

# RUSSIA OF THE RUSSIANS

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## CHAPTER I

### THE GROWTH OF RUSSIA

THE fundamental difference between Russian and English history is the difference between the great plain and the island. English history tells of the upbuilding by an island people of the greatest maritime empire in the world. Russian history tells how a people whose original home lay between the slopes of the Carpathians and the Dnieper gradually, with toil, pain and effort, secured possession of the greatest plain in the world and so created the broadest of land empires. There are curious analogies, striking points of resemblance in the process of empire-building in both countries. But the fundamental difference between the island and the plain, between a sea and a land empire makes itself constantly felt, and largely accounts for striking differences between the two nations in character, social structure and political development.

The island constitutes a secure physical basis for national effort. It guarantees seclusion and privacy. It renders intercourse with the outside world dependent far less on the will of outsiders than on the islanders themselves. The island nation is largely protected against outside interference. It is in a much better position than continental nations to concentrate its energies on questions of internal development. Its social structure is compact and highly organised. Imperial expansion beyond the seas does not alter the essential characteristics of the structure, it only throws them into greater relief. In thinking of the British Empire one thinks primarily and mainly of England. In considering the Russian Empire

one's thoughts range over a wide geographical area, and do not readily concentrate on a given point. British expansion is a radiation, while Russian expansion is a gradual diffusion, and while the position of England on an island base has made it possible to maintain a fairly constant equilibrium between social development and internal expansion, Russian social development has been perpetually subordinated, most frequently sacrificed, to the inexorable necessity of extending the political frontier further and further until the natural barriers of sea and mountain were reached. Thus, though the history of Russian political evolution runs almost parallel with that of the British Empire, England has enjoyed a large measure of political liberty for centuries, while Russia is only now making her first experiments in constitutional government, and Russian backwardness in the matter of political institutions and social initiative is largely to be accounted for by the position of the Russian people on the great plain.

The plain that constitutes the arena of Russian historical effort extends from the Baltic and the Prussian and Austrian frontiers across Eastern Europe and Western Asia in one vast sweep, broken only by the low range of the Urals. It is bounded on the North by the White Sea and the Arctic Ocean, on the South by the Black Sea, the Caucasus and the Kopet Dagh range on the Persian frontier, and on the East reaches a limit in the Pamirs, the Tian-Shan and Altai ranges and the mountainous region beyond the Yenisei. The plain is not absolutely level. There are hills, undulations, stretches of broken country. A map indicating altitude above sea-level displays in different regions of Russia various shades, but these shades will all be of the same colour. **No point in the plain has an altitude of more than 1,400 feet.** The Russian landscape gives the impression of boundless space; it constantly beckons, as the sea does, to far horizons, only that the soil again and again tempts to linger, to settle and to build. The spirit that sent Vikings and Englishmen roving across the green expanse of the sea has caused scores of peoples

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to go wandering over the plain. But in the end they turned their tents into huts; they naturally inclined to settle along the great avenues of communication, on the banks of the rivers that thread their way through swamp, forest and steppe to the limiting seas.

There are in European Russia three great highway-rivers, the Volga, the Dnieper and the Western Dvina. They take their rise in the marshy region of Central Russia to the North-West of Moscow, and flow long slow versts across the plain, the first to the Caspian, the second to the Black Sea, and the third to the Baltic. The course of these rivers indicates the chief lines of human intercourse, those great trade routes that give the principal stimulus to social development and to the organisation and growth of political communities on the plain. The limitless expanse is a constant appeal to go on somewhither, it awakens a spirit of restless adventure. But it is the rivers that tell whither to go and why, and the rivers that take their winding course across European Russia constitute a highway between North-Western Europe and the Caspian and the Middle East, and again between North-Western Europe and the Black Sea basin and Constantinople, that is to say, the Near East. There are no high watersheds **between the rivers**. Frequently two basins are separated by only a few miles of gently undulating country, and boats can easily be conveyed from one to the other overland. These great waterways are thus open roads across the Continent, and those who live along the banks of the rivers necessarily become intermediaries between East and West.

In winter the rivers are frozen hard, and the plain in all its vast extent from Odessa to Archangel, and from the Pamirs to the Baltic, is covered with a sheet of snow. Winter does not paralyse human effort on the plain, but circumscribes it, concentrates it within definite limits. Summer is the time for roving, for active intercourse with the wide world, in the form of trading or military expeditions. Winter encourages

settlement, the accumulation of the products of the summer's toil, indoor life, home industries, communal organisation, the growth of villages and towns. Winter is the period of repose for nature and men, and it is the repose of winter that makes the activity of the summer possible. Then the long winter has a profound effect on character. It causes a relaxation of effort, leads to apathy and inertness, and in any case necessitates a complete change of occupation. To till the soil is out of the question while the snow lies on the ground. The place of agriculture is taken by forestry, by hunting, or by home industries. The melting in spring of the snows that cover the greater part of two continents fertilises the soil, fills the rivers to overflowing with water, and provokes a sudden exuberant uprush of vegetation. Agriculture and commerce on the plain are dependent on the sharp contrast between winter and summer.

It is this natural environment—so different from the snug compactness of an island with an even temperate climate—that determines the main lines of Russian historical development. The thousand odd years of Russian history show how a people living on the South-West corner of the plain learned the plain's secret, discovered its rhythm, its steady alternation between relaxation and effort, between movement and repose, gradually secured possession of the overland trade-routes and, step by step, transforming commercial advantage into political power, finally subdued all its rivals and created an Empire whose limits are nearly everywhere coterminous with those of the plain, while in the Caucasus and Siberia they overpass them.

For several centuries before the beginnings of Russian history, the Southern Steppes of Russia were occupied by Scythians and Sarmatians, of the life and habits of the former of whom Herodotus has left a vivid account. Greek colonies occupied various points along the shores of the Black Sea, and excavations on the sites of these colonies have yielded

rich treasure, a large proportion of which now adorns Russian museums, and serves to show how strongly beat the pulse of Greek civilisation even in the Euxine region **on the confines of the kingdoms of the barbarians.** The Sarmatians were probably of Iranian stock, and a remnant of their descendants is to be found in the Ossetines in the Northern Caucasus. Who the Scythians were is not very clear. Perhaps they were in the main Iranian, and perhaps there were Slav tribes among those whom the Greek writers included under the general designation. That Slavs and Iranians were at one time in close contact is clear from linguistic evidence. The centre of the original home of the Slavs was in the marshy basin of the Pripet in the south of the present Government of Minsk, and probably the White Russians who inhabit Minsk and the neighbouring Governments more nearly represent the original Slavonic type than any other people. To the north of the Scythians in the forest region bordering on the steppe were Finnish tribes—the Western Finns, whose modern representatives are the natives of Finland and Esthonia, being gradually driven northward by the movements of Germanic and Slavonic peoples. The Goths came down from the north before the Christian era, occupied for a time the basin of the Vistula, moved southward to the Danube and in the third century A.D. held sway in the West of the steppes.

Russian history begins with the creation in the ninth century of the State of Kiev. Up till then the Slav tribes, settled along the upper reaches of the Dnieper and its tributaries and along the banks of other rivers as far north as Lake Ilmen, had **not** reached the stage of organised political life, although here and there they seem to have erected forts and even towns. Their position on the trade route between the Baltic and the **Black** Sea gave them certain advantages as intermediaries, but **also exposed** them to attack. In the ninth century about the time when King Alfred was engaged in his struggle with

the Danes, Germanic freebooters known as Variags or Varangers captured the Slav town of Kiev. It is not absolutely certain who these Variags were. They may possibly have been Gothic pirates from settlements on the Black Sea coast—remnants of the Gothic State in the Southern steppes which had been broken up by the Hunns. But it is more probable that the invaders were Northmen who had penetrated into the interior from the Baltic by way of the Neva, Lake Ladoga, the river Volkhovo, Novgorod, Lake Ilmen and the rivers leading thence to the tributaries of the Dnieper. These bands of adventurers led, as the annals say, by a chief named Rurik, subjugated the dwellers along the river banks, and seizing Kiev, which, owing to its position at the confluence of several rivers, was an important trading and political centre, made the first attempt to weld these scattered Slav tribes into a political whole. The Variags, or as they were also called, Rus or Russians, made plundering excursions across the Eastern steppes by way of the kingdom of the Khazars—a Turkish people whose rulers had adopted Judaism—to the Caspian and to Northern Persia, and also down the Dnieper and across the Black Sea to the very walls of Constantinople. The rule of the Variags was hard, but it benefited the Slavs. It established order, promoted trade, and provided protection against the attacks of the nomad hordes who were constantly making their way from Asia into the rich pastures of the steppes. And the Variags very soon ceased to be foreigners and became Slavs in speech and habits. The early rulers of the Kiev state, Rurik's successors, the Princes Oleg, Igor and Sviatoslav and the Princess Olga, made the neighbouring Slav tribes groan by their forcible extortion of tribute, but at the same time Olga, for instance, defended Kiev against the Khazars and Sviatoslav and his successors against another Turkish people called the Pechenegs, known in Byzantine history as Patzinaks, while during the eleventh and twelfth centuries the energies of the princes of Kiev were engaged in warding off the attacks of the Torks and Polovians, also

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Turkish peoples, a section of whom finally settled in central Hungary.

Christianity was adopted in 988 as the State religion by Prince Vladimir, the son of Sviatoslav. The missionaries came from Constantinople, with which the Russians had for a considerable time previously maintained commercial and political relations. Russian marauders had more than once ravaged the precincts of the Great City. Uncouth Russian envoys had frequently stood side by side with the envoys of other barbarian peoples of the steppes, with Khazars and Pechenegs, shy and overawed amidst the dazzling splendours of the Imperial Court. Princess Olga had visited the city during the reign of Constantine Porphyrogenitos, and had concluded with the Greeks commercial treaties. Sviatoslav, Vladimir's father, had, at the instigation of the Greeks, invaded Bulgaria at the head of an army of 60,000 men, and had crossed the Balkans into Thrace. But the Greeks turned against him, and he was in the end defeated by the Emperor John Tzimiskes on the Danube. The city constantly attracted the Russians; they coveted it, and the Balkan question, the question of the watch and ward over the straits on which Constantinople stands, the straits that lead out into the Mediterranean and the wide world beyond, has been vital for Russia from the very earliest period of her history.

The step taken by Vladimir in adopting Christianity as the State religion had consequences of immense importance. Byzantine culture had a powerful rival in that Perso-Arabic civilisation, which had its centre at Bagdad, and held sway over Mesopotamia and the Middle East. The Arabs took a considerable share in the trade of the great plain, and in this way maintained intercourse with the Russians. It is not improbable that, as a legend indicates, Vladimir may have weighed in his mind the possibility of adopting Islam as a symbol of civilisation and political progress, just as the rulers of the Khazars from similar motives had adopted Judaism.

But Vladimir chose Christianity, and so set his face westward and linked the fortunes of the Russian State with those great forces and tendencies which have produced modern civilisation.

The adoption of Christianity was of great immediate importance for the Russian State. It strengthened the monarchical principle and led to the introduction of Byzantine book-learning and Byzantine administrative methods. Vladimir was an ardent promoter of learning and the arts, he succeeded in throwing a poetical glamour over the conception of the state, and in the hold he gained on the popular imagination—the folk-songs are full of the praise of Vladimir, the “Bright Sun”—he may very well be compared with Alfred.

But the new social and political ideas introduced from Byzantium were subjected to severe stress and strain, were scattered by violent winds of misfortune across the plain, and took centuries to mature and to become embodied in a powerful State. The territory inhabited by those Slav tribes, who acknowledged more or less effectively the sovereign rights of Vladimir and his descendants, extended over the northern fringe of the steppe region as far as the Western Bug and the Dnieper on the West ; and on the East as far as the upper reaches of the Don. To the north, in the forest region, it extended beyond Lake Ladoga, and here again on the west it was bounded by an irregular line running from about where Dorpat now stands to the neighbourhood of Vilna, and on the east it extended as far as Nizhni-Novgorod at the junction of the Oka and the Volga. But nominal extent of territory was by no means coincident with extent of power. Rivalries between various regions and princes weakened the central authority, and the practice of dividing up territory among members of the princely house of Rurik led to constant bickering and feuds. Custom had established that the senior member of the family should occupy the throne of Kiev, the other principalities going to the other



members of the house of Rurik in order of age. But the senior might be passed over in favour of the ablest, and, in an age when firmness of will and strength of arm were the first requisites in a ruler, might very easily have supplanted complicated and cumbrous right and made confusion worse confounded. The various appanages of the descendants of Vladimir became small and practically independent principalities, and the strength of the "Russian Land" was frittered away in petty dynastic conflicts. It became increasingly difficult to offer an effective resistance to the incursions of the nomads who occupied the Southern and Eastern steppes. The political power of Kiev steadily declined. Novgorod and Pskov in the north were practically independent merchant republics. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Galicio-Volhynian principality in the west displayed a tendency to assume the power that Kiev was letting fall from her hands. The constant pressure of the nomads on the fringe of the steppe region stimulated a colonising movement to the North-East, to the region between the Volga and the Oka, where the Slavs mingled with the Finns, forming a new type known as the Great Russian. The princes of this region grew more powerful in proportion as the prestige of Kiev declined, and when Kiev fell the strongest ruler of the North-East, the Grand Prince of Vladimir on the Kliazma, became the overlord of the Russian princes.

The Kiev period, which lasted from the end of the ninth to the beginning of the thirteenth century, may be regarded as a preliminary survey of the field of Russian historical **effort**, a kind of feeling of the ground, the drafting of a rough sketch or plan. It was a period of happy guesses, of brilliant suggestions. The spirit of the plain was in it, the spirit of **expansion** and heroic adventure. For the Russian of the Kiev period the world was wide and full of wonder, and the tasks it presented were of fascinating variety. The political and social **system** was ill organised and loosely developed. In the towns the merchant class was dominant, the Prince

and his personal followers, his band or *druzhina*, maintained order, and only gradually transformed their military energy into political power. The clan system prevailed, the blood-feud was common, slavery existed but in a comparatively mild form. Popular assemblies, in which the heads of the clans took part, largely controlled the administration.

But within this loose and primitive social and political organisation the elements of a higher order were actively present. Christianity not only reformed manners and promoted learning, it brought with it from Byzantium legislative and administrative conceptions which became powerful motive forces in Russian history. By asserting the principle of the sanctity of monarchical authority it greatly increased the prestige and the power of the princes. And by marking off the Russians from their neighbours as a distinctly Christian people it strengthened and deepened national feeling. The Orthodox Christianity of Byzantium assumed under Yaroslav, the son of Vladimir, a specifically Russian character. Christian doctrine, Christian tradition, were not merely translated from Greek into Slavonic, they became the predominant, the vital and the distinctive elements in a rich world of popular belief. But they were modified in the process, they became Russian. Christian sentiment reinforced national sentiment. To be a Russian meant to be a Christian, and the struggle for national existence against pagan or Mohammedan neighbours received a religious sanction. Christianity was an important element in that conception of the fundamental unity of the different sections of the Russian people, which steadily grew and developed in spite of fierce attacks from without, and even more dangerous internecine strife. This sense of national unity, powerful as it was in the Kiev Period, did not then avail to establish an effective and unitary political organisation. It bore its fruits only in the Moscow Period.

In the Kiev Period, too, the Russians realised something of the extent of the world in which they were to play their part. They maintained constant intercourse with Byzantium,

which was a meeting-place for representatives of all parts of **the** civilised world. The most westerly of the Russian principalities of this period, Galich, at one time extended as far as the mouth of the Danube, and its chief connections were with a semi-barbarous Hungary and with the Slav states of Bohemia and Poland on the north and north-west. Yaroslav the Great, the son of Vladimir, in whose reign the Kiev state reached the zenith of its power, married a Swedish princess and Scandinavians were prominent at his court. His sister was married to Casimir, King of Poland, one of his daughters to Henry I of France, and another to King Andrew of Hungary, and there is also mention of a connection by marriage between Yaroslav and English princes. On the west the Russians had to deal with Lithuanians, on the north and north-east with Finnish tribes, and in the south and south-east with nomads of Turkish race. From the latter the Russians borrowed many customs and shared with them certain traits such as a passionate love of the steppes. Vladimir is frequently spoken of in song and story as a Kogan or Khagan, which is the distinctive title of Turkish ruling princes from the Black Sea to the Mongolian frontier of China. The roving warriors or *bogatyr*s of the Russian epos bear in many respects a striking resemblance to the typical nomad warrior, and the name itself comes from the Persian *bahadur* through Turkish. Farther to the east, beyond the steppes and the Caspian, there was the wealthy and prosperous sphere of Persian civilisation, with which the Russians maintained trading relations through the **Bulgarians** of the Volga and the peoples of the steppes. The **unknown** author of the great heroic poem, "The Story of Igor's Band," a moving account of the expedition of a Russian prince against the Polovians—the only fragment of secular literature that has been handed down from the Kiev Period,—was probably the contemporary of such Persian poets as Khakani and Nizami. In the Caucasus there was the picturesque kingdom of Georgia, which in the twelfth century

attained brilliance and power. Towards the close of the Kiev Period Byzantium still retained its hold on the southern coast of the Black Sea, but Turkish nomads wandered across the uplands of Asia Minor, and the Seljuks had founded, in the eleventh century, that state of Konia or Ikonium which was later to serve as a base for the Ottoman advance. In the north-west of the Russian territory Novgorod and Pskov maintained active intercourse with the rising cities of Northern Germany. It was indeed a rich and varied world with which the Russians of the Kiev Period were at various points brought into contact, the world of the early middle ages with a flourishing Islam, a slowly expiring Byzantium, and a Europe just coming into being.

In 1238, 1239, and 1240 the North-Eastern and Southern Russian principalities were overrun by an army of Tartars or Turks under Mongol leadership. The

**The Tartars.** impact of this invasion was far more terrible than that of the incursions of Turkish nomads—Khazars, Pecheniogs and Polovians—from which the Russians had suffered for centuries. The Tartars formed part of the host organised in Central Asia by Chingiz Khan, who had discovered in carefully planned and rapidly multiplied nomad raids a secret of world-wide conquest. After having devastated the greater part of Russian territory and ravaged Poland, Hungary, Bosnia and Dalmatia, the Tartar armies, known under the general name of the Golden Horde, settled in the South-Eastern steppes, and their leader Baty, the grandson of Chingiz, built a capital at Sarai on the Volga, some distance to the north of the present Astrakhan, whence he exercised rule over the dominions allotted to him, Khiva, the Urals, the Crimea and the Russian principalities. The rule of the Tartar Khans over Russia took the form of the exaction of tribute, which was either collected by special tax-gatherers called baskaks, usually in a very brutal and rough-and-ready fashion, or else brought by the princes in person to the Horde. The Khans skilfully took advantage

of dissensions among the Russian princes in order to consolidate their own power in Russia, and, on the other hand, rival Russian princes constantly sought to secure their ends by intriguing at the Khan's court. Several princes were cruelly murdered in the Horde, and Yaroslav II, who was Grand Prince of Vladimir at the time of the Tartar invasion, was poisoned on his return journey from Karakorum, the capital of the Great Khan in Mongolia. The Khans interfered little, however, in the details of the administration of Russian principalities, and there was a great deal of peaceful intercourse between Tartars and Russians. Sarai was an important commercial centre, owing to its position on the chief caravan route between Russia and India. There was a considerable colony of Russian traders in the city. Christianity was tolerated, and occasionally members of the Khan's family professed Christianity, although the bulk of the Tartars nominally abandoned Shamanism for Islam shortly after their settlement in the steppe. The Tartars passed on to the Russians many elements of Chinese and Persian culture and certain Oriental administrative conceptions. The Russian vocabulary contains a considerable number of words borrowed from the Tartar language, and many of these were borrowed by the Tartars in their turn from Chinese, Persian or Arabic. It was as a result of Tartar influence that the domestic life of the Russian well-to-do classes assumed that predominantly Oriental character which was so marked a feature of the Moscow Period. On the whole, in spite of the brutality and ferocity frequently displayed by the Tartar Khans and their tax-gatherers, and in spite of the fact that the effect of the invasion was to transfer the political centre of Russia to a region remote from the civilisation of the South and the West, Tartar rule did contribute in many ways to the enrichment of Russian civilisation. Negatively the Tartar yoke provided a most effective stimulus to Russian political development. Just as the raids of the sea-rovers, the Danes, led to the creation

of a United England, so the invasion of those land-rovers, the Tartars, set in motion the forces which gradually brought about the political union of the scattered forces of the Russian people.

After the fall of Kiev, in 1240, the greater part of the South Russian territory passed under the direct rule of the Tartars. In the West, the Principality of Galicia and Volhynia served for a time as the rallying ground for the remnants of Southern Russian power, until towards the end of the fourteenth century Galicia was incorporated in Poland, and Volhynia was annexed to Lithuania. Most of the other Eastern and South-Western Russian principalities were absorbed in that Lithuanian State, which had grown strong through perpetual conflict with the Teutonic order in East Prussia on the one hand, and, on the other, through the subjection of petty Russian princes, weakened by endless dynastic strife. In the long run the Lithuanian elements in the Lithuanian State were completely overshadowed by the Russian, constituting about nine-tenths of the population and territory, and the union of this predominantly Russian and Orthodox State with Roman Catholic Poland through the marriage of its Grand Prince Jagailo with Jadwiga, the Queen of Poland, in 1386, proved to be a source of constant internal dissension, and a perpetual occasion of conflict with the growing Russian power in the North-East. It was in the North-East, in that region between the Oka and the Volga, where Russian colonists mingling with Finnish natives had founded new homes amidst the forests, that the promise implied in the Kiev State again took its slow and toilsome way towards fulfilment. The practice of constant subdivision into appanages was in force here as it was throughout the whole of the territory reigned over by princes of the House of Rurik, and also—though counteracted to a greater extent by centralising tendencies—in the neighbouring States of Lithuania and Poland. Among the petty princes of the region, those of Vladimir on the Kliazma, a tributary of the Oka, gained the ascendancy. In 1169

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Andrei Bogoliubski, Prince of Vladimir, assumed the title of Grand Prince, thereby asserting against the rulers of Kiev his claim to the headship over all the Russian land. But the headship of the Vladimir Princes was for a long time merely nominal. Their real authority extended little beyond the principalities in their immediate neighbourhood, Riazan and Murom. Their attempts to control the affairs of the South Russian principalities or those of Novgorod and Pskov were rarely successful. Livonian knights and Lithuanians had much more influence in the West of Russia, and Poles, Lithuanians and Hungarians in the enfeebled South, than did the Princes of Vladimir during the twelfth century. Vladimir must have been an important trading centre, lying as it does between the Oka and the Volga. In grave mounds in the region have been found coins pointing to intercourse with the distant East and the distant West, coins of Arab Caliphs and Bukharan Samanids dating from 772 to 984, and Anglo-Saxon coins and coins of the German Empire dating from 950 to 1090. From the twelfth to the fourteenth century, Vladimir, with the neighbouring principalities of Rostov and Suzdal, was a home of refuge for that slowly developing Russian culture which, in other parts of the Russian land, **was exposed to a constant irruption of alien influences.** Some of the best monuments of Russian ecclesiastical architecture are to be found in the Vladimir-Suzdal country, and here the Russian spirit ripened and gathered strength in undistinguished obscurity.

It was after the Tartar invasion, in the course of which Vladimir was sacked like many other Russian towns, that the title of Grand Prince of Vladimir came to connote a real authority over the whole of the North and North-East of Russia.

But this was because the Grand Prince became the deputy of the Khan, and was responsible before him for the collection of tribute from the other princes. He was the chief vassal, and his power was a derivative power. But it was none

the less real, and was much more effective as a means of asserting headship than the earlier attempts of the Vladimir rulers to enforce their shadowy claims. And for this reason the title was an object of perpetual intrigue in the Horde on the part of rival princes. Tartar rule served as a mould for Russian unity. It counteracted the perpetual tendency to dismemberment, induced by the practice of dividing and subdividing appanages, until the very principle of authority went astray in fragmentary baronies in the forests.

The process of reunion was hastened by the rapid economic growth of the principality of Moscow, an appanage of Vladimir, which was formed in the thirteenth century, and by reason of the fertility of its soil and its advantageous position on the trade routes between the Volga and the Western Dvina and Novgorod and Riazan attracted a large population from the neighbouring principalities. Moscow proved much better adapted than Vladimir to be the economic centre of the North-East, and it was mainly for this reason that the political supremacy gradually passed into its hands. The princes of Moscow gradually increased their territory by carefully calculated purchase and conquest, and a particularly shrewd and enterprising ruler, Ivan Kalita, secured, in 1328, from the Khan by the customary methods of intrigue and the murder of rivals the title of Grand Prince, which thereafter was a permanent attribute of the rulers of Moscow. Ivan Kalita, as his nickname "Moneybags" indicates, was a careful householder, and his will with its precise enumeration of the golden dishes in his possession is more like that of a country squire than a monarch. He built churches in Moscow, transferred the Metropolitan of Vladimir to his capital, established order in his dominions, intrigued right and left, added field to field and town to town, used the troops of the Khan against his neighbours and kinsmen, and altogether prospered ingloriously, but in a way that surely tended to the centralisation of political power in Moscow. His



successors followed in his footsteps, and the chief characteristic of the rulers of Moscow down to the time of Ivan the **Terrible**, and even after his day, was a sober thriftiness, crafty forethought, a minute choice of ways and means and an unwillingness to undertake any risks. They were **cautious business men**. They increased their territory by purchase, by gradually modifying the laws of inheritance so as to prevent the dissipation of territory in appanages, by setting their neighbours quarrelling amongst themselves, by fomenting civil strife in other principalities, and by going out to conquest when conquest was sure. Very striking is the contrast between this policy and the generous and reckless expansiveness of the Kiev Period, the spirit which later became embodied in the Cossacks. If the Kiev policy was that of the open steppe, the Moscow policy was that of the forest region, where an enemy may be lurking behind every tree. Both tendencies, that of the *bogatyř* or roving hero, and that of the *diak* or intriguing and calculating Government clerk, have continually played and still play their part in the development of the Russian nation and the Russian character.

While Moscow grew stronger, the power of the Golden Horde steadily declined. Internal dissensions and conflicts with Central Asian States undermined the authority of the Khans. But the Tartars for a long time remained capable of doing a considerable amount of harm. In the period from the middle of the fourteenth to the middle of the fifteenth century the Khans made seven destructive raids on Russian territory. One Khan, Mamai, was defeated at Kulikovo, on the Don, in 1380, by Prince Dmitri Donskoi, who displayed a personal courage not usual among the Moscow rulers. Tokhtamysh sacked the Kremlin, the great Tamerlane himself devastated Riazan, and both the Khans Yedigei and Ulu Mahmed fell **upon Moscow**. But in spite of these marauding expeditions the authority of the Khans became a negligible quantity for the Moscow Princes, and Ivan III found it in 1480 a simple

matter to throw off that Tartar yoke to which the Russian people had been subject for 240 years.

Ivan III attained remarkable success in pursuing the aim of his dynasty to reunite the Russian people under the rule of Moscow. First of all he destroyed the

**Ivan III.** independence of the proud merchant republic of Novgorod. Taking advantage of the fact that the people of Novgorod, dreading the growing power of Moscow, had invited a Lithuanian prince to occupy the traditional position of nominal ruler in the city, Ivan sent a force against the Novgorodians, who were left in the lurch by the Lithuanians to whom they had appealed, and defeated on the river Shelon near Lake Ilmen. Then Ivan gradually reduced the privileges of the republic, and appearing before the city with a strong army enforced from it absolute submission. He abolished the system of government by popular vote, and by wholesale execution of the leading citizens and the transference of a large number of Novgorod families to Moscow territory, he precluded a revival of autonomous tendencies, and so closed one of the most picturesque pages in Russian history. Situated on the river Volkhovo, at the point where it flows out of Lake Ilmen on its way to Lake Ladoga, the Neva and the Baltic, Novgorod held the key of the trade between the interior of Russia and the Germanic countries of the North, it commanded the chief overland route between the Baltic and the Black Sea. It was constantly visited by foreign traders who were subjected to special laws and regulations, and had a quarter of their own in the city known as the German quarter. In the course of time the dominions of Novgorod came to extend as far East as the Urals, and to an indefinite distance northward. A prince of the line of Rurik always resided in the city, but the real power lay in the hands of the popular assembly or *vieche*, which was summoned at need in the public square by the ringing of a bell, and which elected an executive from among members of the powerful merchant families. Novgorod,

on account of its wealth, was an important centre of culture, which had a predominantly ecclesiastical character, and found expression in the building of a large number of churches and monasteries, many of which are still standing. But there was a rich, many-coloured and turbulent secular life, echoes of which have been handed down in the epic folk-songs or *byline*.

The principality of Tver, near Moscow, shared the fate of Novgorod, and Ivan III united the whole of Northern and North-Eastern Russia under his rule. There were other circumstances that conspired to strengthen the monarchical idea in Moscow. The fall of Constantinople, the seizure by Mohammedans of the Second Rome, the centre of Orthodox Christendom, produced a profound impression upon the Russian mind. The marriage of Ivan III with Zoe Paleologa brought the ruler of Moscow into direct connection with the house of that young Emperor, who had died bravely fighting on the walls of Constantinople, and the idea that Moscow had inherited the mission of Byzantium,—was, in fact, the “Third Rome,”—was eagerly adopted by the Moscow court, and developed by Russian ecclesiastics. In 1492 the Lithuanian Prince Alexander formally recognised Ivan III as “Monarch of all Russia.”

**The new State was confronted with grave problems.** Its position at the very centre of the great plain made territorial expansion a necessity of existence. There were enemies on every hand, and there was constant need to be armed for defence and attack. The whole organisation of the State—and this is characteristic of Russian policy till the beginning of the nineteenth century—was subordinated to military ends. Moscow had not had time to develop its resources, to attain to any high degree of material prosperity and social well-being before it was plunged into the turmoil of incessant and exhausting wars. Civilisation and manhood suffered terribly, but there was a steady and inexorable growth of power. In the midst of the plain, on the frontiers of Asia,

far from the vitalising currents of Western intellectual conflict and development, State power conceived of as autocracy acquired a dominance over the individual that can hardly be matched in Byzantium. Nowhere is the problem of a conflict between personality and power presented with such force and acuteness as in Russia.

The first task of the Muscovite Princes was to deal with the Tartars in the East and South-East. The Horde had split up into three distinct Khanates, those of Kazan, Astrakhan, and the Crimea, and, by playing off the Khanates one against the other, Ivan III and his successors sought finally to break the Tartar power. Kazan was easily subdued, but the struggle was complicated by the constant intervention of the Crimean Khan, who now had powerful support in the person of a Turkish overlord in Constantinople. There were eighty years of raids and counter raids. The grandson of Ivan III, Ivan IV, the Terrible, who came to the throne in 1533, and who was the most striking contemporary of Elizabeth, took Kazan with its territory in 1551 and Astrakhan in 1556. In view of the raids of the Crimean Khan he was compelled to establish fortified outposts on the Steppe, thus preparing the way for the reconquest of the South. The new dominions speedily became an integral part of the Tsardom. Russian colonists settled among the Tartars in the Kazan region. Tartar princes and nobles came to the court of the Tsar and became, like the descendants of once independent Russian princes, members of the Russian aristocracy. The names of many Russian noble families, such as Urusov and Bakhmetiev, point to their Tartar origin. The Crimea stood as a constant reminder of the sovereignty of the Ottoman Turks over the Black Sea basin and the Southern steppe. Ivan's advisers submitted to him a plan for the conquest of the Crimea, but he was compelled to leave its execution to a future generation, just as he was compelled to leave to a later day the realisation of his dream of establishing the Muscovite power on the shores of the Baltic.

The Eastern frontier was further extended during the reign of Ivan the Terrible by a band of Cossack adventurers under Yermak, who defeated the Tartar Khan of Western Siberia, and made the Tsar a present of the territory in the basin of the Tobol and the Irtish. But the task of extending and strengthening the Eastern frontier was simplicity itself, compared with that of coping with more civilised Western rivals. Poland united with Lithuania had become, under the strong rule of the Jagailo dynasty, a great power. A conflict with Moscow in which Lithuania had become involved during the reign of Ivan III had served as a warning against the danger of separatist tendencies, and the union with Poland had become closer in consequence. After the final subjection of the Teutonic Order in Eastern Prussia by Casimir IV in 1466, and the assertion of Polish supremacy at the mouth of the Danube by the same King, the power of the Polish-Lithuanian State extended from the Baltic at the mouth of the Vistula to the Black Sea. The Polish cities were prosperous, the Polish upper classes were sensitive to the influences of European civilisation, the Roman Catholic Church, which was dominant in Poland, helped to maintain constant intercourse with the West, and at one time it seemed possible that this central European State might attain something like permanent greatness. But there were sources of internal weakness which even the prudence and firmness of her ablest rulers could not wholly counteract. The king was dependent on a diet composed of representatives of the nobility and gentry, who cared more for their own class and personal interests than the general interests of the State or the welfare of the common people. The presence in the diet of powerful magnates from Lithuania, frequently inheritors of Russian or Lithuanian appanages, introduced a further element of dissension and confusion. The distinction between Lithuania and Poland made itself constantly felt, more especially on religious grounds. Poland was aggressively Roman Catholic,

while in Lithuania only the Lithuanians in the north, who formed a small minority of the population, were Catholics, the bulk of the population being Russians and Orthodox. The Reformation, which influenced the upper classes in both Lithuania and Poland, temporarily checked this antagonism, but with the triumph of the counter-reformation in Poland it revived with new vigour. Over the western steppe roved bands of freebooters known as Cossacks, who were mostly Russian in language and Orthodox as to faith, and yielded little more than a nominal submission to Polish authority.

Poland formed the chief barrier to Muscovite expansion on the West. The Baltic coast was held by the Livonian knights, and Sweden, a growing power in the north, occupied Finland. The second half of the reign of Ivan the Terrible was **Conflict with the Western States.** **mainly absorbed in a conflict with these three powers.** The immediate result of a war which Ivan undertook with the Livonian Order and in which Sweden, Denmark, and Poland intervened, was that the Order fell to pieces and its territory was divided, the southern half falling to Poland, and the northern half to Sweden. The Muscovite State became involved in long and exhausting wars with Poland and Sweden, from which it drew no direct profit. Both these Western powers were bent on preventing such intercourse between Moscow and Western Europe as might have a civilising effect on the Russians, and so increase their political power. Ivan died in 1584, embittered by the failure of his western campaigns. But his reign had been in every way one of immense importance for the Muscovite State. He was left an orphan at the age of three, and grew up uncared for, unwatched, while the boyars or great nobles intrigued, fought and robbed around him. He learned to detest the boyars, and when he came to manhood did his utmost to break their power, invoking against them the support of the populace, and surrounding himself with a terrible guard called the *oprichina*, who murdered indiscriminately all who were supposed to be his

enemies. His chief advisers during the early part of his reign were not boyars, but the priest Sylvester, and an official of humble origin named Adashev. Immediately after his coronation he convened a National Assembly, which confirmed a revised judicial code, and heard from the young Tsar's own lips his bitter complaints against the boyars and his promise of good government in the future. Certain administrative reforms were, as a matter of fact, undertaken. The task of maintaining order in the provinces was taken from the boyar governors and laid on elders chosen by the population. The practice of collecting taxes by farming out whole districts to governors who "fed" on them, as the expression was, was abandoned in favour of a system of collecting through elected representatives of the people, all the members of which became jointly responsible to the Government. The effect of these measures was not to develop the principle of popular liberty. Rather the reverse. The power of the boyars was limited, but at the same time the masses of the people were attached more directly to the central Government, and the authority of the Tsar was increased. The chief object of these and similar measures was in fact to increase the fiscal resources of the State in view of multiplying military needs. Ivan's own character was fiercely despotic. He was subject to fits of ungovernable passion, under the influence of which he committed acts of cruelty incomprehensible in a sane man. He murdered his **eldest** son with his own hand. He slaughtered the citizens of Novgorod without cause. He ravaged his own country and murdered his own subjects by the hundred. His fits of passion were succeeded by long periods of remorse, and he ended his life as a monk, varying his monastic exercises with coarse revelry. But he was a statesman of remarkable talent. He clearly foresaw the natural course of Russian political development, and the work of expansion westward begun by him was consistently carried on by his successors until its completion by Peter the Great.

The personal character of Ivan the Terrible and his administrative reforms strengthened a distinctively Muscovite, singularly gaunt and merciless conception of the State. The idea of a political unity, permitting of no diversity, was carried to an **extreme**. The tillers of the soil, the peasantry, had in the course of centuries sunk into a position of absolute economic dependence on the landowners. Towards the close of the sixteenth century they were finally attached to the soil and became serfs, one of the chief objects of this measure being to ensure a regular payment of taxes. The oppressive character of the Moscow system led to a constant emigration of the more adventurous elements to the thinly-populated regions beyond the frontier. Many of them settled in the steppes on the Don, and others went Eastwards to Siberia. These rovers, like those in the steppes beyond the Dnieper, were called Cossacks, and they were the chief agents of Russian expansion eastwards.

**Muscovite  
Rule.**

**Muscovite rule was hard.** But Moscow, the capital, lived a very picturesque and many-sided life, with a great variety of interests of its own. The city was an exceedingly important trading centre. It traded with Persia and Central Asia by way of the Volga and Astrakhan, and the chief intermediaries in the Persian trade were then, as later, Armenians.

The Moscow Tsars tried to open up trade with India, and though the difficulties were not insuperable—an inquiry showed that it was a matter of only four months' journey from the Caspian to the Moghul capital—Persian opposition effectually barred enterprise in that direction. Greek merchants carried on trade between Constantinople and Moscow. There was a certain amount of trade with Sweden and by way of Livonia and Novgorod, and also by way of Poland commercial relations were maintained with Germany. Direct trading relations with England were opened up in 1555 by way of Archangel, and English visitors were among the first to give detailed accounts of the Tsardom of Moscovy to the Western



**world.** The attempts made by Ivan the Terrible to secure from Western Europe skilled craftsmen and instructors were frustrated by Germany and Poland. Learning was not highly esteemed, as is shown by the fate of Maxim the Greek. This Maxim was an Albanian, who spent several years of **study** in Italy, where he became acquainted with the Humanists, among others with Aldus Mantius, and was deeply affected by Savonarola's preaching. On account of his great learning he was sent by the Abbot of the monastery of Mount Athos, in which he had taken the vows, to Moscow in response to a request from the Grand Prince Vasili, father of Ivan the Terrible, for a competent translator and adviser in the revision of church books. He soon came into conflict with the dissolute and avaricious clergy and nobles of Moscow, and all his learning and his spotless character did not avail to save him from life-long confinement in a monastery. And yet this man might, under more favourable conditions, have been the pioneer in a Russian renaissance.

Maxim had a few faithful disciples who profited by his lessons, and among these was Prince Kurbski, whose correspondence with Ivan the Terrible is one of the most interesting literary and historical documents of the period. Ivan himself was well-read in ecclesiastical literature and, as his letters show, possessed real literary talent. The favourite reading matter of the people was apocryphal literature, which included a number of legends of striking beauty.

Foreign trade gave colour and movement to life in Moscow, but the source of perennial popular interest was the Church with its traditions and ceremonies. The Church had a peculiarly national character, and many features in its teaching and ritual filled the stricter Greek ecclesiastics with horror. But whether fighting with Mohammedan Tartars, Roman Catholic Poles and Lithuanians, or Protestant Germans or Swedes, the Muscovites always regarded themselves as upholders of the true faith against sinful error. Political conceptions were set in a framework of ecclesiastical tradition.

The centre of Eastern European trade and the capital of the Tsars was a city of churches and cathedrals. Ecclesiastical controversies aroused intense popular interest. There was the conflict with heresies, such as that of the so-called Judaisers and that of a layman named Bashkin, which seems to have been a distant echo of the Protestant Reformation. There was the long controversy over the question of landholding by monasteries, which possessed altogether about a third of the lands of **Muscovy**. **There was the constant resort for counsel in things spiritual and material to religious recluses, men and women, though many just as frequently resorted to astrologers and fortune-tellers.** There were the important questions of Church government that arose with the assumption of the title Patriarch by the chief prelate of Moscow in the seventeenth century. All these questions greatly excited the minds of the pious Muscovites in the sixteenth and **seventeenth centuries**. **They were indeed most assiduous in the observance of ecclesiastical as of every other kind of custom, but this did not prevent them from grossly indulging their appetites on occasion.** It was a heavy, barbarous, uncritical life that the Muscovites lived, entangled in a network of custom, petty intrigue and stratagem, coarsely material, yet with a rich fund of humour and shrewd popular wisdom, and with an extraordinary capacity for devotion at the heart of it all. This capacity for devotion was displayed in the strange ecclesiastical movement in the middle of the seventeenth century when the Patriarch Nikon used his immense, almost monarchical authority, to impose on the Church in spite of the vehement opposition of the masses, new and more correct translations of the service books. Hundreds cheerfully submitted to torture or went to the stake rather than accept innovations that they considered heretical. These schismatics, the so-called Old Believers, were driven to the confines of Russian territory, and they, too, became agents in the manifold process of Russian expansion.

After the death of Ivan the Terrible the State of Moscow

passed through a period of the severest strain. Ivan's son, Feodor, ruled with the aid of a powerful noble of Tartar descent named Boris Godunov. Feodor left no heir, and with his death that branch of the Rurik line which occupied the Moscow throne came to an end. Boris Godunov had himself elected Tsar, but for all his shrewdness and ability he was unable to maintain his authority effectively over the rival boyars. When Godunov died the throne was seized by a Pretender whom Sigismund of Poland put forward as a son of Ivan named Dimitri. The False Dimitri was murdered, and a boyar named Vasili Shuisky had himself elected by a small clique of his fellows. Vasili was deposed and taken as prisoner to Warsaw. Another Dimitri appeared, and was known as the Robber of Tushino from that village to the North-West of Moscow, where he had his seat and whence he exercised with the help of Cossacks and certain of the boyars a feeble rule. **The land was a prey to anarchy.** Things were bad enough when there was a real Tsar at the head of affairs. The common people were oppressed beyond all endurance by the Government and nobles, and abject servility, beggary and crime were the inevitable consequences. But now there was no restraining influence whatever. Every man was striving for his own hand, and pillaged where he could. The country was open to foreign invaders. The Swedes seized Novgorod. The Poles occupied Moscow, and mocked at the Orthodox faith. The boyars scattered, seeking to secure their own advantage either by supporting the Robber of Tushino or by acknowledging as Tsar Wladislaw, the son of the Polish king Sigismund. The Polish garrison massacred the inhabitants of Moscow. Finally, at the appeal of a butcher in Nizhni-Novgorod named Minin, the people rose and organised a militia under the leadership of a prince named Pozharski and other obscure nobles and gentry. The militia marched up the Volga to Yaroslav and crossed over to Moscow, where they found a force of the Tushino Cossacks besieging the Poles at leisure. The Cossacks and the militia

viewed each other with distrust, but finally co-operated to such an extent that the isolated garrison fell before them, and Sigismund, who was hastening to its relief, was turned back on the way. The last few months of 1612 were occupied in preparations for the election of a new Tsar. A National Assembly was convened, and messengers were sent over the country to test the opinion of the people. Finally, after a long struggle between various factions, the choice of the assembly fell on a sixteen-year-old youth named Michael Romanov, the son of a prominent boyar, who had been made patriarch at Tushino under the name of Philaret. The Romanovs were distantly connected with the house of Rurik through Anastasia Romanova, the first wife of Ivan the Terrible. The election which took place on February 26th, 1613, was approved by the people, and Michael reigned peaceably, yielding the control of affairs for the first few years to his energetic father, Philaret. The fact that at a supremely critical moment, when all the leaders failed with the one exception of the Patriarch Hermogen, the State was saved by the direct efforts of the people is a remarkable proof of the vitality of the nation that had grown up under such difficult conditions in the North-East. The value of popular initiative was recognised during Michael's reign by the convocation of several National Assemblies or Zemskie Sobory, but the purely autocratic principle steadily recovered strength, and the nation again became completely subservient to the State.

Michael's reign was a period of recuperation. His son, Alexei or Alexis, was a retiring man, given to pious works, but it fell to his lot to carry on the work of expansion. An insurrection of the Cossacks of the Ukraine or western steppe against Polish rule led to Russian intervention and a long war with Poland, which resulted in Moscow's securing by the Treaty of Andrusovo in 1667 the possession of Kiev and the territory on the left bank of the Dnieper. During the war with Poland a war broke out with Sweden. A Russian army entered Livland but was driven back with loss, and peace

was concluded in 1661. The submission of the Cossacks west of the Dnieper to the Sultan, led to a war with Turkey (1672-1681), and after the Turks had alarmed Christendom by appearing before the walls of Vienna, Russia accepted the invitation of the Polish king, Jan Sobieski, to join a coalition against the Mohammedan power. The second half of the seventeenth century was thus devoted to irregular warfare with the three powers that prevented the expansion of Russia westward and southward.

The oppressive character of Muscovite administration provoked in the course of the century popular risings in Moscow, Novgorod and Pskov, and in 1667 a very serious insurrection of Cossacks and peasants in the Volga region under the leadership of Stenka Razin, who became a hero of folk-song.

Alexis was succeeded by his eldest son Feodor, who reigned only six years (1676-1682), and then after all these "quiet tsars," these tame and characterless first Romanovs, came Peter the Great like a whirlwind, and with almost superhuman energy transformed the Tsardom of Muscovy into the Russian Empire. The autocracy had been consolidated after the Time of Trouble, not by the Tsars themselves, but chiefly owing to the work of such able advisers as Michael's father, Philaret, and Ordyn-Nashchokin, the leading statesman under Tsar Alexis. Into the autocratic authority thus established Peter put all the rude force of his personal character, and used it as an instrument for dragging the Russian State from the sleepy remoteness of the heart of the plain into the restless and complex world of modern Europe. Peter was strikingly unlike his immediate predecessors, but in Philaret and in Peter's half-sister, the Princess Sophia, there was a turbulent energy that resembled his own. And then Peter's education was the reverse of the typical education of a Moscow Tsar. When he was eleven years old, his sister Sophia organised a mutiny of the Strieltsy, or soldiers of the standing army, and drove Peter's mother and all the members of her family

out of the palace on the Kremlin and, still retaining her position as Regent for Peter and his brother the co-tsar Ivan, a wholly incompetent weakling, concentrated all the power in her own hands and those of her favourites. Peter lived with his mother in the village of Preobrazhenskoe, outside the city walls, where he was left very much to his own devices. He played at soldiers and sailors, built toy boats, gathered around him a host of playmates of noble and humble birth whom he organised into a sham army that afterwards formed the nucleus of a real, modern army. His experiences in the Kremlin at the time of the mutiny had filled him with a life-long disgust for the older Muscovite ways, and near Preobrazhenskoe he came into contact with a foreign colony that opened up for him a new world. Here his passion for mechanics was gratified, and from a Dutchman named Timmerman he learned arithmetic, geometry, fortification, and the use of the astrolabe. A Swiss adventurer named Lefort, with whom Peter made friends, arranged boisterous revels that effaced from the mind of the young Tsar those few lessons in the staid etiquette of the Kremlin that had been given him in his childhood. Peter was personally cut adrift from the old Moscow tradition before he came of age. He, a son of the plain, conceived a passion for the sea. The scent of salt breezes drew him westwards. He sent hundreds of young men abroad to learn the arts and handicrafts. He built a flotilla on the river Voronezh, and with the aid of this and of his newly-cast artillery, he took Azov from the Turks. Finally, in 1697, he himself went abroad to learn more thoroughly what Europe could teach in the matter of ship-building and artillery. He visited Holland where he worked as a carpenter in the shipyards of Saardam and Amsterdam, and spent several months in England. England interested him immensely, but mainly from the mechanical side. He was constantly to be seen at the dockyards at Deptford and at the Woolwich arsenal. He went frequently to the Tower to see the Mint. He once went to the House of Lords

where he saw King William on the throne, and heard some of the lords speak. He afterwards remarked to his companions that it was a very good thing to hear subjects freely expressing their views in the presence of their monarch, but he certainly did not dream of anything like constitutionalism for his own country. Peter went to Oxford, but he does not seem to have come into touch with English intellectual life at any point. When he was not looking at guns or ships or museums he spent his time in carousals with his companions, English and Russian. After he left, the owner of the house in which he had lived presented a bill for damages. The interior of the house had been completely ruined, the floor and valuable furniture broken and covered with filth, windows broken, pictures riddled with bullets. William III paid the heavy bill out of his own pocket.

Peter came back to Moscow after a stay of fifteen months abroad, with his mind full of ideas of the purely technical side of Western civilisation, and these he proceeded to apply in practice. But his mechanical reforms were made subservient to certain simple but broad ideas. He knew that Russia would be economically and politically stifled unless she secured a seaboard, and he bent his energies to the conquest of the Baltic coast. In 1700 he renewed the struggle with Sweden and used all his recently gained technical knowledge, strained to the utmost all the resources of Muscovy in money and men in the gigantic effort through unremitting **wars** and a remodelling of the whole administrative system to lift the State to a new plane of development. The marvel was that he attained his end. One effect of his work was that the State penetrated more deeply into the life of the **nation** than ever before. He bound all classes to the State with **iron** bonds, made the whole people follow him panting and **bleeding in his restless career**. Personally he was a very human man. He was big, burly, passionate, a great drinker and **reveller**, and a lover of coarse pranks, an excellent **mechanic**, the best shipbuilder in Russia, extremely simple

and economical in most of his personal habits, good-natured, but on occasion ruthlessly cruel, restlessly active, but lacking in reflective capacity. But all these qualities acquired an immense impetus from the position of Peter on the frontier of two ages and of two worlds, and from the extraordinary character of the work he was called upon to do. He loomed up in the popular imagination like some terrible demiurge, and the legend went abroad that he was Antichrist. To this day it is difficult to form an exact estimate of his character. He has set such a wide range of forces in motion that it is difficult not to fall into the error of regarding him as their source. Peter, the man, the shipwright-tsar, with twitching face, in rusty caftan and with shoes down at the heel, is lost in the conception of the empire-builder, the maker of a vast modern Russia. He becomes a symbol, the embodiment of the elemental, forward-rushing forces of the Russian people.

Peter was always reforming, always mending. Yet most of his reforms were the result of impulse, were set in motion on the spur of the moment during a lull in a campaign, or upon a hint from some roaming foreigner. He divided Russia into governments for fiscal purposes, so as more systematically to squeeze out of the population money for the maintenance of his rapidly growing army and fleet. Then the central Government institutions proved but poor makeshifts in such a time of stress and he had to reform them, substituting for the unwieldy Muscovite *prikazy* or inchoate ministries, Boards or Colleges on the Swedish model, and for the *Boyarskaya Duma* or Council of Boyars, a Senate which should serve as the interpreter of the Tsar's will. He created a modern army, establishing a principle of military service that embraced all classes. He built the first Russian fleet. He detested the clergy, and instituted a toper's club in the form of a parody on the hierarchy with a buffoon as mock patriarch ; but more serious was his complete abolition of the real patriarchate and his transference of the control of Church affairs to a board or ministry called the Synod



with a layman at its head. The war with Sweden, known as the Northern War, which had for Russia such important consequences, lasted off and on for twenty-one years. But Peter drifted into it almost by chance, was defeated during its early stages, and had no plan of campaign long and carefully calculated in advance. He was drawn on by the development of events to the fulfilment of his dream of the conquest of the seaboard. He was beaten at Narva, but in 1703 he beat the Swedes at Nyenschantz on the site of the present St. Petersburg, and again in the first sea fight won by Russians in modern times. But the war dragged on, and it was not until 1709 that a decisive battle was won. The Swedish King, Charles XII, with his magnificent army had crossed the Vistula in 1707, and with the aid of Cossacks of the Ukraine under Mazeppa, hoped finally to break the growing power of the Russian Tsar. But the plain drew on the masters of the sea, and two years afterwards Peter had no difficulty in scattering Charles's worn out army at Poltava in the heart of the steppe.

When peace was concluded in 1721, Russia found herself in permanent possession of the territory on the banks of the Neva and of the provinces of Livland and Esthonia. The command of the Baltic was secure. It was made more secure by an act which has had no parallel since Constantine founded a new Rome on the shores of the Bosphorus. Peter built on the swamps of the Neva a capital, looking out upon the sea and upon Europe. No other spot was so suitable **for the great work**. Archangel, which had long been the port for trade with the west, was too precarious and too remote an outlet, and Novgorod, the centre of north-western trade **from the earliest times**, was too far inland. In 1703 Peter **built** himself, on one of the islands of the delta a cottage, which is shown to this day, and thence directed the construction of fortresses, churches, shipyards, wooden palaces, Government offices, barracks, the draining of swamps, and the **cutting through** the dense forests on the left bank of the Neva

the avenues that became the "prospects," the chief arteries of the new city. He dragged his boyars from their snug homes in old-fashioned Moscow to his bleak and comfortless half-German "Sankt Peterburg" with its Peterhofs and Oranienbaums. He imported artisans from abroad, and populated the city with his new regiments, and with artisans and peasants from the interior. The city was built by forced labour, and thousands perished under the hard toil. But Peter had his way, and the capital on the Neva became a lasting monument to his rude, creative energy. The very Neva is akin to him. Its broad, mighty stream flowing swiftly to the sea is the mirror of his impetuous striving.

Russia survived Peter's knout, and there could be no better proof of the nation's vitality. During his reign one-fifth of the peasantry simply disappeared, either in war or in terror-stricken flight from intolerable imposts and military service. Three-quarters of the whole budget was devoted to military and naval purposes, and little or nothing was done to relieve the wretched plight of the people. Yet in forcing backward Russia into the European family of the nations, Peter did the main thing necessary to ensure her progress. In the century that followed his death the Empire—Peter had assumed the title of Emperor (Imperator)—slowly adapted itself to the new situation.

Peter was succeeded by his second wife Catherine, a former camp-follower, who reigned with firmness and tact for two years, and then came a dreary period of nonentities. During the reigns of Peter's grandson, Peter II, his niece Anna Ioannovna and the short regency of her niece Anna Leopoldovna, the Germanised Court was plunged in heavy sensuality and in sordid and viscid intrigue. Peter's capable daughter, Elizabeth, drove out Anna Leopoldovna with her son and her Germans in 1741, and reigned with signal ability for twenty years. Elizabeth tried to train as her successor her nephew, Karl Peter Ulrich, Duke of Holstein Gottorp, but this youth proved hopelessly incompetent, and was murdered

immediately after his accession to the throne by the partisans of his wife, by birth a Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst, who ascended the throne as Catherine II.

The process of territorial expansion continued throughout the century in spite of all the intrigues in St. Petersburg.

#### **Territorial Expansion.**

There was a constant succession of wars, and Russia played various parts in combinations in which were concerned the newly established Kingdom of Prussia, the France of the last three Louis, the England of the Georges, the Austria of Maria Theresa and Joseph II, an enfeebled Sweden, an expiring Poland, and a declining, but still menacing Turkey. In the first half of the century Russia supported Austria, in the second half the Prussia of Frederick the Great. There was a moment before Catherine's accession when Russian troops occupied Berlin. Poland was a pawn in the political game of the neighbouring powers, and in the reign of Catherine II was thrice divided, Russia receiving all Lithuania and the Ukraine or Little Russia west of the Dnieper. After long wars with Turkey and the conquest of the Crimea in 1784, Russia finally secured her hold on the Black Sea from the mouth of the Bug to the foot of the Caucasus, and in 1783 the last King of Georgia, Irakli, dreading absorption by Persia, acknowledged the sovereignty of the Russian Empress. From Persia Russia conquered the north-western shore of the **Caspian**. By the end of the eighteenth century almost the whole of what is known as European Russia, besides a considerable portion of Siberia, acknowledged the rule of the Tsars.

The strain which this expansion involved on the resources of the nation was terrible, and a relaxation of internal tension was necessary. Catherine realised this, and from the beginning of her reign deliberately set herself to promote the welfare of her subjects. She summoned a commission to draw up a general scheme of reforms based on the principles of Montesquieu. The plan proved impracticable, but the Empress did not

**Catherine of  
Russia.**

abandon the work of gradual internal reform. She began to loosen the bonds which enslaved the population to the State and promoted education, the arts, and learning. She opened schools, had schoolbooks translated, enlarged the Moscow University, which had been founded in Elizabeth's reign, gathered scholars around her, and with their aid engaged in the scientific study of her Empire. In a comparative vocabulary of the languages of the world undertaken at her instance by a versatile scholar named Pallas many entries were made by her own hand. Catherine corresponded with the French encyclopaedists, toyed with literature after the French manner of the period, and wrote plays, satirical essays, and memoirs. It is true that the effect of her civilising influence did not extend beyond the gentry, and that the masses of the people remained ignorant as before. Indeed, owing to the privileges Catherine granted to the gentry, serfdom became even more oppressive than it had been; peasant risings were frequent in consequence, and a rising of peasants and Cossacks in Eastern Russia under the leadership of a young Cossack named Emelian Pugachev, who gave himself out to be the Tsar Peter Feodorovich, gave the Government serious trouble for two years. To conceal the wretchedness of the people from his sovereign's eyes Catherine's favourite, Potemkin, set up sham villages full of well-dressed, smiling peasants along the route of her journey to the Crimea. But Catherine was sincerely desirous of the national welfare and her reign, in spite of a thousand defects, was one of real progress for Russia. Peter raised the new building of Russian statehood, but it was Catherine who first made it at all habitable.

Catherine was succeeded in 1795 by her unhappy, half-witted son, Paul, whose childishy irresponsible use of absolute power led to his assassination by a band of Court conspirators in 1801. Paul's uncanny face as depicted in Borovikovski's portrait of him in the Winter Palace, with the staring eyes, snub nose, wide nostrils, gaping mouth, seems as though

it had been thrust out mockingly from between the splendours of the preceding and following reigns for the express purpose of reminding the world of the deep-lying tragedy associated with the rise of Russian power.

Perhaps it was because of the complicity of Alexander I in his father's murder that the note of tragedy pervaded his brilliant reign. Alexander began well. When

**Alexander I.** he ascended the throne the air was full of echoes of the French Revolution, and Napoleon was rapidly rising to power. Alexander's tutor, the Swiss Laharpe, had instilled into him broad ideas of liberty, equality, and justice which he made some sincere attempts to put into execution. He gave a pledge to the representatives of the Finnish people on their surrender to him before the close of the Swedish war in 1808, to observe the autonomous rights of the Grand Duchy. When, at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the territory now known as the Kingdom of Poland was allotted to him, he gave its inhabitants a constitution, and seems to have been very eager for a time that it should be a success. He made the German gentry of the Baltic Provinces emancipate their serfs. In all these measures considerations of political expediency were reinforced by a hankering sympathy with Liberal ideas. Moreover, the Napoleonic wars threw Russia into the whirl of European conflicts. Russia became a part of Europe as never before. Napoleon himself was attracted by the vastness of the Russian power, risked all his glory to gain it, and lost, defeated not by Russian generalship, but by the elemental forces of the great plain of which only the dwellers on it know the hard-won secret. The march of the Grande Armée to Moscow, the stabling of troopers' horses in the cathedrals of the Kremlin, the burning of the ancient capital, Napoleon's retreat over the snow-clad plain, his flight—these were the events that for the first time united Russia emotionally with Europe, and gave Russian patriotism a modern colouring. Deepened national feeling bore splendid literary fruit in the

work of Pushkin and his contemporaries. The nineteenth century dawned in glory and in the hope of liberty. A tremor of life and intelligence passed through the inert mass of the Russian nation. The impetus to development given in the reign of Catherine now took effect. Society in the capitals became thoroughly European in character. In the literary circles of St. Petersburg and Moscow there were not a few men who were steeped in the best European culture of the period. The arts were cultivated, and St. Petersburg became from the architectural point of view one of the finest capitals in Europe. In the masses of the people, too, there was a vague groping restlessness born partly of the Old Believers' and other religious movements, partly of the Pugachev insurrection, and partly of the roving of Russian armies over Europe during the great campaigns of Suverov during the reigns of Catherine and Paul, and the Napoleonic wars in the early years of Alexander's reign. The reforms of Catherine's reign had not only liberated the gentry from such humiliating subservience to the State as was involved in the liability to corporal punishment. They had practically given over the management of the new provincial institutions into the gentry's hands. This was one way to train up a governing class, but as the gentry retained unlimited control over their peasants, the lot of the serfs was even harder than before. It was among the nobles and gentry, however, that the idea of the emancipation of the serfs was first clearly expressed. And this idea was connected with that of the limitation of the autocracy. Alexander's friends and advisers at the beginning of his reign, Novosiltsev, Stroganov, who had at one time been librarian of the Jacobin club in Paris, the Polish patriot, Adam Czartoryzski, and Kochubei, who had been educated in England, were all advocates of both constitutionalism and emancipation.

But of these dreams nothing came in Alexander's reign. There was a radical reform of the central administrative institutions. The "colleges" were replaced by ministries,

and the Senate was made the highest Court of Appeal in the **Empire**. With the aid of a remarkable statesman, Speranski, the son of a village priest, Alexander established the Council of the Empire, a permanent body of high officials for drafting laws and undertook, but did not complete, a far-reaching and much-needed plan of financial reform. After the Congress of Vienna, Alexander's reforming ardour gradually cooled, and from 1820 onwards he became openly reactionary. His chief associates during this period were the fierce martinet and **supporter** of autocracy, Arakcheiev, and an ignorant and obscurantist cleric named Photii. He sank into a vague kind of mysticism, became gloomy and morose, travelled constantly over Russia as though pursued by an evil conscience, and finally died at Taganrog in 1825. Alexander was a well-meaning man, capable of generous enthusiasm, and the great events of his reign invested him with a halo of romance. But there were in him curious elements of weakness, a strange twist in his character that leaves an impression of inner failure, of rich possibilities blighted.

Liberal and revolutionary ideas had spread very widely among the educated class during Alexander's reign, and among the army officers a number of secret societies had been formed with the object of establishing a republican Russia. On the

**Nicholas**. death of Alexander and the accession of his younger brother Nicholas, in place of the next of age, Constantine, who had abandoned his claim to the throne, a number of Guards' officers belonging to these societies raised a mutiny in the **Senate** Square in St. Petersburg, and demanded the acknowledgment of Constantine as Emperor and the promulgation of a constitution. The mutiny was suppressed, five of its ringleaders hung, and thirty-one exiled to Siberia, and **Nicholas** in person conducted a rigorous inquiry into the **work** of the secret societies. This event greatly alarmed Nicholas and set its **stamp on the whole of his reign**. Like his **brother**, Nicholas began with plans of reform, but very

soon yielded to his despotic instincts, and resolutely opposed all the progressive tendencies that were rapidly making headway among the educated classes in his time. His general attitude is well expressed in a comment he made on a report on education submitted to him by the poet Pushkin. "Morality, diligent service and zeal," he declared, "are to be preferred to crude, immoral and useless education." Nicholas did not aim at suppressing education. He wished to subject it to rigid principles, to eliminate from it all revolutionary tendencies, to make it subservient to his chief aim of training up the people in loyalty to Orthodoxy, Autocracy and the Russian Nationality. Indeed, some of the young scholars whom he sent abroad to study afterwards became leaders of light and learning in the universities of Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kazan.

But the general effect of Nicholas' measures was to stifle the free expression of thought, and as during his reign literature developed with rapidly increasing intensity the struggle between harsh police measures and an implacable censorship on the one hand and ardent thought and aspiration on the other, made the life of the educated classes excessively gloomy and depressing. German intellectual influences found their way into Russia, and gradually thrust French influence into the background. The philosophy of Schelling and Hegel was eagerly debated by groups of students and literary men. At this time it became possible sharply to distinguish two main tendencies of thought which strongly influenced subsequent development, those of the Slavophiles and the Westerners. The Slavophiles, adapting Hegelian theories, asserted that Russia possessed in her own traditions and her own institutions, the principles necessary for her future development; they dreamt of a Russia of free, self-governing communities under the shadow of the Autocracy and the Orthodox Church. The Westerners, on the other hand, strongly insisted that Russia could progress only through the adoption of Western institutions and Western culture.



All Nicholas' repressive measures failed to check the ferment of ideas: they only gave it an increasingly political, and in the end, a revolutionary character. It was during Nicholas' reign that the stormy anarchist Bakunin, and that most striking of Russian political thinkers, Herzen, began their long exile in Western Europe, where they worked each in his own way for the political development of Russia.

Nicholas was a manly, soldierly kind of ruler, with a strong sense of responsibility. But he trusted neither his people nor his officials, and tried to concentrate the administration of the Empire in his own hands, the result being only an oppressive development of the police system, and a steady growth of corruption amongst officials of all kinds. His despotic inclinations were intensified by the Polish insurrection in 1831, and by the French Revolution of 1848, and it was because he felt that it was his mission to oppose revolution in all forms that he sent his troops to quell the Hungarian insurrection in 1848. He made some slight additions to the territory of the Empire as the result of a war with Turkey in 1829, but the Crimean war in which he became involved at the close of his reign, brought him only humiliating defeats, and forced him to realise the disastrous effects of his despotic system of government on that very military efficiency that he prized so highly. Deeply mortified by the revelations of corruption in the army, he cried, "My friends the Decembrists (the leaders of the mutiny in December, 1825) would never have done this." Nicholas died in 1855, before the end of the war, and was succeeded by his son Alexander II.

The second half of the nineteenth century was marked by a fierce conflict between the old order and developing social forces. The process of expansion fell into the background. The western frontiers of the Empire were fixed, and expansion into the territory of decaying Central Asiatic Khanates was almost effortless. The Russian people had

**Social Unrest.**

**eastward into Khanates** was

at last conquered the plain, and the Government availed itself of European technical discoveries to strengthen its hold on the plain by purely mechanical means such as railways and telegraphs. Railways and telegraphs, in fact, served the purposes of bureaucratic centralisation, but at the same time hastened the dissemination of new ideas. The Europe of the nineteenth century was elated and turbulent in its pursuit of progress. The world was a modern world. The old Muscovite seclusion was a thing of the far distant past. It was impossible to hold the great plain by Muscovite methods, or even the methods of Peter the Great, and the principles and methods of that virile despot Nicholas I had been tried in the Crimean War, and been found wholly wanting even from the standpoint of a merely mechanical grasp on territory. The Russian people had hitherto blindly followed the lead of an unknown destiny. But it could no longer be dragged at the heels of destiny in the form of the State. To hold and administer its immense territory the State was compelled to train a modern army and to educate a bureaucracy. But the training institutions were channels by which European ideas found their way into the minds of the governed. The universities turned out the Government official and the revolutionary, and often enough both in one person. The educated classes were keenly aware of the position of the people, and struggled to secure for it the right of intelligent participation in the great task of nation-building. The Government now yielded to the demand for reform, now retreated to its old positions. The struggle was full of tragedy, of that intricate tragedy that seems implicit in Russian development. It was a struggle between the spirit of the steppe and the spirit of the forest. And the goal of the idealists who fought against the old order was a liberty as vast and as exhilarating as the plain itself. This ideal is still present, deeply troubling, but in the process of struggle it is gradually passing from the region of abstraction to that of real and minute achievement.

Alexander II, like his uncle, Alexander I, began with reforms and ended in reaction. But the reforms of Alexander

II were very far-reaching, and marked the beginning of a new epoch of development.

**Alexander II.** The new Emperor first of all modified the severity of the police regime, gave a certain amount of liberty to the press, and then with the help of his talented brother, Constantine Nikolaievich, the enlightened Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna, who cultivated the friendship of scholars and literary men, and had effected the organisation of medical aid to the wounded during the Crimean War, the broad-minded statesman, Nicholas Miliutin, and many other men of mark, he began the work of reform from the base upwards. The first and most urgent task to be undertaken was that of the emancipation of the serfs. From the end of the eighteenth century onwards, Liberals had demanded the abolition of serfdom, the more enlightened landowners had long since begun to realise that it was economically unprofitable, and the disasters of the Crimean War had shown the Emperor himself that the continued existence of serfdom was a danger to the State. Committees were organised in the various governments to study the question, and editorial commissions sifted the materials. The Chief Committee in St. Petersburg finally drafted an elaborate emancipation scheme which, after discussion in the Council of the Empire, was in its main features confirmed by the Emperor, and in a manifesto issued on February 19th (March 4th), 1861, which the landlords were commanded to read to their assembled peasants, the institution of serfdom was abolished in Russia. Alexander's energy in **carrying** this great reform through in the teeth of the opposition of powerful cliques of reactionary landlords, was the **more remarkable** seeing that he was not a reformer by instinct or training, but was simply convinced of the political necessity **of the measure.** Over ten million peasants were liberated and enabled to purchase allotments of land from their former masters through the Government, by means of a system of

redemption payments, spread out over a long term of years in the form of an addition to the taxes. In Little Russia the allotments became the property of individual peasants, while amongst the Great Russian peasantry the ownership of the land of the freed serfs was vested in the village communes. The change effected was a veritable upheaval, and in order to cope with the immense work of reorganisation involved a reform of local government became necessary. Zemstvos or Provincial and District Councils, composed of elected representatives of the gentry, the peasantry and the townspeople, were established in thirty-three governments of European Russia with power to levy rates, to maintain schools, roads and hospitals, and generally to promote the economic welfare of the population. The Zemstvos became strongholds of progress, training schools for public workers, and forerunners of constitutionalism in Russia. Justice was in a deplorable condition, and here, too, reform was urgently necessary. By measures enacted in 1864 a radically new judicial system was established, theoretically more perfect, juster, more humane than any other European system. All these reforms, known as the Great Reforms of the Sixties, aroused an ardour for progress, a passionate humanitarianism, a sense of rich and manifold opportunity such as had never been known in Russia before. Public opinion came into existence in a land till then almost inarticulate, and public opinion was aboundingly optimistic. But the hopes awakened by the reforms fell short of fulfilment, and in 1866 a reaction set in.

The comparative liberty given to the press in the early years of Alexander's reign had stimulated an intellectual movement; social and political questions were eagerly debated under a thin veil of literary criticism, and public opinion divided itself into three camps—the Slavophiles, and a Liberal and a Socialist group of Westerners. The chief organ of the Liberals was Herzen's *Kolokol* (The Bell), which was published in London, was read by influential members

of the Government, including the Emperor himself, and **greatly** influenced the course of the Emancipation Reform. The Slavophiles, led by Aksakov and Samarin, had their centre in Moscow, while the Radicals, under the leadership of Chernishevski, were grouped around the monthly *Socremennik*. The growth of Radical and Socialist tendencies alarmed the Government, and in 1862 Chernishevski and several of his associates were arrested and deported to the Siberian mines. The insurrection which broke out in Poland in 1863, and which provoked the Government to severe reprisals, including the entire abolition of Polish autonomy, was at first looked on by the Russian Liberals with a certain sympathy. But the intervention of European powers at the instance of Napoleon III led to a strong revulsion of feeling in favour of the Government, and a prominent Liberal publicist, Katkov, became from this time on the ablest advocate of the Government policy. Herzen, by strongly taking the side of the Poles during the insurrection, lost the enormous prestige he had hitherto enjoyed in Russia, and he became identified with the Radical group. It was about this time that the so-called "Nihilist" tendency made itself manifest. The Nihilists were the Futurists of that period. They were young Radicals who in their passion for science and progress scoffed at aesthetics, defied conventions of every kind, pooh-pooed religion and tradition, and admitted no guide but reason. But Nihilism was only a tendency. There was never a party **called** Nihilists, and Nihilists were not necessarily terrorists, though terrorists were often Nihilists in their attitude to life. It was from the tumult of conflicting forces that marked the **early** sixties that the revolutionary movement developed. **Alexander** grew weary of reform and alarmed at the complex **variety** of social forces his reforms had called into action, and when in 1866 a man named Karakozov, acting entirely on **his own responsibility**, fired a shot at the Emperor, the policy of the Government was reversed. A new period of reaction **began**, and during this period the revolutionary movement

steadily gained in strength. No further reforms were granted, repressive measures were directed against the press and the Zemstvos, and the police powers of the governors were extended. Amongst the students of the universities arose a movement known as "going into the people," which meant that educated young men and women carried the University Settlement principle to its utmost limit, that is to say, they tried to bring enlightenment to the ignorant peasants by mixing with them, and living and dressing exactly as they did. At first this movement had a purely educative and humanitarian character. It was only later that it became political. The political revolutionary movement was developed abroad by Bakunin and his associates. But the Government, by constantly arresting young men and women who gathered together in conspirative mutual improvement societies where they eagerly studied how they might be useful to the people, promoted the growth of a revolutionary movement at home. Prince Kropotkin brought Bakunin's revolutionary writings into Russia, and hundreds of students went amongst the peasants, this time not to teach them the alphabet, but to incite them to insurrection. About a thousand of these students were arrested. The Government redoubled its repressive measures, and struck at random in its efforts to crush the revolutionary movement. But the revolutionaries organised in 1876 a party under the name of Land and Liberty with the object of bringing about an agrarian revolution. This was the first organisation of any strength that was avowedly terrorist in character. A peaceable demonstration arranged by the party in the Kazan Square in St. Petersburg, led to a large number of arrests and to fresh additions to the long procession eastwards to Siberia. In 1877 a girl named Vera Zasulich fired at and wounded General Trepov the prefect of St. Petersburg, because he had a political prisoner flogged for refusing to lift his hat. The Government, hoping to rally public opinion to its side, had the case tried in open court, but Vera Zasulich defended herself with such effect

that she won the sympathy of the public, and the jury acquitted her. This incident greatly stimulated the energies of the terrorists.

But the revolutionaries were at that time a small minority. The reaction weighed heavily on all classes, but it could not stay a powerful intellectual movement, and it was in the sixties and seventies that Turgeniev, Tolstoy and Dostoievski produced the novels that made Russian literature famous throughout Europe. The Government itself had recourse to the aid of the press, and its efforts to form a strong body of conservative public opinion were vigorously supported by Katkov, who in the *Moskovskia Viedomosti* (Moscow Gazette), supplied the Government with ideas in the shape of an extreme Nationalism. A wave of genuine national enthusiasm swept over the country when, in 1877, Alexander came to Moscow and solemnly declared war against Turkey in the name of the liberation of the Bulgarians. There was a momentary revival of the ardour of the early sixties, and many disappointed revolutionaries rushed to the front to serve as volunteers or as medical helpers. But the war had no effect on the internal situation, and Liberals complained bitterly that the Emperor, who had given a constitution to liberated Bulgaria, withheld one from his own Empire. Terrorist attacks on governors and gendarme officers became frequent, and two more attempts were made on the life of Alexander. The "Land and Liberty" party split into a purely terrorist group named the *Narodnaya Volia*, or "People's Will," and an agrarian group, and the *Narodnaya Volia* entered on a systematic terrorist campaign. The Government **retaliated** by multiplying repressive measures and, in 1880, an Armenian, Count Loris-Melikov, was appointed Dictator for the purpose of rooting out sedition. A lull in the terrorist campaign gave Loris-Melikov, who was in friendly intercourse with the *Zemstvo* Liberals, occasion to induce Alexander to continue the work of reform by preparing the ground for a constitution. But he had hardly begun to put his plans

into execution when on March 14th, 1881, Alexander II, when driving in a sleigh along the Catherine Canal in St. Petersburg, was killed by bombs thrown by the terrorists of the Narodnaya Volia.

The murder of Alexander II threw back the work of reform for years and intensified the reaction. Alexander III, the new Emperor, believed solely in police methods of government, and the Nationalism of Katkov and of Alexander's chief adviser, that strange reactionary for conscience' sake, Pobiedonostsev, formed the staple of the Government policy. The Russian Empire includes a large number of peoples of non-Russian nationality whom the Russians had subdued in the process of their conquest of the plain. There are Germans, Poles and Esthonians in the Baltic provinces, Poles in the South-West, Little-Russians in the South, Jews in the former territory of the Polish State, Armenians, Georgians, and a host of smaller peoples in the Caucasus, Tartars in the Caucasus, in Eastern Russia and Siberia, and a variety of other peoples in Siberia and Central Asia. The Government aimed at forcibly assimilating these peoples to the Russian nationality, but the policy of Russification instead of consolidating the unity of the Empire aroused bitter resentment against the ruling race. The chief sufferers during the reign of Alexander III were the Poles, the Jews, and the Germans of the Baltic provinces. For Russians there was not a glimmering hope of reform. A great extension of territory was effected in Central Asia, and the influence of Russia in European affairs was increased by the conclusion of an alliance with France. Alexander III was a sturdy soldier of limited intelligence, but with a strong sense of his duty as an autocrat and a curious faith in a blend of faded Muscovite romanticism with the virtues of modern artillery and strategical railways.

Alexander III died in 1894, and the autocracy outlived him by eleven years. During the early years of the reign of the present Emperor Nicholas II, there were no outward



symptoms of the approaching change. The policy of Russification was continued and was applied with great vigour to Finland where, under the shelter of the autonomous rights, maintained in their integrity by Alexander I and his successors, a stubborn and capable people had developed an interesting culture of its own. The Minister of Finance, Count Witte, a man with a keen modern business mind, tried to give a new lease of life to the autocratic and bureaucratic system by measures of a purely technical character, such as railway construction, the artificial promotion of industrial enterprises, and a reform of the monetary system by the establishment of the gold standard. But the Russia that made possible an autocracy was quietly slipping away. Strategical railways were arousing villages from their sleep, and bringing them to rapidly-growing capitals. Factory chimneys had risen up in clusters at various points on the plain. In the region of the Don there was a Black Country of mines and foundries. During the second half of the century, Poland, the Moscow region, Riga and St. Petersburg, had become important manufacturing centres, and millions of peasants were abandoning their homespun for the cheap cotton goods which all kinds of enterprising middlemen, from the anglicised wholesale dealer to the old-fashioned bearded merchant in a caftan and the Tartar pedlar, hawked over the plain from Reval to Vladivostok. With the increase of population the land allotments of the Emancipation period had grown too small, and the peasantry were restless and discontented. The number of schools had little by little increased, and new ideas were slowly finding their way into the masses. The educated classes were gradually recovering from the apathy into which they had sunk during the eighties. The famine of 1892 was a sharp call to compassion, and eager bands of helpers illustrious and obscure—Tolstoy, side by side with a village schoolmistress—hastened to relieve the starving peasants of the Volga region. The growth of industry modified the

views of the Socialist groups. In the nineties, Social Democrats made their appearance, and attacking the older school of Populist Socialists who pinned their faith to the peasantry, concentrated all their efforts on agitation among the factory workmen. The Zemstvo Liberals groped their way towards organisation, and in 1902 founded in Stuttgart a Liberal organ of the type of the *Kolokol* under the editorship of Peter Struve. A Social Revolutionary party was founded in 1900, and both Social Democrats and Social Revolutionaries formed organisations abroad among the hundreds who had at one time or other escaped from police repression in their native land for political reasons, smuggled their literature into Russia, and carried on conspirative propaganda amongst the workmen and peasantry, and the students in the Universities and technical schools. Terrorist action was renewed in the early years of the present century, and the political police scented revolution everywhere.

But revolutionary activity was very slight considering the vast extent of the Empire, and on the surface things were quiet. President Faure and President Loubet came to St. Petersburg, and the Emperor Nicholas went to France, and the alliance between France and Russia was firmly cemented. M. Witte tried to swell the exchequer and diminish drinking by establishing a State brandy monopoly. There was a movement to the Far East. The Trans-Siberian railway was completed, Russian troops occupied Manchuria, and a Russian naval base was established at Port Arther. But it was just this movement of expansion when internal conditions were unstable that led to disaster. In January, 1904, Japan declared war on Russia, and in the war that followed Russia suffered an unparalleled series of defeats. The war let loose all the forces of discontent at home. While Russian armies retired step by step before the Japanese in Manchuria, a revolutionary movement rapidly developed in the centre of the Empire. It began with the assassination of the Minister of the Interior

Plehve, in July, 1904; it received a tremendous impetus from the shooting down of workmen on Red Sunday, June 22nd, 1905, in St. Petersburg, and after the conclusion of peace in August it culminated in a general strike throughout Russia. The strike was brought to an end by the promulgation on October 30th, 1905, of that manifesto by which the Emperor limited his power, affirmed the principles of civil liberty, and declared that thenceforward no law should be valid without the consent of an elective National Assembly. This manifesto marked the end of a historical epoch and the beginning of a new era of development. It was an expression of the formal abolition of the autocracy and the establishment of constitutional government in Russia.

