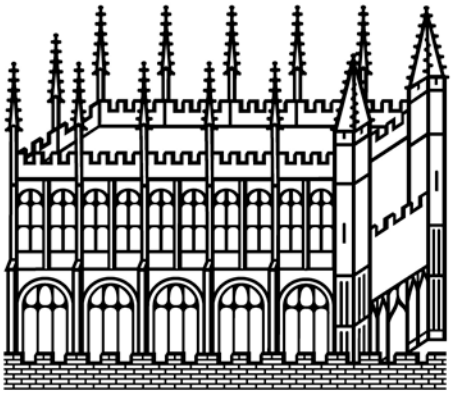

THE

LIFE OF NICHOLAS I.

EMPEROR OF ALL THE RUSSIAS.

With an Appendix,

CONTAINING

AN ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF THE EMPEROR PAUL,
AND OF THE LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH OF
THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER.

FROM ORIGINAL SOURCES.

With a Portrait.

BY

EDWARD H. MICHELSEN, PHIL. D.

AUTHOR OF THE "OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND ITS RESOURCES."

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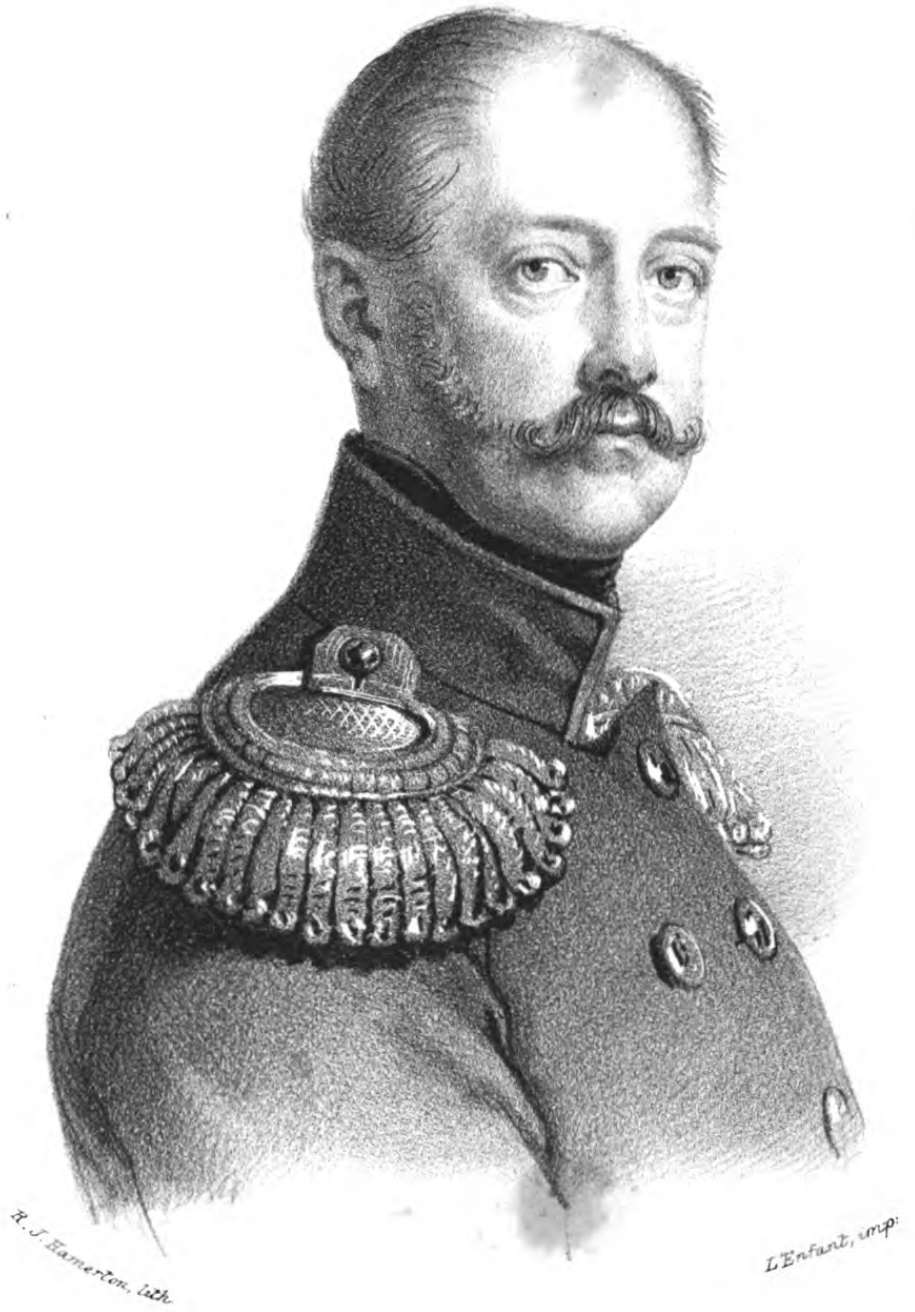

NICHOLAS THE FIRST.

London Wm. Spooner, 379, Strand.

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PREFACE.

THE author, as well as the reader, may easily on this occasion dispense with the usual prefatory remarks concerning the motives and design of the publication. Russia has thrown down the gauntlet, not only to Europe but to mankind generally, and her Autocrat is resolved not to abate a single iota of his imaginary rights. The eyes of the world are now, with intense curiosity, turned towards the monarch who, in the nineteenth century, dares to persist in claims not less despotic and arbitrary than pregnant with results of aggrandisement and spoliation,—towards the man who bids defiance to the warlike attitude of the greatest powers of Europe, and risks life, honour, throne, and even dynasty, on one single throw. Is he mad? Is he a fool? Is he bloodthirsty? Has he been reared in a wrong school; or, has nature lavished on him perverted notions of right and wrong? These, and many more questions of a like character, naturally suggest themselves to the reflecting mind at the sight of the present gigantic preparations of war throughout Europe, and a reply to which the reader will perhaps find in perusing the following pages, in which the life and gradual development of the character of that singular man is sketched with scrupulous impartiality. The author has particularly abstained from relating any event or incident that

does not bear, in the most direct manner, upon the individual character of his hero, and he has thus avoided falling into the common error of bringing the title of the book in conflicting contrast or at variance with its contents. He has strictly adhered to the letter of the title, and limited his sketch to the individual man,—to his personal character, education, notions, and principles, as the mainspring of all his actions and movements at home and abroad. He has gathered his information, not only from personal observation during his stay in Russia, but also from the most authentic sources on record. He has consulted, beside Custine, Golovin, Ustrialov, and the author of "Revelations in Russia," the most recent works of Grimm, Grätsch, Tolstoy, Haxthausen, Cartnic, Dimidoff, Gurtenyeff, and many other native authors, whose writings have never yet been translated; such as those of Pogodin, Polewoi, Wassili-Berg, Danilewsky, and Neverow, who, as they occupy high literary posts in the country, and have access to the secret records of the court and the empire, are certainly persons best calculated to enlighten us on the character of the hero of our narrative.

April 1854.

ERRATUM.

Page 17, line 11, *for* 1844 *read* 1824.

THE

LIFE OF NICHOLAS THE FIRST.

THE PORTRAIT OF THE CZAR.

At St Petersburg, go where you will — in the petty chandler's shop of the low suburbs of the metropolis, in the repositories of gold and silver of the *Gostina Dwor*,* in the private dwelling, or the public exhibition — go where you will, the portrait of the Emperor continually meets your eye, in almost every form of art, from the rudest lithograph to the most elaborately-finished painting. Yet, various as are the skill and modes of artistic execution, there is no mistaking the likeness: you find in each and all the same stern countenance, devoid of passion,

* A colonnade with shops and magazines, not unlike the Palais Royal at Paris.

of either love or anger; while a freezing chill creeps over you as you contemplate a face the eyes of which, proudly turned sideway, seem almost to despise a scrutinising gaze. It is the Czar of all the Russias, of unmistakeable identity, trait by trait. No daguerreotype could reflect more accurately the cold, imperturbable countenance, or the apparently passionless character of those unblenching features. The *tout ensemble* is that of an almost colossal statue, which is without heart, sympathies, or weakness; a physiognomy denoting unswerving resolution, unchecked by conflicting feelings or generous considerations of any kind

How far the outward picture presents the reflective mirror of the interior man, or how far the physical features are characteristic of the intellectual qualities of the man, the reader will be enabled himself to ascertain by the perusal of the following pages, in which the eventful life and character of the Czar, and the historical incidents of his reign, are recorded without bias or prejudice.

NICHOLAS THE GRAND DUKE.

Nicholas was the ninth of ten children of the Emperor Paul I., by his second marriage with Maria Feodorowna of Wurtemburg. He was born on the 25th June (old style), 1796, at Gatshina, near St. Petersburg, at which event no demonstrations of joy beyond those of an official character were evinced in any part of Russia. Why should it have been otherwise? The Empress Catherine had already divided the empire between his two elder brothers, Alexander and Constantine, having kept her son Paul from the throne for more than thirty-five years. Alexander was destined by her to be Czar of Russia, and Constantine Greek emperor; and with these views she had provided for the education of the two Grand Dukes, one born in 1777, and the other in 1779. For Nicholas she had no such boon to confer, nor was she enabled to form any plan for his condition, he being but four years of age when she died, and his father only then permitted to ascend the throne.

During the brief eccentric reign of Paul, the regards of Russia and of the whole world were

directed towards the two elder Grand Dukes, and Maria Feodorowna saw nothing in the third to justify the remotest idea of the part he was destined hereafter to play. His youth was uncharacterised by any striking peculiarity, although it is not improbable that the earliest impression of his childhood may have been that moment when the Empress-mother, alarmed by the clash of arms and confused voices in her palace, snatched her two youngest princes, Nicholas and Michael, from their bed, and ran with them through the long corridors leading to the apartments of the Emperor, where she was stopped by the impassive Count Pahlen, who, having forced her back to her room, not without some show of violence, exclaimed, in locking the door, "*Madame, restez tranquille; il n'y a point de danger pour vous!*" Saying which he disappeared with a hasty bow, without replying to the anxious question of the alarmed and half-distracted Empress, as she apostrophised him with, "*Et mon mari?*" The regicide had in the mean time been perpetrated, and Alexander I. was proclaimed emperor on the ensuing day.*

At St. Petersburg, people have been accustomed

* See Appendix (A).

to affirm that Nicholas has on several occasions mentioned that dreadful night, now enveloped in the darkness of court mysteries. Be this, however, as it may, it cannot be denied that Nicholas showed more manly courage, as regarded the locality of the crime, than Alexander. During the reign of the latter prince the Michailow palace remained unoccupied, whilst the doors of the private apartments of Paul were locked and closely sealed, so that no possible entry could be effected through them. Nicholas, however, shortly after he ascended the throne, had them opened, and having minutely inspected them, closed them again to the public, but converted the remainder of the palace into a college of the Engineer-cadets. It has been afterwards observed, that the Czar visited that establishment less frequently than any other military school in his capital.

The two princes, Nicholas and Michael (there was barely two years difference of age between them), received their education under the immediate superintendence of their mother. The first years of the reign of Alexander were so eventful for Russia's internal condition, that the private history of the young princes remained wholly unrecorded. Eventually their education was entrusted to Count

Lambsdorff; and whilst Storch and Adelung (two celebrated German authors), as also Marevieff, were their instructors in the sciences, Dupuget of Lausanne was selected to teach them the French language. A taste for military life showed itself at an early stage of the career of the two princes, though, even in this department, Nicholas exhibited an indisposition for deep studies. Many anecdotes are in circulation, illustrating the pleasure the two princes took in mimicking the manners and language of some of the courtiers, and of their addiction to mischievous tricks. In the acquisition of modern languages Nicholas displayed considerable adroitness, whilst he was passionately fond of music; and it is even said that he became so perfect in the art as to have been enabled to compose several parade marches.

It may be doubted whether there was any moral relation between the pupil and his tutors. A certain coldness and reserve, amounting almost to moroseness, were perceptible in his demeanour when he began to understand his real position in the imperial palace; nor were his relations with his mother of a more cordial nature when he had passed the first years of childhood. Not a word is

mentioned of the friends of his boyhood who now occupy so marked a position. It is, however, believed that Adlerberg, Benkendorff, Orloff, and others, who formed in after-life the Czar's immediate attendants, had been associated with him also in his youth. But the circumstance of their having been the playmates of his infancy had not the least effect in diminishing the distance of rank between the Grand Duke and his attendants. It was only after the Revolution, which opened his path to the throne, that these followers were allowed to approach near to his person. His early youth was, in short, spent without real friends of his own age, while among the more mature of his associates there were wanting such instructive companions as Laharpe was to Alexander. Neither Lambsdorff, Adelung, nor Storch, understood as he did the art of being to the Grand Duke at once a tutor and a friend. It is, therefore, by no means singular that no softer properties were worked out of the originally intractable character of his nature. The few favourable traits which were subsequently observable in his disposition were chiefly connected with his domestic life, since his marriage in 1817.

It is difficult to decide, whether his predilection

for military life had not some influence on his general character, though it must be admitted that even his early love of martial studies manifested itself in the ordinary routines of field-muster discipline and exercises, rather than in the higher branches of the science of war. This zeal for the common drudgeries of a soldier's duties may have been still farther stimulated by the example of his brother Michael, who carried that inclination to a sort of monomania. The theatre of war was then too far removed from his sphere of operation to enlighten his views on military organization. And yet the Grand Duke Nicholas was less beloved, if less feared, by the soldiers, than his brother Michael. This sounds rather paradoxical; but it is not really so, when we take into consideration the Russian character. Michael was known to be extremely strict in the most trifling matters of discipline, punishing with the utmost rigour the least oversight in dress or attitude, or any deviation from military prescription. This savage rigour was rendered more repulsive by the fact, that he would sometimes carry out his own sentence of punishment himself, finding indemnification for the exertion by the lavish severity of the chastisement—a spirit worthier of his father Paul, or

of his brother Constantine, than of either Alexander or Nicholas. These barbarities were practised equally upon the officer and the private, and even his acknowledged favourites were not always exempted from the infliction. There was something reconcileable with the Russian character in the equal distribution of these brutal punishments, and we thus find Michael less dreaded and hated in the ranks than among the bearers of epaulettes, crosses, and orders. Such victims could never pardon him his regardlessness of their position, and that acute mortification of their self-respect, to which the common soldier was a stranger. Many anecdotes are recorded of the satirical remarks and railleries with which he wounded the feelings of dukes, counts, generals, &c., who happened to fall under his displeasure, while not a single word of insult or irony is known to have passed the lips of Nicholas against offenders. The fact is, that Nicholas, of more saturnine temperament, was not less severe than his brother; and whilst he extorted excessive service from the soldier, was less accessible to him than his brother Michael, avoiding the precipitate violence of the latter as regarded the infliction of military punishment. He never degraded himself by becoming

the executioner of his own edicts; nor did he, on the other hand, like his brother, ever attempt to repair the rashness or cruelty of which he had been guilty. True it is, that Michael was not very delicate in the choice of his means of reparation, for they were mostly confined to presents of money; yet are many instances known in which no false pride withheld him from publicly apologizing and begging pardon of those whom he had injured. In this respect he was the counterpart of Constantine. Nicholas, as emperor, has likewise sometimes displayed similar com punctions of satisfaction; but they seemed to be less the emanation of a warm heart and true sense of justice than the bitter fruit of experience and political calculation. Neither was the Grand Duke Nicholas more happy in arousing sympathy in the mind of the public generally. Those who were enabled to judge of him personally, ascribed to him but a very moderate capacity, wondered at his want of knowledge, and thought to discover in his social intercourse an attempt to imitate his brother Alexander; with which they were still more displeased, as he lacked that grace in expression and manner for which the latter was so peculiarly distinguished. The distant public knew him only from the mouths

of the soldiers, and from their statements an estimate was formed of his character. A characteristic anecdote is still told of his conduct of life. At one of those festivals at Peterhof, at which the crowd is tacitly allowed to approach near to the imperial family, Alexander, the Empress, and the whole court, had taken refreshment upon one of the little land-arms which stretch forth into the sea. The Emperor and Empress, who had conversed familiarly with some of the people who stood nearest to them, were about retiring amidst the enthusiastic acclamation of the multitude, when a large space was suddenly opened by the soldiers at some distance by forcing back the masses. "What means this violence?" was the general whisper. "The Grand Duke Nicholas is coming," was the reply. It was indeed he, who, having marched with hasty steps into the space, looked for a moment upon the sea, without casting a single glance upon the repulsed crowd, and then stepped back to the palace without in the least acknowledging the loud greeting which the multitude was—as in duty bound—bestowing on him. One of the writers on Russia, who happened to be present at the scene, seems to justify this behaviour, by saying, "the Grand Duke does not like to gossip with the

people;" but it happens in life that we are often compelled to endure what is mostly to our dislike, while the whole life of a prince is more or less a continued scene of presentation.

His youth naturally prevented Nicholas from participating in the mighty events which agitated Europe at that time; and having thus remained an idle lounger at the gallant court of Alexander, it might fairly be questioned how far he escaped the *intrigues d'amour* of that somewhat corrupt circle. He found, however, a guardian angel in his own nature and constitution. The whole of his pleasures were concentrated on military exercises and amusements. There were certainly *on dits* about his *liaisons* with an actress, some court ladies, &c.; but these rumours are so loosely told, and are, besides, so little in harmony with his early life and manners, that we are justified in questioning their accuracy. At all events, it is certain that these little foibles exercised no influence whatever on his after-life, there being not a single instance on record to show that they had the least share in any of his public actions, either when an emperor or a grand duke. Though one of the handsomest young men at court, he does not seem to have attracted the admiration of the fair sex.

"He belongs to the drawing-room of the imperial family," gaily observed one of the handsomest women of that day; "but though one is always pleased to see him approach, when absent, he is less missed than either of his ugly brothers." This serious turn of mind, which appears to have saved him from the allurements and follies at that period so rife among the depraved *beau monde* of St. Petersburg, was probably not more the result of early adopted principles, than the consciousness that he lacked those social qualifications usually deemed requisite in gallant circles. That pleasant air of ease and grace which hung about the court of Alexander, was ill suited to the somewhat clumsy nature of the Grand Duke Nicholas, who always represented the prince, but never the man of the world. By the time he reached maturity, however, a change for the better was working in the morals of the court. The Emperor had been frequently abroad, and occasionally his absence would be protracted. At such times the Empress gave up for a while the full splendour of court life, while the natural inclinations of the Empress-mother led to comparative retirement. These circumstances were not without their beneficial influence upon the morals of our youthful hero, who,

constitutionally sedate and stern, was thus afforded little opportunity of growing depraved or effeminate.

The year 1814, which again gave peace to Europe, restored to the Russian court its former gaiety, though this was somewhat overshadowed by strange and anxious cares. The finances of the empire had been exhausted, and whole provinces desolated by the long war, while all those comprehensive plans which had begun to be realised in the first years of Alexander's reign were abruptly stayed. It was known that the Emperor had passed the meridian of life, and there was no direct heir to the throne. These circumstances combined, probably induced the belief that the time had now arrived for the young prince Nicholas to depart on his travels abroad—a course even then, more than at present, held necessary to the development of character in royal and aristocratic life. The immediate purpose of his travels was stated to be the inspection of the various theatres of war in France and Germany; and the statement found ready belief, from the well-known predilection of the prince for military affairs. During his progress he visited various courts, and, amongst others, that of St. James's. Here, however, he made but a short stay. Remembering the

prince's age at this time, we are naturally led to the presumption that the real object of his travels might have been like that of Cœlebs—a search for a wife; yet it is far from certain that Alexander had then thoughts of appointing Nicholas to be his successor. Throughout Russia, and more especially in the army, it was believed that Constantine would be the future Czar; though such an event was looked forward to with considerable alarm, lest that unruly prince should attempt to imitate the wild extravagances of the mad reign of Paul.

Nicholas, on his return, found great changes in the court. Martial brilliancy had given way to the subdued elegancies of peace: "bruised arms were hung up for monuments," and gay life was superseded by a more modest form of social intercourse. In truth, the Emperor and his court had grown grave, and seemingly devout; but in the absence of a cheerful candour in external life, a great portion of that true humanity which had distinguished the personal conduct and reign of Alexander was also lost. Jesuitry and hypocrisy had thereby gained much ground at court, and, indeed, throughout the whole empire. Sins were committed secretly; suspicious eyes were upon the words and actions of men of dis-

tinction; privileges were offered to converted Jews; proselytism was at a premium; and the whole train of religious scruples was brought into action, endangering individual and general safety. We have in this an important connecting thread to the subsequent events in the life of Nicholas, who, soon after his return, married Maria Charlotte, eldest daughter of the late King of Prussia, as had been pre-arranged between Alexander and King Frederick William III.

NICHOLAS THE SUCCESSOR TO THE THRONE.

On the 13th of July, 1817, the marriage ceremonies between the youthful couple—the royal bridegroom being hardly twenty-one, and the bride about two years younger—were solemnized at St. Petersburg. In accordance with the law, the young princess had previously adopted the Greek religion, and with it the Christian names Alexandra Feodorowna. It is more than probable that the late King of Prussia, as a zealous Protestant, would not have consented to an alliance with a Russian prince, had not the plan already been foreshadowed of substituting Nicholas for Constantine as successor to the Russian throne;

neither is the fact of his always calling her the Princess Charlotte, instead of by either of her adopted Greco-Russian names, less indicative of King William's repugnance to his daughter's new religion. Prior to 1823, however, nothing particular had occurred to point to the new plan of succession; which, indeed, was kept a family secret until the last moment, when its realisation could no longer be delayed or withheld from the public. It is, however, remarkable, that the "Genealogical Almanac" of Frankfort-on-the-Oder for 1844, printed by permission of the Prussian Censorship, already sets down the Grand Duke Nicholas as "successor to the Russian throne." From this, then, we learn that some conversation touching the point must have occurred between the two monarchs prior to the marriage of Nicholas, though, perhaps, the plan was only matured when it became plain that the rash temper and peculiar views of Constantine would, if he were allowed to ascend the throne, overthrow the existing order of things. The probable result might then have been a revolution in the Russian army, which had imbibed new and more enlightened notions since crossing the Rhine and coming into immediate contact with French society. Of the two princes, Nicholas ap-

peared certainly the less dangerous, and more suited by nature to realise the ambitious plans of Russia under modified forms.

It has been said, that at the frequent reviews of the Imperial Guards, at which Alexander and his brothers were present, Alexander and Constantine would enter into conversation with some of the pretty women among the crowd, while Nicholas would not deign to cast a look at them, but ride by his dallying brothers with a sneer at that condescension which he looked upon as a disgrace to royalty. Yet the marriage of Nicholas with the Princess Charlotte was certainly not so much an affair of pure love as a matter of court expediency, though it cannot be denied, as the result showed, that there existed more conjugal affection between the royal couple than usually attends on princely alliances. There was a similarity between them, not only in the majesty of figure, but also of mind and character. When the princess was hardly ten years old, her mother, the Queen Louise, thus wrote about her to her father, the Duke of Mecklenburg Strelitz:—"Charlotte pleases me every day more and more; though she is but little communicative, and rather close and reserved, she conceals, like her father, under a cold

exterior a warm heart, that knows how to sympathise with all our sufferings. She is, in appearance, indifferent; but, in reality, affectionate and obliging. There is a peculiar dignity of majesty in her deportment; and I am sure she is destined for a brilliant career, if it pleases God to keep her alive." The maternal prophecy has been fulfilled. Dorow (in his work, " Prince Koslowsky ") says, " The impression made by the princess's appearance in public at St. Petersburg was of a varied character. By the side of some Russian ladies, her complexion appeared deficient in bloom and freshness, and her form of that plumpness deemed indispensable to the completion of northern beauty. Impartial observers called the face handsome, but devoid of expression, while the glance of her eye was watchful and lurking." The courtiers, however, such as Prince Koslowsky,* were of opinion that her features were regular and pleasing, her carriage graceful, and her form majestic;

* He was born at Moscow in 1783, and died at Baden-Baden in 1840. He was Russian Ambassador at Turin, Stuttgart, and Carlsruhe. Despite his diplomatic caution, he was unable to put a sufficient rein upon his tongue; and this, together with the fact of his being a Roman Catholic, prevented his ever coming into more intimate relations with the Russian court.

that when animated the lurking glance was lost, and she looked the true daughter of the Queen of Prussia and the sister of the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg: in a word, that she resembled less the princess than the lovely woman. These then are the opinions of individuals who had every opportunity, at the time of which they write, of seeing and conversing with this royal lady, whose present appearance in no way indicates her former beauty. She is now a meagre person of a broken constitution, her complexion is sickly, her features are convulsively nervous, her eyes deep and glassy, while her look is unsteady and her brow stern and haughty. The air of the Winter-palace, say the romantic politicians, has dried up her soul; she has become the victim of a mania for dancing and other pleasures, say the grave prosaics. It is one of the many traditional falsehoods of which we daily read, that the illness of the Empress dates from that day of terror on which occurred the military revolt at St. Petersburg, when she was consumed by anxiety for the safety of her husband. By this assertion, doubtless, a compliment is meant to the affections of the Empress. Without denying that the incidents of that time, though in reality more directed against the dynasty than the person of

Nicholas, might naturally produce a deep impression on the Empress as a wife; yet it is well known that, for many years after the event referred to, she was still in excellent health, and that her sufferings were solely attributable to the effects of too frequent dancing and imprudent exposure afterwards, together with tight-lacing: which last folly, indeed, is annually productive of whole hecatombs of victims in high life.

The position of Alexandra, or Charlotte, was not so secure upon her entrance into the circle of the Russian court; but she might be excused some feeling of real timidity, which, as we most often find, conceals itself under the mask of coldness and severity. Both the Empress and the Empress-mother stood in position above her; the domestic disputes between Constantine and his wife were yet unsettled, while she herself hardly knew the ground on which she stood. The like feeling of a vague and undefined position may, probably, also have troubled the mind of Nicholas. He held the military rank of Head-inspector of Engineers, but was never admitted to the council-table where political and diplomatic questions were discussed. His sphere of operation was confined to mere garrison service. In his

exterior there was seen only the soldier, while in society, like his consort, he was cold, severe, proud, uneasy, and watchful. This unpleasant feeling, which was common to both, was perhaps an additional inducement for them to hold aloof from court as much as possible. They therefore lived retired in the Anitshkoff palace, some two miles from the Winter-palace, and became by habit so necessary to each other that their union was afterwards cited as a model of domestic bliss.

These years of comparative solitude proved of infinite importance to the successor to the throne. They influenced with great benefit the moral development of his mind. He was by nature brave, though incapable of deep impressions; the character of Alexandra was more likely to inspire such a man with respectful affection than with passionate love. Such was really the relation of Nicholas to his highly educated spouse. The force of her education to a great extent influenced his, and it is well-known that in the seclusion of Anitshkoff the royal student laboured to supply the gap in his neglected studies. Doubtless Nicholas derived much happiness from the double part of husband and of father which it was now his turn to play in life; at least he excused

himself on that score for visiting the court but seldom—his eldest son, the heir-presumptive to the throne, Alexander Nicolaiwitch, being born one year after his marriage.

In 1819 followed the birth of the Grand Duchess Maria (Duchess of Leuchtenberg), and in 1822 that of the Grand Duchess Olga (Crown Princess of Würtemburg). New interests now gathered round Nicholas, and it is probable that in the long vista of the future he saw the position he was destined to attain.

The anticipation of that position prompted him to redoubled circumspection. Hence that measured and reserved conduct which prevented his ever becoming popular—if popularity may be applied to Russian relationships—he being surrounded by a court where the one party clung with slavish adoration to the person of Alexander, while the other lived in uncertainty as to the successor to the throne, and, therefore, doubtful who should be most flattered. It was in circumstances as critical as these that the passive and repelling conduct of Nicholas was best adapted. The courtiers knew this, and one of them characteristically observed of Nicholas:—

"The usual expression of his countenance is

severe, even to misanthropy. He smiles only from politeness; never from cheerfulness. It has so much grown his habit, that in him it looks neither affected nor unseemly. Yet all his words and movements are measured, as if set to music. In the tone of his voice and his expression there is neither pride nor dissimulation, though it soon becomes evident that he does not speak the conviction of his mind, which he holds a secret so profound, that it were absurd to attempt the sifting of his thoughts, or hope to be entrusted with his confidence. A part of the same disposition has been adopted also by his wife," &c. &c. This writer has, however, a good opinion of the mental capabilities of Nicholas.

He asserts that the Grand Duke is a great master of engineering, and, therefore, a thorough mathematician. We must, however, accept this statement with caution. Nicholas has never yet afforded any proofs of that profound knowledge ascribed to him. In no instance has he placed himself at the head of an army of operation, but at the grand reviews in the environs of St. Petersburg he frequently allowed himself to be out-manœuvred and surrounded by the foe. Such exhibitions of bad generalship led him to yield the right of command in person at these mar-

tial displays. An anecdote is current among military circles in Russia to the effect that, on one occasion, at Cronstadt, when Nicholas was approving some experiments in the ordnance, an old General told him in plain terms,—"Your Majesty knows nothing about it." Now, though these facts testify to the deficiency of Nicholas in the higher branches of military science, they no less evidence his good sense in accepting a rebuke, and his equally good taste in bowing to the decision of the bluff officer, while he might have commanded hosts of flatterers who would have lauded his views and thrown the subsequent failure upon the shoulders of the inventors. But this is not an isolated instance of his submission to the judgment of others, though adverse opinions were usually couched in more polite terms than that delivered at Cronstadt. Cancrin, the Minister of Finance, who was no special favourite with the Autocrat, frequently carried out the schemes of his department in opposition to the views of Nicholas; Nesselrode, Volkonsky, and others in their various offices, did the like. Generally speaking, Nicholas would bow to the opinions of the chiefs of the departments when the question involved technicalities; indeed his whole life is remarkable for the deep re-

spect he has always entertained for men of positive science and practical experience. It is somewhat strange, however, that he has evinced no such esteem for the votaries of the æsthetical arts, or for genius generally. The encouragement he has exhibited to the masters of painting, music, &c. does not exceed the limits of reward usually offered by princes to men of talent; the pictures he has most cared for have been those of war, horses, fields of battles, &c.

The respect he has hitherto shown to the authorities of positive science may assist us, in a measure, in unravelling the personal character and actions of the man. It equally evidences his respect for received laws, his partiality for existing institutions, and of conservatism generally, while it further explains his perfect indifference to the political, moral, and social movements in Russia from 1818 to 1825, which he doubtless regarded as only the first steps to insurrection and revolution.

Having entered in his youth into no nearer practical relation with the world than was afforded him in brief relaxation from military duties, he was therefore a perfect stranger to the springs and resources of administration, and probably saw in the secret reactionary measures of his brother Alexander only

the tightened reins of order and conservative principle, which had been allowed to fall slack in the preceding years.

None of the many effects of the protracted war, nor the political aspect of nations in the time of Napoleon I., had ever directly influenced Nicholas, while the thousand hopeless attempts to introduce new ideas without the attendant consequences, to adopt new systems without proper basis and connexion, together with all the numerous ineffective experiments which characterised the first half of Alexander's reign, may have appeared to him from the perspective of the Anitshkoff palace as so many proofs that it was utterly impossible to remodel Russia and her administration. Be this as it may, it is certain that ever since Nicholas ascended the throne he has shown more zeal in improving the administrative departments of justice and the police than for the general progress of his vast country, which measures a seventh part of the whole globe yet shares so little in civilisation and refinement.

DOMESTIC LIFE AT THE ANITSHKOFF PALACE.

It may not be without interest to glance here at the domestic life of the Anitshkoff palace, the fashion of which has, with a few exceptions, been transferred to the Winter-palace.

Nicholas rises at an early hour and goes soon to the business of the day, after having taken a short walk. The most scrupulous order reigns in his study; the walls are adorned with pictures of regimental costumes. The furniture is elegant, but not over rich; while there is nowhere to be seen a trace of useless ornaments. The dinner-meal usually takes but little time, for it is served quickly, while the dishes are comparatively few. The Czar eats heartily, but is very moderate in his drink. He neither smokes nor takes snuff. In the evening he has two or three cups of very strong tea, and spends the interval between that and bedtime at some game. Despite his regularity of life, which is necessarily much interrupted by receptions, travels, &c., the Czar is no slave to habit. According to those who have had the best opportunity of judging, his relation to

the Empress is simple yet noble—an expression that undoubtedly admits of varied interpretation.* Women are not without their influence at his court. In 1846, a young lieutenant of the guard danced a polka with Lady Dashkoff, so much to her entire satisfaction that he was soon after installed as one of the aides-de-camp to the Czar. His friends composed a new polka, which they dedicated to him under the ironical title of the "Promotion Polka."

Much has never been said of the exhibition of parental feeling on the part of Nicholas—at least he did not display it in any lively degree while his children yet remained young. The Grand Duchess Olga, the late Princess Alexandra, and the Grand Duke Constantine, were frequently indicated as his pets; though, judging outwardly, since they have been grown up, a large amount of form and ceremony has accompanied their intercourse. Custine, in his

* A couple of years after her marriage, the present Empress paid a visit to her father at Berlin. Nicholas, two days after her departure, took post, travelling *incog.* and arrived at the palace at Berlin one hour before his consort, who was not a little surprised to be welcomed by her husband. It is the only time, it is said, that he indulged in a hearty laugh.

work "Russia in 1839," says,—"Nicholas forgets his majesty only in domestic life, where he is reminded that man has his happiness independent of state duties." There is, however, a degree of coquetry in the domestic life of the Winter-palace. Persons well acquainted with the imperial family assert, that though Nicholas may love his children dearly, yet it cannot be denied that he assumes towards his sons a serious and cold demeanour, while his behaviour to his daughters is chivalrous in the extreme: but this is a conduct which he generally adopts towards ladies. The weak and sickly Empress he treats with compassionate affection: we can find no better word. When from indisposition she is confined to her apartment, he frequently visits her there; and the newspapers, which are always loud in praise of his undiminished affection, mentioned that, at the time of the imperial stay at Naples in 1847, he used to carry her in his arms up the staircase to her chamber.

During the burning of the Winter-palace in 1836 (says Grätsch), Count Orloff reported to the Emperor that the fire was about reaching the imperial private cabinet or study, and asked him what he desired to be saved in it, as no time was to be lost. "Only

my portfolio," was the reply; " it contains the letters of the Empress which she wrote me during our engagement."

THE FIRST OFFICIAL APPEARANCE OF THE GRAND DUKE NICHOLAS.

We now arrive at the first official appearance of the Grand Duke Nicholas, upon the death of Alexander. But before we proceed with the thread of our narrative, it will be well to sketch, at least in outline, the relations which at that period existed between Russia and the rest of Europe.

The year 1818 was characteristic in the reign of Alexander. To the reactionary measures then instituted belong the introduction of the severest censorship of the press and the prohibition against the importation of foreign books. The freemasons' lodges and meeting-houses were closed; the missionary societies interdicted [1822], and a number of criminal law-suits [1822 and 1823] were commenced against supposed demagogues, socialists, &c. In Poland, the liberal form of government was suc-

ceeded by a system, which, while it annihilated constitutional rights, was utterly devoid of principle or idea. The state of Europe continually called the Russian Emperor abroad. Scarcely had he returned from the Congress at Aix-la-Chapelle [1818], when he hastened to Warsaw, where disturbances had broken out [1820]; thence to Laybach [1821], where he recommended the principle of armed intervention, and where also the news soon after arrived of the Greek insurrection. In vain the Greeks invoked the assistance of the Russian Cabinet, which had, in fact, encouraged them to this step, but now evinced for them no particle of sympathy. Baron Strogonoff was received very coldly on his return from Constantinople. It is quite certain that no means were left unemployed to stifle the disturbances in Spain, Portugal, Naples, and Piedmont, by Alexander, who was the soul of the famous Congress of Verona [1822], where he did not cease to combat phantoms, thereby losing sight of reality, and neglecting the affairs of his own country, which at that moment required his entire attention more than ever. The non-intervention in favour of Greece gave general dissatisfaction. It was argued that the acknowledged head

of the Greek Church had no right to stand idly by and calmly regard the slaughter of its highest functionaries, and a vast number of its true children, that church having for a long series of years been placed peculiarly under the immediate protection of Russia. This argument was especially employed by the agitating parties to excite the clergy, and rouse among the community the liveliest sympathy for Greece. The people, who were not allowed to manifest any political opinions, now talked aloud of the dangers to their religion, while the secret societies fomented the disaffected spirit, as the foundation of their political designs, well knowing that the will of the Czar remained firm and unshaken. Alexander, however, only longed for the blessings of peace, — peace at any price, peace throughout Europe, but more especially in Russia. Whether it was to be the quiet of the grave, or the lull preceding the furtherance of political development, who could say? There was, at all events, in that passive wish a total misapprehension of the world's onward march. The stillness of obtuse despondency may for years be enforced by the shadow of the bayonet, as indeed has been the case during the reign of Nicholas till 1853; but a

forced retrogression to a given point, whence the engine of development is to be again started with renewed velocity, is, even in Russian relations, a matter of impossibility. This was seen in the latter years of Alexander's reign. The illness by which he was attacked [1824], the frightful inundation of St. Petersburg [November 19th, 1824], the death of a dearly-loved natural daughter, were all held as retributive visitations from Heaven for the Czar's neglect to grant due protection to the orthodox church in Greece. The masses dared not to give utterance to their feelings; but it was bold policy of the agitating party to use this very accusation as a means to shake the dogmatic confidence so long reposed in God's imperial vicar upon earth. To weaken the devotion of the people for the sacred person of the Czar, was tantamount to removing the corner-stone from the Russian state edifice, and ultimate success was at no vast distance, when Alexander undertook his journey to Taganrog, whence he was carried back to St. Petersburg a corpse.

Had the secret societies been enabled for a little longer to combine in their preparations for a general revolt, and not been induced to a precipitate outbreak by the incidents occurring at the change of

government, the intrigues of the present Russian cabinet would not have remained concealed behind the Pan-Slavonic movements; while the Russian nation itself, conjointly with the Poles, could openly have appeared as the advocate of the Pan-Slavonic claims, and the struggles that still await Europe had been terminated in their germ. "Your if," indeed, as Shakspeare has it, "is your only peace-maker," and scarcely admissible in critical history; but who can avoid some indulgence in political conjecture, when all the relations of Europe depended on a single throw?

The great social revolutions which have convulsed the whole continent within the last four or five years, may be traced to that time when the political sky, though but slightly overcast, unmistakeably indicated the coming storms. The nations of Europe had then entered on a new era; the demands for their promised rights were urgent and violent, while the right by the *grace of God* had become questionable. In acknowledgment of the victorious struggle against foreign rule, the princes had made promises to the people, which they forgot when the danger was averted; though they did not escape the memory of the latter, who neither could nor

would any longer accommodate themselves to the obsolete forms of society. Everywhere were visible the unmistakeable signs of popular displeasure, restrained only from open outbreak by the power of the bayonet and the sword. Hence the secret societies, and the so-called democratic agitations which existed throughout Europe, animated by the spirit of social regeneration. It was from causes like these that the throne of the Restoration became undermined, while crowns no longer sat with the steadiness of old upon princely brows. There were revolutions in Naples, Piedmont, Spain, and Portugal, opposite the Holy Alliance, the work of Alexander. Hence his meddling in the political concerns of the remotest parts of Europe, and hence also his neglect of the internal affairs of his own country. But Russia was not free from the infection. At Warsaw tranquillity was, to outward appearance, restored by the dissolution of the Diet in 1820, and the arrest of many of the members of the secret societies; but, in reality, the ferment was continued. The Poles considered the Diet, which was re-opened in 1824, as a mere farce, and induced their Patriotic Society to proceed in all their movements slowly and with caution. In the interior of

Russia outbreaks were of frequent occurrence among the peasantry, to whose just demands the Emperor deigned no other reply but the knout and Siberia; neither did the army any longer offer to absolutism complete and perfect safety. The rise of the Guard against the tyrannous discipline of Colonel Schwarz, showed that the troops had learned in the previous campaigns that there was a higher destiny for the soldier than the routine drudgeries of common exercise, in which he was too often called to waste his faculties. The new institutions of the military colonies were intended to check the sense of freedom among the troops, but proved, on the contrary, a menacing counter-power to the unconditional omnipotence of absolutism; and when, at last, it was found advisable to dissolve these institutions, and to banish the refractory Guard regiments to the Caucasus, or distribute them among the other divisions of the army, the disaffected masses were dispersed as fructifying seeds of freedom throughout the whole empire, and the above-mentioned disturbances by the peasantry were one of the results. Alexander's last journey to Warsaw in 1825 brought him to the knowledge of a conspiracy, which was to end in regicide, though the conspirators them-

selves remained undiscovered. The days of Alexander were thus numbered by secret foes, and the dagger of the assassin was already raised against him, when, by the natural causes of illness, his life was terminated at Taganrog.*

In the Russian metropolis there was no perceptible sign of all these disturbances. Even the usual forerunning indications of popular movements, the unsafe condition of property and excess of crime, were not observable, though it is certain that the masses had been informed of the existence of some vague conspiracy, the end and object of which they were unable to define. It is hardly credible that the ever-vigilant police of Russia were not in possession of these secrets several months before the death of Alexander; but it is more than likely that, conscious of superior power, the authorities were willing to allow things to grow sufficiently ripe to make a great example of the failure of the conspiracy—a plan, at that time, much in vogue among the very *humane and honest* governments of Europe.

Alexander died December 1st, 1825. The news arrived at the Winter-palace on the 9th, at the

* See Appendix (B).

moment when the imperial family were assembled in the chapel to render thanks for the messages received the previous day, announcing the convalescence of the Czar, by letters from the Empress Elizabeth and Prince Volkonsky. It was Nicholas who received the fatal news: he only of the three brothers was then resident in St. Petersburg. Constantine had lived for many years at Warsaw as viceroy, with the title of Generalissimo of the Polish troops, while Michael had also left for that city but a few days before. Before the news was bruited in the streets of St. Petersburg, the Grand Duke Nicholas obtained a brief interview with the Empress-mother, who was supposed to be the only person at court—himself not excepted—who knew the brilliant destiny that awaited him as the consequence of Constantine's resignation. Though this great fact had been surmised by many of the members of the court, it was still divested of any degree of certainty.

So far as the public at large were concerned, they had not the least doubt about the succession of Constantine, the Russian law on that point being clear and definite. It is true that the want of legitimate descendants of Alexander, together with

the union of Constantine with the plebeian Johanna Gradzinska, afterwards Princess Lovicz, ought to have caused some anxiety and hesitation among the people; yet were they perfectly indifferent which of the three brothers should ascend the throne, neither being special favourites with their countrymen. Nay, strange as it may sound to non-Russian ears, the morose and despotic, but whimsical Constantine, was the only one for whom the soldiery, at least, evinced any degree of sympathy. The Russian understands better than we do how to love tremblingly. To proceed, however. Immediately after the interview of Nicholas with his mother—and, of course, what passed between them no one knows—he repaired to the Senate Palace, to take the oath of allegiance to his brother Constantine, as the "legitimate heir to the Russian throne by birthright." The State Council replied by appealing to sealed packets, deposited by Alexander with the senate, the synod, and at the cathedral of Moscow. These packets bore the autograph superscription: "To be preserved until further notice, and, on the occasion of my death, to be opened in an extraordinary sitting before any other disposition be enacted." The chief packet was found to contain

a letter from Constantine to the Emperor, dated 14th (26th) January, 1822, begging the acceptance of his resignation to the throne: an act to which he was desirous of giving force and guarantee in addition to the obligation he had solemnly, and of his own free will, undertaken at his divorce (April 1st, 1820), from Anna Feodorowna, Princess of Saxe Coburg, and sister to King Leopold of Belgium. The packet further contained the reply of Alexander, dated 2nd (14th) February, simply signifying his assent to the request. Lastly there was enclosed an imperial decree, dated Tsarko-Zelo, 16th (28th) August, 1823, referring to this resignation and the established law, which gave the throne to Nicholas.

Thereupon the state council invited him to preside at their sitting; but, though it is exceedingly improbable that Nicholas should not have been previously acquainted with the new dignity that awaited him, particularly after his interview with his mother, and the opportunity which had been afforded him of perusing, with his own eyes, the documentary evidence, he yet refused to accept the invitation. In return he alleged, "That, not being a member of the council, he had no right to sit there; but if the council had matter of importance

to communicate to him, he was ready to receive it at the Winter-palace."*

The state council accordingly repaired to the palace, and made him officially acquainted with the tenor of the documents. They were about to take to him the oath of allegiance, when Nicholas interrupted them with the words, "I am no emperor, nor do I wish to be so at the expense of my elder brother. Not until he signifies his determined resignation, under present circumstances, will I claim my right to the throne." The council, senate, and synod, while deliberating on the necessary steps, saw great danger to the country in this de-

* Nicholas had for some days previously taken up his abode at that palace,—a circumstance that proves he was not quite in earnest in his refusal to accept the throne. Neither was the secret so strictly kept from the grandees, as is evident from the following incident. Prince Koslowsky was once in company, in 1824, at Prince Galitzin's, when the Grand Duke Nicholas unexpectedly entered the *salon*. The whole company rose, and Koslowsky, who was suffering from the effects of a broken leg, was endeavouring to do the same; when Nicholas, perceiving the movement, went up to him, put his hands upon the prince's shoulders, and begged him not to stir. "How can I stir," replied Koslowsky, smilingly, "when sixty million souls weigh upon my shoulders?"

lay. The people might begin to ask themselves, not only who is to be the Emperor, but who would rule the best,— a question that might involve a doubt of the dogma touching the divinity of the Czars. The diplomatists now had recourse to the following strange logic : " Nicholas being now our legitimate emperor we must obey his will, should he persist in conferring the crown on Constantine ! " The people naturally followed the example of the council, senate, and synod, who took the oath of allegiance to Constantine. For three whole weeks this imperial comedy was enacted throughout the empire, to the confusion and insult of all classes of society. For three whole weeks all the official acts of the government were performed in the name of the Emperor Constantine I. Decrees, passports, and despatches, were superscribed and undersigned in the name of one whose title it was known was only asserted in positive coquetry with truth ; while in Poland, hardly any business of importance was transacted during this time.

Some writers have fallen into error, asserting that the oath of allegiance to Nicholas at St. Petersburg, and that at Warsaw to Constantine, were taken simultaneously. It is not so ; Constantine

having received the intelligence of the death of Alexander, patiently awaited the orders of Nicholas to cause the oath of homage to be taken in Poland. After the lapse of fourteen days, Constantine received the first news of his brother's refusal of the throne; correspondence ensued, the refusal was withdrawn, and on the 24th December Nicholas formally accepted the government. He fixed, however, December 1st, the day on which Alexander died, as the date of the commencement of his reign.

We have given in detail the history of Nicholas's accession to the throne, in order to show his utter want of sincerity in the whole transaction from beginning to end. The part played by him in this state comedy was either very daringly or thoughtlessly conceived; at the same time that he trifled with the sanctity of oath, he swerved from the iron rule that marked implicit obedience to the imperial command. To suppose, as some of his panegyrists have written, that he was actuated in his scruples by any extravagant idea of legal legitimacy, involving a fanatical submission to priority of birth, is to suppose in him that of which no evidence has been given in his life. The Emperor Nicholas well knows how to evade a law without

actually violating it; how, in fact, to beat the bush without breaking the branch or pricking his fingers, as we see by his conduct during the investigation into the military revolution in 1825, and in other proceedings which we have yet to record. It is true that, on the other hand, instances are cited to show his strict adherence to the letter of the law; but these instances are so unimportant, that it is clear he gained more reputation by an ostentatious strictness than he lost in conscience or principle by a reasonable leniency. We may as well give here the particulars of one of those grand examples, so frequently quoted by his panegyrists in illustration of his scrupulous observance and rectitude.

A run-away horse, belonging to Count Adlerberg, had been caught by the police, and therefore became forfeited, according to law, to the fire company. The horse being a great favourite with the Count, the latter hastened to the Emperor to interfere in his favour, offering at the same time to substitute another animal from his stable of at least equal value. "Take as many as you please from the imperial stable," replied Nicholas; "but do not—no, Count—do not ask of me to break

the law." Now, as the Count was known to be the friend of the Czar, it would, indeed, have been bad policy on the part of the latter to infringe the law on his behalf. Anecdotes such as these will not, therefore, induce any greater esteem for the rigid justice of the Emperor, though they may excite applause for the tact with which it is enforced.

Some writers allege, as a reason for the hesitation of Nicholas to accept the crown, a becoming timidity at undertaking the responsibility of absolute rule over sixty millions of souls. It is, however, remarkable, that up to that period of his reign at which we write, we find no single instance to verify the supposed existence of such a natural fear—no instance in which Nicholas has shown the slightest scruple to enforce implicit obedience to his will from that sixty millions of souls. If, however, by that "natural fear" is meant merely a consciousness of inferiority, a knowledge that he was no favourite with any party, and that Constantine had at least the attachment of the troops in his support, we assent to the hypothesis: beyond a doubt the personal relation of Nicholas to Constantine was anything but close friendship. Be this, however, as it may, there is enough to show that Nicholas had, as Grand Duke,

remained a perfect stranger to state affairs, that he ascended the throne of the Czars, not to rule as an European Emperor of the nineteenth century, but to resume again that *Asiatic despotism* which, in the semi-liberalism of Alexander's reign, had been cast aside—to resume this in opposition to the demands of the age, his own interest, and the welfare of his people.

Nicholas is no genius, but a character. Yet the character is deficient; deficient in that which the after reading of the Grand Duke could never supply, —mental refinement and human sympathy. Deficient, then, in that refined humanity which disregards personal and direct interests in all questions concerning public welfare, Nicholas acted, on his accession to the throne, more in the spirit of an interested private person than as an enlightened prince with the interest at heart of his sixty millions of subjects.

NICHOLAS I. CZAR OF RUSSIA.

In signing the act of his accession, Dec. 24th, 1825, Nicholas was fully aware that the first step of his reign was to be a struggle against conspiracy. News was momentarily expected from Kiëff respecting the issue of the arrests of Pestel and other ringleaders of the conspiracy, in and without the metropolis, with which Diebitch, on his own responsibility, had commissioned General Tshernitsheff.* The insurrection might have progressed to a general rise in Lesser Russia, and, perhaps, extended still further —though, in the metropolis itself, the danger was then considered more remote than it really proved afterwards. On the 25th of December the new Emperor had not yet shown himself to the public, but received in the evening of that day the oath of homage from the state council, senate, and

* We may here correct a current error relative to Tshernitsheff's subsequent elevation to the post of Minister of War. His rise is usually attributed to his being enabled, when at Paris, to procure the plan of Napoleon's expedition to Russia. The fact of that contrivance is certainly true; but he owes his portfolio to his share in the discovery of, and the subsequent inquiry into, the conspiracy here named.

synod. Hardly was the ceremony ended, when an intercepted letter of Lieut. Rostoptshoff betrayed to the Emperor the conspiracy of the Guards, and the preparations they had been making during the two previous days for the accomplishment of their purpose. The only apparent means of averting a general unity of action at the moment was to receive the oath of allegiance from each regiment separately in the barracks, instead of allowing, as was previously intended, the whole division of the Guards to pass on the occasion publicly in review.

The events of the following day are well known in their general outline, but will be found more in detail in the sequel.* Various and contradictory are the reports about them, while no impartial historian has, as yet, chronicled the Military Revolution of St. Petersburg; and even in these pages, in which we only presume to recapitulate incidents as far as they bear upon the personal character of the Czar, his identity assumes different aspects, according to the respective views of the historians of that insurrection. Some, who seemed to have evinced a kind of timorous reverence for imperial majesty, describe him as awfully grand, like the Aurora

* See Appendix (C).

Borealis; while reckless liberalists called out with the Psalmist, "What he thinks is terror; what he sees is rage; what he speaks is scourge; and what he writes is blood." There is certainly much truth in the first estimate of Nicholas, very little in the second, and still less in that opinion which accuses him of both cruelty and cowardice on that day. There is no evidence that at any time he ever exhibited the slightest cowardice; though, on the other hand, the military insurrection is the only instance on record when he incurred the risk of personal danger from a *mêlée*. Yet do we know that he has since frequently exposed his life to epidemic attacks, and to the raging elements.

He has never afforded the malignant an opportunity of proclaiming him faint-hearted or despondıng. Certainly, to have exhibited any such feeling, on the eventful day referred to, would have been tantamount to a resignation, not only of his most ambitious hopes, but also of the very existence of the dynasty. We would not for a moment justify the severity of the sentences upon the culprits who were condemned without due examination, or even the form of inquiry; yet, taking into consideration the defective state of the Russian laws, and the

cruel delay in all official justice, it must be admitted that the quelling of that insurrection by the most violent means was founded on the necessity of self-defence.

The success with which the decisive measures of Nicholas were then crowned, stimulated him to that mode of government by which his reign had been so strongly characterised. In the crush of conspiracy was born a terror, which appeared to him the best means of ruling his people and gaining their implicit obedience. Fortune stimulates courage, which is said to favour the brave.

It was owing, perhaps, to the first success of courageous violence that Nicholas dared to deviate from the spirit of Alexander, who, in his semi-Liberalism, had attempted to introduce into Russian element that relation between the sovereign and his subjects which exists in European monarchies. Nay, he deviated even so far from the policy of his brother, as at once to retrograde to the old standing-point of Asiatic despotism. True he had promised, not only in the letter-patent to his Russian subjects written on his accession, but also in a special manifesto to the Poles, and again in a

circular note to the European courts, "that henceforth he should devote his energies to continue the government of Alexander of glorious memory;" yet he held himself released from that promise by the force of circumstances, as he did afterwards by the insurrection of Poland, when he broke the solemn oath that he had taken before God, "to keep intact and in force the Constitutional Charter" of that unhappy country.

That Nicholas at his accession had not yet decided on the political system he should pursue, is evident from the fact of his retaining in office those statesmen who governed the country, almost independently, during the reign of Alexander. His flatterers account for this, on the plea of his deep respect for the memory of the dead Czar, while impartial judges see in it only irresolution or cautious hesitation. Nicholas was fully aware of his own want of experience in government affairs, and was naturally anxious to become somewhat better acquainted with the construction and working of the state machine before venturing to make alterations in it, even when he had discovered the enormous frauds and abuses practised by some of the ministers in their respective

departments. It was only owing to extraneous circumstances that a few changes were subsequently introduced in the administration.

No radical reform of any kind was effected during the first years of Nicholas's reign, though the movement he made in its favour was much paraded. Indeed, in the administration generally, the reforms introduced are to this day but partial and fragmentary, the principal changes being wrought in the form alone, to which empty and specious names have been given, goodly to the ear, but like an apple "rotten at the core." Taken at its worth and in the aggregate, the civilisation which has been introduced into Russia ever since the time of Peter I., was borrowed from abroad; and this very circumstance is sufficient in itself to explain why such civilisation, stripped as it is of internal and organic improvement, should remain superficial and shallow in its progress, assuming the mere show without the substance of European humanity.

The first evidences of the probable character of the new government were manifested by Nicholas in the increase of his military suite. The number of imperial adjutant-generals rose within a short time to 120, to which must be added a vast number

of aides-de-camp. The privilege that was conceded to these adjutant-generals of demanding from all tribunals the submission of their official acts touching their administration, expenditure, &c., placed the civic greatly under the control of the military authorities, thereby raising the rank of the latter to the highest dignity in the state. The military career, in brief, paved the way to every great post and function in the realm.* It is under auspices like these that Adlerberg, Benkendorff, and Orloff, have come in personal relation with the Czar, while Diebitch, Woronzow, Paskiewitch, and others, have earned in the field of battle the power and confidence they possessed in the cabinet.

It would be unjust to suppose that Nicholas accepted the crown merely from love of absolute

* The titles of Colonel, Major-General, Lieutenant-General, &c., are thus borne by civil officers, who, probably, never wore a military uniform. Certain it is, however, that in the Russian cabinet, senate, or state council, we cannot find more than two or three members who have not at one time belonged to the army. There is not a provincial governor, or high diplomatic agent in Russia, who has not risen to his post through the grades of military rank. It is one of the special offices of the so-called "Cadet-School" of St. Petersburg to instruct the pupils in diplomacy.

power — the will to dispose arbitrarily of the lives, persons, and property of his people. He has been often actuated — and especially at the commencement of his reign—by the greatest zeal, even under personal trials, to restore right and legal justice in his dominions; but it was beyond his intellectual grasp to devise means for the equitable adjustment of the two spheres, the administration of justice and political government; the actual distinction was wanting between the two forms.

Nicholas has been justly reproached with his antipathy to foreign tastes, and with his endeavours to infuse the same amongst all classes of society; an amusing illustration of which is found in the following anecdote:—

It is customary in all the regiments of the Guards to entrust the purchase of the horses to young men of fortune, as an economical means of getting the finest animals at a cheap rate. These young officers have a year's leave of absence granted them, and usually, at the expiration of this time, are promoted; but they are expected to bring back no animals which are not worth about double the regimental price; so that an undertaking of this nature usually costs them from one to several thou-

sand roubles. A certain Yakovloff acquitted himself much to the satisfaction of his colonel; but, nevertheless, was not promoted. As soon as it was possible he left the service, but was at the same time —and has been ever since—refused permission to travel. Obliged to remain in idleness at home, Yakovloff consoled himself by going the full length of Anglo and Gallo-mania; and whilst in this state of mind was one day disporting in the Neffsky-Prospect, in all the glorious foppery of the most *outré* Parisian costume. On his head was a little peaked hat, resembling a flower-pot reversed — a handkerchief, with a gigantic bow, was tied around his neck—a cloak, so short that it seemed a cape, was thrown over his shoulders—on his chin he wore a beard "*à la Henri Quatre.*" He had an enormous oaken cudgel in his hand, a glass stuck in the corner of his eye, and a bulldog following at his heels. As he was sauntering complacently along the broad pavement of this St. James's Street of St. Petersburg, the Imperial carriage drove past, and, abruptly stopping short, the Emperor himself leaned out and beckoned the beau to approach him.

"Pray," said Nicholas, eyeing him with humorous

curiosity, " who in God's name are you, and where do you come from?"

" May it please your Majesty, I have the honour to be your Majesty's faithful subject, Save Saveitch Yakovloff."

" Indeed!" replied the Emperor, with mock gravity; " we are enchanted to have the opportunity of making your acquaintance, Save Saveitch. Oblige us by just stepping up and taking a seat beside us."

Yakovloff slyly let drop his cudgel, and with some misgivings took his seat.

" But stop," said the Emperor, who had not at first noticed this proceeding, when they had driven on a little way, " where is your stick, Save Saveitch?"

" Never mind the stick, your Majesty!"

" But I do mind it, Save Saveitch Yakovloff!"

The carriage was turned back, the stick picked up, and orders given to drive on straight to the palace. When there, the Emperor alighted, and beckoned the dandy to follow him.

" Oh! no, Save Saveitch, don't take off your cloak; we must have you just as you are, hat, stick, cloak, and all."

The Emperor led the way to the apartments of the Empress.

"Pray, my dear," he inquired of her, "do you know this animal?"

"No," replied the Empress, bursting into a fit of laughter at the extraordinary figure before her.

"Then allow me to inform you that this is our faithful subject, Save Saveitch Yakovloff. What do you think of him?" said the Emperor, turning him round; "is he not a pretty fellow?"

The unfortunate beau, whose feelings may be conceived, after affording the royal couple much merriment was dismissed, half dead with terror and confusion; but before he departed, he was assured that the Emperor did not always punish the foolery of his subjects so leniently.

Though there is not one single drop of true Russian blood in the veins of Nicholas, his Russian notions peculiarly manifest themselves in the circumstance of his confounding appearances with reality. It is the same which prompt the Russian mechanic to imitate the construction of the most complicated artistical machine in a remarkably short time, so as strikingly to resemble the original model. Whether the imitative machine will perform the

same service is a different matter. Usually it does not. The Russian never heeds the intrinsic merit of a performance. He is too much absorbed in the display. The following incidents will bear us out in our remarks.

We have already alluded to the suffering state of the peasantry, which, before Alexander's death, was the cause of several insurrections among that oppressed class, while the most angry feelings were spreading from province to province. When Nicholas became Emperor, reports were circulated that he intended to realise the promises of Alexander regarding the abolition of bondage. But when no step was taken towards that end, oppression, instead of being diminished, was increased; and more especially in consequence of the impoverishment of the nobility, who had greatly suffered by the wars and the critical state of the Russian finances. The rising peasantry now imitated the observances used abroad on similar occasions. Meetings were held and petitions despatched to the Czar, praying for a diminution of the heavy burdens imposed. The answer of the Emperor was his manifesto (18th May, 1826), in which he branded the reports as false, and emanating from evil-disposed persons,

who by such means only thought of "abominably deluding the simple sense of the country people, and basely turning it to their own purposes." The peasants were then threatened with the most rigorous punishment should they refuse to obey implicitly the orders of their lords and masters. This decree not meeting with due compliance, the military divisions stationed in the neighbourhood were marched into the disturbed districts, announcing the existence of a court-martial empowered to enforce the rights of the nobility. A special ukase at the same time instructed the local authorities to see that the nobility were not excessive in their requirements, and did not treat their bondsmen with too much rigour. But who were to regulate the measure of duties and the severity of treatment? Who but the local authorities, whose pay in Russia is so small from the government, that it is almost impossible for the members to foster existence without accepting bribes and presents? This Nicholas well knew, and it was therefore but a piece of ceremony on his part to affect a love of justice and a hope of reform, when he was conscious they were impracticable under existing circumstances. Neither were all the subsequent laws for the ame-

lioration of the condition of the peasantry fraught with much advantage to them; indeed, little or nothing in their behalf has as yet been effected, notwithstanding the external display.

Again, we have had occasion to refer to the confusion and disorder found to exist in the state departments, the criminal courts and civil tribunals. When steps for revision were first taken, these defects were more particularly manifest in the treasury offices, where defalcations were discovered to an enormous extent. At St. Petersburg, some of the guilty treasurers or cashiers saved themselves from anticipated punishment by flight, while others committed suicide. In the provinces dismissal, exile, and hard labour, were the several punishments awarded to the numerous culprits. Fraud and embezzlement on a very large scale in the marine department at Cronstadt had remained for a very long time undetected. Four merchants of that place personally informed the Emperor that, in some hidden stores of the great emporium (*Gostina Dwor*) at Cronstadt, there had been for years past, in course of accumulation, all kinds of ammunition — large guns not even excepted — surreptitiously appropriated by the authorities, and secretly sold to captains of

foreign vessels. An aide-de-camp of the Emperor was forthwith despatched to Cronstadt to investigate the matter. He surrounded the emporium with armed soldiers, and was successful in his discovery of the stores secreted. An inquiry on a large scale was of course anxiously anticipated; but, strange to say, that very night the entire place became a prey to incendiary flames, and with the stolen property of the arsenal were consumed the goods and wares of honest merchants, amounting to several millions of roubles. These flames naturally cast a tremendous light on the rotten system of Russian Bureaucracy, even more fearful than the discovery of the previous days. What must have been the effect of such demoralization upon the masses? Nicholas seemed not to trouble himself with such considerations; all he did was to punish and remove the delinquents, while the old system remained unaltered. As a remedy against the recurrence of like breaches of confidence, the young Czar adopted *the creation of a new police.*

It had its central points in the third division of the "Emperor's own Chancellerie," and was employed not only to protect the person of the Czar, but also to dive into the secrets of private life among

the higher functionaries, and of people of rank and distinction generally. This inquisition had been heretofore confided to the Minister of the Interior. General Arahtsheyeff had been intrusted with the protection of the Imperial person; while the common police had already long since organised, as a portion of its public duties, a regular system of *espionage* into the private life of the middle and lower classes. Despite these secret springs of vigilance, demoralization had run its full course, and wrought confusion and disorder in all the relations of social existence. Nicholas entertained great hopes of his new system, and placed at its head his personal friend, General Alexander Benkendorff. How the latter exercised his activity in the bureaus and salons of London, Paris, Brussels, Vienna, Berlin, Leipsic, Naples, Rome, Switzerland, &c., is but too well known. The question naturally presents itself—Has any improvement been effected in the state of society by the operation of this system? None whatever, is our positive reply. There is no one to guarantee the honest proceedings of the agents of this secret police—no one to answer for them. It can never be proved that their suspicions are unfounded. The perfect fallacy of the entire system

has been shown by experience. Benkendorff's absolute power and sagacity did not in the least improve the morals of the Russian officials; neither did his successor Orloff, and his *alter ego* Dublet, evince themselves more successful in their operations. Now, as before, the frauds of the higher classes, and the deceits of the lower, are still proverbial in Russia. It may be that the increased rigour of punishment has, in some measure, lessened the frauds practised by the high officials in the state treasury; but they take good care to compensate themselves for the loss, by dipping into the pockets of the people at large. It may be asked, Why do not the public complain? Simply because it is of no use. Inquiries "drag their slow length along" for years; the complainant in the meanwhile is reduced to beggary, and most often dies before the completion of the business. The wronged and robbed individual being thus prompted to silence, order seems to prevail, and the cabinet of St. Petersburg is content with this imaginary success. There is, indeed, great significance in some of the sayings indulged in by Russian statesmen. Thomas Golovin, when ordered to return to his country, replied that he would do so when

the following proverbs of the nation became obsolete:—"*What is mine is the Czar's.*" "*Near the Czar, near death;*" and "*Fear not the judgment, but the judge.*"

We have shown that Nicholas is apt to confound a change of form with reform, external order with organisation, while no one of the changes of his government has ever been developed from the manifested wishes or necessities of the people themselves; yet, must we not forget the many difficulties he has had to overcome at every attempt at progress. He has frequently been reproached with the desire of realising in his reign the ideal of absolute Czardom. We have not the least doubt that such is really the case, though he has repeatedly subdued his personal will before that of his councillors, each of whom he was accustomed to consider an authority in his respective department. Thus it happened shortly after his accession, probably at the time the delinquencies of the Bureaucracy came to light, that one day in the State council he proposed the highest discretionary power should be given to him,— the power to break occasionally through the strict regulations of promotion in the civil and military services, by which advancement can only be made step by

step in successive order; and desired the right to appoint even to the highest posts of government, from out the ranks of officials, those individuals whom he might consider meritorious and capable of forwarding the public good, though they might hitherto have occupied only an inferior rank in the state. This was certainly one of the most absolute proposals that could be suggested, showing, by the way, additional evidence of how little skill and talent Nicholas possessed for organic reform, since no radical improvement could be effected by merely changing men instead of measures. Neither was it in his power to decide for himself on the merits of his candidates, without consulting men of experience competent to judge on the subject. Where he was to find such men was, indeed, a puzzle. Certainly not among his ministers. He had received them from Alexander, to become initiated by them in the routine of state affairs; and this new measure was only calculated to remodel the old system and put ministers *hors de combat*. Surely not from among his adjutant-generals and aides-de-camp. They were all men without the least diplomatic knowledge, having arrived at the court direct from the camps and barracks. All these considerations had escaped the

notice of the Czar; and it was, indeed, fortunate that Prince Wassilitshoff, the President of the Council, ventured to explain them to Nicholas, and oppose his demands in direct terms. The Czar felt the weight of the arguments urged, and only desired a prolongation of the sitting, that he might hear at once the opinions of the other members; but the President dared also to oppose that request, and two-thirds of the august assembly voted with him for the adjournment of the debate. At the next sitting the Czar's proposal was rejected by a considerable majority; to which decision Nicholas yielded, despite the menacing attitude he had assumed when first made acquainted with the rejection.

Reports were circulated to the effect that Nicholas subsequently treated the President with striking coldness; but no instance is known of his ever having violated the outward forms of respect due to the prince's age, rank, and merits.

The Czar's relations to Cancrin, his finance minister, were of a peculiar character. This is not the place to discuss his opinion of the system proposed by that minister. It is sufficient to know that Nicholas, after much opposition, adopted it, and that it proved sound enough to save Russia from the

state of bankruptcy to which she was hastening in the last years of Alexander, under the finance minister, Guryeff: and even to increase the revenue from 1826 to 1844 by 160 million roubles banco (about £6,400,000). Yet Cancrin was no favourite of the new Emperor, and the most cherished plans of the minister were constantly opposed by Nicholas; which very often led to an interruption of personal communication. The political attitude assumed by the former sometimes resembled that of Cardinal Richelieu in the reign of Louis XIII. Thus it happened, that as late as 1841 he insisted upon a cessation of the offensive war in the Caucasus, and a limit to the expensive travels of the Emperor; also upon a reduction of the army by 60,000 men, under threat of resigning his office. The opposition of the Czar, and the stubbornness of the minister, seemed to promise no hope of reconciliation. Indeed, so great was the anger of Nicholas, that he suddenly left the Winter-palace in the severest season, and shut himself up for three days in his summer residence at Peterhoff, while Cancrin had already left his official residence in the Treasury, and retired to his private hotel on the English quay. Suddenly, however, Nicholas returned to the Winter-palace, sent for

Cancrin, and met him with the following words:— "After all, you are right." Cancrin became more powerful than before, and his demands were in part assented to. Without questioning the final willingness of the autocrat to yield to the more experienced judgment of others in matters of business, we may add that the Czar and Cancrin perfectly agreed in the fundamental principle, "that all foreign non-Russian influence tended to the injury of the state, and that every deviation from a *status quo* in the position of the nation was an allurement to revolution."

We have before us a diplomatic memorial of the last thirty years, in which Cancrin is reported to have said, "There is no necessity to improve the condition of the people, since, according to the Russian proverb, 'A dog that gets fat becomes mad.'" This memorial goes on to say, "He entertains the strongest aversion to railways, and speaks of them as inventions little short of madness." His opinions upon this subject are recorded as follows:— "They are follies; and within twenty years they will all disappear from the face of the earth. Of course, the whole world is against me in my belief, and I know that we also shall have railways here;

for, like the cholera, they are sure to make pretty well the tour of the globe. The Emperor has set his heart upon them, and they will therefore be constructed. When I am dead he will remember me, and my reluctance to adopt them." Few would suppose that Cancrin was by birth a German, and in his youth held office in a Germanic state.

We now arrive at the relation of Nicholas to the churches of his empire.

The Czar is, according to the Russian dogma, the Vicar of God upon earth. "Why should we not do what the Czar commands, since he is our God whom we must obey?" This is the fundamental doctrine of Russian obedience to the throne, and is further explained by the traditional admonition, that God gives each time to the people such a Czar as they deserve,—a severe ruler for a sinful age, and *vice versâ*. It is easy to govern a nation with such principles. But we must not forget that, in the glitter of liberalism with which Alexander would have surrounded the Czardom, the dogma of the "Vicar of God" received a severe check; and still more so, by the incidents of the three weeks' interregnum. It was well known that Alexander, in all his political and religious movements, had evinced much partiality for

the Lutheran creed. The first step of the new Czar, who was resolved to restore the imperial dominion to its previous absolute vigour, was, therefore, to show himself a strict adherent of the orthodox church, the summit of which was identified in his own person. From this point of view, the deep and increasing devotion of Nicholas to his own form of religion, as well as his conduct towards the dissenting churches of his empire, are perfectly clear and intelligible, while his great display of orthodox feeling was from the first moment only a means to a political end.* Few persons require to be told that the Greco-Russian Church is now a ready tool in the hands of the Czar. The fact is patent to the world. But it may not be uninteresting to cast a rapid glance at the manner in which that church has

* Soon after his accession to the throne, the Czar ordered all the Jews domiciled in Livonia, and more especially at Riga, to expatriate themselves. Shortly afterwards, on his passing through that city on his way to Warsaw, the Jews of Riga took the opportunity of presenting a petition to him, just as he was embarking in a boat on the Dwina river for Düna Mindau. The Czar declined to receive the paper, when one of the petitioners dared to exclaim, "Your Majesty, where are we to go?" Nicholas, in reply, pointed to the water, signifying, Go and drown yourselves, at the same time ordering the boatmen to shove off.

learnt to combat all the elements hostile to the absolutism of the Emperor.

In the early part of his reign Nicholas eagerly embraced every opportunity of impressing upon the public his deep sense of religious devotion. At his coronation at Moscow and Warsaw, at the funeral of Alexander, the death of his mother, at the annual consecration of the Neva, the solemnities of the Easter festivals, even at the births of the imperial children, this show of orthodox piety was ostentatiously manifested.

The war against Turkey was industriously represented to the masses as a war of religion to protect the orthodox Church in her ancient rights and privileges. It thus became comparatively easy to enlist the sympathies of the people for the violent measures adopted against the sects of the united Greeks and Armenians, who were represented as the lost sheep of the fold, while a like but even severer system was afterwards adopted against the Lutheran peasants along the shores of the Baltic. The Russians generally believed the state as a theocracy, perfectly right in its proceedings against the Infidels, and became fanatical in their attempts at proselytism. We know the steps taken by Nicholas against the Roman

Catholic Church in Poland, and we cannot but remember those disputes which extended even abroad, to Austria and the Danubian principalities, when the Czar set himself up as the High-priest of the Greek confessions. With the sword in one hand and the Greek double-cross in the other, Nicholas has managed to conduct his government in the interest of absolute Russian power, and with a sagacity worthy of a better cause. He has attained nearly all his purposes, though he committed a gross blunder when he further assumed to be supreme head of the Roman Catholic Church. This union of the crown and priest cap is incompatible with the Russo-Greek spirit, and a new schism has thus been introduced in the Orthodox Church, already split into numerous sects, which will at one period or another prove one of the most dangerous incidents in the social revolution of Russia. With the question, whether the high-priest of believers can also be the high-priest of infidels, the subject is transferred to the field of religion, and a religious doubt involves — more especially in Russia—a political prejudice. With the dogmatic doubt touching the rights of the Czar, the whole edifice of Muscovite absolutism tumbles to pieces; and Nicholas, who would have restored the

ideal of absolute power, will stand in history the first who sapped its foundation.

We now come to his proceedings against the Jews in Poland and Lithuania, and the persecution of the Basilian nuns at Minsk. The horrible cruelties practised on those nuns were, however, more the work of the fanatical clergy than of the Czar himself. Undoubtedly we have yet to learn whether, and how, the perpetrators of those inhuman acts have at last been punished by order of the Czar; but as the latter disclaimed all cognizance of the facts at the time of their occurrence we must give him the benefit of the doubt, positive proof being wanting to confirm a guilty knowledge.* It is, however, diffe-

* In the summer of 1845 Christendom was appalled by the revelations of the Basilian nuns of Minsk, whose widely-proclaimed sufferings asserted, contradicted and re-asserted, furnished innumerable paragraphs for the daily press. No notice, indeed, was taken by the Russian Government of any of the newspaper squibs. The Empress went to Palermo for her health. The Emperor followed to visit the royal invalid, and all the world wondered whether he would go to Rome, where the Polish abbess was then known to be; and if he ventured, what would be his reception. Nicholas *did* visit Rome, and was received by the Pope with all the distinction due to his high rank. The Pontiff met him at the door of the ante-chamber, where the attendants were edified

rent with regard to the Polish Jews living on the western frontiers of the empire, whom he banished into the interior.

We must not, however, expect any systematic designs from many of the acts of Nicholas against his Polish subjects after the Revolution of 1832. Since that time a sort of blind fury appears to have beset him in his relation with that unhappy country; all the dignity of his station, even temperate language and conduct, seem to forsake him the moment

by seeing the heads of the Greek and Catholic Churches embrace each other.

The interview which followed was strictly private, ouly the confidential attendants of each monarch being admitted. No authentic account can therefore be given of what passed on either side; but the Pope is represented as having displayed a truly patriarchal care for his flock in the Russian dominions, and to have fearlessly stated facts concerning their treatment, of which the Emperor is said to have professed utter ignorance. When all was over his Holiness is stated to have returned thanks to God, with upturned hands and eyes, for having been granted the long-desired but unhoped-for opportunity of pouring certain truths into the imperial ears, and thus acting the part of a good shepherd towards his smitten and dispersed Russian flock. The interview being ended the Pope reconducted the Emperor to the door, where, as well as on occasion of a second visit, all the external marks of friendship and consideration were

the question relates to Poland, and he appears then only as an enraged soldier or police functionary divested of all attributes that serve to mark the high-minded monarch, or even the educated gentleman.

We have seen the boy Nicholas, almost exclusively amusing himself with military pastimes—we have observed him as a youth, passionately fond of exercising and commanding the troops, — and as heir apparent to the throne, eagerly visiting the fields of

observed towards him. But it was noticed that the Pontiff did not return the Emperor's visit. Meanwhile the story of the Russian nuns was again revived. Doubts were felt and expressed as to the statements being true; and while the Romanists affirmed, and their opponents denied, the allegation, even the visit of the autocrat was conceived a *prima facie* refutation of them. But very soon appeared in the public journals a declaration, purported to be made on oath by the Polish abbess before the Pope, at repeated intervals between November 8th and December 6th, 1846. This document was printed in a Polish journal published at Paris, and likewise in the "Univers," and excited very great and just indignation. An official note is said to have been immediately addressed by Cardinal Lambruschini to the Russian ambassador, M. de Boutenieff, in which he expressed the Pope's regret at the publication of the paper. Soon after an official Russian note was presented to the Pope, containing a direct denial of the facts alleged.

battle, still moist with the gore of gallant warriors. Returned to his home, we have noted him playing the part of Inspector-general of Engineer corps; while he marked his accession to the throne by crushing a military insurrection, and surrounding himself with a legion of aides-de-camp, whom he invested with almost unlimited power, both civil and military. We have thus shown that everything in and about him indicated the soldier and the disciplinarian.

It is possible that he took for his prototype the military organisation of Prussia, as his father Paul did that of old Prussia; but then the aim and end which Nicholas had in view by that organisation was different from that of the Prussian monarchs. Prussia, with her small territory and population, could not figure as an important state among the great powers of Europe, without a vast army at command to protect her against aggressions. But the views of Nicholas were directed not only to the protection of his throne from any attacks by his own people, but to the possible aggressions against Europe at large. Russia having, moreover, become one of the European powers, he wished to improve the defective state of his government by a superior

force of arms, and was anxious to make good the want of moral by an excess of physical power. Real plans of conquest, however they may have become subsequently identified with Russian policy, were, before the Turkish war (1829), hardly conceived—certainly not ripened. A large standing army being deemed indispensable for the security of the throne, it was but reasonable to endeavour to give it a name and *locus standi*,—in short, a moral *point d'appui*.

The military colonies established by Alexander, and already counting 380 villages, with 400,000 souls, were first adapted to realise the plan of a national force based upon the possession of land; though these military farmers might, when dissatisfied, prove a very dangerous population to the state. And so they eventually turned out to be. Left to the mercy of their superior officers, they were treated harshly,—an insurrection followed, and the whole scheme was abandoned. The present organisation is, in fact, nothing more than an invalid establishment on a large scale. A soldier who has spent twenty of the best years of his life (of late the regulation has only been for ten) in the service of his country, ought, at least, to be provided with the means of earning a livelihood upon

his return to private life. But nothing of the sort is done. Only a few retire with a small pension, and all that the peasants have to expect after their period of service is freedom from bondage, without the slightest provision for existence; while the notoriously immoral character of the Russian soldiery is greatly against their finding employment among their countrymen in after-life.

In this way the population of Russia is increased every year,—not in useful members of society, but in outcasts and vagabonds. It is, therefore, absurd to repeat, after some panegyrists of Nicholas, that he is the creator of a great military organisation of happy excellence. To this day the Russian soldier lacks feelings of true honour, moral loyalty, and noble self-consciousness, so necessary to civilisation. Disciplined only by the rod, he is yet sadly stained with all the gross vices of brutish habit and savage neglect. The Russian force is not without great value in the field, and chiefly on account of its mechanical obedience; but it is not, and never will be, a national army — an army guaranteeing the future progress of the country. It is an army which, to the sound of the trumpet — as a pack of hounds to the huntsman's cry — will

hunt faithfully; but it can never constitute the intermediate link between the sovereign and his people. Herein lies Nicholas's misapprehension of the spirit of the age, and of his vocation to civilise his sixty millions of subjects by adequate laws and institutions.

The spirit of the age, the world, and history, are with him words without meaning—in brief, things beyond his comprehension. He ignores them in favour of absolutism—in the same way as Socialism denies them in favour of a Utopian Republic, miscalled Democracy.

We have imputed many of the faulty proceedings of Nicholas to his defective education, and we are confirmed in our belief by his conduct towards Europe since 1830. Each of the multifarious changes and reforms which have taken place in almost every corner of Europe since that period, has in turn excited the indignation of the Czar. It is characteristic of him that he should have said to Custine, "I comprehend what is meant by an absolute monarchy, because I am myself at the head of one; I also comprehend a republic, because it constitutes a complete and exclusive form of government: but I abhor a constitutional

monarchy: it is a government of fraud, falsehood, &c. &c."

He thus acknowledges an absolute monarchy, as something consistent and legitimate; and a republic, because he identifies it with the ancient republics of Greece and Rome, where power was absolute, and exclusive. Constitutional monarchy, a mode of government best calculated to promote development in the state, he abhors, simply because it holds out promises for the future in which he has no belief.

He has sent orders, crosses, and letters of congratulation, to a Radetzky, Windischgrätz, and Jüllich, for their successful efforts in restoring affairs to their old routine, and yet wages war with Turkey, and possibly all Europe, for being refused to modify long-standing treaties and agreements.

We would, however, avoid discussing the foreign policy of Russia, our business being only with the personal character of the Emperor; and we must therefore content ourselves with a brief sketch. That policy is inherited from Peter the Great, and its aim is Asia. If the succeeding rulers of Russia had adhered more to the sense than to the letter

of that legacy—if they had gone on where Peter left off—made progressive movements towards the civilisation of the nation, this conquest might have been justified from the Russian point of view, and Russia might then, in reality, have become what she claims to be,—"the intermediate link between Europe and Asia." It was only Catherine II. and, to some extent, Alexander I., who attempted so to solve that historical question, while all other rulers have taken the doctrine literally, and thereby desired to reap all the blessings and advantages o foreign civilisation, without sharing in the labour of its cultivation.

They neglected, in short, the primary conditions of that aim, by refusing to the people intellectual freedom, the liberty of thought, and self-instruction. They desired to transplant to their own soil the material benefits of Europe, without cultivating the soil itself, and rendering it accessible to the exotic fruit. The consequence is, that Russia stands in contradiction to herself—that she has received the gloss of European culture without softening the internal element of Asiatic origin—that Russia and her people have become incapable of mediating between Asia and Europe, and, instead

of forming a bridge between these two quarters of the world, she has grown into a wall of separation rising from a deep and impassable chasm. The Russian cabinet has thus forfeited all right to conquest; we see in it only an arrogant power of vile pretensions, which gives us full warrant to oppose it by word and deed. Russia spreading towards Asia, as towards Europe, would cover, as with a lava crust, all the seeds, blossoms, and fruits of civilisation; and especially if that conquest policy continue, as of late, to be conducted more with the venom of intrigue and seduction than by the open force of arms.

Nicholas is not, however, personally responsible for these tortuous manœuvres. They correspond neither with his character nor his narrow views; they are family traditions, transmitted from government to government, and handed over to him as sacred relics by his wily ministers and courtiers, who find their account in them. We do not seek to defend him by this plea. It is, indeed, a heavy charge against a potentate ruling over the seventh part of the globe, that he has so little understood the age of his reign and the world beyond his empire as to believe that all the moral and social move-

ments abroad are but the work of whimsical fashion and the wanton luxury of peace, requiring only to be subdued by forcible means. This is, however, an error common to most princes of the Continent.

The previous pages fully show how Nicholas ascended the throne without preparation for it; how, till his accession, he was kept a perfect stranger to all the affairs of administration; and how even his scientific education was neglected. The simple occupations of his youth never brought him in contact with his people, and still less initiated him in foreign affairs. He learnt, on ascending the throne, that demoralisation prevailed among all classes of society; but instead of introducing better laws and institutions, which should serve by degrees to improve the morals of the people, he held that with the increase of severity and the surveillance of the police he should at once grasp the remedy. All he effected by that severity proved but a show of improvement, while the real evil was making cruel inroad into the very heart and constitution of the country; and vice, which became thus more refined, was also more destructive.

This was not the only fact made known to him. He found a functionary caste wholly given to bribery and corruption, yet he cared not to see that the pay of these corrupt officers was sufficient to enable them to live and withstand temptation. In 1840 the rate of salary was somewhat advanced, yet was it quite inadequate to meet what had been hitherto regarded as almost the necessarily expensive habits of the *employés*. When the annual pay of an inspector-general of customs is but 2000 roubles banco (£80), can we expect him to be above the acceptance of the bribe for allowing smuggling within his jurisdiction? The rate of pay, by the way, dates from the reign of Catherine I., when the paper rouble had its full nominal value, and not, as now, only a quarter; when commodities were much cheaper, and the habits of the people far more simple. The various conspiracies, commotions, and disturbances, which occurred in the interior of Russia, and even at Moscow and St. Petersburg, as also the Danish question, and some domestic afflictions, destroyed many of the Czar's fond hopes and favourite schemes; and it seemed that then his previous energy of cha racter yielded before a certain acerbity of temper

and despotic obstinacy.* Despite the immense resources at his command he could not obtain all he desired, while he was without strength of mind to read in failure a proof that his efforts were

* In illustration we give the following incident:—

"Nicholas once asked his favourite, the present Prince Menschikoff, how it was that wherever he went in the metropolis he was sure to encounter the prince's nephew, who seemed to have scarcely any other occupation than to measure the length of the streets or to note the passers-by?

"'I will speak to him, your Majesty,' replied the prince.

"'No, bring him to the palace,' commanded the Emperor.

"Accordingly, the young prince next morning attended his uncle to the imperial palace; and, on having the question put to him by his Majesty, answered,—

"'How is it, your Majesty, that wherever I go in the metropolis, I am sure to meet your Majesty, seemingly with no other occupation than to measure the length of the streets or to note the passers-by?'

"The Emperor acknowledged the young man to be endowed with some natural wit, which he commanded him to cultivate for a couple of years at some lonely spot in Siberia."

Thus, even his most favourite courtiers were not exempt from that sourness of temper, and the young man's ready wit would have elicited a reproof qualified by a smile, rather than a banishment aggravated by irony, from any prince less morose and ill-tempered than Nicholas.

unreasonable, and that he was striving after that which was wrong, idle, and unnatural. He was too weak, then, to acknowledge that he had erred in regarding man as a mere machine, the spirit of the age as a wanton fashion of the world, and a thing to be moulded at pleasure; to see, in brief, that he had sinned against the organism of history, humanity, and time. He was too weak to admit this; and yet too strong in power not to forego the errors of his reign—errors which will ultimately deprive him of that position in the history of sovereigns which his antecedents might have earned for him. Had he pursued a more direct course he might have been censured, but no one could have proclaimed him untrue to himself, while now even his previous apparently straightforward conduct will induce a suspicion of hypocrisy. To his heirs he will leave nothing but the threatening danger of revolution, carrying with it the overthrow of all the existing institutions, civil, religious, political, and social. Whether his immediate successor will possess the destructive but gigantic strength of the present Czar to retard for another century the natural course of development in Russia, we greatly doubt.

Nicholas and his cabinet are suspected by Europe

of designs of aggrandisement by any means within their grasp. The statesman considers those designs dangerous to the balance of power, while the philosopher seeks in vain for any moral benefit likely to result to the Russian people or humanity generally from Russian conquests; since the subjects of the Czar are denied the right of thinking, much less of acting, for themselves, and are, in fact, debarred the privilege of hoping to be civilised by the free agency of nature and education. Let no one reply that the Kirgisi, Tshutski, and other rough tribes of Russia, are not yet ripe for civilisation, being still deficient in the preliminary conditions and preparatory education for such a thorough culture. Even savage tribes are ready enough to be governed by humane laws; while to check the natural progress of advancement by violent means is a deadly sin against the holy spirit of humanity. The necessary consequence of that crime is the offence of insurrection. Revolution will be the first movement in Russia—it will mark its progress by fire and sword: then, and not till then, will self-reform be possible in that empire.

Nicholas I. is, probably, the last true Russian Czar. When the Slavonians shall, at some future

time, write their own history, he will probably be called the last of the Slavonic knights. Time wears out many stains; and History, in her retrospective view, sees bright spots where the present only notes a profound darkness: and Nicholas is certainly, even physically, a fitting monument to mark the history of the existing age.

He is taller by a head than most of his courtiers, while the outline of his form is perfect. He is robust and muscular. The head, though somewhat too small in proportion to the rest of the body, is still in keeping with his broad chest. The usual expression of his face would suit a statue. A fixed severity and consciousness of majesty are the predominant characteristics. This expression certainly sometimes assumes a more friendly aspect; but it does not appear in the eye, which seldom beams kindly, while the mouth never smiles. The latter feature, indeed, is regularly formed, but the sharp, thin lips, indicate austerity and harshness. No sensuality is observable there, nor in any part of the lower face; neither do those lips tell that they have been used to give utterance to words of mildness; while the corners of the mouth betray too plainly contempt of men, and a reserve that never spoke a

word in the fulness of confidence. The overhanging eyelashes lend to his physique something lurking even in simple conversation. When angry, his eyes glare terribly; but they have no brightness for joyous emotions. The finely-chiselled nose runs down straight from the high forehead,—denoting, according to physiognomists, an incapacity for self-denial. His arrogant pretensions have entangled him in war with nearly the whole world. He is too obstinate to yield, and yet too weak for effectual defence; and it is not improbable that his cold heart will break long before the Western Powers shall dictate to him upon his own territory the equitable laws by which Russia is henceforth to be governed.

Who is to write his epitaph?—What shall it say?

*** Since writing the foregoing pages, the "Secret Correspondence" between our Government and the Czar has been published. The contents fully confirm our analysis of the character of the Autocrat. His ambitious plans, manœuvres, duplicity, and schemes of spoliation, now lie bare before the world upon his own confession, and fully correspond with our view of his life, conduct, and designs.

APPENDIX.

(A.)

THE DEATH OF THE EMPEROR PAUL I.

It would occupy too much space in this narrative to dwell on the many cruelties which were inflicted by the Emperor Paul on all classes of his Russian subjects. Though the ruthless regicide of this monarch cannot be justified, still his oppressions and tyranny had become so unbearable, that even the safety of the imperial family made it necessary to limit his power, or render it less hurtful. After long and protracted deliberations, the conspirators resolved to seize upon the person of the Emperor, and imprison him in some remote strong place of the empire. It was further agreed that the Grand Duke Alexander should ascend the throne. The share that prince took in the project, as also the whole of his subsequent conduct, sufficiently prove that no murder was contemplated, though revenge afterwards ex-

ceeded the limits of the original plan. We might enumerate many decrees of Paul, which bordered not less on ridicule and cruelty than on madness; but we content ourselves with giving here a specimen of his eccentric edicts, and in the subsequent narrative of a "Trip to Siberia," one of his humorous freaks. He decreed one day that all Russian subjects in the metropolis, high and low, should at once wear the three-cornered hat, abandon the new-fashioned waistcoat (which, he thought, savoured of revolutionary France), and adopt the bygone costume. There was not a moment to be lost. From the want of a sufficient number of hatters and tailors to supply immediately the enormous demand for new hats and waistcoats, the people themselves were obliged to shape their round hats into three-cornered ones, by means of thread, and to alter to an approved form the cut of their waistcoats. Such despotic notions might have excited ridicule and laughter, had they not been accompanied by threats of the knout and Siberia in case of disobedience.

Paul must certainly have been aware of his unpopularity, and, indeed, possessed with some vague idea of his impending danger; for he repeatedly exclaimed one evening, at Lady Gagarin's, his mistress, "I see that the time has come to execute my grand *coup d'état.*" This *coup d'état* was to imprison the Empress at Kolmogor, an isolated spot four miles from Archangel, the Grand Duke Alexander at Schlüsselburg, and Constantine in the fortress of

St. Petersburg; while Pahlen and some of the grandees were to be executed. Lady Gagarin, terrified at the manner and tone of his exclamations, informed her confidants; and, on this intimation of danger, Pahlen hastened to apprise Alexander. A council was then secretly held, when it was resolved to give Pahlen license to act as he should think proper, provided the life of the Emperor was held sacred. This Pahlen solemnly promised, though he could not foresee the tragical consequence. The consummation of the conspiracy was to have taken place on the 22d March, 1801, but the Grand Duke, for politic reasons, caused the postponement to the following day. Paul resided at the Michailow-palace, —a massive, uncouth building, which he had surrounded with bastions and other fortifications, and where he hoped to find shelter and defence from any sudden outbreak. Shortly before the hour appointed for the event, the number of the conspirators was increased by several young men of the first families, who had been, on that same day, degraded and most cruelly punished by the unhappy Paul, for some trifling offences. Pahlen released them from prison, and accompanied them to General Talésin's, where the ringleaders of the conspiracy had assembled. Platow Subow, the last favourite of Catherine the Second, and General Benningsen, were among the guests at supper with Talésin. The conspirators, about sixty in number, heated by excess of wine, then divided themselves into two sections;

one headed by Pahlen, and the other by Subow and Benningsen. These latter, conducted by Argamakow, an aide-de-camp to the Emperor, repaired noiselessly to a secret staircase in the ante-chamber of the imperial apartments, where two guard hussars, together with two valets-de-chambre, were sunk in deep sleep. Argamakow knocked softly at the door, when a valet from within demanded, "Who's there?" The former mentioned his name, and said he had come with his report to the Emperor. "It is impossible," said the other; "it is only midnight." "Nonsense," whispered the aide-de-camp; "it is six o'clock in the morning. Open, or take the consequences!" Not suspecting any wrong the valet opened the door, when eight persons, with drawn swords, rushed in. The former, greatly terrified, crept into a corner, while one of the hussars, who showed resistance, was instantly killed. Subow and Benningsen then entered the bedroom of Paul. The first approached the bed, but, finding it empty, exclaimed, "By Heaven, he has escaped us!" Benningsen, however, more collected than the former, searched the room, and at last discovered the Emperor cowered up behind the bed-screen. He approached, and, saluting him with his sword, said,—"Sire, in the name of the Emperor Alexander you are my prisoner; but no harm will be done you." Paul made no reply. By the glimmer of the night-lamp they could see alarm and terror in his countenance. Benningsen immediately examined all the outlets.

One door led to the room of the Empress, another to the wardrobe, and two more to cabinets containing the flags of the metropolitan garrisons, and several swords belonging to officers who had been arrested. While Benningsen was occupied in locking these doors and putting the keys into his pocket, Subow repeated to the Emperor, "Sire, by command of the Emperor Alexander, you are our prisoner." "What prisoner?" at last asked Paul. "What harm have I done you?" "You have tyrannised over us for the last four years," said one of the conspirators; "there must be an end to it."

Paul stood before them without either shoes or stockings; his head was covered with a night-cap, while he had thrown hastily across his shoulders a morning-gown. He was surrounded by the conspirators, with drawn swords and uncovered heads. Had Paul retained the least presence of mind he could easily have escaped through the trap-door under his bed, leading into the apartments of the Empress. But fright had so confused him that, at the first alarm, he thought only of jumping from his bed, and concealing himself in some corner. While the conspirators were now engaged in laying hold of the person of the Emperor, a noise was heard from without. Subow hastened to the apartments of Alexander, which were below those of his father. The two Grand Dukes, Alexander and Constantine (the latter only now informed of the secret), were, together with their consorts, in the most painful

condition, and the news which Subow brought, instead of allaying, only increased their fears.

Benningsen and a few others, in the meanwhile, remained with Paul, and tried to persuade him to yield voluntarily. The door at once opened, and more of the conspirators now entered *pêle-mêle.* Prince Tashwill, major-general of the artillery, who had recently been dismissed from service, foaming with rage, rushed upon Paul, and with a furious blow felled him to the ground. In his fall both the lamp and bed-screen were overturned. The sequel of this frightful tragedy was acted in the deepest darkness. Benningsen, believing that Paul meant to fly or defend himself, cried out, "For heaven's sake, Sire, think not of escaping. You are lost by showing the least resistance." During this address, the voices of Tashwill, Gardanow, Sautarinow, and the Princes Werinsky and Seriatin, plainly indicated that a violent struggle was going on between them and the Emperor. The latter had succeeded in getting up, when he was again thrown down, and, stumbling upon a marble table, inflicted a deep wound both on his cheek and hip.

Benningsen, who did not partake in the murderous affray, now brought a light, and the first object that met his eye was the lifeless body of Paul, stretched full-length on the floor. He had been strangled by a scarf of one of the officers. His last words to his assassins were, "Spare my life, gentlemen, for heaven's sake! Give me at least time to

say a prayer!" Benningsen having convinced himself that Paul was really dead, had him laid upon the bed. At the same time a captain of the Guards appeared with thirty soldiers. He received orders, in the name of the new monarch, to guard all the avenues leading to the bed-room of the defunct emperor, and to refuse entrance indiscriminately to any person of whatever rank or distinction. Having taken these precautions, Benningsen descended to the Grand Dukes, and informed them of what had happened. Alexander now learnt for the first time at what price he had obtained the crown.

He gave himself up to the most bitter grief, and seeing Pahlen, who had kept guard on the grand staircase, now enter the apartment, exclaimed: "Oh, Pahlen! what a night! Will it not be said that I am the murderer of my father? And you—did you not promise his life should be spared? Oh, I feel utterly wretched!"

Pahlen, however, who was considering how best to secure the crown to the living monarch rather than to deplore the dead one, replied: "Sire, first reflect, that no monarch can enter into secure possession of the highest power without the sympathy of his people. One moment of weakness may be fraught with the most injurious consequences. Show yourself to the army, and be saluted Emperor of all the Russias."

"And what is to become of my mother?"

"I am going to her," replied Pahlen.

He went, but saw only the Countess Lieven, *dame d'honneur* to the Empress, whom he requested to convey the news of the Emperor's death to her mistress. When the Countess informed her that the Emperor had died from an attack of apoplexy, "No," cried she; "he has been murdered!" The Empress then rushed forth to the corridor, in order to enter the chamber of death; but she was stopped by Captain Pettarazky, who had kept watch with thirty men of the Guards. He approached her, and declared respectfully that she could not pass. She demanded if he knew her, and who had dared to give order not to allow her to enter the apartment of her husband? Pettarazky replied, reverentially, that he had the honour of knowing her Majesty, and had received that painful order from his colonel. The Empress, however, still pressed forward, but the soldiers checked her progress by lowering their bayonets; her Majesty, then turning to the captain, slapped his face with her hand, and sank down in a swoon.

The two Grand Duchesses, Maria and Catherina, who had followed their mother, now endeavoured to revive and compose her. Having partially recovered, she asked for a glass of water, and one of the soldiers, who fetched it, tasted the water before he handed it, saying, "Your Majesty may drink safely; it is not poisoned."

The Empress was now prevailed upon to return

to her room. Pahlen wished to lead her at once to her son Alexander, but, though she had barely recovered from her swoon, she was already strong enough to declare "she knew how to preserve her rights." Having once been crowned, she considered herself legitimate sovereign of Russia, and demanded the oath of allegiance from her son. Alexander in the meanwhile had been anxiously waiting for the reply of his mother, and when Pahlen told him her decision,—"This is an obstacle," said he, "which I had not foreseen."

Pahlen, however, insisted upon going to work at once, as the success depended on immediate despatch. Alexander yielded, and entered the same carriage which had stood ready to convey Paul to the fortress. They repaired in great haste to the Winter-palace, to receive there the oath of allegiance from the dignitaries of the empire. Pahlen and Subow mounted behind the vehicle, which was followed by two battalions of the Guard. Benningsen remained with the mother-empress, to persuade her out of her resolution.

After much hesitation, she consented to take the oath of homage to her son. Everything now proceeded smoothly, as if Paul had departed this world in the most natural manner. The court physicians were ordered to open the body and report the cause of his death. It was, of course, an attack of apoplexy. A fortnight after, the corpse was embalmed, laid out for public exhibition, and afterwards buried

with all the pomp usual on such occasions, in the Peter Paul fortress.

The murderers of Paul were afterwards gradually removed from the court. Many were incorporated in the regiments stationed in the remotest parts of the empire, and even Pahlen received the order to quit the metropolis, while the following incident gave a pretext to dismiss him altogether from office. Not long after the death of Paul, a priest pretended to have obtained in a miraculous way the portrait of the deceased Czar, beneath which was inscribed: "God will punish the assassins of Paul I." Pahlen, informed of the evil effects this picture began to produce upon the public mind, complained to the Emperor. The priest was arrested and scourged. At his examination he confessed he had received the portrait from the Empress-mother with the express order to exhibit it publicly, adding that a similar portrait was to be found in her own chapel or oratory. Pahlen, having ascertained that such was the fact, had the picture removed by force. Highly exasperated, the Empress-mother complained of his violence, and procured from Alexander an order for the instant removal of Pahlen from the metropolis. Indignant at the order, he resigned his offices; and Alexander urged, in order to make the sacrifice complete, he should go as far away as possible from St. Petersburg. Two hours afterwards the projector of this tragical conspiracy was on his way to Riga, where he spent the remainder of his life. Subow

returned to his estates in Lithuania near Wilna, and never after visited St. Petersburg but once, and then only for a short time on the termination of the French war.

A TRIP TO SIBERIA.

FROGÈRE, an actor at one of the minor theatres of the Boulevard in Paris, had entered into an engagement with the manager of the French theatre at St. Petersburg, where he had the good fortune so greatly to please Paul I., that he soon became a distinguished favourite of that monarch. An ill-timed *bon mot* one day convinced Frogère how dangerous it was to speak too freely in the presence of the eccentric autocrat. It was at the imperial dinner-table, when one of the guests lauded the present Emperor at the expense of Peter the Great.

"That is robbing Peter and paying Paul," said the Emperor, turning to his favourite. "Is it not so, Frogère?"

"Certainly, sire," answered the latter. "To satisfy Paul we may rob not only Peter the Great, but also Peter the Apostle."

"And pray why so?" asked the Czar, quickly.

"Because," said the excited actor, "Paul in his anger has frequently commanded in the words of the Saviour, 'Go, and bear the cross throughout the world, more especially in Siberia.'"

Paul showed anger in his face, and no one dared to laugh or to be pleased with the actor's reply. A few minutes afterwards the Emperor rose, and dismissed the company.

It was in the middle of winter, about midnight, when Frogère was aroused from his sleep by a loud knocking at his door. He jumped from his bed, opened the door, and saw, to his amazement, an officer and a file of soldiers enter the apartment. The former produced a warrant from the Emperor, banishing Frogère to Siberia. We may readily imagine the terror of the Frenchman. He cried, threw himself upon the floor, tore his hair, and repeatedly exclaimed, "What crime have I committed to deserve such a punishment?" He received no answer. He begged for a few hours' delay, to throw himself at the feet of the monarch and learn the nature of his guilt. In vain: the officer would only allow him time to pack up a few clothes and linen. Scarcely was the operation finished, when he was surrounded by the soldiers and carried outside the house, where a coach was in waiting. He was then lifted into it —more dead than alive—while two soldiers, with drawn swords and cocked pistols, took their seats on each side of him. The doors of the vehicle were locked, and the officer giving the signal, the coach rolled away at full speed, surrounded by a cavalry escort.

How long the first stage lasted Frogère was unable to tell, the vehicle being so thickly covered that not

the least ray of light could penetrate. He was told on entering the coach, that the soldiers had orders to shoot him on the spot the moment he opened his mouth to put any question to them. He consequently observed strict silence, and suffered a world of pain. The door of the coach was at last opened—it was broad daylight. His eyes were, however, bandaged, and he was led into a miserable hut, the doors and windows of which were closed as soon as he entered. When the bandage was removed, he saw by the faint glimmer of a rushlight a dish of coarse food upon a board before him. Though he had been fasting for some time he could hardly swallow a morsel; fear, however, induced him to eat, for the faces that watched his motions seemed to portend no good. Siberia! Siberia! that was his only thought; he was to live in that terrible land!

Frogère gave himself up to despair when the previous officer—by the by, an old acquaintance,—entered the room, attended by a courier. The poor prisoner felt as if he had not seen that friendly face for years. In the joy of his heart he was about to embrace him; but a motion with the hand and a stern look restrained him, while the finger of the officer pressed upon his lips imposed silence. He had flattered himself that the courier had brought an order for his release, but he was mistaken. The officer dismissed his guide, and ordered the soldiers to leave the room and wait outside. Being alone with the prisoner, he said, almost in a whisper,

"Frogère, we must now part. I have accompanied you to the first stage, and you will hence be under the inspection of another officer. Be careful not to speak a word. I risk much, even in giving this caution; but I am your friend. Have you any orders for me? Can I serve you on my return to St. Petersburg?" Poor Frogère melted into tears. Instead of replying to the questions, he only bewailed having to undergo a punishment for an unknown crime.

"An unknown crime?" said the officer. "Don't you, then, know what you have done? Are you mad, Frogère? Have you forgotten the sarcastic jest you made at the imperial table? It has offended the Emperor; you are punished because there was much truth in it."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the exile; "and am I to suffer so severely for such a trifle?"

"Hush! be silent!" whispered the other; "walls have ears. But, not to waste time, listen, Frogère. I am the only one whom you know: henceforth, during your long journey, you will see faces wholly unknown to you. The Emperor, you are aware, is immovable in his resolves, and inexorable in his wrath. You had better, therefore, be resigned to your fate: you have nothing to hope. Tell me, then, quickly, what I can do for you."

"Speak for me to his Majesty."

"Not a word of that," said his friend. "Ask anything but that."

"If that be the case," said poor Frogère, "I have nothing to ask."

"And your money and trinkets," rejoined the officer, "you have left them all behind. Can I lodge them safely for you somewhere, until your return?"

"My return!" gasped Frogère; "then I am not exiled for life?"

"Of course not—only for three years. Take courage! they will soon pass away,—and then ——"

"Three years for an innocent word!" whined Frogère, and began anew to cry and complain.

But at this moment the soldiers entered, and, bandaging his eyes, they lifted him into the vehicle, and away it rolled again.

It seemed a very long stage,—for Frogère calculated that he had travelled a whole day, when the vehicle again stopped. As before, he was bandaged and led into a wretched hut, a counterpart of the first, and lighted by a piece of blazing pine-wood. The same coarse food was again placed before him. He looked at the faces around him. None that he knew—none that inspired him with comfort.

After several and similar journeys, the vehicle again stopped. By Frogère's estimate, as well as he could tell, he had travelled three days and nights. His eyes were bandaged as before; but, instead of being led, his guides seized him, and carried him for some time, until they placed him upon a wooden bench. He waited for a few moments, and won-

dered why the bandage was not removed. At last he heard soft whisperings, and then quick steps approaching. His hands were suddenly seized, and tied behind his back. He tremblingly asked what it meant, but received no reply. In another moment his coat was torn off his shoulders, and his breast laid bare. Frogère now thought that eternity, instead of Siberia, was to be the goal of his journey. "Take aim!" was the command of one whose voice he thought he knew—"*fire!*" and several shots were at once discharged. Frogère fell senseless to the ground. He was raised, unwounded, and whilst he was borne along he became sensible of a division of soldiers marching past him. Having been placed on a chair, his hands were unbound, and the bandage removed. He then found himself in the same room, at the same table, and in the same company, where that unhappy *bon mot* had escaped him. Opposite to him sat the Emperor. The astonishment, terror, and doubt, which alternately reflected in the poor actor's face, so greatly excited the risible faculties of Paul, that the entire company joined heartily in the mirth. Frogère fell in a swoon. The whole terrible trip had only lasted twenty-four hours. The Emperor had accompanied him in disguise all the time, and found immense delight in the prisoner's painful sufferings. Though used to comedies, it was long before the actor recovered from the sad dream of that imperial farce.

(B.)

EMPEROR ALEXANDER'S LAST JOURNEY TO TAGANROG.

From the Memoirs of Frederic Fayot, late Professor of the French language at the Imperial Institutions, St. Petersburg.

On my return from the baths of the Caucasus, whither I had gone for the benefit of my health, I stopped for a few days at Taganrog, where Alexander had recently arrived. The apparent object of his majesty's journey was to bring the Empress, who was dangerously ill, to the mildest climate of Russia. With the increase of danger, the Emperor's love for her likewise increased, calling her his angel, and dwelling on the purity of her love and heart. The journey had also an aim of a more political character. It was to give him an opportunity to visit the southern part of Russia, where he intended to introduce considerable alterations. Neither was he less influenced by another circumstance. He had been informed of agitations directed by a certain military party against his own family and the prerogatives of the high nobility; he therefore left St. Petersburg, to avoid being present at the disclosure of the conspiracy, in which so many members of high families were implicated, and for whose reprieve and pardon he expected to be distressingly importuned.

I frequently met him in the streets, where he walked every morning in the exclusive company of the Empress. A loving crowd surrounded them, and the remembrance of those walks and the acts of benevolence that resulted from them is the most touching of my recollections of Russia.

One morning I met the Emperor, who had just come out from a hut, whither he had brought assistance to an old bed-ridden widow. After addressing to her words of hope, comfort, and consolation, he took his leave, and left upon the table 500 roubles. About this time his face showed care and sorrow, though it had been observed that these changes dated from the time he had left the metropolis, where he evinced unusual emotions during the mass with which his journey was inaugurated.

Taganrog remained for some time the point whence Alexander made excursions to the surrounding parts. He visited the Danube districts, and was about proceeding to Astrachan, when he was interrupted by the unexpected arrival of Count Woronzoff, at that time governor of Odessa. He had come to propose a journey that was not to be delayed for a moment. Disturbances had broken out in the Crimea, and the imperial presence was necessary to quiet the popular feeling. Though the distance was considerable, Alexander yielded, and at once set out. He caught cold on his visit to the convent of Georgiewsky, which soon resulted in an attack of fever, and compelled him to make a stay at the castle of Count

Woronzow. Dr. Wylie had given him some medicine; but as he found himself worse, he gave orders for immediate return to Taganrog.

I saw him just entering the town. He sat in his carriage wrapped in a wide grey cloak; his face was very pale, and showed pain. It was soon known that he was dangerously ill.

Though he suffered much, he persisted in refusing medicine, and drove the doctor several times from his room, saying to the servants, "Give me ice-water, it cools me, but medicine only burns my inside." When pain had left him for a few moments, he wrote a letter, and having sealed it, said to his valet: "Extinguish the light, my friend; people outside might imagine that somebody was dead within." The Empress proposed to call in several physicians, but he rejected them all. His malady lasted a fortnight, and on the 1st December, 1825, at ten o'clock in the morning, he departed this life.

When he was laid out, his face was covered with a veil: it had become quite black. The corpse lay in state for three days, and was then removed to the church, where it remained for forty days, and afterwards carried to St. Petersburg, attended by the imperial aides-de-camp, three of whom sat behind the hearse. A squadron of Guard-Cossacks and a number of the suite and servants followed the body.

The affectionate attention of the Empress was touching in the extreme. She never left the couch of the august patient, who expired in her arms.

She assisted at all the funeral ceremonies at Taganrog, and after the lapse of four months departed for Kaluga, where she was to remain during the fine season; but she grew worse, and died shortly after her arrival. Wylie became melancholy and almost desponding. It was presumed that he would be in disgrace at the court, but it was not so. He was, on his return to St. Petersburg, well received by Nicholas, who appointed him his own physician in ordinary.

THE LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH OF THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER,

ABRIDGED FROM THE JOURNAL OF SIR JAMES WYLIE, BART.,* HIS PHYSICIAN IN ORDINARY.

At our departure from Orechow, the Emperor's valet, Feodorow, told me that his master was not well, and looked unusually pale. On our arrival in the evening at Mariampol, his Majesty sent for me. He was feverish. As we were to proceed on our journey on the morrow for Taganrog, I contented myself with

* Sir James was a Scotchman, and entered the Russian service as military surgeon in 1790. He was chosen as physician to the imperial court in 1798, and surgeon in ordinary to the Emperor Paul.

In 1814 the Emperor Alexander appointed him his physician in ordinary, and solicited George IV. to create him a baronet. He is reported to have died within the present year (1854) at St. Petersburg, leaving a large fortune to the Czar Nicholas.

ordering him a small glass of punch and warm clothing to produce perspiration. During the night the fever, however, increased, and the Emperor had not slept well. On visiting him in the morning he complained of general languor, headache, and more especially of pains in the loins. He looked pale, the nails of his fingers were discoloured, the eyes and the skin yellow—the latter cold, dry, and rough, while the tongue was furred and the pulse very high. It was not long before the whole body became hot, and his breathing heavy. I now recognised his illness to be an intermittent fever, combined with a bilious attack. I prescribed accordingly, which had the effect of reducing the pulse to 90. On the following morning I ordered him an infusion of senna, which he took, but could not be persuaded to take a second dose. He spent a restless night—the tongue was dry, and the pulse rose to 110. Very early next morning I found him almost in the same state of prostration, but he would not hear of medicine. "I have resigned myself," said he, "to the supreme decree of the Almighty, and have no confidence either in physic or physicians. Without the aid of the Power above, all human skill avails nothing." From that moment I continued to consult Dr. Stoffregen, physician to the Empress. In the night the Emperor was with much difficulty persuaded to take a spoonful of sudorific mixture, which gave him so much ease that he got up, and conversed cheerfully with those around him. Next morning he complained of a

pressure at the pit of the stomach, but refused all physic. After the lapse of a few hours he was induced by the Empress to take some medicine, but the pulse continued to beat 110, and a fit of faintness soon followed. The succeeding night he slept quietly, and without interruption, until seven in the morning, when bleeding from the nose ensued, and the pulse again rose to 110. On the next morning (24th Nov.) I found my imperial patient considerably worse; the fever was more violent — the head oppressed—the pulse from 110 to 120—and the breathing much heavier. The Emperor, however, insisted that he was not only better, but quite well. We applied to his head and hands cold acid bathings, but he would not swallow a drop of medicine. On the 25th of November we ordered the application of leeches to the neck, temples, and behind the ears; for two days he refused, but was at last persuaded to submit, as also to take some senna infusion. Hardly had he swallowed it when he was seized with shivering fits, which lasted until midday. There was no use of prescribing any more medicine, since he was sure to refuse taking it, and all that he would permit was his back and shoulders to be bathed with vinegar and water. Having drank two cups of green tea with lemon-juice, he got out of bed, shaved and washed himself, and then lay down again. He called me to his bedside, and tried to communicate something, but he could only utter, "My friend, what a deed! what a horrible deed!"

He was evidently in great mental excitement, and looked at me with flashing eyes—it was the first symptom of delirium. From that moment unconsciousness and delirium varied at short intervals. About three in the afternoon he had another violent attack of fever, and a few hours after he would no longer remain in bed. The consequence was a fit of faintness, during which he was brought back to the bed, and became afterwards more composed. Next morning (27th Nov.), about four o'clock, a burning heat and other fatal symptoms announced approaching dissolution. The Empress requested me to make his Majesty acquainted with his condition. It was a sad and distressing mission. The Emperor asked me, "Has it really come to this?" When I assured him of his danger he sent for his confessor, and received the sacrament. He passed the night in total stupefaction, and at eight o'clock in the morning the intellectual faculties ceased their operation. About five o'clock in the afternoon he fell into a death-like sleep, which lasted some time, when at eleven in the evening (the scarcely perceptible pulse beating 118 in the minute) the agonies of death commenced, which terminated his life the following morning (Dec. 1), at fifty minutes past eleven.

(C.)

THE MILITARY INSURRECTION.

All the regiments of the Guards were, on the morning, to take the oath of allegiance to the new Emperor. At noon the general of the Guards came to the palace, to announce that the oath had been taken by six regiments. No accounts had been received from the other regiments; but this circumstance was attributed to their barracks being at a greater distance. It was learned that four officers of artillery, having shown some opposition, had been put under arrest, and that the remainder of the artillery had unanimously taken the oath. Information was also brought that three or four hundred men of the regiment of Moscow had quitted their barracks, and were advancing towards the Place du Senat, with their colours flying, proclaiming the Emperor Constantine. The people began to assemble in that square and about the palace, and shortly after the Emperor arrived, without any suite, and was received with demonstrations of joy and respect. The two companies of the regiment of Moscow persisted in their revolt. They drew up in a square battalion before the palace of the Senate, and were accompanied by seven or eight subaltern officers, joined by some persons in civil costume,

whose presence intimated their intention. Some of the mob crowded around them, shouting repeated huzzas. The concentration of a faithful and resolute military force now became indispensable. The Emperor ordered a battalion of the Guards to march, and placed himself at their head, resolving not to employ force unless absolutely necessary. General Miloradowitch, governor of St. Petersburg, now approached the disaffected, hoping that his voice would suffice to recall them to their duty. A pistol fired by a person dressed in a frock coat mortally wounded that brave officer. Meanwhile, by order of the Emperor, the battalion of Sappers, and the Chasseurs of Finland, who had reinforced the guard of the castle, proceeded with the Horse-guards, the Grenadiers of Paulowsky, the Chevalier-guard, and the brigade of artillery, to join his Majesty. The insurgents had been increased by a few soldiers of the grenadiers of the Body-guard, and also by a number of marines of the guard.

The Grand Duke Michael, who had lately arrived at St. Petersburg, being informed that some of the regiments in revolt belonged to his division, proceeded alone, and without force caused six companies, which had at first refused, to take the oath; but they had not, like their comrades, marched to the square of the Senate-house. Towards night, when all gentle means to quell the tumult had proved fruitless, and when even the voice of the metropolitan of St. Petersburg had been disregarded,

the Emperor decided on using force. Some pieces of cannon were brought, and after a few shots were fired the square was cleared. The cavalry charged, and routed the remnant of the rebels in all directions, who in their flight threw down their arms, and begged for mercy. Before midnight more than five hundred had been seized by the patrols, and the most guilty of the officers arrested. The chief conspirators, Colonel Pestel,* Lieutenant-colonel Marawieff-Apostal; Lieutenants Relizeff, Riumin, and Kachowsky, were hanged at St. Petersburg; while Prince Trubezkoy, and the poet Bestuzzeff, together with forty three more, were transported to Siberia. The punishment of a few of the condemned was afterwards mitigated, among whom was the poet who had been exiled to the steppes of Irkuzk, but who was eventually sent to the Caucasus, where he ended his life in combat with the mountaineers. The guilty divisions of the Guard expiated their offence in the wars against the Persians and the Caucasian tribes.

* By some mismanagement, the rope by which Pestel was suspended gave way, and the condemned fell unhurt to the ground. When he arose, and the executioner again fastened the rope round his neck, he exclaimed, "They are so stupid, they don't know even how to hang a man!"

THE END.

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