

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

By CHARLES RIVET

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TRANSLATED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY
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RASPUTIN WITH SOME OF HIS ADEPTS

(Rasputin in the centre)

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INTRODUCTION

M. CHARLES RIVET, the author of this book, is the Petrograd correspondent of the *Paris Temps*. His knowledge of Russia is quite exceptional. He has been in that country since 1901, and speaks Russian. He went out first as a Professor and remained as a journalist and in both capacities he had special opportunities of mixing with the three great sections of Russian society: the aristocracy, the *bourgeoisie*, and the peasant class. His sympathies were always with the advanced thinkers, he had many friends among them, especially among the Cadets, and he was the avowed enemy of the old *régime*. In his letters to the *Temps* and the *Illustration* he attempted to awaken the French people to a sense of realities, to bring before them the truth about the Dual Alliance and to warn them of the dangers of secret diplomacy. His newspaper campaigns, somewhat shorn of their full value by the timidity of French statesmen in Russian matters and, later, by the Censorship, made him extremely unpopular with those who ruled the destinies of Russia. This was particularly the case in his attacks on the Minister Maklakof, in his sounding of the alarm when Krupp was about to become a

INTRODUCTION

large shareholder in the Putilof Munition Works, and in his denunciation of the weak diplomacy which enabled Berlin to send to Constantinople the Liman von Sanders Military Commission. "This man," said M. Sazonof, "is constantly putting his spoke in our wheels." And M. Rivet was arrested, in Petrograd, in the very thick of the war, as a first step to expulsion. But the Russian bureaucrats were afraid to carry out their intention and he was released.

His book consists of four parts, to which the three divisions roughly correspond. He has desired to put before the French public—in the first instance—the immediate causes of the Revolution, with a sketch of personalities and powers, to give a clear account of that Revolution and its effects, to describe the political elements composing the last Duma of the old era and the political groupings of post-Revolutionary days, and, lastly, to tell the French how and why they were misled about the Dual Alliance.

It will seem to British and American readers, friends of France before the war, and, since the war and Verdun, not only her friends but also her steadfast admirers, that M. Rivet has used towards his country a merciless severity. It was indeed suggested that in the translation this section—the last in the book—should be omitted, but there is in it so much fruitful unveiling of the crooked ways of diplomatists, of the timidity of Governments and the secrecy of agreements affecting, in their repercussions, the whole world, that the translator using his discretion retained practically all that M. Rivet had set down. This was not done in order that the private affairs of France should be held up to the ironical inspection of

INTRODUCTION

foreigners, but in order that certainly the British should ask themselves whether they have much to boast about in their attitude towards true Russia both before and during the war. Was Russia known in English-speaking countries as well as she should have been? Did we not also believe in the fiction of a Russian Colossus? Did not educated men vouch for the accuracy of a report that vast numbers of Russian soldiers were passing through England on their way to help France, when the truth was that Russia was hard put to it to transport enough troops to fight on her own frontiers—to say nothing of a railway system which at that time was altogether incapable of carrying any troops to the Northern port? And have there not been democratic Englishmen who have reviled the Revolution because of its effect on military operations?

The truth is that, apart from a small number of men such as Mr. Stephen Graham and the Hon. Maurice Baring, Englishmen knew nothing of Russian internal affairs, and even those who did know were apt to put upon Russian things not a "realistic" but a personal interpretation.

It is M. Rivet's contention that the Russian Revolution has at least freed us from the dead weight of Tsarist incompetence and the duplicity of irresponsible favourites. We were, before, never certain of what might happen on the Russian front, now—grimly—we are ready for the worst and rely upon other fronts for a decision in this war. M. Rivet further contends that the Revolution, in itself, and without any military victories by Russian Armies, in spite of the bitter disappointments of recent months, is the

INTRODUCTION

greatest blow struck at Prussianism in the whole war. His book should prove that to sceptical readers.

However, the purpose of this introduction, which takes the place of the original French introduction addressed exclusively to the French, is not to lecture English readers on their ignorance of foreign affairs. The translator himself, though cosmopolitan by education and inclination, confesses that he was shamefully ignorant of the movements which have shaken Russia to its foundations. M. Rivet's book is one of several that have served to correct deficiencies in his outlook. It is hoped that this English translation will help others not only to form a just appreciation of Russia risen from the dead, but also to determine that secret diplomacy shall be banished from our dealings with foreign countries, and that the new democracies shall be free to decide their own fates without the oblique because timid perversion of party politicians working in the dark.

CONTENTS

PART ONE—UNKNOWN RUSSIA

CHAPTER I

OF THE RUSSIANS IN GENERAL

	PAGE
The Russians as seen from France (<i>and England</i>)— General features of the Russian character—A mentality resulting from their political system— Classes in Russia—The peasants—The middle class—The aristocracy—Their social relations . . .	15

CHAPTER II

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

Nicholas II.—The Empress Alexandra Feodorowna— The Grand Dukes—The Court—Intrigues and secret influences—Rasputin and the tragi-comedy of Tsarkoyë-Selo	27
--	----

CHAPTER III

THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT AS IT WAS

The parody of constitutional government — The Ministers—The Parliament—The real masters of Russian policy: the <i>tchinovniks</i> who had remained the <i>Guard of Ivan</i> —Prussian traditions—German pushfulness—Police rule and its victims	81
---	----

CONTENTS

CHAPTER IV

RUSSIAN POLICY UNDER THE LAST TSAR

PAGE

The policy of "pacification"—Stolypin—The Black Hundreds—Repression—Nationalism—Khokovtsof's <i>laissez faire</i> —Reaction becomes more pronounced—The period of weak policy—Goremykin—Stürmer, Protopopof and the era of folly	106
--	-----

PART TWO—THE REVOLUTION

CHAPTER I

POLITICAL PARTIES BEFORE THE CHANGE

The parties in the Duma—Octobrists, Progressives and Cadets—Labour deputies and Social-Democrats—The Centre party—The Right—Parties as they will be	135
---	-----

CHAPTER II

THE GENESIS OF THE REVOLUTION

Origins of the conflict between the rulers and the nation—Its first manifestations—Waiting Russia—Russia becomes tired of waiting—The crisis becomes more marked—Last provocative acts—The climax approaches	146
--	-----

CHAPTER III

THE EPILOGUE

The days of the Revolution—The Revolution and Nicholas II.—His abdication and his arrest—The Empress—The end of a reign—The character of the Revolution	169
---	-----

CONTENTS

CHAPTER IV

AFTERMATH OF THE REVOLUTION

	PAGE
Political currents of Free Russia—The Liberals—The various Socialist shades—The war and the Russian Socialists	202

PART THREE—FRANCE AND RUSSIA

CHAPTER I

THE FRANCO-RUSSIAN ALLIANCE

The Dual Alliance, what it was in the mind of its initiator and the French conception—The Potsdam Agreement and its consequences—The problem of armaments—The mistaken attitude of France—The mythical strength of Russia of the Tsars—Russian bluff	219
--	-----

CHAPTER II

FRANCE AND THE RUSSIAN NATION

The ignorance of Russia and its consequences—The Government was not the nation—The cry of the Russian people—A new definition of the Franco-Russian Alliance—The paradoxical position of France and Russia yesterday and to-day	235
CONCLUSION	244

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

RASPUTIN WITH SOME OF HIS ADEPTS	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
THE TSAR AMONG HIS OFFICERS	<i>Facing page</i> 30
THE EX-EMPRESS ALEXANDRA FEODOROWNA	38
THE MINISTER MAKLAKOF.	66
M. PURICHKEVITCH.	76
GENERAL SUKHOMLINOF	114
BORIS STÜRMER, PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL	124
MONSIEUR MILIUKOF	164
BARRICADES AND GUNS ON THE LITEYIN PROSPEKT	170
A STATE PRISON (LE CHÂTEAU DE LITHUANIE) AFTER IT HAD BEEN SACKED AND BURNT	184
MEETING OF SOLDIERS IN THE DUMA BUILDING IN THE FIRST DAYS OF THE REVOLUTION	196
NATIONAL MILITIA FIRING ON A HOUSE SUSPECTED OF HARBOURING POLICE DURING THE REVOLUTION	214

PART ONE

UNKNOWN RUSSIA

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

CHAPTER I

OF THE RUSSIANS IN GENERAL

The Russians as seen from France (*and England*)—General features of the Russian character—A mentality resulting from their political system—Classes in Russia—The peasants—The middle class—The aristocracy—Their social relations.

THE idea which people abroad have formed about Russia has always been rudimentary. Beside the Cossack, that bugaboo of legends, we knew only the amiable and cosmopolitan man of the world, possessing a charm somewhat accentuated by a kind of Oriental felinity, whom we used to meet as a compulsory patron of Palace Hotels in watering places or seaside resorts.

Beside that type there was another, the hairy student, Utopian dreamer, gentle anarchist or simply a revolutionary hunted down in his own country, whom one met in capitals hospitable to exiles or in university towns. For the most part Jewish or Caucasian, the latter type was no more representative of the race than the 'princes' who were the glittering guests of international caravanserais, endowed by toadies

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

with a patent of nobility unknown in the land of Tolstoy.

To these odd samples the knowledge of most of our countrymen was limited. And yet they believed they knew the Russians thoroughly well, for as someone has too justly said, truth ceases to have any kind of importance in the eyes of Frenchmen (*and the English*) once they have made up their minds about anything.

* * *

In Russia, under a variety of aspects, our Ally shows to the observer, no matter what class is in question, certain general features which we recognise in greater or less degree, according to external influences, in most of the Slav peoples.

Our selfish and petty Western civilisation has ceased to show anything like the extraordinary generosity of the Russian, in the freedom with which he expends himself, both in personal energy and in criticising men and things. Although a kind of cruelty does, we admit, reveal itself in him under the stress of excitement, contrasting notably with that lymphatic melancholy so well interpreted by his admirable folk-lore, the Russian, speaking generally, is infinitely gentle and of a great natural kindness, compassionate as a true Christian should be, as hospitable as an Oriental.

But if he has every virtue a kind heart can give he is almost altogether lacking in the qualities of character. Russian history supplies the reason. Passing, after centuries of Tatar oppression, under the rod of the Muscovite Tsars, the Russian people was in such a condition that even in the twentieth century it had never exercised the most elementary liberty. It is barely sixty years since serfdom was abolished.

OF THE RUSSIANS IN GENERAL

Wholly given up to the sadness of a social condition which since it prevented all individual development rid him of all need to perfect, to strengthen his personality, the Russian has preserved a sentimental nature, a mystical nature, without the saving qualities of character. His master first, and, above the master, the State, have been for the Russian peasant tyrannical guardians, but none the less guardians, who rid their wards of all need for moral decisions as well as of all material cares. And that is why one finds in the Russian an almost complete lack of self-discipline as well as of the sense of responsibility. He is an extremist because he is young, enthusiastic as artists are, impulsive in the manner of a sensitive who lacks the mind that will think things over soberly ; he is often at the mercy of a whim, because he is not guided and urged on by the will, which is both rudder and goad. He would be bubbling over with life if the apathy conditioned by the climate in which he lives did not later restrain the vigour of his youthful growth. To the full vivacity of the Latin is united the dreaminess of the Oriental. Although endowed with considerable common sense he nevertheless lets himself drift into Utopian dreams because he lacks a foundation which would have given him more individuality and practical sense. He is more Oriental than Occidental : the neighbourhood of Asia and his Tatar slavery have left in him deeply cut impressions. He is inclined to compromise others through laziness or because he has not always—once more a throw back to a past ruled by terror—the courage of his opinions. But when he does possess the courage of his opinions he will go to the very extremes of self-sacrifice.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

This nation, new to our civilisation has, in fine, at the moment of its liberation, a mentality made up of resignation and deceitfulness, the result of the servitude to which its fate for so long subjected it. Its past political system inculcated only passive qualities, twisting out of shape a generous nature, stunting the kindest impulses. It has made of it a gossamer open to all generous theories but too often unresponsive to the sense of realities.

* * *

In the Russian peasant, strongly marked we find the general characteristics of the portrait we have sketched above.

The *Mir*, that rural communism which made of every Russian mujik a member of the community and not a free peasant living on his own soil, has powerfully diminished in him the spirit of initiative. It is but a short time ago that the Government Offices were guiding every step he took ; he scarcely knows how to find his way alone. Independence, in its early days, can only cruelly embarrass him.

He is a good, docile creature not lacking in shrewdness but childish and ingenuous as any lack-wit. The old *régime* used him too long as a prolific source of revenue by making easy for him the consumption of spirits.

In this way, Government got rid of the more complex task which would have consisted in developing the nation's resources by increasing through social reforms the purchasing power of the rural community. Besides, so long as the populace drank it would not ask for the spiritual nourishment which they had no

OF THE RUSSIANS IN GENERAL

desire to give it. By its sodden stupefaction it was quite easy to maintain it in a state of black ignorance.

It appears that a political manœuvre of Count Witte when attempting to upset Kokovtsof was responsible for the "going dry" of Russia. The author of the spirit monopoly made a speech in which he said he was profoundly shocked at the sums his successor expected from that source of income, making thus of the Russian budget a "drunken budget." The Tsar was so struck by this that he forbade the sale of spirits and thus won for the Russian peasant the abolition of this new form of slavery.

Delivered from the dangerous Nirvana of his vodka and liberated to-day from the shackles of an ever-suspecting government or from the tergiversations of a clergy in the pay of the despots, the Russian rustic will find growing in him the will to strive, the need for activity, the sense of economy which now he lacks. He will gain greater power to resist temptation, greater faith in himself, and as a corollary, he will show less facility for obeying orders.

With the disappearance, at least to a great extent, of drunkenness, the Russian village will no longer have the desolate and poverty-stricken appearance which now so painfully strikes the stranger. Its inhabitant will forget that brutish illiterate life in which the cruelty of the Tatar blood struggled for mastery with the gentleness of a Christian mystic, that pitiable life painted by a master hand in the works of Maxim Gorki.

* * *

The middle class in Russia, a class of intellectuals or of people with means, dates from yesterday.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

It is composed either of sons of peasants whom a university career has enabled to jump a step in society, and to whom it has given the right to suppress on their passports the mention of their first condition in order to substitute the description "town-inhabitant," or of members of the lesser nobility whose patents have been acquired by State service, in the Government offices or in the army. The ranks of this class have been swollen by men who though still peasants have become wealthy in trade, the "merchants of first or second rank," as they were defined by the compulsory classification which existed for Russian society under the dead Tsardom.

This young *bourgeoisie*, composed as it is of disparate elements, lacks homogeneity. It is most diverse as regards the intellectual average and varies in its tendencies according to its diverse origin. Thus, the university class, the liberal professions, showed themselves to be possessed, speaking generally, of advanced ideas; on the other hand the Government servants for the most part, because interest bade them, and the merchants by the strength of their peasant traditions, ranked among the conservative elements. It must be said, however, that during the reign of Nicholas II., and especially since the War, the Government had powerfully contributed towards the creation of a singleness of political opinion in this class, with rare exceptions. It had done this by its gross incapacity or by its crimes which revolted honest consciences. Indeed, if it was the blind mob which opened the flood-gates of riot in Petrograd in that memorable month of March, 1917, it is the "bourgeois" of the Duma who canalised its rush and transformed it, with

OF THE RUSSIANS IN GENERAL

the help of the army which for a moment wavered, into a revolution.

The Russian middle class—described by some as the “intellectuals,” wrongly since as we have seen it includes men whom wealth alone has enabled to rise socially—is numerically slight compared with the rural mass which constitutes about eighty per cent. of the population. It possesses also the essential characteristics which we gave above. These may be attenuated, hidden beneath a wash of Westernism, but if the cultured Russian or the Russian of merely superior social rank is ideally gifted, on the other hand he shows the same absence of energy and of the sense of realities which seem to be the distinctive mark of the nation. We find in this class the dreamer with the rich imagination superbly ignorant of practical conditions. We find the poet who in the generosity of his enthusiasm adopts fine ideas but shows himself incapable of attempting to realise them. He lacks system and perseverance and is without any talent for organisation. He shows himself to be inconstant and capricious. To base any hopes upon him is to court disappointment.

But on the other hand what a master-conjurer that “bourgeois” will sometimes prove in the realm of thought. What a superiority he shows over his Western brother-bourgeois whom modern life has diminished to its own image, swallowing him up in material cares and lowering him to pursue purely material joys.

In the Russian bourgeois—how those too ill-mated words are little adapted to the man they would describe—as in the Russian in general, there is no

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

measure for time nor for space. The carefully ordered life of our countries is doubtless impossible in Russia, but how much life gains there in extensiveness what it loses in intensity of action.

* * *

We now come to the Russian aristocracy. We must not confuse it with the handful of adventurers whom we have seen circling about the stricken palace of Tsarkoyë-Selo. Such men as the Princes Kropotkin, Lvof, Troubetskoy, Count Tolstoy and so many others are amongst the purest and finest defenders of Russian democracy. There was an aristocracy which fought by the side of the people for the people contrary to its own class interest. We have just named its noblest representatives.

There was an aristocracy which satisfied itself with the enjoyment of its worldly goods, an aristocracy without aim in life, becoming Government officials or serving in the army as a method of killing time, spending its days partly on its own properties, partly in foreign capitals and watering places. It had a special liking for Paris, Biarritz, the Côte d'Azur, Florence, Homburg, the sporting centres of the Tyrol. It was, above all, cosmopolitan; its action upon the affairs of its own country must be reckoned as nil.

Finally, there was the aristocracy—partly German by origin—whose whole evil activity has been concentrated upon three names: Nicholas II., the Empress, Rasputin. Such are the Frederiks, the Benckendorffs, the Graabes, the Nilofs, Voyekofs, Tatischevs, to give only a few names. We shall recite elsewhere its dire deeds, even to the master whom it pretended to serve.

OF THE RUSSIANS IN GENERAL

The Russian of high birth has generally had a most careful education. From an early age he is given over to the care of foreign governesses and tutors who make of him a remarkable linguist. He is an accomplished man of the world, a *grand seigneur* in his manners, giving his money lavishly and lavishing his personal charms. He well knows by his pleasant ways how to please his company, he likes to astonish by his largesse his equals in rank of Western countries whom smaller means or greater prudence compel to a cautious moderation.

Under this appearance of a seductive European, the Russian still reveals himself. The lack of restraint in the private life of the aristocrat shows the same lack of discipline as that from which his middle-class and rural-class compatriots suffer. He is indolent and weak-charactered as they are, and as they do he obeys impulses and becomes the slave of a whim. He is sometimes a wit, often a man of warm heart, a man of character never.

* * *

Taken in the mass the Russian aristocracy has shown itself relatively kind to its former serfs. For the most part it lived on a familiar footing with them, in a sort of Biblical simplicity. The Russian is essentially democratic in his life, and one did not find in the relations between nobles and commoners that feudal spirit which characterises, for instance, the relations between the Polish lords and peasants. It must be carefully noted that the Russian nobility has always had a share in the requests for social reform put forward by the country under the rule of the Tsars.

But its privileges, the liberties it too often took,

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

its landed wealth, fabulous for a few great proprietors of entailed estates, constituted an anachronism the unfairness of which was keenly felt by the mujik, little developed though he might be. That is why, although the peasant could not be said to hate the descendants of his *boyars*, the first thing the country people did in the revolution of 1905 was to burn and pillage their domains.

If the landed nobility took a kind of pride in making itself simple and easy of access for the man of the soil, it showed itself arrogant with the "bourgeois," actually renouncing its liberal opinions if it had to do with an intellectual or by its manner showing its difference in rank to the parvenu of the merchant class.

The intellectual class, for its part, returned a thousandfold this contempt for a caste whose superiority was only maintained by force. Its sympathy was reserved for the disinherited mujik, and it spent its time secretly opening the eyes of the peasant to the hardships of his condition.

The merchant who remained a peasant by the defects of that class showed himself as tricky to his former companions as he was obsequious to the nobles of his country, buying from the former, selling to the latter without troubling about the wretchedness of the one or the insufferable arrogance of the other. His motto being *beati possidentes*, he had very little truck with politics which would have injured his business prosperity, his sole care.

* * *

In Russia, modern progress up to the present has superimposed itself without transition on medieval

OF THE RUSSIANS IN GENERAL

customs. The twentieth century bestrides the fifteenth. The Middle Ages were apparent on all hands, in the institutions which Tsardom has just bequeathed as well as in the raw types which used to jog elbows with you, elemental, virgin souls, with the minds of gossellers whom we used to know among us in former days, with roughly and rudely modelled features on which the complexity of our European existence has not yet imprinted its stamp of exhaustion and urban mannerism. And in a setting of our day to see this world of bygone times, these customs of centuries long past, those ideas which have remained the property of generations long dead in our Western world, was to suffer a veritable impression of complete chaos.

We might be deceived by the outward appearance, but when one knew thoroughly what was once the empire of the Tsars one took note of the enormous distance which separated us from our Allies. It is probable that our only points of contact consisted of our common failings.

But Russia now free of its shackles, now travelling along the same road as its elders in civilisation, will by double marches catch up with them. Less servile than its masters of yesterday in copying Prussian methods it will rediscover with greater unity of purpose all its powerful originality. The various strata to be found in its social structure will heap together to merge harmoniously. Russia will develop, will organise itself, the types it used to exhibit to us, those pariahs and political martyrs, those mystical seers, as well as those adventurers or those social pirates returning as it were from the fabulous days of Byzantium and the darkest depths of history, will, one and all, disappear.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

The fatherland of such men as Solovief, Kropotkin, Kovalevsky will take its place in the concert of European nations to revivify our old Continent by the freshness of sentiments, the exaltation of a new convert, the sublime ingenuousness of those generous children—our friends the Russians.

CHAPTER II

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

Nicholas II.—The Empress Alexandra Feodorowna—The Grand Dukes—The Court—Intrigues and secret influences—Rasputin and the tragi-comedy of Tsarkoyë-Selo.

THE character of the Emperor Nicholas II., a swiftly passing, dimly seen figure in the mystery of an inaccessible palace, will some day give historians pause.

The French (and English) newspapers had portrayed him as an enlightened despot to whom the War had revealed the dangers of an irresponsible bureaucracy, as one who meant from thenceforward to call to his side for the purpose of government the living forces of the nation. That was the purest imagination. The real Nicholas II. had unfortunately no resemblance to that fictitious creature. He bore the same name, that was all.

The fact is, the Tsar did not understand his people, had no system, no policy, unless it was—quite as much owing to self-infatuation as to the worship he had for autocracy—the intention to maintain intact the rule of absolutism.

He has been called weak. That opinion is erroneous, at least in part. Nicholas II. has shown on the con-

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

trary, in spite of certain vacillations, a remarkably logical sequence in his thoughts and in his acts when the prestige of the Crown and what he took to be its interests were in question. He had one dominant thought which will be found to have guided all his deeds—it was to bequeath to his descendants a patrimony not less than that he had received from his ancestors. He inherited that conception from his father. One day when Alexander III.—changing his opinion after a first impulse which had made him tear up on his accession the scheme for a Constitution worked out by Alexander II.—desired in his turn to grant a Charter to his people he consulted the Procurator of the Synod Pobiedonotsef who replied to his Imperial master: “Sire, you are the chief of a heritage of which you have not the right to give away the minutest particle.”

Alexander III. took the advice to heart and spoke no more of a Constitution. His son, who worshipped his memory, a worship to which the French owed his fidelity to the alliance, followed the example of the man he wished to take for his model. And Nicholas II. was wont to say in a sentence which summed up his views: “There are two black days in the calendar of my life: those of Tshushima and of the 17th of October, 1905.” The defeat in the Far East and the Constitution granted as a result of the Revolution were two wounds from which he never recovered.

So it was easy to understand, when one knew that fundamental characteristic in the psychology of the sovereign, his persistence in surrounding himself with men who, in point of fact, worked against his interests. Such men as Sukhomlinof, Goremykin, Maklakof,

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

Stürmer, Protopopof, to mention only his last Ministers, took care to keep constantly before him no subject but the necessity to strengthen continually the absolute autocracy. Goremykin, interpreting with a flatterer's shrewdness the patriotic wisdom of the Duma, immediately after the prorogation he had ordered, came to tell the Emperor (scarcely two years ago), "I beg your Majesty's pardon for my weakness. I nearly became afraid, afraid of a revolution with which they threatened me if we dismissed the Chambers ; but it is only children with whom we have to do !" Sukhomlinof, swaggering in the uniform of a Grodno Hussar, came, for his part, to assure the Emperor that the army, ready "to the last button" for a possible war, was devoted to him. Later, Protopopof, at the same time as Rasputin, a Protopopof mazed, half-mad with wild dreams of the magnificent future he saw opening before him, came in his turn to echo the sly peasant of Pokrovsk and to assure his master that God and the Holy Spirit approved of the righteous work accomplished under the guidance of such counsellors.

This artificial atmosphere of confidence created about the Emperor's person fitted in too well with the ideas which possessed him to make him take seriously the salutary warnings which were not lacking. The dignitaries of the Empire very unwillingly took upon themselves the ungrateful *rôle* of those messengers of classical literature whose duty it was to carry bad news to monarchs. None the less there were men who dared the deed.

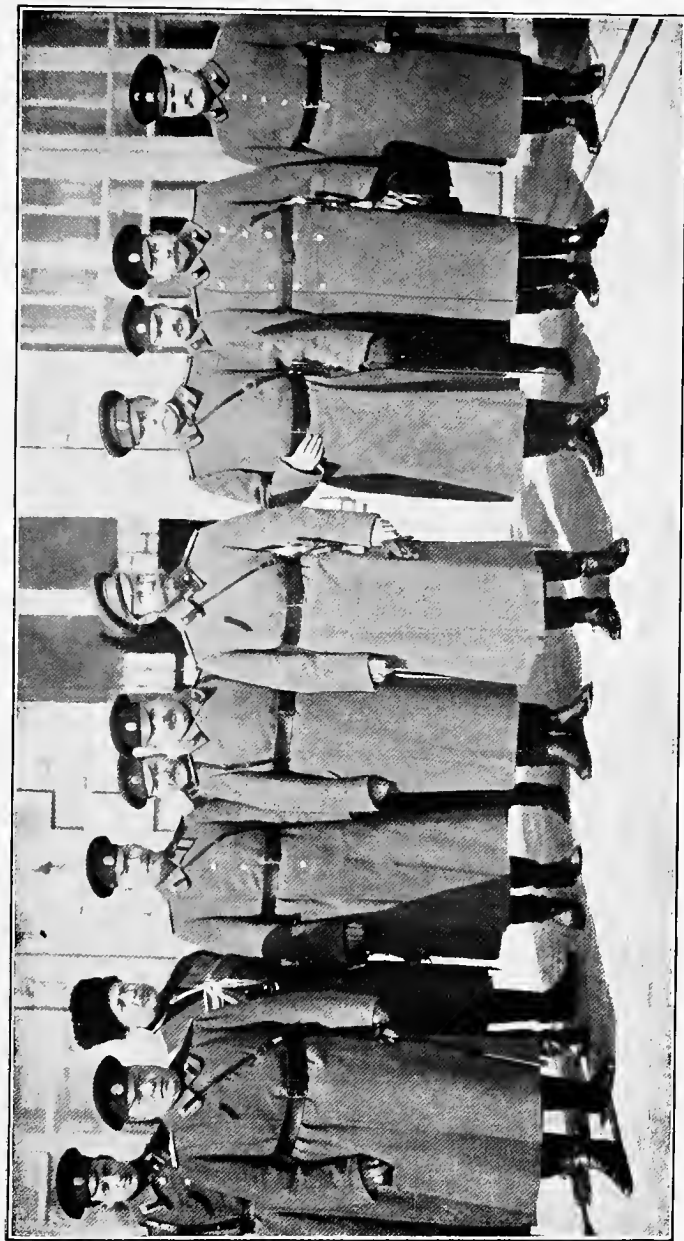
Count Vorontsof-Dachkof, Lieutenant-General of the Caucasus, who had been a personal friend of Alexander III., after presenting his report to Nicholas

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

II., shortly before the war, at the palace of Livadia, spoke to him with the boldness which characterised him. After the official conversation, replacing by familiar speech the ceremonious language of the high official, he said: "Now I must talk to thee. Dost thou know that with thy Rasputin fellows thou art going to thy doom, that thou art gambling away the throne of thy child?" The exhortation was long, the old servant eloquent. The Emperor, lying huddled on a settee, ended the interview by crying out with a sob: "Why did God confide to me so heavy a task?" The next day, Vorontsof-Dachkof saw him in the park playing with his son and that very Rasputin!

And earlier than that, Monsieur Gutchkof was to be found denouncing before the Duma the scandal of that sexually-perverted peasant's presence at Court, and prophesying the direst consequences. Kokovtsof also loyally warned the Tsar of the effect produced on the country by the low intrigues of courtiers. So too Messrs. Sazonof, Krivochein, General Polivanof, signed an address begging the Tsar not to prorogue the Duma, a dangerous measure which Goremykin was suggesting. So too Monsieur Rodzianko courageously brought to the Palace the painful echoes of the Duma's accusations.

The Emperor had a marked aversion for all those who came thus to tell him the truth. Messrs. Kokovtsof, Sazonof, Krivochein, General Polivanof, all paid for their sincere conduct, one after the other, by the loss of their offices. That too was the determining factor in the dismissal of Monsieur Trepof. And Monsieur Rodzianko, whom the Emperor called the "arch-deacon" because of his deep voice prophesying evil,



THE TSAR AMONG HIS OFFICERS

(The officer on the left is the Grand Duke Dmitri concerned in the murder of Rasputin, the Tsar is in the centre.)

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT.

also lost, by his outspokenness, the sympathy of his sovereign.

This monarch, indeed, never called for the help of councillors of their standing until he was afraid. And then he became thoughtful, confiding, and would propose of his own accord measures which he had refused the day before. But as soon as his fear diminished he would begin to set traps for the Minister who had spoken his mind, he would play tricks on him, then one fine day he would cause him to resign. Despot though he was he had not the kingly gesture which strikes to break at a blow, sure of his every stroke. It was in the dark that Nicholas II. attacked his adversaries; he was false and sly, cold and underhand.

All that might lessen his supreme power was methodically swept aside by him. As soon as a Minister began to loom large in public opinion his doom was sealed. His dismissal was ready for him. Monsieur Sazonof owed his in part to his great popularity. When Stolypin was murdered before his monarch's eyes, the Tsar had not a single impulse of sympathy for that man who had wished to consolidate his throne, and left the theatre where the murder had taken place without even approaching the fatally wounded man, who with the death-rattle in his throat made a last effort to bless by the sign of the Cross the Cæsar for whom he was dying. "Stolypin eclipsed me" was the only funeral oration pronounced by the Imperial lips on the dead Prime Minister, on the morrow of his interment.

Nicholas II. never knew how to make himself beloved, even by his most confidential servants. And he himself, outside his family, never loved anything or

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

anyone. Suspicious because he had been too often deceived, he never opened himself to his familiars. He had favourites but never any confidants. He would disgrace and dismiss his most devoted Ministers with an ease which disaffected most of those who had taken on the heavy task of governing under his ægis. Count Witte and others, as we have seen, were "sacked" like any servant. His *fidus Achates*, Prince Orlof, suffered the same fate for having dared to criticise Rasputin. Before them, Count Witte, who knew his way about the palace of Tsarkoyë-Selo, one day said, thoroughly disillusioned, to General Kuropatkin, who was going to present his first report as Minister of War, "Beware of the gentle eyes you are about to see!"

His egoism was only equalled by his boredom. He possessed no interests, no hobby, he did nothing with passion or even with average keenness. In order to please him it was necessary to flatter him; to continue in his favour it was necessary to amuse him, and above all never to speak to him of serious matters, nor point out to him difficulties or obstacles. He took offence at any resistance just as he displayed a real aversion for discussion; for that reason he always appeared to agree with the opinion of whoever was speaking to him. How many Ministers there were who thought they had convinced their Sovereign because he had advanced no objection to their arguments, and who on the morrow learnt by the papers that their health made a rest necessary for them!

It is true, however, that apart from his rigorous adhesion to the creed of divine absolutism, the last of the Russian autocrats showed himself a man of weak

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

character, unable to take decisions, open to every suggestion of his circle, so that he would often countermand an order he had given but a short while before.

German influence certainly made itself felt in the acts of Nicholas II. ; his first resistance to the Polish reforms, his repugnance to conceding anything to new conditions, arose without doubt, at least in part, from the self-interested advice of William II., transmitted by the Tsarina. But it must be emphasised that never would the undoubted prestige of the German Emperor in the eyes of his relative have made the latter abandon his line of conduct towards France : the shade of Alexander III. was more powerful than the persuasive messages of William.

Separated from his people and from outside events by the screen of Court intriguers, the Tsar appeared to the public only as a fitful vision at some official ceremony. And on such occasions he was timid of aspect, anxious, his gestures were nervy and jerky. He felt comfortable, in his element, and unsuspecting only in the bosom of his army. At the mess of officers of the Guard, at some regimental festivity, Nicholas II. let himself go, became loquacious, familiar. He would even get drunk at times. On the morrow, in the forlorn surroundings of the park of Tsarkoyë-Selo, the Emperor would become the distant autocrat, discouraging advances by a mind working on peculiar lines, the semi-Asiatic potentate whom his Ministers never approached without a certain apprehensiveness.

This was the man who, during the revolutionary street-riots of 1905, replied to a dignitary tremblingly bringing news of the fight raging in the capital :

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

"Dear me, what interesting times we live in." Then he added in French: "Moi, ça m'asticotte!" (That sort of thing "gets my goat.")

The Tsar saw what was going on round him. But in his opinion, the good of his people did not require a diminution of the prerogatives he held by divine right. The mystic that he was did not consider it right to yield what he believed it his duty to maintain intact.

He repeated on his own behalf, and as he thought with better reasons than a Western potentate, those words of William II.: "My royal power comes to me by the grace of God; it comes neither by parliaments nor assemblies nor by popular votes." Those who spoke to him of indispensable votes seemed to him to be grossly mistaken or guilty of *lèse-majesté*. The people if it murmured was going beyond its rights. And as he desired sincerely, perhaps, the happiness of his subjects, which he thought he could best assure by keeping them enslaved, so he would sign without a qualm the death sentence of those who committed the crime of desiring his subjects' freedom.

Let us quote here, in corroboration of what has been said, the following article from the *Novoye Vremya* which appeared on the morrow of the *coup d'état*.

"When the Emperor Nicholas ascended the throne," wrote the Petrograd paper, "a dazzling horizon opened before him; he might well cherish the most brilliant hopes. But full of weariness, when he received but a few years later the delegates of the nation's representatives all he could find to reply to their timid requests was, 'Go, gentlemen, and abandon your illusions!' Russia wished to live free and in intimate

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

relations with its Sovereign, and the latter saw in that wish nothing but distorted dreams. For that matter, his pronouncements have never caused anything but despair or the bitterest disappointments.

"It seemed at one time that the Russo-Japanese War, and this war after it, had taken the scales from his eyes. But that was not so. He remained deaf to the cry of the whole nation, to the voice of the Duma, of the nobility, the Zemstvos, the Council of the Empire.

"Because he had placed his own interest above that of the Russian people, the Crown and the Sceptre, of which the flunkys of the Court had made too much use, have escaped from his hands."

Too many fraudulent courtiers had cast incense before him, as if he were an idol, for him to think he might be an object of hatred. The Tsar, badly advised, badly directed by a false conception of his rights and his duties, saw the discontent of his subjects growing, but did not know how to deduce a lesson from it. "What!" he cried out when one of his evil geniuses, Admiral Nilof, his *chef de pavillon*, handed to him the telegram of the President of the Duma giving him the news of the rising, "What! A revolution in Petrograd?" It was the cry of a Louis XVI. And thereupon this obstinate yet weak-purposed creature burst into tears before the immensity of a misfortune which swept thus suddenly upon him without his having till that moment suspected its approach.

The ikons before which that emperor-survival from the Middle Ages would cast himself in moments of depression had let him suppose, in their Byzantine ornateness, that time had not moved since the day of the

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

boyar Michael Romanof, his ancestor and the first elected Tsar of his dynasty.

* * *

It is always a delicate matter to write about a woman, of that woman especially, the Empress Alexandra Feodorowna, who was doubly hostile to us both as a German and a sovereign. And yet it is impossible to draw a good likeness of the dethroned Tsar if we do not accompany it by at least a sketch of the woman who symbolised the atmosphere in which Nicholas II. moved.

Alexandra Feodorowna, a minor princess from Hesse, remained for long a dim figure following in the wake of a monarch who himself did not seem destined to play a remarkable part in the history of his country. The young Sovereign, married like those of her rank, wielded in the beginning no power at all over the man to whom chance alone united her. The timid Nicholas II. had been given a captivating mistress by a father anxious to see him more "manly." He had been faithful to that liaison, and his marriage to a stranger who was intellectually his superior was at first for him only one of the inevitable obligations of his position. The Tsarina, on her side, did not seem to cherish for the Imperial companion they had given her any sentiment other than that which a life lived in common may produce. She had found at Court a handsome officer of whom she made the hero of her romance, vowing for him a profound affection, echoes of which formed important elements in the secret scandalmongering of the capital.

Although it is said in Petrograd that the Tsar may

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

have been unjustly saddled with the paternity of the Grand Duke Alexis, the birth of that child certainly brought husband and wife more closely together. As regards Alexandra Feodorowna, the mother was to silence the woman in her, and besides the woman was about to lose in a sufficiently mysterious manner the object of her dreams.

This death, joined to a religious disquietude which was already beginning to show itself, and to the anxiety left in her mind by the vision of revolution in 1905, made her give her whole self to the care of the delicate scion of the Romanofs, whose advent had created an intimacy, a community of cares for the future, between the two. It was from that date that she began to occupy in the mind and life of her husband the place which until then had been occupied by her mother-in-law, the Dowager Empress.

Unfortunately she did not make use of this to direct the wavering Nicholas II. towards ideas more modern than his narrow conception of autocracy. By her very origin more open to Western views, she could, if she had chosen, have let fresh air into that Asiatic Court which had only copied European Courts in their vices or their faults. She was a woman with a brain; she had the intelligence necessary to realise the danger which threatened her and her family, if they persisted in isolating themselves in the conceptions of another epoch in the midst of a nation which desired to live as a modern nation should.

She was never able to do so. The loss of one dear to her, the apprehensions for the safety of a son she worshipped, the inexplicable fear she felt for that Russia, so mysterious, so secret to her, from whose

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

dark depths rose, confusedly, the sound of threatening voices, had little by little brought the phlegmatic Teuton of former days, the convert to the Orthodox Church, to a state of mystical exaltation bordering on pathological disease. The unhealthy condition of her mind bereft her of all power to observe. She allowed herself to be lulled into confidence by the official applause which was the regular accompaniment of the rare excursions of the Imperial couple. She lent a too-willing ear to sycophants, and the Calvinist of yesterday now became the humble follower of the grotesque or filthy practices of Gregory Rasputin, that Siberian Cagliostro whose presence at Court she forced upon her weak husband, upon whom his influence came to exclude all others.

She was never popular. She soon became hated when she left her early reserve to interfere in all affairs of State, causing to be appointed or dismissed Ministers, high officials, bishops whose names were whispered to her by their friends at Court. A series of telegrams addressed by her to the Tsar, published by permission of the Provisional Government, show how much she busied herself with political matters. These telegrams are written in English, for the Empress spoke Russian rather badly, in spite of twenty-three years' stay in Russia. They are signed, as are those of the Tsar, with the pet names the couple gave each other. One of them, dated December 27, alluding to the trial of the too notorious policeman Manassevitch-Manuilof, private secretary of Stürmer, and arrested for blackmail, runs thus :

" I ask you to stop at once the Manuilof trial. The Court seems to be extremely severe towards him.



THE EX-EMPRESS ALEXANDRA FEODOROWNA.

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

Stop all in your own interest. It is absolutely necessary for your peace of mind.—ALEC.”

The Tsar replied: “I will stop the trial without delay.—NIKI.” Whereupon Alexandra expressed her satisfaction by the following words: “I thank you for your noble command of yesterday.—ALEC.”

And while she became a Russian reactionary the Tsarina still remained a German patriot, keeping up regular communication with the country of her birth. The Kaiser knew how to profit by this. It is through the Tsarina that he transmitted his messages, his ideas, or his suggestions to his cousin.

By playing up to the evil side of her part in this way—by virtue of a peculiar mental condition—the Empress could only do disservice to the causes dear to the hearts of her subjects. She injured her own family by keeping Nicholas II. in the close atmosphere of monastic walls, where the poor wretch found himself swayed this way and that between the respectful remonstrances of men like Kokovtsov or Rodzianko, the flatteries of a Maklakof or a Protopopof, and the religious humbug of a Rasputin whom he took for one of those *maly dushi*, weak-minded men supposed to be inspired of God, by whom the Muscovite Tsars, like our Kings of long ago, with their Court fools, allowed themselves to be abused and addressed with gross familiarity.

It is in that retreat, shut away from the outer world, that Alexandra Feodorowna, worked upon by her confidant, the Vyrubova woman, mistress of Rasputin, held sway. The German woman intrigued on behalf of the land of her birth; the mother in her incited the husband to maintain his power in its worn-

THE LAST \OF THE ROMANOFFS

out forms for the coming reign of that weakly Alexis Nicolaevitch who was the one bond of union in that ill-assorted household. The Tsar would always yield to her. Was he not a good husband and a good father? But he excused himself for his weakness, one day, by replying to the reproofs of Count Kokovtsov, "Rather twenty Rasputins than one hysterical woman!"

This woman had one noble moment. She, too, will have gone out, as a century ago the Austrian woman went, in a flash of beauty.

"You see before you only a little Sister of the Poor," she said to the rioters who burst through the iron railings of the Palace abandoned by its Cossack guard.

Nicholas II. also said a moving thing in his unguarded sincerity. "I have been deceived!"

Did he realise that above the self-interested counsellors there was one guilty woman, unconsciously guilty, the Empress herself, a Marie-Antoinette whom history, repeating itself, had placed at the side of Nicholas Romanof, in order to cloister him in a Byzantine Trianon, whose foul atmosphere was that of unhealthy religiosity, where the windows were closed, as against an evil wind, to the currents blowing from the whole country, laden with the prayers of a nation? That nation would have thrown itself at the feet of its Tsar if he had during his reign made but one move which deserved to be acclaimed.

* * *

The Grand Dukes appear to have formed, for some years, a circle altogether withdrawn from the Court, taking no part in the political intrigues which centred about the person of the Sovereign. They did but assist, heartbroken, at the sinister farce being played

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

out at Tsarkoyë-Selo. Their influence would certainly have been salutary to the throne if the family had been able to preserve any weight in the counsels of the Imperial couple, whose circle was very inaccessible.

At the beginning of the reign, the brothers of the deceased Emperor, the Grand Dukes Vladimir, Alexis, and Paul, enjoyed a certain amount of credit with their nephew. Then those great lords, little encouraged by their eldest brother to mix in affairs of State, attracted to Paris, and sickened by the provincialism of a Court which aped that of a little German principality, ceased of their own accord to keep in close touch with Nicholas II.

Vladimir and Alexis died, leaving behind them more lively memories in the French capital than in a fatherland too dull for those roystering goodfellows. The Grand Duke Paul, widower of a Greek princess, was banished for having contracted a left-hand marriage, in 1902, with Countess Hohenfelsen, whom he had caused to be divorced from Count Pistolkhors, an officer of the Guard.

In addition to that last uncle, exiled by him to satisfy the puritanical ideas of his wife, the Emperor had among his close relatives two sisters and a brother, the Grand Duke Michael, his mother's favourite.

Michael Alexandrovitch, who was not unlike his father, Alexander III., in his person, also had his openness of character. But, again like his father, his mind worked slowly, his intellect was not above the average, and for that reason he proved of little use to advise or help the Tsar. He also was exiled because of a romantic marriage contracted with a lawyer's daughter, who later was created a Countess

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

with the name of one of her husband's estates, Brassovo. The Grand Dukes Paul and Michael came back to Russia at the beginning of the war.

The two sisters of the Tsar lived very quietly in their palace at Petrograd. The Grand Duchess Olga had married an Oldenburg, the Grand Duchess Xenia had married the Grand Duke Alexander Michaelovitch. The son-in-law of the Grand Duchess Xenia is that very Prince Yussupof, Count of Sumarok-Elston, who executed justice upon Rasputin.

As a close connection of the family and one less colourless than the above, one must reckon also the aunt of the Emperor, widow of the Grand Duke Vladimir, the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna of Mecklenburg. It is said that the Emperor feared her. Extremely intelligent, free in her manners, a woman of considerable presence, she certainly overawed her nephew, who was always exceedingly shy with women.

The palace of Maria Pavlovna had become the meeting-place of the Romanof family, whom the ever-suspicious Alexandra kept away from the head of the dynasty. It has been said of the woman who has been called "the Grand Duchess Vladimir" that she dreamed of seeing one of her sons replacing on the throne the shadowy creature whose every deed brought him nearer to his doom. Her conversion to the Orthodox faith, in spite of the fact that she was a German princess, was thought to have been made with that intention. We have since seen that the Grand Duke Cyril, probably by her advice, has been the first of the family to pronounce himself on the side of the Revolution. If such projects were really entertained by Maria Pavlovna

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

they would not be a tribute to her perspicacity. For her three sons, Cyril, Boris, and Andrew, were not in the least popular. The first, married to the sister-in-law of the Empress, the divorced wife of the Grand Duke of Hesse, had had but one hour of glorious celebrity as the survivor of the man-of-war *Petro-pavlovsk*, sunk during the Russo-Japanese war. The second had distinguished himself only by a riotous life. The third was almost wholly unknown.

After the "Vladimir" family came the whole collection of cousins whose members did not even bear the title of Grand Dukes lest the list of these should exhaust infinity. It will be well to mention in the first place the sons of the former Field-Marshal, Grand Duke Michael, the "Michaelovitch" family. Of these the Grand Duke Nicholas, a well-known historian, an associate member of the Institut de France, the Philippe-Egalité of the family, feels himself more comfortable in democratic Paris, where he has many warm friends, than in that Rasputinian Russia which he was wont to denounce courageously. The others are the Grand Duke Sergius, one of the chiefs of the artillery, and the Grand Duke Alexander, married to the Emperor's sister.

Then came the "Nicholaevitch" family, the Grand Duke Nicholas, known to us as the Commander-in-Chief of 1914-1915, of whom the Tsar became jealous when he saw how popular he was, and who ruined himself in the opinion of the Tsarina by the cavalier bearing which the nobility of his character made him adopt towards Rasputin. The Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholaevitch seems to have been a soldier in every sense of the word. Although he despised Nicholas

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

Romanof as he deserved to be despised, he never treated him except as his Sovereign, and showed himself to be the most obedient of his subjects, the most deferential of his servants, whilst his namesake Nicholas of the Michaelovitch family, with his socialistic tendencies, always affected the most complete independence.

I remember an episode of minor importance in itself, which showed the three Nicholases in their true light. That was five years ago, during the festivities celebrating the centenary of 1812, on the plain of Borodino, at the foot of that redoubt of Chevardino where they had just unveiled the column erected by the society of the *Souvenir français* to the memory of the dead of the *Grande Armée*. The Emperor was present. Nervous in his gestures, anxious as usual, he kept curling the tips of his moustache, glancing with a certain apprehension at the bystanders, familiar French people whom one could not very well banish to a safer distance, as had just been done, during those days of commemoration, for the unconsidered fellows of the Russian crowd. Signatures were being appended to a record of the unveiling ceremony which General de Torcy was to take back to France. The Grand Dukes, one after the other, were signing their names below that of their sovereign lord. When the turn of Nicholas Nicholavitch arrived, he did what none of those before him had thought it necessary to do. He approached the Tsar and, with his heels together and his hand to his helmet, said, "May I have leave to sign?"

"Of course," replied the Tsar, in a bored tone. Meanwhile Nicholas Michaelovitch came up to the

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

group of French journalists who were present at this solemn reminder of the Great Epic of 1812 and, with his hands in the pockets of his military great-coat, said:

"Let us leave this little family party and talk of something more interesting . . ."

The former Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Armies has a brother—the Grand Duke Peter, married like himself to a Montenegrin princess. This Peter, who is anything but a courtier, avoided Court like the plague and spent most of his time in the Crimea.

Finally, there are the "Constantinovitch," quite young people whose father, Constantine, died during the war. He gave much of his time to the arts and leaves behind him some musical compositions which have been praised.

The Grand Duke Paul, of whom mention was made farther back, after his return to favour became an assiduous frequenter of Tsarkoyë-Selo. He was nevertheless unable to prevent the exile of his son, the Grand Duke Dmitri, implicated in the murder of Rasputin.

The daughters of the Emperor, of whom the eldest, Olga, was intended to be the wife first of that same Dmitri, then of the Crown Prince of Rumania, did not play an important part at Court. Too young to occupy there a position of prominence, they found themselves supplanted in the hearts of their parents by the Tsarevitch Alexis, upon whom the Emperor and Empress, ever anxious for his delicate health, lavished a thousand attentions. In order to please the father and mother, as well as to make sure of future

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

favours, the courtiers had made of that spoilt and wilful boy the centre of the Court.

* * *

As for the Court ! It had lost all brilliancy since the revolution of 1905. From that date, in order to safeguard himself and his family from all attempts, the Tsar had abandoned that Winter Palace against which had broken the first wave of the popular tide, twelve years ago. He had taken up his permanent residence at the gates of Petrograd, in the peaceful Tsarkoyë-Selo, where the shade of the great Catherine still seems to linger. There in the homely setting of a residence comparatively small Nicholas II. felt at ease, less crushed than in the immense building in the capital, more sure too, behind the Cossack cavalrymen of Kuban who kept watch and ward at his gates. The Empress found that she could regain there a little peace of mind, she who had been so terribly stirred by the sight of that populace which coming to the palace with a prayer on its lips had been unmercifully shot down beneath her windows, in the ghastly revolutionary days of October.

Since that withdrawal from society, parties and gala performances took place no more. All that remained were a few indispensable receptions, ceremonies absolutely necessary for official reasons, through which the Imperial couple would go, as through some piece of drudgery, and indeed as often as not the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna would take the place of the sick Empress, suffering from one of her attacks due to her maternal or religious terrors.

Official etiquette was relaxed, life dragged on wearily.

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

The aides-de-camp on duty, the Ministers coming to present their reports, were the only visitors from the outer world to break the monotony of a secluded life. The usual guests were limited to a few high officials; Frederiks, Minister of the Court, an old man of seventy-eight who still had a manner, but, with an evil mind, had nothing but that; Voekof, Nilof, obsequious flunkeys without personal worth of any sort; Benckendorff, Marshal of the Court, very ornamental but as insignificant as his companions. In that select circle, all the personal airs and graces were practised to perfection; they could "throw a chest," "show a leg," and set spurs ringing, but unfortunately Truth never rang there. Their motto was "It will last as long as our time."

But beside that crowd bespangled with gold braid and Orders, that set of titled flunkeys, on guard at doors and in ante-chambers, the palace of Tsarkoyë-Selo also sheltered two individuals, creatures very different in their origin but none the less allied, a woman of "distinction" and an illiterate mujik: the Vyrubova and Rasputin.

They constituted those "secret and irresponsible forces" of which so much had been said, which were denounced in the Duma by the deputies of the Right and of the Left, by Count Bobrinsky, M. Purichkevitch, as well as by M. Miliukof or the social-democrats Skobeleff and Cheidze. They were "that scandalous sovereign power" against whom even the reactionary nobility revolted, as was shown by resolutions carried in its congresses.

* * *

Anna Vyrubova had been one of the maids of honour

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

of the Empress, when she was still Mlle. Taneyef, daughter of the director of the Emperor's private Chancellery. She became from the very beginning the favourite of Alexandra Feodorowna, although physically as well as intellectually she was a most vulgar person. She married a naval officer, Vyrubof, but that union was brief. The husband asked the Emperor, after a stormy scene in the very palace, for permission to divorce her.

General O——, of whom mention was made previously, who had awakened the affections of the otherwise phlegmatic Alexandra Feodorowna, had just died, in circumstances which have remained unexplained, in Cairo, whither he had gone to cure a sudden illness. The Tsarina, deeply distressed, had a serious nervous breakdown. She refused to see anybody and caused her door to be closed to all comers. Mme. Vyrubof alone, who had remained on at Court without occupying any definite office, shared the voluntary claustration of the Sovereign, who, in order not to pass night after sleepless night alone, had ordered a bed to be placed for her in the private suite. Spiteful rumours circulated at that time about the jealous and exclusive friendship which the Empress showed for her former maid of honour who had become without official title her inseparable companion and the receiver of her most intimate confidences. Mlle. Taneyef became for all *la Vyrubova*, a hag without charms, more like the housekeeper of a middle-class boarding-house than the confidant of an Empress. But it was necessary to beg for her good offices if one wished to obtain with any degree of certainty some appointment or some favour at all out of the ordinary.

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

The Vyrubova, all-powerful in the heart of the Tsarina, now came to share her power with the coarse and filthy creature of whom this corpulent woman—who would have thought it?—had become the passionate mistress, with that Rasputin on whom, assuredly, all light has not yet been shed outside Russia, although since people have been free to write, much has been said about the fellow.

I tried in 1914, after the *Lokal-Anzeiger* had done so, to give a full-length portrait of Rasputin, in the columns of the *Temps*. The paper hesitated to publish it. France had scruples, most regrettable in the light of latter events, which the organ of the German Court had not, in spite of the close relations existing between Potsdam and Tsarkoyë-Selo. I will again attempt, late in the day in my opinion, that complex character-study, hoping to explain it to Western minds, for with the story of Rasputin and his followers we are plunged into the most absolute Byzantinism.

* * *

For hundreds of years already, by virtue of the superstitiousness of the country, the Court of the Tsars had known the presence and suffered the influence of miracle-workers, of half-witted creatures who could say to the feared master what high officials would not dare to say, of hot-gospellers or spiritualists, Savonarolas, Cagliostros, men like Nostradamus, in former days mere pathological patients but now become with the passage of time quacks profiting by the childishness or greed of their contemporaries. Thus Nicholas I. had his Koreyecha, an inspired peasant. Alexander III. consulted a miracle-working priest, Father John

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

of Kronstadt, who now that he is dead has been made the excuse for the formation of a sect who rape little girls—the Joannites, still in existence.

With Nicholas II. we had first a hypnotist, Philippe, a Frenchman from Lyons, sent for to Petrograd fifteen years ago to "suggest to the Empress the conception of an heir to the throne" for whom all Russia was waiting.

Then came a visionary, the monk Illiodorus. Rasputin threw them all into the shade; however, he was very nearly replaced by an American Jew who took up his abode at the Grand Hotel at Petrograd, whose spiritualistic performances attracted to him a following almost as great as that of the Siberian rustic. In the very last months of the reign of Nicholas II., there was talk of a deaf-mute woman whose gruntings were interpreted by grave individuals and excellent ladies as *ipsissima verba* from on High, to repeat which to the Empress was the duty of all. A young and handsome Montenegrin monk, Mardary, likewise became a favourite in high quarters. He would have taken Rasputin's place if the Revolution had not put a sudden end to all such low practices.

Rasputin still alive knew how to maintain himself against all comers, in spite of the efforts of other intriguers competing for Imperial favour. The rascal was big enough to defy any intrigue against himself.

* * *

In the very depths of the Siberian taïga, in the government of Tobolsk, in the district of Tumen, there is an obscure village which was to be made famous by the man whose scandalous influence will have to be noted in Russian history. It is called

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

Pokrovsk. Like most of the inhabitants of villages in those parts, the people of Pokrovsk are ex-convicts set free from neighbouring gaols. For the most part they have become agriculturists, but they have remained unburdened with scruples and are never at a loss for a way out of a difficulty. The peasant-vocabulary has for them a withering term of contempt—appropriate enough as events show—which is the worst insult a Russian mujik knows : horse-thief.

Gregory Rasputin was born in 1871 of the most wretched of the poorest families in the village. His father's name was Efim. To this had been added, in order to give him a social status, the nickname Rasputin. Chance is responsible for many jokes. Rasputin meant "the blackguard" by a degeneration in meaning of the word "rasputnik." The son was to deserve still more fully the nickname already well deserved by the father. And the old rogue boasted of it later when, in order to put a stop to obvious jokes which this name and the debaucheries of its owner caused, the Empress had his name changed to *Novy*, the New. "Rasputin I am," he used to say like any Rohan, "Rasputin I will remain!"

The young Rasputin broke to such a degree the easygoing laws of his fellows that the peasant-tribunal of Pokrovsk ordered him to be whipped, more than once, for offences committed against his neighbours, in the company of two favourite companions, one Barnabas, a gardener, and one Striapchef.

Mr. J. W. Bienstock, in a very fully documented biography of the scoundrel, reminds us that the archives of the Tobolsk Court-house preserve records of three separate crimes in which the criminal was

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

Gregory Efimovitch Rasputin : the first deals with a case of horse-stealing, the second is a case of perjury, the third the rape of an old beggar-woman and of two little girls of twelve and thirteen respectively.

One day, Gregory had to drive in a carriage from his own to a neighbouring village a priest who was the object of great veneration on the part of the Siberian peasants. This man of God was anxious to convert the reprobate whose evil reputation was notorious. He believed that he had succeeded, for, from that day, Rasputin seemed to have turned over a new leaf. He spent some time in a neighbouring monastery at Verkhoturyé, to reappear at Pokrovsk as a man of saintly life. He became a *strannik*, that is, a beggar-monk, wandering from village to village seeking money for the construction of imaginary churches. The sly rogue had found his vocation ; to exploit the religious superstition of his fellows seemed to him an easy source both of profit and consideration. He played at being a recluse, he invented an incoherent jargon which impressed the simple-minded creatures about him. He spoke henceforth only in parables, and that forlorn corner of Siberia became the Judæa of this impostor upon whom soon was bestowed the name reserved for those peasants, regular lay-monks who go about preaching the glad tidings and who are called "venerable," *staretz*.

He obtained a marked influence on women and soon numbered many of them among his converts. His feminine admirers and his disciples formed a sort of fraternity in which eroticism was mingled with religion. The head of it, for that matter, had founded it on a law which he later on not only forced upon a

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

Court over which a half-mad woman presided, but also upon the most exclusive circles, suddenly thrown open to that dispenser of worldly goods.

"Salvation is in contriteness" (this is what the sly scoundrel had invented), "contriteness can only come after we have sinned. Let us therefore sin, my sisters, in order to gain salvation!" "By sinning with me," he added, when he had reached the apogee of his influence, "salvation is all the more certain to come to you for this reason that I am filled with the Holy Spirit!"

But the peasants of Pokrovsk, because they were less greedy for gain or less corrupt than the great ladies of the capital, knowing nothing of nervous disease or the thirst for Court honours, did not all of them adopt this doctrine. One remembers having heard complaints addressed by the local clergy to the Synod. One of these described the sort of Witches' Sabbath held by the adepts of Gregory. This is the report :

"Every night they meet in the fields round a bonfire on which is sprinkled incense and aromatic plants. They set fire to it and then joining hands men and women dance round and round the burning pile repeating over and over again 'Lord, forgive us for the sin because we shall repent of it.' The dance becomes more and more wild, the words become murmurs, and when the chain breaks about the dying embers of the fire, a scene of indescribable licentiousness takes place. [*The translator has not considered further details necessary.*]"

These complaints, so far from damaging the reformer, drew attention to him. The ecclesiastical authority even exhorted the local clergy to give

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

instruction to Gregory Rasputin. His reputation spread far and wide. People came from far away to kiss the hem of his garment, to beg for the laying on of hands by that Saint who as in all cases of faith-healing (auto-suggestion) had the reputed power to heal. Ladies from Tobolsk joined the simple-minded peasant women, and his fame spread beyond the frontiers of his own province.

Rasputin became ambitious ; human folly, which according to his experience seemed bottomless, had made him self-confident. The father-superior of the Convent of Verkhoturyé, where he had spent a short time, having provided him with a letter of introduction to Father John of Kronstadt, he deserted his wife and his two daughters, and started from Tobolsk one fine day in 1904 for the distant capital.

Father John gave a most kind reception to this man who so far was only called "venerable." He presented him to several bishops who were deeply impressed by the piety of the holy man and introduced him to the most rigorously exclusive house in Petrograd, that of the Countess Ignatief, whose salon consisted of Princes of the Church and devout women, highly placed Government officials and great military officers, and in that salon, under the cloak of religion, everyone indulged actively in political intrigue.

Rasputin soon became the oracle of that circle. By virtue of the opinion of those who had introduced him, among whom was the Archbishop Theophanes, a man justly respected, people at once gave great attention to the platitudes emitted by the rascal in his picturesque peasant speech. Each of his truisms excited the admiration of the old ladies. The young ones soon joined in the chorus of praise, in order to

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

gain the favour of the boor whose influence all felt to be growing.

This profligate peasant, this crassly ignorant Tarruffe, was by common consent declared to be the Lord's interpreter ; he was by his admirers announced as a seer, an advocate, a prophet, even an emanation from God. He became famous with a fame whose echoes reached Tsarkoyë-Selo by the mouth of one of the first to be conquered, the Vyrubova woman.

The doors of the Palace swung open before him. From that moment he was no longer able to count the multitude of his worshippers. He had them in every social stratum, deluded peasants, both men and women, and bourgeois believers. But he numbered them chiefly among the great ladies of an aristocracy degenerated by the drinking of spirits, neuropaths who found a peculiar excitation in the presence of this offensive creature, or shameless careerists who tolerated the familiarities of Gregory in order to obtain by his influence the promotion of husbands, brothers, or lovers.

His power over the Empress was enormous. Rasputin, whose light-coloured eyes in their dark sockets had a most disturbing effect when he stared at one, hypnotised her, advised her, and quieted her. He would use the familiar forms "Thee" and "Thou" to her, and kept her in order by constantly reminding her of some saying from Holy Scripture to which he gave his own peculiar twist. A letter from Alexandra Feodorowna published not long ago by the *Utro Rossy* will show how strong a hold on her Rasputin had acquired.

"How shall I thank you for all that you are to me," wrote the Tsarina to the favourite. "To place one's

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

head on your shoulders, to say nothing, to feel only the joy of peace and forgetfulness! What a divine benediction! I thank you for having given me that happiness!

"Forgive me for all my imperfections. I do try to be good and a true Christian but it is so difficult! How difficult it is to overcome one's bad habits. But you will help me. You will not leave me, for I am weak and I love you and have faith in you only.

"Help Anna (Vyrubova). She is in great trouble. You know all about it. Heaven permit that we should meet again soon. I embrace you. Forgive me and give me your blessing. Your daughter: A." Other letters preserved at Petrograd are positively love-letters.

None the less it is our duty to silence once and for all the calumnies which attribute to the impostor a part which in fact he never played towards his fair penitent. The wretched woman did indeed drag herself at his feet, and even permitted—we have a Grand Duke's evidence on the subject—the most revolting familiarities, but tears streamed down her face the while. Her guilt was that of a mystic, not the excitement of a Messalina. Meanwhile the scoundrel blessed her in the name of God whose Word he brought to men. It is true that he believed he could do with her what he liked and boasted of his power once in a night-club at Moscow in such a way as to impress his hearers. But he lied. He exercised that power only upon one of her women-in-waiting and upon a crowd of neuropaths seeking a new sensation or immediate favours.

In that temporal order this man who was said to have the divine gift to "heal women of the disease of

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

voluptuousness" was tireless in his ministrations; crested family carriages stood in daily greater numbers before the door of the humble apartment he occupied first on the English Prospect, then in the Gorokhovaia quarter.

The bacchanalian riot which then began is indescribable. *Gricha's* debaucheries (they called him by his pet name) ranged from Public Baths to the drawing-rooms of princes, where he was the favoured guest. But neither can we describe the abjectness of the women who encouraged him. The monk Illiodorus has left a circumstantial account of confidences he had received from Rasputin. Boccaccio pales beside the tales of this "Holy Father" as the Empress called him. His deeds would have turned the late Marquis de Sade green with envy. Yet parents handed over to his ministrations their very daughters, as did husbands their wives.

One day, in a family of great and ancient name, Rasputin, who had taken into dinner an old woman scandalously underdressed, imitated the action of Molière's *Tartuffe*, and throwing his napkin round a bosom devoid of charm cried out with that frankness of speech which made him all-powerful, "Hide it!" But as he rose from table he placed his arm about the waist of a young girl whom, to the admiration of her parents, he had marked as a victim. Seeing which, a respectable dowager, bitten with the prevailing madness, leaned over to the person from whom we hold the description of these scenes and murmured, "Dear, dear holy father. It is only fair that he, too, should have his share of worldly pleasure!"

I was saying one day to a foreign diplomatist with

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

whom I was talking of these orgies, "This is Byzantium." "No," he replied, "it is Bedlam!"

* * *

The Vyrubova woman had been one of the first to desire to be exorcised by this vigorous male who formed so striking a contrast to the milk-and-water cavaliers of her social circle. As we have seen, it was she who introduced him into the Palace and presented to the Empress the man whose willing slave she became. For this fleshy woman was a gross sensualist.

Rasputin, who accepted his extraordinary good fortune as nothing more than his due, behaved at first as the holy man in the presence of her whom he called "Little Mother" to his familiars. It would never do to frighten a neophyte. He gained such power over her by his gift of the gab and his imperturbable impudence that she insisted upon her daughters having a confessional interview every day with the worthy man, who was an evident manifestation of the divinity—a thing which so shocked their governess that, in sheer horror, she left a family which had ceased to be intelligible to her sane English mind. The Grand Duke, heir to the throne, was also one of the first of his devotees in that household. The Emperor, as his ancestors had done for others, permitted the overheated speeches of this Siberian fakir. He tolerated this atmosphere of vice and mental disease for the sake of peace at home.

However, one day when the great dignitaries of the Church began to take notice of the daily scandals caused by this "holy father," when the Duma, by

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

the mouth of M. Gutchkof, expressed its disgust at the hospitality shown to this felon by the Imperial family, it was decided not without regret to get rid of him. He received the order to go back to his native village. The Tsar and his family were then in summer quarters at Spala. Rasputin went, but as he left he said to Alexandra Feodorowna, "You are driving away a man of God. God will avenge himself upon you by striking you through that which you hold most dear!"

On the journey he kept affirming "I shall go no farther than Moscow, you will see. I shall be recalled."

And, as it turned out by a coincidence most unfortunate for the fate of the Romanof family, the Tsarevitch fell ill at that very moment. The Empress, mad with anxiety, saw the hand of God in a matter that was a case of purest chance. A telegram ordered Rasputin back at once.

So Gregory came back, stronger than ever. He would now be able to give himself up freely, openly, to his shameless debauchery, to his intrigues. What need had he in future of any Nessus shirt since they were now going to keep him at the Palace as the mascot of the sickly heir to the throne.

He had become *tapu*, understood it and showed that he understood. With true believers he still played at being a holy man by saying to them "If you reject me, God will abandon you." To those who did not believe he employed a form of speech that was more of the earth, earthy, but none the less effective for that. He said "If you don't obey me, I shall know how to have you punished by my friends."

In this way, he secured the votes of all. By the side of the crowd of hysterical or merely practical

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

women we saw the rush of ambitious men seeking portfolios or bishoprics. The power of Rasputin became unlimited. Before him bowed personages of the greatest importance. Any man who ignored him by attempting to put him in his proper place was at once dismissed from his office. He was the real Emperor, by the intermission of Vyrubova acting in her turn upon the Empress. The other Emperor, Nicholas, did no more than sign his name to the decrees of that triumvirate.

When the popular conscience became restive, or after the frank speeches of men like Vorontsof-Dachkof, the humbug was sent away from Court for a time. He would then leave, accompanied to the station by a crowd of worshippers. He pretended to go to Siberia, but would return soon afterwards, having been sent for by the Empress.

The Archbishop Theophanes, full of remorse for having let that scoundrel gain such power for evil, and full of shame at having thought that he heard in him the voice of God, the Bishop Hermogenes, also one of his former protectors, the fanatical monk Illiodorus, who alone would supply a whole chapter in the history of mysticism in Russia—at one time the friend, and dupe, of Rasputin—tried all of them, with the most praiseworthy intentions, to overthrow this false god by denouncing his evil practices. Rasputin, to satisfy appearances, made a sort of confession, and then, strong in the knowledge of the power behind him, took vengeance upon his accusers. Hermogenes was sent to a monastery, Theophanes to Tadriz, and Illiodorus, hunted by the police from place to place, was compelled to take refuge in Christiania, from which

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

town the Russian authorities managed to make him depart, as the result of events to which we shall refer later on. The unfortunate Illiodorus was not long in discovering the mistake he had made about Rasputin in the first instance. Giving in a letter his impressions on the apostate in the early stages of their acquaintance, Illiodorus has left us a curious document of which we quote here a few passages: "During his journey to Tsarytsin with the Very Reverend Bishop Hermogenes, Gricha asked me to accompany him on a visit to my faithful. He was received everywhere as an angel from God. People bowed low before him, educated people as much as the others. As for him, in all the houses he entered he kissed the young and pretty women, discouraging the advances of those who were at all old.

"It was during his stay at Tsarytsin that Gricha one day spent four hours alone with a young girl, a nun, whom he felt it necessary to console. I knew of this for the first time only some three or four months later.

"At the end of November, Gricha took me to the village of Pokrovsk, of which he was a native. During the journey, which was rather long, I tried to discover in Gricha the evidence of his worth, of his miraculous power or of his exceptional gifts. It was in vain. My companion spoke to me almost exclusively of women. And the remarks he made to me, with reference to those women whose spiritual adviser I was, filled me with discomfort and made me begin to have serious doubts about the holiness of the man who could talk like that.

"During another journey he spoke to me of the Tsar

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

and the Tsarina. 'For the Tsar,' he said, 'I am Christ. . . . The Tsar and the Tsarina salute me, they bow down before me. The children of the Tsar cast themselves before me, they kiss my hands.' He said many things beside these and I blushed as I heard him.

"We arrived at Pokrovsk, where I began to observe my host more attentively. He lived on a big scale. He had a big house, furnished with precious carpets, with ikons, portraits, presents from their Majesties. But although he was always dressed with great care, the mujiks of the district considered him a scoundrel; the priests spoke against him and even regarded me as a rogue because I went about with him. The Archbishop of Tobolsk, Antony (who is now at Tver), was just as hostile to him. For all those people Gricha was only a rogue, a *Khlist*, a profligate."

But on the other hand, at Petrograd, the "holy father," effective protector of the little Alexis, triumphed over all obstacles. His overbearing insolence knew no bounds.

One Easter Day—this happened during the War—he was breakfasting with the sister of the Vyrubova woman. They were expecting the latter, who was to arrive from Tsarkoyë-Selo. When she entered the dining-room she held in her hand a little parcel. She gave it to Gregory, saying :

"It is a present from Her Majesty, who has spent a part of the night working so that I might bring it to you this morning. The Empress is anxious that you should put on what she has sewn with her own hands, this very day, after you have taken Holy Communion." Rasputin undid the parcel. It was

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

blue silk shirt, a Russian shirt of the kind he was in the habit of wearing, as all peasants did, worn loose over very baggy trousers, which were tucked into top-boots. Those of Rasputin were made of patent leather.

"We'll look at it later," he said with a grimace of disappointment. "Let's eat now." And he plunged his hands into the dish a footman was presenting to him, for the boor, perhaps in order to make fun of the more refined manners of the servile creatures who fawned upon him, never used anything but his fingers to eat out of the priceless dishes of his hosts.

* * *

One day he tired of lascivious pleasures and became indifferent to the gifts of those who came to solicit his influence. These gifts, varying in amount with the capacity of the various petitioners, had to pass before they reached him through a sort of bodyguard formed by a man and a woman. The man was that Striaptchef who had been his companion in crime of Pokrovsk days, and the woman was the sister of Barnabas, also a robber, who had been exalted to the rank of secretary, while her brother was to become a bishop. Seeking for a change of amusement, this caster-out of devils took to political intrigues.

He succeeded. In that province his opinion again prevailed both in matters of internal policy as in others of foreign policy, although the fox totally lacked the most rudimentary education. One of his friends, Prince Andronikof, an influential swindler, had to show him on a map, at the outbreak of war, the positions of France, Russia, and Germany.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

He would lose his way among ideas and would become confused in questions of political programmes. But what did that matter? Were those not matters of pure worldly interest and were not the counsels that he gave forth in Biblical language, the only counsels to be remembered, inspired by the Everlasting?

There was a time when it became fashionable at Court to look coldly on Japan, because this weird counsellor had said when he saw Baron Motono leaving the private study of the Tsar, who had just received him in audience, "Let us beware of those devils!"

And everybody shouted for war to the knife against the Germans as soon as Gregory had said, when speaking of them, "To H—— with the b——!"

But the bellicose feeling diminished later on when the mouth of the oracle, put up to it by the Tsarina and her creatures, said "War is a terrible thing to which one ought to put an end." On that day, those men, nameless, but who included the chiefs of the bureaucracy, men of German origin who had been installed at Court, such men as Frederiks, Benckendorff, Stürmer, to whom were added the leaders of the reaction devoted to the Kaiser, the men who in a word were known as the "German party," thought they had triumphed. We shall show elsewhere how they set themselves to preparing a separate peace. The Grand Duke Nicholas had once interfered to ruin these underhand machinations, the Duma next caused them to fail, and the Revolution was finally to put an end to them altogether.

But the Russian people had to drink the cup of

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

bitterness to the dregs. It was compelled to see following one another in the government of the country a regular string of people whom the "man of God" produced ready-made for the purpose, by writing to the person of his choice notes scribbled in his sprawling, clumsy writing, notes in which he addressed in the most familiar terms the man for whom they were meant. Goremykin stiffened with disgust when he received the first scrap of paper in which Gregory called him in his easy way, "Little old man—*Staritchok*."

None the less Goremykin was compelled to bow before the star of a firmament new to him, for this star had begun to shine in all its glory during the Ministry of his predecessor Kokovtsov. It was Rasputin who thought of giving to the latter as collaborator Governor Maklakof, who had made himself very pleasant to him during a country journey of the Imperial couple escorted by the mystic humbug. It was Rasputin again who supported Sukhomlinov, although the relations of the general with the Austrian Altschiller with regard to munitions of war, the profits of which transactions were divided among them, were publicly notorious. And it was Rasputin who since 1913 caused to be appointed or dismissed bishops and high officials.

"I can't write or read well enough to be a Minister," he confessed one day. He did better than that!

He knew enough about the atmosphere, not to say the psychology of the Palaces, to introduce only the sort of men who would please. For to please Nicholas II. was all that was required to make him ratify by a *ukase* the choice of his wife's adviser. Sukhom-

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

linof had pleased by his fine presence, dressed up in his Hussar uniform with gold braid. Besides, he was always so reassuring. Maklakof, for his part, had pleased because he was such a funny fellow. His own brother, the Liberal deputy, who hated him, said to the present writer, "He would be better in a circus than in his private room at the Ministry of the Interior."

After a Cabinet Council at which grave matters had been discussed, it was quite usual to ask Sukhomlinof and Maklakof to remain at the Palace, because they were both such "jolly good fellows." The Imperial family would unite, a few intimate friends were admitted. Then, in order to forget the Council and to have a little fun, someone would ask Maklakof, famous for his power of miming, to "take off" one of his colleagues, or to pretend to be a panther. This peculiar talent was worth a fortune to him. When one heard the sound of dogs barking in the great corridors of the Palace one knew that M. Maklakof, Minister of a Department of crushing weight at a most difficult time, had just arrived and was announcing his arrival himself.

"O, Nicholas Alexievitch, *do* imitate the panther for us!"

It was never necessary to ask Maklakof twice. He would coil himself up under a sofa, roar like a wild beast in the pairing season, then, crawling out from under the sofa on all fours, take a huge leap and land in an arm-chair. The Grand Duchesses and the Tsarevitch would laugh till they cried; "*the* Majesties," as Vyrubova called them when she was speaking French, were good enough to smile. All was forgotten, Cabinet



THE MINISTER MAKLAKOF

("The Love-Sick Panther.")

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

Council, sovereign power and its cares, the nation groaning in misery.

"Nicholas, son of Alexis, *do* pretend to be a panther." When Maklakof was dismissed as the result of the anti-German riots of Moscow in 1915, the paper the *Utro Rossy* was punished by a fine of 3,000 roubles for having published an article entitled "The leap of the love-sick panther." Truth was not good to tell, not so very long ago in Russia, and the present writer learnt that to his cost on more than one occasion.

Although he knew better than anyone how much influence Rasputin enjoyed at Court, the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholaevitch had the fine courage to expel him from General Headquarters, whither the intriguing scoundrel had gone, urged by those whose ready mouthpiece he had become, to discuss a peace necessary, he said, for the welfare of the Empire.

Rasputin came charged with one of those fantastic tales which succeeded so well with those who were credulous either because of their stupidity or because it suited them to seem so.

"War is a calamity, Highness. Thou must put an end to it. The Holy Virgin appeared to me in a dream and told me we must conclude peace. I come to inform thee of Her will."

"When didst thou see the Virgin?" replied Nicholas Nicholaevitch.

"Three days ago."

"Now that's odd. I too saw her, but it was only two days ago, and she said to me: 'Rasputin is coming to see thee. He will advise a separate peace. Don't listen to him, but expel him like the scoundrel he is. If he goes on bothering, have him thrashed.'"

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

and that's what I'll do, you scum, if you don't (bad word) out of this at once!" These high-handed dealings constituted one of the determining causes for the transfer of the Grand Duke Nicholas to the Caucasus.

Having become the dispenser of the Imperial favours, Rasputin made of them the most extraordinary use it is possible to imagine. A whole volume would be required for complete narration of his exploits. It was at his request that one day the title of Excellency was conferred upon a well-known speculator, Manus, a proven blackmailer, one of those rogues whose every deed just escapes being criminal by the legal code, but who are protected against their victims by loosely-drafted laws. This man, like his protector, had climbed from the lowest depths of the social scale to the heights of a most scandalous fortune. Manus an Excellency! Even the police of the day were shocked at the thought, and one cannot say more than that.

Rasputin was not satisfied with these irritating successes. To show that he feared neither God nor man and that he snapped his fingers at everyone he created—a saint. His friend of former days at Pokrovsk, Barnabas, who was a gardener by profession, had actually been made a bishop at his request. The pen of a Rabelais would be necessary to relate the drolleries of that prince of the Orthodox Church who exhorted his flock in language that was anything but polished, in sermons of the most humorous nature, which the newspapers sometimes reproduced with the utmost solemnity with the nominal intention of spreading the good word, but actually for the greater amusement of their readers.

Monseigneur Barnabas desired to perpetuate his

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

memory in the diocese. He convinced his accomplice Rasputin that he must make the Synod canonise a former Metropolitan of the province. The whole business was going well when war broke out. The Minister of Roads and Railways who had been consulted—why the Minister of Roads and Railways?—pointed out that if they created a new saint there would be a rush of pilgrims and that there would be a danger of a congestion of the railways most undesirable at that moment. The Synod, struck by that objection, decided to postpone the canonisation of the saint till after the War. Barnabas and Rasputin attempted to carry things with a high hand, and the former, of his own authority, canonised his Metropolitan without bothering any more about the Most Holy Synod. The latter ordered him to come forthwith to Petrograd. When he arrived he was duly admonished. Thereupon he informed them that he no longer recognised their authority and refused to obey any further orders to appear before them. The Synod sent to fetch him. He hid in the house of Prince Andronikof, a third robber. The police were set on his tracks; he had the policemen shadowed and identified, to report them to Rasputin. The Synod declared that no canonisation was valid without its consent and the ratification of the Emperor. He replied that the saint had been recognised by the Empress, and that was good enough for him. Being now sure of impunity he returned calmly to Tobolsk. On his way through Moscow he asked to see Samarin, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, an honest man for once in a way. This dignitary, sick at heart because of the shameful farce which the Church was made to play out by the machinations of such

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

adventurers as Rasputin and Barnabas, refused to receive him. Samarin was dismissed shortly after. The bishop triumphed in his diocese, Gregory named Novy triumphed at Petrograd, and their saint is still on the calendar.

* * *

The widespread hatred which Rasputin had aroused against himself had already provoked one attempt on his life. During one of his journeys to Siberia, at the station of Tumen, a woman of the people, who paid for her deed by relegation to a lunatic asylum, fired a revolver at him, wounding him in the pit of the stomach. She was anxious to avenge Illiodorus, eclipsed at Petrograd by the mountebank and exiled at the man's request when he had become his enemy. The mujik, possessing a magnificent constitution, recovered from his wound after having hung between life and death for a fortnight. Those were days of mortal anxiety for the Empress, to whom, by her order, news was telegraphed every day. It is said that the Emperor also read these telegrams with the greatest attention, but with other intent than his wife. He nursed the hope of being rid, without possibility of return, of a compromising personage whom his cowardice when dealing with the excitable German woman prevented him from banishing.

Some months after that first attempt, in 1915, the deputy of the Right, Khvostof, who had been made Minister of the Interior by Rasputin's advice, resolved to get rid of a burdensome protector, who was evidently becoming a national danger into the bargain. Khvostof, who in spite of this praiseworthy resolution was himself one of the most extraordinary products of

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

that end of a *régime*, had in his pay one Rjewsky, a retired officer, who had become a police agent and a journalist. This Manuilof *in petto* had served shortly before the war as a sort of spokesman for General Sukhomlinof, as an obliging interviewing agent, to arrange for the insertion in the papers of the capital, in order to assist certain operations on 'Change, the vibrant declaration : *Russia is ready!* which the whole of the French Press reproduced as Gospel truth.

Rjewsky, seriously compromised and shunned as a shady man, passed into the private police service of the Minister of the Interior. Khvostof instructed him to seek out the monk Illiodorus, who had taken refuge at Christiania. He was to ask him if he would convince some of the enthusiastic partisans who were devoted to him in Russia, especially among the peasants of Tsarytsin, that it was necessary to rid the fatherland of the Anti-christ, the sadic Rasputin. Rjewsky left for Norway, taking with him an offer of 200,000 roubles for Illiodorus to carry out the plan.

But Stürmer, who was then Prime Minister, heard from the bodyguardsman Striaptchef, the inseparable companion of Rasputin, of the plot being engineered against the latter. Striaptchef had been warned by no less a person than Rjewsky's mistress, who in this way revenged herself upon a lover who used to thrash her. The events which followed were pure melodrama. Rjewsky, who was getting ready for a second trip to Norway, was challenged to fight a duel, on some absurd pretext, in the very train which was bearing him away, by an officer who had been specially instructed to do so. There was a violent scene, and the parties left the train at the Constabulary barracks of Bielostrof,

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

the station on the Finnish-Russian frontier, to have the matter out. Thereupon the police said they must detain the traveller to explain the affair. Rjewsky made a tremendous outcry, stated who he was, spoke of his mission and produced proofs of it. That was exactly what the police, who were acting on Rasputin's behalf, were waiting for. Rjewsky had fallen into the trap which had been set for him, and had delivered Khvostof to his enemies. He was arrested on his return by Stürmer's policemen, under the orders of Manuilof, at the very moment when those who had betrayed him were being arrested by Khvostof's men. O most distressful Russia !

Rjewsky was deported to Siberia, in spite of a letter of the humblest apologies addressed to Rasputin. Khvostof was informed that he had resigned, and was replaced by Stürmer, who now combined the functions of President of the Council with those of Minister of the Interior, while his satellite Manuilof received the title of Excellency for having helped to save the mascot of the Tsarevitch.

But the matter did not end there. The Russian "government" managed to convince the Norwegians that Illiodorus was an undesirable person, and had him expelled from Christiania.

The former monk, who had resumed his own name of Sergius Trufanof, took refuge in the United States. He bore with him the manuscript of his Recollections, in which, so it is said, the Ford peace mission had become interested, and which the ruling powers in Petrograd tried to buy from him in order to prevent the publication of a book which described, in all its petty details, the tragi-comedy of Tsarkoyë-Selo.

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

Last October (1916) the *Mémoires* of Illiodorus began to appear in the American journal *The Metropolitan*. Then the publication of them suddenly came to an end. It has been suggested that this suspension was due to pressure brought to bear by the Russian Embassy at Washington and by the Orthodox Archbishop in the United States. Trufanof—otherwise Illiodorus—set about a rumour that 25,000 dollars had been offered to him by the Embassy and the Archbishop, together with permission to return to Russia, if he promised not to publish information which he was one of very few to possess. It appears that he refused, and even brought an action against the American proprietors of the magazine. What was it that did influence the latter? Nobody knows. Another rumour said that they were Jews, and that the Jews of Russia had begged them to cease publication of revelations which might serve as an excuse for further oppression by the Russian Government. However that may have been, in this matter once more Rasputin had his way.

* * *

But all things come to an end. The obscene peasant whose name was only mentioned with disgust by decent-minded people was becoming more and more dangerous to the cause of Tsarism. If the Sovereign could not see that sufficiently himself the monarchists were able to see it in his interest. The influence of the ruffian had been astounding under Kokovtsov; it became preponderating under Goremykin. With Stürmer it overwhelmed all other influences. Rasputin ruled. From both Right and Left of the Duma arose grave warnings, the Left denouncing, the Right protesting.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

Monsieur Purichkevitch, a Conservative deputy, went to the tribune one day towards the end of 1916 and said : " It must no longer be possible that Rasputin's *ipse dixit* should be enough to nominate to the highest places of the hierarchy the most abject and unscrupulous scoundrels. Our national ideal is shaken to its very base. Rasputin is to-day more dangerous than the false Dmitri of our history was in his day. I call upon the Ministers to rouse themselves ! Let them go forthwith to General Headquarters and beg the Tsar to put an end once for all to the dictatorship exercised by Rasputin over Russian policy."

But he spoke to those who would not hear. The puppets could do nothing to the man who pulled the strings that made them jig. How should those who owed their very position to him turn against the man who had created them ? Even the Grand Dukes, who felt themselves insulted to the very depths of their being by that mujik whose arrogance respected nothing and no one, had to remain powerless to protest to their august relative, whose will collapsed altogether at any sign of a scene by the hysterical Empress. Violence alone, it seemed, could rid Russia of the man. The Conservative circles staked all on this hope of salvation, but the Liberals, who understood better how such a state of affairs had become possible, how deep were the roots of the evil, knew that even if Rasputin were dead, corruption would still continue to thrive. A politician of the Left, who has become a member of the Provisional Government, when I asked him several years ago whether the enlightened politicians had not thought of suppressing so evil a creature, replied wittily in Russian : " What is the good ? When

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

Rasputin (the dissolute) has gone, *rasputjě* (Dissolution) will remain ! ”

The members of the Right, however, as we have seen, thought differently about the question. The deputy Purichkevitch had been the indefatigable organiser of a travelling railway kitchen (a refectory-train) which went to the front in order to provide officers, in this sort of house on wheels, with rather better food than they could get in their improvised messes. It was in this train that the death of Gregory was plotted. The Grand Duke Dmitri was present at the meeting.

Some time after that, in order to execute the sentence, Prince Yussupof, Count Sumarok-Elston, who had married Princess Irene, daughter of the Grand Duchess Xenia, own sister of Nicholas II., invited Rasputin to a supper-party he was to give in the luxurious palace owned by his father on the Fontanka canal. The party, at which the Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovitch and Purichkevitch were present, went on late into the night. The mujik of Pokrovsk behaved more insolently than ever before that cream of the Russian aristocracy. What happened exactly ? The versions of the drama differ in their details. The conspirators have kept their secret well. The Grand Duke Dmitri would not even speak when his father entreated him to do so.

The next morning, the 1st of January, 1917, the corpse of the man before whom the Empire had trembled was found under the ice, near the Petrovsky Bridge, by that distant promenade of Petrograd, the Bois de Boulogne of the Russian capital, which is known as the district of the islands. The body bore two wounds

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

caused by revolver shots, one in the breast, the other in the back.

The grief of the Empress can only be measured by the fury she showed towards those who were suspected of being the authors of the crime. By her personal order—the Emperor being at General Headquarters—Prince Yussupof was arrested at Nicholas Station, as he was about to enter the train for the Crimea. She telegraphed on the 31st December (Russian calendar) to Nicholas II.: “Order Maximovitch to arrest Dmitri in your name. He wished to see me to-day. I refused.” And the young Grand Duke Dmitri was thereupon informed that he was to consider himself under arrest in his apartments. His father, who was at General Headquarters with the Emperor, on hearing of what had happened, returned to Tsarkoyë-Selo, as did Nicholas II., recalled by his wife.

The Grand Duke Paul asked that his son should be liberated. The Sovereign replied by a vague promise and the next day wrote to his uncle:

“Dear friend Paul, I cannot, to my deep regret, set free Dmitri till the inquiry has been terminated. I have ordered them to be as quick as possible and to be kind to him. All this is very painful, but is he not alone to blame for having become involved in such a business by his imprudent conduct? I pray God that Dmitri should come out of the inquiry without a blot on his name and altogether stainless. With all cordiality. Thine ever, NICHOLAS.”

“That letter,” the Grand Duke has said since, “set me at rest. I saw my son, who swore to me that he was innocent. I proposed that he should telephone



M. PURICHKEVITCH
(Concerned in the murder of Rasputin.)

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

to Nicholas to beg for an audience. He replied to me with tears in his eyes, that the blood of Rasputin was not on his hands. He swore it on the head of his mother.

"I am accustomed to believe implicitly all Dmitri's statements. So I believed him again this time, but I decided to conduct a personal inquiry into the circumstances of the murder.

"I heard from the lips of my youngest son Vladimir, a friend of Yussupof, and from people who seemed to know that the murder had been committed as the result of a conference with Purichkevitch. My son, it is true, was present at the meeting, but did not fire at Rasputin. *This man was killed by two revolver-shots, in his chest and in his back, fired by Yussupof and Purichkevitch.* My son refused to go into the details of the murder. He told me he had sworn to divulge nothing.

"On the 5th of January, while I was at dinner, a telephone-call came for me: it was my son Dmitri. He said, 'General Maximovitch has just left the house and has informed me that I am under orders to leave to-night for Persia. Come to the station to see me off.'

"Dmitri's message upset me. I took my cap, my overcoat, and went on foot as fast as I could to the Alexander Palace. The Emperor refused to see me. 'Tell him I'm too busy' was the message he sent me by a footman. 'He can wait.'

"In the course of the night my son was expelled from Petrograd. Among those who saw him off was my wife's daughter, Mme. Derfelden. When she got home she found the police searching the house and

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

was told to remain under arrest in her private apartments.

"We found out later that the police search and the arrest of Mme. Derfelden had been brought about by a spiritualistic *séance* which had taken place at the house of the Minister Dobrovolsky. The ghost of Rasputin had appeared and had ordered Protopopof, one of those who were present, to arrest my wife's daughter.

"After several days under arrest"—the Grand Duke continued—"she managed at last to secure an audience with Protopopof. He accused her of being the instigator of Rasputin's death. 'Have you seen the sphinx?' he said to her. 'Look at him and he will hypnotise you. For that sphinx is the wise Rasputin!'

"Mme. Derfelden came out from the house of the new wizard terrified and feeling as if she had gone mad. The next day Protopopof, who had begun to play the part that Rasputin had played until then, said to the Emperor, 'Yesterday I had a call from a charming lady who had come to assassinate me, but I was able to bring my influence to bear on her so powerfully that we parted excellent friends. That woman was Mme. Derfelden.'

"The Emperor congratulated his Minister on having escaped death, made the sign of the cross over him several times by way of blessing, and said :

"'May Heaven grant you a long life so that you may long continue to be useful to your country.'"

So Rasputin was resuscitated. Protopopof, as he himself attempted to convince Alexandra Feodorowna, was reincarnating him. The former Liberal deputy who used, when in Paris, to emit European sentiments

THE TSAR AND HIS COURT

in such a way as to charm all those who heard him had now trimmed his sails to the wind which blew at Tsarkoyë-Selo. He had adopted that maxim which the reactionary Minister Casso justified one day at great length when I reproached him with showing himself more royalist than the King, when as a fact the true sentiments of that pupil of Condorcet were quasi-Republican. "What's the good of bothering? When you're at Rome you must do as the Romans do." (The French proverb is more expressive of the circumstances and also more Russian in its bearings—You must *howl with the wolves*.)

No one dared to touch Purichkevitch, as he was known to be guarded by fanatics, members of ultra-Right societies, such as the *Alliance of the Archangel Michael*, which he had founded. The young Grand Duke who was inculpated in the affair joined General Baratof in Persia, the place to which he had been told to exile himself. Yussupof was commanded to take up his residence on one of his father's estates in the province of Kursk. The official inquiry, however, conducted by the Minister of Justice Makarof, had ended in an open verdict. So Protopopof had this honest reactionary replaced by the Senator Dobrovolsky, a most unscrupulous man who started the official inquiry again secretly and who asked the ghost of the "holy father" to tell him who his murderers were!

It all sounds like a dream. None the less I went, chapter by chapter, through that pitiable business. Those of us who were in touch with things actually lived that ghastly nightmare of the Rasputinian Russia which trampled on everything: on honour, morality, fatherland. And to intensify, if such a thing were

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

possible, the horror of that long orgy, there came the huge drama of the War.

The War . . . a war kept going heroically by a France straining every nerve while the inheritors of Rasputin thought of nothing but to satisfy the grudges and the insane whims of a wretched woman who had completely lost her balance. For the sake of appearances soldiers were sent to the various fronts to be mown down in herds—a minor consideration. The first, the most important thing was to satisfy the capricious desires of the Masters, to call up with the utmost urgency Tatar regiments to guard a palace for which the murder of Rasputin had become a grim advertisement.

From the depths arose ever more loudly the complaints of the nation ; lest the ears of Alexandra Feodorowna should hear them, the mountebanks who served her set about to prepare a counter-revolutionary massacre.

CHAPTER III

THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT AS IT WAS

The parody of constitutional government—The Ministers—The Parliament—The real masters of Russian policy : the *tchinovniks* who had remained the *Guard of Ivan*—Prussian traditions—German pushfulness—Police rule and its victims.

BUT a short while ago there was nothing savouring of constitutional government in Russia but a name. The *Almanach de Gotha* had since 1905 given to that country the following highly paradoxical definition : a constitutional monarchy under an autocratic Tsar. Even that was an exaggeration. The reforms introduced as the result of the pressure of opinion, the convocation of a Duma which in theory was to constitute a national representation, did not in fact make any alteration at all in the old state of affairs. The system remained the same : the Russian bureaucracy, more royalist than the King, more autocratic than the monarch, gave up no iota of its power or of its prerogatives.

As we have seen elsewhere, the deep-rooted ideas of the Tsar were not such as to suggest to him any lessening of his power. He became, consequently,

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

the natural ally of the administrative caste in order to pursue with it a common aim : to get back all that he and it had been compelled to yield under the threat of insurrection.

That is why Nicholas II. always took good care that the men he called upon to assist him in the government should come from no other source than that bureaucracy. The Ministers of the last Tsar, excepting Witte, Stolypin, Sazonof, and to some extent Kokovtsov, were officials without any initiative and without any desire but that of obeying orders. These men will be found to have played no part in their country's history, except to dig more and more deeply the pit which separated the rulers from the ruled. Covetous or simply dull-witted flunkies, time-servers by timidity or by calculation, they will be seen to have limited their activities strictly to carrying out the Imperial wishes or the whims of Court favourites.

Popular representation, it will be shown elsewhere, was choked by the ruling class which acknowledged no authority but that of the Tsar and was anxious not to allow it to encroach upon the prerogatives of the Sovereign. In order to bridle it more tightly and to check its slightest attempts at independence, the absolute autocracy had retained to assist it that " House of Lords," the Council of the Empire, whose members also were recruited for the most part from officials who were nominated at the end of their public career as a sort of reward for services rendered. The Council of the Empire proved itself to be as unsympathetic to the " upstart " as were all who profited from the continuance of the old *régime*. Its activities consisted entirely in thwarting the timid attempts at liberal

THE GOVERNMENT AS IT WAS

legislation made by the Lower House. No single innovation of the Duma found grace in its sight. The Council of the Empire, indeed, did better than this. It sometimes opposed the will of the Emperor, notably in the Polish question. It refused to ratify the project for municipal self-government which Nicholas II. wished to grant to the kingdom in order to keep an agreement he had made with the dead Stolypin as well as a promise made to another dead man, General Skalon, a former Governor of Warsaw.

If the help of the Council of the Empire was insufficient, the Cabinet had yet another way of neutralising all parliamentary action. It called into play article 87 of the Foundation Laws which gave it the power to make laws by proclamation without the assistance of either of the Legislative Houses.

In fact, the Duma possessed no more than a consultative function, and even then, most of the time, it was only consulted as a matter of form.

* * *

It will be seen that the words *Minister* and *Parliament* were never in Russia anything but names used to please European opinion. As Nicholas I. said of his day, the Empire had continued to be governed by 30,000 departmental chiefs! The real mistress of the Russian destinies was actually its administrative caste, that complicated machinery which began with the powerful officials of the various Government offices in the capital and ended with lower police officers or the petty clerks of local institutions. Whether they were governors of high rank or clerks of minute importance, these bureaucrats formed a sort of steel-

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

hard strait-waistcoat in which a nation was enclosed as in a frame incapable of expansion, in spite of the forward march of time.

The Tsar Ivan the Terrible, in order to have his commands carried out, and to safeguard the basis of absolute rule, had created a guard which was the blind executor of his bloody orders. It was the *opritchina*. It indulged in every sort of violent deed and crime, burning, murdering, pillaging right and left in order, so they were wont to say, to sweep away treason. And to symbolise their task the members of this guard tied to their horses' tails a broom to indicate that they were to "sweep away treason like dirt." This guard did not disappear with the tyrant who originated it, but gradually changed its form. Peter the Great fixed its status by introducing the classification of ranks which divided the officials into twelve classes or *tchins*, a classification which has endured till our time. The model was to be found in Prussia, it was after the Prussian archetype that the Russian renovator constructed the administration of the Empire, making out of the *boyars* or *Menchikofs* of the eve "secret (even more than Privy) councillors," "State councillors," or "assessors of the College." The *opritchina* merely changed in name. The *opritchniki* became *tchinovniks*, people with *tchins*, with titles and prerogatives, who would still form, in spite of appearances, the *guard of Ivan*, far more oppressors of the people than its helpers or counsellors.

The form and the name changed, the spirit remained the same. The principal object of the institution copied from Prussia was to consolidate and extend the powers of absolute rule, to reduce Russia to abject

THE GOVERNMENT AS IT WAS

obedience far more than to administer the country, so that—as in the century of Ivan the Terrible—treason should be utterly swept away.

With the growth of Russia, the new *opritchina* grew proportionately to become an enormous, a colossal bureaucratic organism which gripped hold of the country to maintain it in the traditions of its past. The morals of this caste have been portrayed and castigated by Gogol, whose comedy *The Reviser* is of powerfully tragic quality under the veil of laughter which his genius threw over it.

The social development of Russia has been one long struggle between the nation and the bureaucrats. The conflict between power and the people, to which a chapter of this book is devoted, is nothing but the underground war which that people had to wage to break out of the strait-waistcoat forced upon it by the tyrannic *tchinovnik*.

* * *

The carrying out of all laws, the whole administration, were, then, in the hands of the *tchinovniks* whom the social aloofness, the weakness of the great chiefs, or their deliberate participation in profits made the absolute masters of those they ruled over. The people, in order to evade regulations which were applied literally or to escape the abuses of the autocrats *in petto*, knew of one method only: it was to bribe their bullies. The *vsiatka*, the touch of palm-oil, was the only way, as the case might be, either to moderate the zeal of an official or, on the contrary, to stir it up again. Russian journalism and Russian literature are full of tales and anecdotes of the corruption of the bureau-

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

cracy. It was of an extent we cannot even imagine. It had become so much a part of the national custom that one would place with one's own hand without even the disguise of an envelope in the hand of the bureaucrat upon whom chance made one depend for the moment the viaticum which would urge him on or moderate his energy. And it was all the same whether the bureaucrat was a general, an admiral, or merely the secretary of a police commissioner.

So it was that the Social-Democratic deputy Tchenkhéli could make from the tribune of the Duma in May, 1916, that only too well deserved accusation against the imperial administration :

" The autocratic and bureaucratic *régime*, under which is hidden the negation of all the guarantees of the right of the private citizen, is the best possible soil on which to cultivate corruption.

" In all Russia you could not find a single man who could maintain that he was able to live without bribery. This war has transformed the customary etiquette of corruption into impudent and public bribery. There is not a single screw left in the machinery of the State which has not been very thoroughly oiled, to use the word which is currently employed to describe bribery among us. It is a perfect orgy of corruption. While plague is at our very gates, hundreds of millions of money are being borrowed and twenty-five per cent. of that goes to the corruption of the *tchinovniks*. It has gone so far that without bribery a private citizen can now no longer even get bread, potatoes, or sugar."

From time to time, when some more than usually disgraceful scandal had come to light, the powers

THE GOVERNMENT AS IT WAS

would take steps. These generally consisted in the nomination of a senatorial commission instructed to inquire into the facts of the charge. But as the officials compromised generally belonged to every step in the hierarchy, sometimes including the Minister of the department himself, the inquiry would end in a string of reports which were not followed by action, and in the course of time the matter was duly pigeon-holed without any measures following.

Not only was the Russian bureaucracy corrupt, but it was also incapable of any productive work. The caste was notorious for its weakness when faced with arguments. Indeed, all sorts of ingenious tricks had been invented to make it impossible for any one individual to take a decision without referring the matter elsewhere. Russia will be found to have been the country of commissions and sub-commissions, all excuses for palavers and *questionnaires* which would delay for years the solution of some of the most elementary questions.

The administrative caste generally recruited its members from the nobility which had found life on its estates too boring and had come into the towns in order to enjoy a little society and to indulge in its passion for gambling. To that upper category, which received the important posts, no matter what might be the incompetency of the candidate or his lack of scruples provided he had noble connections, was added that of the lesser *bourgeoisie* or the sons of peasants, officials of the lowest grade, who in spite of the very small amount of power they wielded nevertheless were found to be very serious obstacles to any innovation, reform, or progress.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

At a meeting of the Council of the Empire on June 19th, 1916, devoted to the discussion of the law on the responsibility of officials—for these were never responsible to anyone but their chiefs—Prince Eugene Trubetzkoy, a Liberal member of that assembly, described the Russian administration in the following manner :

“ There is a great gulf fixed between society and the official class. That is a pathological phenomena which ought to receive the attention of the legislative bodies. In no country is the official so despised as he is in Russia. There is no exact and full translation of the word *tchinovnik* in any foreign language, and that is because of its contemptible associations.

“ This pathological phenomenon of which I speak consists in the division of the whole population of Russia into two classes : the officials on the one hand, on the other hand the rest of the population.

“ To what, in this war we are waging, is the weakness of Russia due ? It is to this fatal division. When our armies start again a glorious offensive, why is it that we are afraid to rejoice ? Whence the doubts which at once rise to chill our enthusiasm ? One word is enough for a reply : *tchinovnik*.”

The speaker had put his finger on the weak spot. Zealous to carry on the tradition of the old *opritchniki*, the official saw before the higher interest of the nation his own interest. He regarded all social problems and all political questions from this angle of vision. The fatherland was only interesting in so far as he might make money out of it while he pretended to serve it.

* * *

What is more—and this was one of the essential

THE GOVERNMENT AS IT WAS

reasons for the suspicion felt by the nation and for the widening of the gulf which became more marked between the administrators and those they governed—the bureaucratic class, reactionary and of German origin, was instinctively sympathetic towards the military, feudal, and oppressive Empire of the West, towards that system described as *Steuer bezahlen und Maul halten* (Pay and keep your mouth shut). Russia could say with Prince Trubetzkoy that it did indeed nourish suspicion with regard to *tchinovniks* who could not console themselves for the breach with a country where flourished a political system dear to their hearts, although honesty compels us to admit that it is in Germany more honestly applied.

This suspiciousness was made all the more intense by the fact that the Tsar-party in Russia, not content with copying Prussia, had in addition borrowed from it in former days a whole set of men to apply its methods. Germans or men hailing from the Baltic provinces, numerous dignitaries or officials of the Empire, in spite of an affection for their new country which may have been sincere, had none the less preserved for the country whence they came an atavistic sympathy, either secret or openly confessed. The great war has given us more than one example of that duality of feelings of which, I believe, only a German is capable, however much he may have identified himself with the country he has adopted.*

* A family which has provided Russia with numerous dignitaries, that of the Barons Mengden, established in Livonia, saw the last of its race distributing proclamations in the German language to the peasants on his estates. Young Baron Mengden was condemned to deportation in February, 1915, by a Russian court-martial.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

Since Catherine II. Russia had suffered a regular invasion of Teutons whose *Kaiser* was far more the one at Berlin than the one at Petrograd.* They were the most ardent upholders of the Russian reaction, they were the "enemy within the gates," a powerful and organised enemy, deriving their strength from the support of the Throne itself, but a little while ago, in the person of Alexandra Feodorowna.

It is not our purpose to describe at length here that powerful movement of German penetration in Russia, a movement which possessed a real organisation which was political, scientific, economic, financial and colonising. This movement invaded Russia so insidiously that true Russians who really loved their country did not always manage to escape its influence. The Russian University system was abundantly saturated with Kultur, the Russian intellectuals have drunk, at the *Alma Mater* herself, from the spring of Teutonic science. The landed proprietors with their German stewards, the merchants with their German agents, the officers with their professors in the art of war from Berlin, that is to say, a considerable part of the Russian nation, consequently lived in close and constant relations with the Teuton.

Is it surprising, then, that we should have seen Germany omnipotent in every division of Russian national life? Long ago already she had claimed the right to interfere in internal affairs. Her constant acts of intervention in the Polish question in order to prevent the grant of liberties are notorious. Did not

* Von Schwanenbach, Russian Minister of Education, used to make his confidential reports in duplicate. One of these went to the Tsar and the other to the German Emperor.

THE GOVERNMENT AS IT WAS

General Skalon, Governor-General of the kingdom, declare to the Polish Count Tiszkjecz, in 1905, " You have against you the Emperor William II., who will come and make you see sense " ? Germany did all in its power against the Russian nation to support absolute autocracy. The deputy Markof might well cry out, when he was addressing the members of the Left, in a sitting of the third Duma, " You forget, my revolutionary friends, that William II. is there to put you back in your places with a single blow of his mailed fist ! "

The German Ambassador in Petrograd possessed an authority which the British Ambassador alone was able to acquire during the last months of Nicholas II. His organ, the *Petersburger Zeitung*, even while the two countries were at war, after the Ambassador's departure, continued to defend with the greatest impudence the cause of Russia's enemy. This publication was not suspended till long after the outbreak of hostilities.

The German was everywhere, as we have seen. He had above all usurped most of the important functions of the Empire. In this way the supreme authority found itself duplicated by that of a foreign oligarchy.

At Court the Heydens, the Benckendorffs, the Budbergs, the Korfs, the Knorings, to mention only a few, formed an escort to the descendant of the Gottorp, while in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the newspapers noted with indignation, even since 1914, the presence of a certain number of barons. The army included Rennenkamps, Kaubars, Boems, Wahls, Merzenfelds, Kraabes, Mörders, Pleischers, Pilars von Pilchau,

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

Rauchs, Zeins. The Navy had such names as Ebelhardt, Dröber, Klüpfel. In the Exchequer, at the Ministry of the Interior, the Education Department, in the lists of Governors, German names swarmed. Poland under Tsarist domination had had a foretaste of the administration of von Bäseler with such men as von Essen, Uthof, Meyer, Lund, Korf, Gleisser, Fechner, Schepping, Petz, and many more.

The Court Annual, the Army List, the Navy List were crowded with names of a Germanic type. One might have thought it had been done for a bet. There is a story that Alexander III., reviewing one day the newly appointed officers of a regiment of the Guards, asked a young ensign who was in the front rank what his name was. The name was German. The Tsar passed on to the next: the name was German again. It was so again for the third and the fourth. The Emperor showed his feelings by spitting on the ground, which is the Russian way of expressing anger, and went off without saying a word.

This German penetration constituted when war broke out a national danger whose gravity our Allies were able to reckon, to their cost, when they suffered from the deeds of such a man as Miasoyedof, a German by derivation, of Stürmer, and of many members of the Baltic aristocracy. In times of peace this hold was nothing more nor less than an intolerable anomaly. As the Cadet deputy Roditchef said, "The German in the service of the Russian State and an alien to it is utterly ignorant of the Russian character. He looks upon it as clay in the hands of the potter." "That's the sort of Russian we must fight against," he added. The fight was becoming all the more necessary because

THE GOVERNMENT AS IT WAS

the alien was also as often as not a *tchinovnik*, and the latter, whether he was of Teutonic origin or the descendant of a Russian family, was the public enemy.*

* * *

From being the public enemy he became the most loathed creature when he belonged to that all-powerful category of the Russian system of government—the police.

The Russian absolute autocracy seems to have relied altogether on that institution which was the essential machinery of the old *régime*, the most important department of the bureaucracy.

Its principal section was the political police, that much-feared *okhrana* which some years ago used to be called the “third division” of the Imperial Chancellery. Its organisation was formidable, including, from a director to be found in the immediate neighbourhood of the Tsar, an innumerable *gendarmérie* spread throughout the Empire, a cloud of secret agents disseminated in all classes of society, to end with the *dvornik*, that compulsory concierge of every Russian

* NOTE.—In strong contrast with the State administrative organisations Russia under the Tsars also included autonomous organisations such as the *Zemstvos*, which were a kind of elected district councils, and the *municipalities*, which administered the villages. These bodies had only a very limited power, since their decisions before they could be put into force had to be submitted to the governors and to the police. Nevertheless, both *Zemstvos* and municipalities, within the limitations of their power, have contributed enormously to the improvement of the condition of the rural classes. During the war their activity made up for the inertia and apathy of the State administration in the organisation of matters behind the lines.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

building whose work consisted less in taking to the police-station the drunkards found in the street than in making a daily report to the police superintendent of the district on the comings and goings of the house to which he was attached.

All public life was subjected to police inquisition, no single individual could flatter himself that he had escaped from its supervision. The atmosphere of the wretched country as a result was very difficult to breathe.

Once the traveller crossed the frontier he felt heavy upon him the invigilatory inspection of malevolent spies. The least observant travellers could tell you that the entry into Russia produced the effect of passing the threshold of a prison. From Verjbolovo, the first Russian station after leaving Eastern Prussia, one had the feeling of entering a gaol, a desolate and wild gaol where the police was king, absolute master of your liberty and of your life. Not to mention Russian subjects who had only too many chances of finding out for themselves, non-Russian personages, people who should have been above any sort of suspicion, also on many occasions had the fact thrust upon them. Thus I remember that Dr. Charcot, the explorer, and Paul Fort the poet, who had come to Russia to give a series of lectures, were detained at the frontier, when they were about to leave the country, by fussy policemen who could see in them nothing but people who had omitted to obtain from the Government offices of the capital a parchment certifying that "the police saw no reason why they should not leave for abroad."

By a costly expenditure of the secret fund placed

THE GOVERNMENT AS IT WAS

at its disposal, the *okhrana* knew how to recruit its members from all classes of society. That is why one was never sure, in a drawing-room, in a restaurant, in an editorial office, even and especially in the secret meetings of Liberals, that one's neighbour or the most virulent speaker was not a police spy or an *agent provocateur*. Denunciation thrived on all sides. Every Russian subject of note, every foreign resident who was to be watched, had somewhere in some police den a mysterious index-card, and in the corresponding files the parties concerned were never designated by their own names but by nicknames. Thus the deputy Cheidze (who has since become famous) was known under the name of *drawing-room* (*gostini*) and the former Minister Sukhomlinof under that of *glycerine*. Letters were opened, read, suppressed, censored, by the contemporary *opritchniki*. So were books and papers. Such books as Larousse and other encyclopædias had special editions for Russia, or, failing that, would have some of their pages torn out. The circumstances of the violent death of Paul I., for instance, must not to be known by loyal subjects.

Wretched was he whom the *okhrana* had declared to be "suspect." His peace was at an end. Every time the police thought it had discovered a plot or was afraid of impending trouble he would have his house searched, he would be arrested, cross-examined, thrown into prison "as a preventive measure" for weeks, months, even for years. Heaven help the poor devil who, dreaming of a happier future, was foolish enough to say aloud what one scarcely dared to think to oneself. Such a man would, after an acceleration of his trial, hear himself condemned to

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

deportation to Northern Siberia, find himself sent to the filthy Siberian gaols or thrown into the dungeons of the fortress of Peter and Paul, or of Schlüsselburg. And if a breach of the law could be proved, then one grey morning the rope, that "necktie of Stolypin," would send back to the Orthodox God the ill-begotten soul of that perverse subject. The Russian political police was the great food-purveyor for the gallows. The crimes to its credit were not to be numbered and the tale of them became more and more terrible as the day of reckoning grew nearer. The labour-deputy Kerenski (known to us now as the most significant man in Revolutionary Russia), who became Minister of Justice in the Provisional Government, proclaimed the infamy of the police from the tribune of the Duma on May 16th, 1914, by these words which called for retribution: "The most notorious gaolers of the period of Alexander III. knew how to respect in their political enemies the man who thought differently, and when they shut him up in the fortress of Schlüsselburg they would sometimes come to chat with him. And some of those martyrs, those men struggling for liberty, have been able to return to us with the glamour about them of twenty years' hard labour. But now, the sons of those famous gaolers do not hesitate to seize young men of seventeen or eighteen and make them die slowly but surely under the blows of the knout, under the strokes of the rod, or by the burns of a red-hot iron. Are we not returning to the days when political prisoners were walled-up alive? And you imagine, gentlemen, that you can claim for this country the civilising mission of a European nation!"

The annals of the Russian martyrology would alone

THE GOVERNMENT AS IT WAS

provide material for several volumes. There is nothing more awe-inspiring than the Odyssey of those apostles of liberation whose names are legion ! What is there more noble than the life of such women as the *Grand-mother of the Revolution*, Brechko-Brechkovskaya, and of Vera Figner, the recluse of Schlüsselburg ? Reality, in the very midst of this twentieth century, a few hours' railway journey from such enlightened cities as London or Paris, made with blood and tears a tale such as the most imaginative romancers would not have dared to write for their most kindly-disposed readers. Russian life under the Romanofs, and especially under the last crowned Emperor of that name, will be known to have had for its creed and its motto those sinister words : *Gallows and Siberia !*

Under such a system of government Russians have learnt to dissimulate, to hide their real thoughts. A foreign observer, Dr. Grundish, has written on the strength of his knowledge of them : " As soon as the conversation, which is always lively and intelligent in that country, often indeed extremely brilliant, began to touch the fringe of certain questions, people looked at one another and the words died away unspoken. Thus it was that people of importance, intellectuals, real patriots were humiliated by this necessity for caution. It was too often necessary to lower one's voice, which as a result would not regain its full resonance for some time."

In order that the timid might be made bold again and the suspected man be persuaded to express his true sentiments, the *okhrana* employed its provocative agents. The most famous-infamous of them all, who was unmasked by the indefatigable inquiries of Burtsef,

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

was Evno Azef, upon whom the French Government had the misfortune to bestow the Cross of the Legion of Honour. This recognised agent of the political police had also managed to insinuate himself into the revolutionary circles. He had had himself elected director of Terrorist organisations and member of the Central Committee of the Socialist Party.

Evno Azef had to his credit as a revolutionary more than thirty murders attempted or accomplished at his suggestion, by his instructions or with his consent. Among his most famous deeds was the organisation of the murders of the Minister of the Interior, Plehwe, and of the Grand Duke Sergius. It was he who prepared the attempted murders of Admiral Dubassoff, the Governor-General, Guerchelman, and the attempt on Nicholas II. The last failed only owing to outside circumstances over which the scoundrel had no control !

This provocative agent had played an active part in the drawing-up of plans for the military mutinies of Moscow, Viborg and Kronstadt. He knew beforehand of the preparations for the assassination of General Sakarof at Saratof, and of Governor Bogdanovitch at Ufa, as well as a number of terrorist crimes which succeeded.

The double activity of the policeman, Azef, lasted from the year 1903 to the year 1909, that is to say, it included the culminating period of the Terrorist action in Russia. Thanks to those acts which were crowned with success, Azef speedily won an exceptional position in the very heart of the Revolutionary Committees. At the same time, by his betrayal of individuals and the revelations which brought to nought certain

THE GOVERNMENT AS IT WAS

Terrorist plots, he became a most valued agent of the *okhrana*.

V. Burtsef in a complaint which he sent from Paris in June, 1914, to the Russian Minister of Justice, said of that monstrous product of the system of government that is now dead: "The immediate object of Azef's activities was the extension of Terrorist action. Every fresh success strengthened his privileged position in the ranks of the Terrorists and increased his worth and his usefulness in the opinion of those who directed the political police.

"Azef's revolutionary career and his police career were closely connected. The credit account of Azef's Terrorist activities constituted, in the opinion of the revolutionaries, a guarantee of his political good faith and was calculated to set at rest any possible suspicions with regard to the part he played as a provocative agent.

"But in spite of that, suspicions did begin to be entertained about him. Azef then increased his bluff and passed from the organisation of the usual Terrorist acts to the provocation of regicide. When at the end of 1905 the storm of revelations began to gather angrily about him, he offered the Council of Workmen's Delegates to organise the blowing up of the *okhrana*'s central offices. But this plan was rejected as being too manifestly of a provocative nature.

"Finally, regicide became the object of Azef's activities. The proofs which I have in my hands, proofs I have taken not only from the archives of the Revolutionary party, but also from the evidence of associates of Azef in his fighting organisation and from the confessions that Azef himself made when we met

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

at Frankfort-on-the-Main, leave no doubt on that score.

"However, Azef was not only not arrested as a criminal, but he was not even dismissed from his position as a secret agent. On the contrary, when the first charges were made against him, he tried to give up his active work as a policeman. Thereupon Guerassimof, chief of the *okhrana* (this was at the beginning of 1906), gave the order to have him arrested secretly and only set him at liberty again when he promised that he would continue to serve on the same conditions as before, that is to say, on the basis of his double treachery. After having agreed to collaborate actively in the work of General Guerassimof, Azef continued as energetically as before to collaborate in the work of the revolutionary organisation so as to allay all suspicion in the minds of his comrades."

The attempt on Admiral Dubassof in which Count Konovnicin met his death, the attempt on Guerchelman, the Governor-General of Moscow, the murder of Governor Slepzof at Tver, as well as other murders of the same kind, are all to be placed to the account of Azef, after he had made his agreement with General Guerassimof.

Just as Rasputin sinned in order to be able to repent, so the *okhrana* caused the highest personages in Russia to be murdered in order to prove to the survivors how necessary was its own existence !

The *okhrana* in order to keep its hand on the Russian Revolutionary Movement had created agencies in every country to which Russians emigrated. Paris, Lausanne, Geneva especially, were flattered by the presence of police spies whose duty it was to keep an

THE GOVERNMENT AS IT WAS

eye on the Russian revolutionaries. Paris knew both Ratchkovsky and Rataef, the directors-in-chief of foreign services of the Russian political police. The alliance gave them the opportunity of taking liberties. Did not V. Burtsef find it necessary, only two months before the outbreak of war, to place before the French Minister of Justice of the day, M. Bienvenu-Martin, a protest against the illegal actions of the foreign branch of the *okhrana*, whose principal offices were in Paris itself.

One of the first acts of the Russian Provisional Government has been to hand over the archives of the secret police to V. Burtsef. The latter belonged to the Russian Revolutionary Socialist Party. In the reign of Alexander III. he was compelled to fly from his country, where he was looked upon as one of the most dangerous enemies of the monarchy and came to take refuge in Paris. When the revolution broke out in 1905, Burtsef returned to Russia. He edited a review, *The Past*, in which he published a number of documents on the evolution of democratic and revolutionary ideas. When the counter-revolution succeeded he was compelled once more to exile himself, and for the second time took up his residence in France. It was from Paris that he began an unmerciful attack on the Russian police and brought to light the deeds and attempts of the provocative agents.

Several of the latter, having seen the error of their ways, came to confess to him. Bakai, head of the secret police at Warsaw, Menchikof, an important official of the secret police at Moscow, placed in his hands documents which seriously compromised the former *régime*. The Provisional Government could

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

not have done better, in order to clean out those Augean stables, than to give to M. Burtsef the documents of the secret institution against which he had fought all his life.

* * *

The Russian political police died only when the *régime* died. When Azef had been finally shown up and hunted down like a wild beast by the revolutionaries he left behind him assistants who carried on his work. There is one of them about whom people have talked a great deal since the Stürmer Ministry : Mannasevitch-Manuilof.

Ivan Manuilof made his first bow in the lucrative career he had adopted as the agent of Ratchkovsky at Paris. His intrigues against his chief were the cause of his transfer to Rome. He was again transferred thence because of the large sums he was compelled to spend, so he said, as a result of the exalted personages with whom he was on good terms. He was instructed to organise at the Hague a system of espionage which should report on Japanese diplomacy. He managed to discover the Japanese secret cypher, but being found out in turn by the Japanese counter-spy system, he deceived his chiefs by continuing to send them despatches supposed to have been intercepted but which he himself made up from beginning to end. His fraud came to light when he sent to Petrograd photographs of the pages of a Chinese dictionary, stating that they were secret documents of the greatest importance. He was recalled to Petrograd, and we next find him connected with the negotiations which the Russian Government kept up for a time with that curious personality of the 1905

THE GOVERNMENT AS IT WAS

revolution, Father Gapon. He then entered the ranks of journalism, again following a policy of provocation of his own devising, by revealing from time to time some of the underground workings of the organisation to which he still continued to belong. And in the intervals he would—for a consideration—make use of his connections to help people who were seeking appointments. He would use his good offices with the heads of departments on behalf of men whose record was not clean. Stolypin, who was at that time President of the Council, stirred to action by the complaints which poured in from all sides, wished to put an end to the career of this shameless individual. Manuilof obtained the intervention of the *okhrana* and of a number of highly-placed people whom he obliged by giving them secret information. The Council of Ministers was compelled to stop the judicial inquiry.

Manuilof wrote for several years in the *Novoye Vremya* and the *Vetchernee Vremya*, signing a column of news about foreign politics with the pseudonym "Diplomaticus." Admitted everywhere, influential, above all feared, the policeman was having the time of his life. Nicholas II. made him a present of a cigarette-case with his initials, in 1915, on his return from a journey he had made in Europe on behalf of his newspapers in search of "copy," a journey during which he interviewed all the statesmen of the Allied countries.

He came back to Petrograd to find as Prime Minister (President of the Council) one of his old chiefs, the former head of a department of the Ministry of the Interior (to which the police is subordinate), Boris

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

Stürmer. Manuilof became his willing slave. People used to say "There is a corpse between them" to explain the intimacy of that Minister with an individual whom he knew to be shady, which may have been untrue so far as Stürmer was concerned, although Manuilof was notoriously a scoundrel.

There was now no limit to Manuilof's energy. As in former days he turned his influence into hard cash. In spite of the fact that he had two ruinous hobbies, the collection of antiques and women, he rapidly became more and more wealthy. Concessions, business orders, the setting free of prisoners, decorations, everything might be obtained from this factotum of Stürmer who shared the profits with his master.

But one day there came a marplot. Manuilof had caused to be arrested, under a charge of high treason, a shady financier, one Rubinstein, in order to get rid of a rival who was successful in the affections of a Palace Theatre singer. He had then attempted to blackmail several Petrograd bankers by threatening them with proceedings as accomplices in the dirty dealings of his first victim. One of them appealed to the Minister of Justice, M. Khvostof, uncle of the Minister of the Interior and a very much more honest man than his nephew. M. Khvostof set on foot an inquiry, and, as soon as he found out the truth about the fellow, had Manuilof arrested without informing Stürmer. His action made his immediate resignation necessary, although the Tsar had offered him the Presidency of the Council a little while before. Rasputin had intervened on behalf of the policeman who was his friend. He was only able to extract a revenge from the author of the arrest, for Alexandra Feodorowna saw

THE GOVERNMENT AS IT WAS

to it that the whole matter was hushed up. She understood that too many people would have been implicated and that the trial of Manuilof would in fact have been the public trial of the *régime* under which he flourished and of the *okhrana*. The new Minister of Justice, Makarof, therefore received from the Tsar the personal command to stop the prosecution while the judicial inquiry was taking place. Although Makarof was a reactionary himself, he sent in his resignation, disgusted at the iniquity of the orders he had received. His successor, less scrupulous, cleared Manuilof of all blame. It was unwise to touch a member of the *okhrana* though he might be deep-dyed with guilt because of the fear of the scandal public revelations would cause. Germans, buffoons, traitors, above and below Ministers without any power, men like Azef, Guerassimof, Manuilof, Elia Kurtz, whose name is still in the Annual Register of Petrograd as "correspondent of French newspapers," Kurtz the chum of Ministers and powerful noblemen, who became chief of the counter-spy system at Bukharest during the war and was then cast into the fortress of Peter and Paul, such were the wheels within wheels of the Russian government machine ! It is on such a society, a fine society indeed, that the throne of the autocrat of All the Russias had its foundation.

CHAPTER IV

RUSSIAN POLICY UNDER THE LAST TSAR

The policy of "pacification"—Stolypin—The Black Hundreds—Repression—Nationalism—Khokovtsof's *laissez faire*—Reaction becomes more pronounced—The period of weak policy—Goremykin—Stürmer, Protopopof and the era of folly.

THE Revolution of 1905 will be found to have formed in the history of Russia a very definite line of demarcation between two periods.

Until those memorable days of October the principle of absolute autocracy had remained unquestioned by the mass of the people, and as it had its foundation on the people it had been almost impossible for the *élite* to attack it.

The Revolution shook it to its very base. It was discussed, it appeared out of date, and because of the crass badness of those who supported it, it seemed monstrous to a section of public opinion which grew ever more and more considerable.

The year 1905, then, was the beginning of a relentless fight between the defenders of autocracy, a minority, and a nation ever more and more determined to raise itself to the social level of its neighbours.

For that reason the Russian Government policy

POLICY UNDER THE LAST TSAR

from that time may be summed up thus: to get back again from the country the semi-liberties which had been granted under revolutionary pressure. This policy was christened the policy of "pacification" and under its convenient cloak both honest-thinking Ministers and angry officials committed the worst excesses.

Count Witte, the father of the Constitution of 1905, after having hesitated for a moment before the insurrection, soon became again the obedient servant of the sovereign whom he ironically called his "august master," but whose too servile Minister he none the less showed himself too happy to be.

The Government monopoly of spirits, which he had instituted, besides filling easily the safes of the Exchequer, enabled him to keep the Russian nation in a state of brutishness agreeable to those who wished to perpetuate its state of bondage. "The mujik," wrote a Russian pamphleteer, "had been shut up in a nursery, dark, dank, unclean. On the bare walls, instead of pictures which he could understand, were hung threatening notices, and instead of toys suitable for his age in the evolution of humanity there was only a row of vodka bottles."

* * *

But Witte's government was comparatively mild. He was an ambitious man who hedged in order to serve his own interests. His crooked policy first gave to Russia a period of rest from strife and then led him to suppress the first Duma. His successor, Stolypin, meant to choke the popular movement, in order, as he thought, to support the Tsar effectively.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

"First the restoration of order," said he epigrammatically, "any reforms can come later." In order to restore order and pacify the nation he used every means which boundless power could place in his hands. If he wished to proclaim a law against which the Duma was protesting he simply rusticated the latter or brought into play that famous Article 87 which gave him the right to do without Parliament. Stolypin thought he would make of autocracy a sort of guardian angel to the people. But circumstances had changed with the times, and so had the needs of civilised life. New horizons had opened before the people and the rod which in the mind of the Russian Prime Minister was to be a paternal rod was none the less a rod. The means Stolypin employed to restore the absolute autocracy which for a moment had been shaken to its foundations could only rally to his side courtiers or dupes such as the Octobrist party, who saw in him a man desiring to apply to the last letter the constitutional manifesto.

Relying on this Centre party of the Duma, and especially on the sections of the Right, he asked the support of the latter to pacify the country. It was like throwing open to the wolves the gates of the sheepfold. The ultra-Conservatives whom the popular insurrection had left sore, considering this revolt as an outrageous crime 'against the symbol of the fatherland in the person of the Tsar, went eagerly to work. The Black Hundreds, a reactionary organisation brought into being by the revolution, then began to have the time of their lives. Dr. Dubrovin, the organiser in chief, who had become the right hand of the secret political police and the heads of Government departments,

POLICY UNDER THE LAST TSAR

stirred up afresh pogroms against the Jews, worked up the populace and the simple-minded by his pamphlets, paid for out of the State Exchequer, to attack the Revolutionaries, the Poles, the Ukrainians, the Finns. Terrorist crimes followed on one another thick and fast. They were pacifying. And in course of pacification, after the deaths of the editor Yolloos and the deputy Herzenstein, who fell beneath the blows of the ultra-Right societies, came the murder of the Labour-deputy, Karaulof, in 1908, and finally the attempt against Witte himself.

The Emperor treated these crimes with indulgence. One would hang without chance of reprieve some student who had written a revolutionary pamphlet that had been found among his private papers, but one always commuted the already light sentences pronounced *pro forma* upon the reactionaries' assassins.

From that date on, excepting perhaps the period of M. Kokovtsof's ministry, the internal policy of Russia will prove to have been a disgrace to civilised Europe. It sank back to the level of the worst days of the national and religious persecutions of the terrible Procurator of the Synod Pobiedonotsef, during the last years of Alexander III. The prisons, the awful gaols of Peter and Paul, of Schlüsselburg, the deadly prisons of Siberia, that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returned, were full to overflowing. No single night passed without the workmen's quarters being thrown into disorder by some police investigation. No morning passed without the students whispering in one another's ears the name of some comrade who had been arrested. Whole towns and provincial governments were placed under martial law

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

or under military protection to allow illegal acts to take place. Those were the days when police provocation (common informing) flourished.

They were pacifying the country. The Tsar, although he was deeply religious, saw without remorse the list of victims of his system become longer and longer. Was it not for the sake of his dynasty and was not the fate of his family intimately connected with the country's weal?

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While they were gagging the people they began to hunt down the nationalities who had been forcibly herded under the ægis of the two-headed eagle. Poles, Finns, Letts, Lithuanians, Georgians, Jews, found themselves treated as "subjects of the second class," and pretexts of every kind were found to harass them. The Government was supported in this policy by the growth of a nationalism new in the history of Russian thought. Aggressive, uncompromising, it owed its existence to some extent to the humiliation felt when Austria annexed Bosnia. It was fostered and artificially encouraged by those who were anxious to distract public opinion from social questions. The Jewish pogrom was an outlet for the Tsarist system of government. Moreover, the political chiefs found in these massacres a direct method of revenge on those who in 1905 had played a considerable part in the popular insurrection.

"Russia for the Russians," that is of course for the Great Russians, such was the *leit-motiv* of the Nationalist Minister, Count Bobrinski, and of the sections of the Right in the Duma. Stolypin found his name straightly connected with this sudden birth of a

POLICY UNDER THE LAST TSAR

narrow-minded Jingoism, of an intolerant Imperialism, so little in sympathy with the usual Russian broadness of view. And Stolypin was killed outright by one of those who had been "pacified" or by some provocative police agent, the truth was never found out.

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Kokovtsov followed him, hiding discreetly behind a sovereign who took offence at any marked evidence of character in a Minister. He gave his special attention to the question of national finance, which, although it was sufficiently delicate in Russia, was at any rate less troublesome than the political situation. During his Ministry the police remained absolute master of that Empire one could gag, since M. Kokovtsov himself had one day been foolish enough to say, "Thank goodness, there is no Parliament in this country!"

His policy consisted chiefly in letting things take their own course. Let it be said here, to give that true friend of France his due, that it was under his administration that the Empress began to rule really and without a rival in the mind of her weak husband. Rasputin was then nearing the very summit of his power and had arranged that Kokovtsov should have as his collaborator, as we have already seen, one of his own creatures, that Governor Maklakof who was dressed up to play the part of Minister of the Interior.

From that moment wire-pullers in ever-increasing numbers were to direct public affairs, and the President of the Council, letting things go to the Court favourites, limited his own activity to the strict performance of mere administrative routine.

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To crush the advanced national sections, to keep the

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

people in a state of ignorance, and to checkmate the Russian subjects of non-Russian race, this was still the Government policy. Maklakof concentrated his attention on the use of the police. In an interview I had with him at that time, an interview which caused a sensation in Russia, he spoke to me solely of centralising and strengthening the power of autocracy as well as the police organisation (that was understood) to act as its judicial executive. The Polish and Jewish questions did not exist for him. In his opinion they were, neither more nor less, "excuses for creating unrest."

And still, gaining strength as it grew, reaction made itself felt. The Poles were cheated of even the meagre promises Stolypin had made to them. They were refused the pitiful measure of municipal self-government, but the political chiefs at Petrograd at the same date were proclaiming as Russian soil and registering as belonging to the Orthodox faith the territory of Kholm, as Polish a province as ever was.

The Jews, when Casso was Minister of Education, suffered a reduction in the percentage of their children allowed to enter educational establishments. The trial of Beylis, that wretched Jew accused by a magistracy in the pay of the reactionary, Scheglovitof, Minister of Justice, of having bled to death a Christian child for his Paschal bread, brought infamy upon a Russia from which nevertheless such a man as Tolstoy had sprung. Finland stood by helpless while her talmanns were deported.

The Russian Press was gagged more than ever. During the year 1913 there were 364 convictions registered against newspapers. The last traces of the con-

POLICY UNDER THE LAST TSAR

cessions of 1905 disappeared. By withdrawals of rights, by restrictions, or by counter-legislation the Government was counteracting all that was left of the ill-fated constitutional charter. With such men as Maklakof, Scheglovitof, Casso, both Russian and non-Russian subjects saw the fresh triumph, this time wild with spite, of the old *régime* of oppression and enslavement.

But the period of strong men like Stolypin was coming to an end, as was that of statesmen such as Kokovtsof. They made way for puppets, hypnotised by the wishes of Tsarkoyë-Selo, mere flunkys of government-by-Tsar who seemed projected by fate to precipitate the final crash. The Master, ever ready to take offence, preferred them to Ministers whose personality was too markedly contrasted with his own. Their submissiveness was much more to his taste than the will of a Stolypin, the warnings of a Witte, or the respectful remonstrances of a Kokovtsof. The careerists he called upon to govern for him played the part he expected them to play without considering what the public weal might demand, and their whole aim was to gratify in every particular the whims of the Crown.

We were now at the beginning of the age of weakness. The age of follies was still to come.

* * *

With the fall of M. Kokovtsof, brought about by his disagreements with the Duma, and with the appointment of M. Goremykin, "that old overcoat they remembered one day when they felt cold," as he had described himself, there can no longer be said to

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

have been any home policy in Russian affairs. The country had been so successfully "pacified" that it was over-excited. The weakness of Kokovtsof, who let his Ministers go their own way, had done as much to bring that about as the brutality of his predecessor.

Goremykin, an old man of seventy-six and idlenatured at that, a retired official into the bargain with old, worn-out official ideas, who still thought the mujik was the unheeding serf of the happy days of his youth, was quite incapable of governing. All that had been asked of his weak old hands was to build up again what was breaking down, to restore once more apparent good relations between the Government and the Duma, which had been simmering with indignation at an unfortunate expression used by Kokovtsof. But such a task was beyond him. It did not fit into his conception of the system of government-by-Tsar, such as it was when he served it in the good old days in the reign of the last sovereign.

It was therefore useless to expect of him the enormous labour, a task demanding genius, which would have consisted in replacing on a solid foundation, by a series of opportune concessions to public opinion, the whole principle of absolute rule. The poor man was not up to his work. Instead of masterly conceptions he invented wretched expedients. And while the measures he took became more and more petty, the problem itself became, on the other hand, more and more difficult. For now indeed the bureaucratic *régime* reeled under the blows brought about by the inexorable consequences which in this world follow justly upon our deeds. We saw the guilty stewardship of General



GENERAL SUKHOMLINOV

(Formerly Minister of War.)

POLICY UNDER THE LAST TSAR

Sukhomlinof result in the terrible situation that the nation at war against a powerful enemy found itself without arms, almost betrayed without defence of any sort, by the apathy, the corruptibility, or the actual treachery of those who stood at its head.

* * *

The situation called for men. Men? It was flunkeys the dying Tsardom called for. Goremykin could not hold his own against the growing stream of discontent and popular execration. Stürmer was sent for, that mercenary official who was condemned even by his likes.

For Stürmer nothing existed, neither social reforms in the country for which the voice of Russia now called with one accord, nor any cleansing of an organisation altogether out of date, nothing existed but a Tsarina and a Siberian peasant who had become her prophet. After all, what was there left besides that for the "bunch"—as M. Sazonof called them—who were to follow one another in power, under the orders of that sinister individual? The interests of caste only, the safeguarding of profits and perquisites, the maintenance of privileges. And beyond this monarchism of a peculiar kind nobody took care of the hurt to the Sovereign, to the Empire itself, which might be inflicted by an unbridled oligarchy and the scandalous excesses in which, in a sort of frenzy, a few adventurers placed by chance at the head of that immense country indulged.

The system of absolute autocracy, especially with such men as Witte and Stolypin, considered that the

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

fight it kept up against the subjects of the Empire was one essential to its continued existence. For such men as Goremykin or Stürmer, on the other hand, it was too much to expect that they should consider anything essential. They did not think of the future. They did not even think of the morrow. Their policy was that "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." The growing difficulties were met by improvised and temporary expedients and the most clumsy helpers were enlisted for the task. Ministers followed one another like puppets on a stage after having jiggled about once or twice. Their names are legion, their work nil, since it was never anything but negative. The mannikin-tyrants who were entrusted with the portfolio of the Interior, Khvostof among others, no longer struggled on behalf of ideas but against individuals. Burtsef, for instance, was arrested when full of confidence he hastened to his country, leaving a safe refuge to offer his services to a fatherland at grips with a redoubtable enemy. The war had increased still more, if such a thing were possible, the power of the police, which under the pretext of counter-spy service was quite openly squaring its accounts with those who despised bureaucracy.

One name, cursed by everyone, summed up that epoch: Rasputin, the key-stone of the arch of that crumbling edifice. Every man thought now of himself. Ministers, dignitaries, Court officials, at the sight of his extraordinary good fortune and of the complete upsetting of ideas and of things which such success argued, sank to the most abject depths of humiliation to gain money and honours. The war made possible an extraordinary orgy of spending, and indeed at no

POLICY UNDER THE LAST TSAR

time in the memory of Russians has embezzlement flourished as it did then.

* * *

Then in that whirlwind of folly, that orgy of provocative measures, when people who thought themselves beyond reach of punishment fell into a sort of frenzy of setting a whole nation at naught, one man suddenly came to his senses. It was Stürmer.

He must have argued something in this wise. When victory crowns our efforts in spite of all the administration has done to make victory impossible, will it not become a weapon to be feared in the hands of the country? Will not the army when it returns sweep away the fools and the criminals who sent it to death, unarmed, and after that did not even make a serious attempt to repair their first neglect? Will the nation, stirred with indignation, when peace is re-established, allow those who had seized hold of power to retain it? It is certain they will not.

Everyone knew or felt, at least confusedly, that Russia was only waiting for the end of danger from without to gain, by force of arms if need be, that emancipation which until then a blind monarch had refused. That is why there grew in the governing circles a new feeling. That feeling was the fear of victory.

For a complete revolution of Russian ideas had taken place. I wrote of it as follows, in November, 1916, in an article to which the *Genevois* gave the hospitality of its columns, for the French Censorship thought it necessary to suppress at that time what was happening in the dark wings of the Russian political stage.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

"Before this war," I wrote, "it was quite usual to hear in Russia, in advanced circles, an aphorism which was not calculated to reassure the Allies of the Empire : 'A victorious war,' they would say, 'would mean a hundred more years of reactionary government' for us.' I remember a conversation I had with a man of considerable standing in Petrograd, a few months before the European conflict. 'We love France,' he said, 'for her ideas, the idealistic France whom by the way it is difficult to recognise in the acts of her leaders so far as Russia is concerned. But supposing a war broke out, let us say over the possession of Moroccan sands, we should use the gun placed in our hands before all else to end the work which remained unfinished in 1905. . . . Charity begins at home. . . .'

"These remarks reflected exactly the opinion at that time of the Russian liberal circles. They could not for the country's happiness desire a triumph of the generals of the Emperor, who would strengthen the system which had been slightly shaken on the morrow of the war with Japan.

"The fear of victory was in the camps of the Left.

"War was declared on Russia. Its cause or its pretext, as you will, was a question much more dear to the hearts of Russians than the Franco-German rivalries in Africa. It was now a question of Slavs, of *bratushki*, those little brothers of the Balkans whose existence was known to the least mujik. And by virtue of that, the war was popular among the masses. Better still, it became popular among the members of the Left, among those who but a short while before only awaited a struggle with a foreign enemy to settle internal accounts, seeing the only hope of liberation for the

POLICY UNDER THE LAST TSAR

Russian people in the defeat of the armies of the Tsar. It now became their war and for the following reason.

“Germany had always been for the Russian Liberals the synonym of reaction. Her acts of interference in the policy of the neighbouring Empire had never had any object but that of dissuading the Cabinet at Petrograd every time the latter showed itself disposed to make some concession to the threat of revolution. Although they had been nourished with German science and philosophy, the Russian intellectuals had nevertheless for the Alma Mater, where politics were concerned, nothing but suspicion, to which was added sometimes a certain envy which the easy-going Slav had of German method, far-sightedness and business enterprise. Besides the Germany of Louvain did not have to do much to bring down upon itself the contempt of a nation of dreamers and idealists, a peaceful, humane people, who were revolted and roused to wrath by the degraded methods of Kultur.

“By the side of this external and secondary cause of the change of opinion with regard to the war, in the sections of the Left, there was another, an internal cause, which perhaps was of even greater importance in the minds of the intellectual classes. A war which the Government would have made its own affair, which would have been organised by it for victory and successfully carried out by it with that intention, would have been a trump card in its hands. But from the first months of 1914 the most deluded were able to assure themselves easily of the incompetency of the chiefs at Petrograd. 1915 was to show more clearly still the futility of the greater number of them, their culpable system of sacrificing everything to the in-

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

tention of crushing out the least desire for progress in the country. One obvious conclusion was to be drawn from this situation. The Russian nation drew it. If we make this war our affair, it said, if we desire victory and organise victory ourselves over a Germany which is too much feared and too much followed by our rulers, we shall at one blow have conquered our right to citizenship in the eyes of the Sovereign and also of European public opinion, which knows too little about us. There followed on these lines a veritable revolution in the ideas of the advanced circles of thought. Its principal factor, as I have just tried to show, was one of an internal social nature. It was a transformation which Germans who knew Russia intimately could never have foreseen. Public opinion suddenly came to its own. This war that had been begun badly, still more badly continued, this war which threatened for a moment to ruin it, revealed to the country the mistake it made in trying to expect better days as the result of disaster, to expect that social victory should follow on a military defeat. Public opinion was now aware of its own power. In the face of this catastrophe which the guilt of the rulers had made possible, the nation at once saw that its political future was intimately bound up with victory, for the nation alone had the means to organise it. And to that task it bent its whole energies as to a work of liberation. The war was 'its war' and the victory would be 'its victory' too. Because it would have contributed powerfully, because it would have repaired the omissions of a feeble and worn-out administration, it could not be forgotten when triumph had crowned its efforts.

POLICY UNDER THE LAST TSAR

“ So we saw the municipalities, the zemstvos, combining into powerful groups of unions, which undertook the task of manufacturing war munitions, of organising the commissariat and the Red Cross, in a word, of putting the whole country on a war footing. We saw a Duma pulsating with patriotism try to rouse the somnolent Government. They called upon half-hearted and distant rulers to make the effort necessary to raise the country at least to the level of the enemy’s military power. For the first time since 1812, the whole Russian people was at war because it hoped to wrest from war its own liberty. The fear of victory had vanished from its ranks !

“ But on the other hand, it seemed to have found a place and a considerable place in the other camp, that of the governing bureaucracy. The violent criticisms of the popularly elected House scarcely succeeded in rousing it from its torpor.

“ The bureaucracy is not, cannot, and refuses to be equal to the task before it,” I wrote in that article in the *Genevois*. “ It is not only red tape that renders it impotent, it is not only because it is a machine without a soul that it is flaccid and without patriotism. It is because the spirit that breathes in it is one of petty sectarianism, because its will and its power to act are only at the service of its hatred, and its hatred, unfortunately, is reserved for anyone but the enemy without its gates.

“ The enemy of this machine is anything that wishes to escape from its tyranny, to free itself from rule by police, anyone who wishes to see an end to the frightful procession of political martyrs, anyone who wishes to breathe freely in this Russia of Rasputin

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

from the German invader, there should be rescinded the order which forbade Israelites to live anywhere but on the very confines of the Empire, now found that by secret circulars the old law was re-established which officially was still supposed to be repealed. The Jewish wounded were not allowed to be cared for in the town hospitals. They might have contaminated by their ideas the soldiers of His Majesty. Corps commandants were forbidden to mention in despatches any gallant deeds performed by men of the Jewish faith. To let public opinion think that the Jew was anything but a spy and a traitor would have been to put an end to the anti-semitic ferment which had been so carefully worked up.

The fear of revolution as a result of the war was to assume the strangest forms. It has even been whispered that the directors of the old *régime* had a scheme by which Russian prisoners returning from Germany, where their nationalist ideas had been carefully cultivated, or where they had developed their own ideas as a result of contact with their French and English comrades in captivity, were to be sent back not to their own villages but to Siberia as "colonists." We know, from another source, that an order was given to the Russian troops in France not to have any dealings with their comrades of the French Army. Western nations could have nothing but a bad influence on the subjects of the "Little Father."

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But these precautions would have been of no avail if war went on. Stürmer, his protectors at Court, and his minions of the Ministry understood that. It was solely in order to avert the internal danger that they



BORIS STÜRMER
(President of the Council.)

POLICY UNDER THE LAST TSAR

went about to prepare a separate peace. It became an obsession for the "camarilla," in spite of all its official statements denying the rumours which spread through the neutral papers, in spite of hypocritical protests repeatedly made in Paris and London. It little mattered to some that Russia should lose her honour and a part of her very territory, in a transaction which would have been too contemptible for words, provided the reactionaries remained masters of the Empire. Love of their fatherland was for those people a secondary matter. Let the country die if their power was to fall.

The Tsar, in spite of the entreaties of his wife, the prayers of some of his Ministers and of his favourites, shared their point of view not at all. Just as his grandfather had not been able to forgive the French politician, Floquet, for his "Vive la Pologne, Monsieur," the Tsar, vindictive as all weak men are, could not forgive the insulting language used by the Kaiser about him, from the Potsdam balcony, at the outbreak of war. Besides he was anxious to repair the failure of 1904 and give back, in the West, to the patrimony of his ancestors what he had lost, in the East, as the result of war with Japan. Moreover, in his opinion, defeat or an unsatisfactory peace would bring about his fall far more certainly than victory. For victory might give one leave to hope for days of happiness, of a better understanding with his people. Finally, there were his solemn promises to his Allies. Nicholas II. was not the man to forget them. Let us do him justice in this.

* * *

The advisers who had no other faith than their own

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

interest knew all that. Why, the newspapers of the Extreme Right went so far as to publish, under the eye of a kindly censor in their pay, the statement that the Emperor was the principal obstacle to a separate peace! Had not Maklakof and Scheglovitof, former Ministers who were assuredly men of influence at Court, received no reply to the memorandum drawn up by them and submitted to the Tsar to prove to him that in the interest of the monarchy it would be well to stop a war waged on his best supporter and especially with the help of two democratic nations? It was therefore necessary to put the supreme authority in such a position that he must stop the war. Short of that, he would never be won over to the views of his circle; to buttress up theories facts were needed.

It was then they evolved the Machiavellian plan of which Rumania was to be the victim. Its defeat, which they took for granted, was to bring about without any manner of doubt, so thought those who were responsible for the plan, peace between Germany and Russia. They had even thought how profit might be made out of the matter by giving to Russia Moldavia, while Wallachia was handed over to Austria.

Rumania still hesitated to take her place by the side of the Entente. She was not ready. But the Russian directors had sent to Bukharest, as a sort of ultimatum, the telegram which was to rush a nation headlong to defeat: "Now or never."

By this the Rumanian Government found itself compelled to choose between a most hazardous policy and the renunciation of the national aspirations. Patriotism gained the day. This time Rumania followed Petrograd's advice, but even now only on

POLICY UNDER THE LAST TSAR

certain conditions. Fearing the Bulgarians, he obtained the promise from the Russians of definite help in the Dobrudja, into which four army corps were to be thrown.

What did it cost Stürmer to promise since he was quite resolved not to perform? The sequel is well known. The Rumanians left to battle alone were crushed; the Russian assistance, which had been a mockery during the triumphal march of the Germans through Little and Great Wallachia, only became of real value when the Sereth lines were reached. Why was this? It was because Stürmer had decided that the retreat should end there so that peace negotiations should take the exact course he meant them to take. It was necessary that Russian opinion should understand the uselessness of a longer effort, but at the same time that it should not feel the goad of defeat inflicted on Russia itself. That the Austro-Germans should be stopped on the Sereth lines meant that Russia had cried "Halt!" as soon as the advance threatened Russian territory. Rumania alone would be vanquished. And from this fresh victory it would be seen that the German capacity for new offensive could undoubtedly not be stopped.

In the circumstances what could be done, except to make peace? Russia was not humiliated by a defeat which would have touched her to the quick, she must look at things coolly, consider her own interests. Did not these compel her to open her eyes to the truth? Since it was becoming certain that Germany was invincible, would it not be better to treat with her at a moment when one could do so without being compelled by the relentless campaign

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

which, unless they settled on terms, would be fought against Russia herself this time ?

There was a chance of this manœuvre succeeding. M. Miliukof and the Duma put an end to it. The leader of the Cadets, in an historical speech, courageously laid bare the intrigues of the adventurers by denouncing from the tribune of the House the secret plans which were to bring about the unheard-of infamy of a separate peace.

Stürmer, howled down at the Duma, opposed by the military leaders and by the British Ambassador, had to be abandoned even by his powerful friends. His fall was pitiful. And now Rasputin fell, too, under the avenging bullets of highly-placed men. Unfortunately, Stürmer left in power, to continue and to intensify the confusion of public affairs, Protopopof drunk with his sudden good fortune at Court. Not only had his interviews with the German diplomatist Warburg at Stockholm, on his return from Paris and London, where he was a member of the Parliamentary deputation, not hindered him from becoming a Minister, but the new attitude of this semi-Liberal of yesterday had won for him the high protection of the Tsarina, which enabled him to stand against the will of the nation. Thus Trepof, made President of the Council, finds himself prevented by this schemer from doing honest work. He is anxious to "get on with the war," but Protopopof, who sees the storm gathering, prepares for reactionary measures and busies himself with the strengthening of the police by getting for it a supplementary vote of 90,000,000 roubles without, for obvious reasons, consulting the Duma. The short life of this Ministry is one series of scandals. The opposition of

POLICY UNDER THE LAST TSAR

tendencies which now exists between the Court flunkey and a Prime Minister trying to show some beneficent activity increases the chaos.

Lord Milner, coming back from Petrograd at that time, said to an English journalist : " If I had believed a quarter of what I have just heard in Russia I should have gone off my head ! " Nevertheless the war went on, more and more difficult problems arose, the disorganisation both at the front and behind the lines kept increasing. At last the new Minister, Trepof, managed to draw up a programme ; in dire haste he tried to put it into effect, but he reckoned without the Court. For the Court was only faintly interested in the questions with which Trepof is concerned. For them the only thing that mattered was the death of Rasputin. Protopopof troubled about nothing else. Sent for by Madame Vyrubova and the Empress, the new favourite consoled them for the death of the great man, promised revenge. He made himself indispensable. Besides, Rasputin was *not* dead. He lived again in Protopopof. And so you see Protopopof playing out the farce, copying the other man's tricks, becoming an oracle, aping the mystic.

Trepof, who keeps his head, asks for the Emperor's support and demands that the humbug should be dismissed. He receives no answer. Count Ignatieff loudly announces his contempt at the sinister farce that is being played. Trepof and he are relieved of their posts, while Protopopof, who until then had only been the power behind the Ministry, now is made Minister in fact. His disgusted assistants resign.

Galitzin nominally replaces Trepof. As a matter of fact it is Protopopof who is the real Prime Minister.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

The Ministers of War, of the Navy, of Foreign Affairs, of Finance, each in turn send in their resignation in order to have nothing more to do with the wretched business. With the exception of General Schuvayef, who is replaced, they are commanded to remain at their posts. It will not be for long. The Revolution comes at last to put an end to this age of madness. The men who have betrayed Russia and humanity are no longer able to harm. Although their evil work can be repaired by the new-born nation, history will not fail to reserve for them its most crushing expression of abomination.

* * *

It has been a temptation to develop at some length the misdeeds of these last minions of Russian absolutism. But this rapid review of the internal policy of the Empire, during the decade which followed the first Revolution and preceded the *coup d'état*, must not close without mention of the part played by the Russian clergy.

This part, it will be seen, has not been to its honour. The Holy Synod made itself the obedient servant of the Court favourites, always excepting a few courageous bishops and a Procurator of high moral worth, M. Samarin, whose name has been mentioned several times in this book. Born of an old family of the nobility of Moscow, a marshal of the nobles of that city, M. Samarin tried to give to the Church a different orientation from that of the familiars of Tsarkoyë-Selo. Imbued with the highest and purest conservative traditions, Samarin ardently desired to serve his Sovereign and his country. Power, for that man of a type so rare during the reign of Nicholas II., was not

POLICY UNDER THE LAST TSAR

an object in itself but a means of service. He was sacrificed by the unwitting potentate because he had tried to clean the Augean stables. On the very morning of his dismissal he was received in audience at Tsarkoyë-Selo, whither he brought a detailed report on Barnabas. The Tsar was gracious, charming. He said he would read the document with all the more interest that he appreciated the author's talent as a writer. Then he asked news of his family, if he intended soon to take up his abode with that family at Petrograd, in the dwelling kept for the special use of Procurators. The same night Samarin received from the Sovereign a letter which began as follows: "As your report this morning took longer than I thought it would, it was not possible for me to inform you of my decision to replace you."

But M. Samarin was only a brilliant exception. Among the chiefs of the Russian ecclesiastical hierarchy it was no longer possible to distinguish religion from slavish obedience to the worst lusts of the *régime*. Among them, too, as in the lay world, promotions and favours were the object of everyone's desire.

The clergy had its Protopopof and its Rasputin in the persons of the Archbishop Pitirim and the gardener-bishop, Barnabas. Unscrupulous schemers became the masters of the formidable instrument of the Church, as it was in the days of the Tsars. Really religious men, such as the Metropolitan Anthony, found themselves condemned to exile in distant provinces or reduced to silence.

The lower ranks of the Russian clergy, itself very ignorant, will be found to have done nothing for the education or the emancipation of the nation. Indeed, for

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

many years the pope (priest) had ceased to be respected by the peasant classes. To tell the truth, even the Orthodox faith will be found to have gained nothing from its priests. They reduced it to a series of idolatrous practices. They made it a religion of outward show, to influence the imagination of the simple-minded, by means of gorgeous rites, without leaving to it anything, without adding anything to it that would speak not to the eyes but to the slumbering minds, to the souls of the faithful in anguish.

Divine service had lost what the service of the Tsar had gained. Many took advantage of their position to please their earthly masters, and the persecutions of the non-Orthodox by way of converting them will not in the sight of God, whom the Church pretended to serve, compensate for the extortions of the clergy.

PART TWO

THE REVOLUTION

CHAPTER I

POLITICAL PARTIES BEFORE THE CHANGE

The parties in the Duma—Octobrists, Progressives and Cadets
—Labour deputies and Social-Democrats—The Centre
party—Nationalists—The Right—Parties as they will be.

ON the morrow of Nicholas II.'s manifesto of October 17th, 1905 (old style), which bestowed upon the Empire that Constitution which in the following years was little by little rendered futile, Russia experimented in politics for the first time.

In the course of the Revolution which preceded the concession made by the Tsar, a first abrupt exchange of ideas had taken place. During those October days, the people had been enabled by the dislocation of government to meet, to act together, to listen to the music as sweet as it was unusual of the words Liberty and Equality.

The working classes had had the leisure to agree upon a programme of reforms. On their side the intellectuals, according to their temperament, their social set, or the work they did, gathered in more or less advanced groups or combined to defend the principle of absolutism that had been shaken by an initial blow.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

The great mass of peasants, on the other hand, understood not at all what was taking place. They saw in the period of disturbances which followed the Russo-Japanese War nothing but an opportunity of running amok among the great landed estates of their former masters. The Revolution so far as they were concerned became a *jacquerie*. It was only later that a beginning of education allowed them to send to the various Dumas a few representatives. These took their places either on the benches of the Right or among the ranks of the Opposition.

When opinions became more precise, taking shape as the semi-liberty granted by the Sovereign allowed the political and parliamentary education of the country to proceed, parties became more definitely delimited, broke up into sections according to the details of programmes more and more clearly drawn up.

The third and fourth Dumas possessed well-defined parties, each one grouping together part of all that did and does still represent Russian public opinion; the aristocracy, the liberal professions, the officials, the clergy, the working classes of the towns and a very small minority of the rural population.

These parties, beginning from the Left, were known as the Social-Democratic, Labour, Constitutional-Democratic, Progressive, Octobrist, the Centre, the Nationalist, the Right and the Extreme Right. In between these sections were to be found the Mussulmans, the Polish deputies, and the Independents, of whom only passing mention is made here.

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As soon as the Constitution was proclaimed in 1905, M. Alexander Gutchkof, who became Minister of

PARTIES BEFORE THE CHANGE

National Defence in the Provisional Government, founded a party whose strictly constitutional programme aimed at reforms already roughly indicated in the grant of a Constitution. This party took its name from the date of the Imperial Rescript—it was the Octobrist party. In the third Duma it played a preponderating part. Stolypin for a long time depended on it to checkmate the impatient reformers of the Left. This parleying with the Russian “Chancellor” earned for it a certain disfavour on the death of that man. The Octobrist party was thought to be lukewarm, even opportunist; its opponents claimed that it did not really represent any section of public opinion. M. Gutchkof, its energetic leader, who played a part of great patriotism both as President of the third Duma and as a member of the Committee of National Defence of that Assembly, was not re-elected for the next session.

Public disfavour caused the section to break up into three parties. The most Radical among its members took their places at once on the right of the Progressives, under the name of Octobrists of the Left. Others, more moderate, especially interested in agrarian reforms, and in the free development of those institutions so beneficial for the rustic population, known as the *zemstvo*s, occupied the centre of the party under the name of *zemstsy*. And the original Octobrists, who did not think it necessary to evolve with the times, and who feared to support the Radicals with their votes, became the Octobrists of the Right. Taken in the lump the party remained what it had always been, a party of the Left Centre. Its left wing often voted with the Progressives and the Cadets, and when the

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

fourth Duma, resisting Government acts of provocation, formed the Progressive Block, the greater number of the Octobrist party enlisted under its banner.

It has already been said that after the disappearance of Stolypin the Octobrists lost much of their moral influence. None the less they preserved their importance by virtue of the number of votes they commanded. Their adhesion to the Block was certainly one of the reasons for the strength and success of that coalition.

* * *

On the immediate left of the Octobrists came the Progressive party, which reckoned among its members more than one man destined to play an important part in the country. Its leader, M. Efremof, is President of the Russian section of the Inter-parliamentary League. In this capacity he is not unknown in France and England. A Liberal who became almost a revolutionary—and who did not in those last years?—M. Efremof is one of those transparently honest men who in Russia formed such an astounding contrast with the crookedness, the corruptibility, of the officials of the old *régime*. Typically Russian, he had all the kindliness of his race, and like so many of his race lacked force of character.

The party of which he is the much respected leader was—since we must speak of it in the past tense now—much more Radical than the Octobrists. It had many points in common with its neighbour on the left, the Cadet party, but had not adopted what some have called the “doctrinaire spirit” of the latter, its sometimes sectarian attitude which gave it a certain lack of adaptability.

PARTIES BEFORE THE CHANGE

In 1915, when the Russian reverses, which were to be attributed solely to administrative incompetency, once more brought up in a serious form the question of drastic administrative reforms, the Progressives outstripped the radicalism of the Cadets, asking, in the speeches of their leaders, for a Government "directly responsible to the House." However they consented to sign the manifesto of the Block which only asked for "a Ministry possessing the confidence of the country."

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The Constitutional-Democratic Party (generally called by its two Russian initials K.D., from which the word cadet has been evolved—ka-dé), although monarchical like the foregoing, was already, under the old *régime*, a part of the advanced Left. It sat on the right of the extreme Left, that is of the Labour members and the Social-Democrats.

This party has always been strongly disciplined and has always had for its leaders men who were sometimes uncompromising but were courageous in their defence of a programme which certainly threatened to breach the walls of autocracy. It includes men of unusual significance: M. Miliukof, whose historic speeches have already sufficiently explained this great parliamentary figure; M. Shingaref, a man with a remarkably organised brain and, like M. Miliukof, a man of exceptional learning; M. Maklakof, also a great speaker who was as much liked as his brother, the former Minister, was loathed; M. Roditshef, a typical Russian, a generous-minded dreamer, kind-hearted and noble-souled, who may be said to have

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

been the heart of the party, while Miliukof was its head and Shingaref was its right arm.

It has already been said that the Cadet party had been accused of sectarianism. Let us say in its defence that it refused to agree with the extreme demands of the Progressives who wanted a Cabinet responsible to the nation's elected representatives, because M. Miliukof wisely preferred to ask less in order to obtain a little from a Government undisposed to grant any but the most infinitesimal concessions. It has also been seen that M. Miliukof, although a man of very advanced opinions, upheld the Romanof dynasty by proposing as a first solution, when Nicholas II. abdicated, that his brother should be made Regent, and had the courage to stand up to the Workmen's Committees by declaring to all whom it might concern that he was responsible for the suggestion.

"Let us go slowly to go surely," said M. Miliukof to me at the time when, in order to profit by the retreat of two years ago, which had had a considerable effect on the Court, some friends were talking of precipitating the event which all of us thought bound to come. M. Miliukof only abandoned under protest that wise programme of gradual evolution because of the insistency of the extremists whom the Revolution conjured out of the crowd.

* * *

Left

From the ranks of the Extreme ~~Right~~, in the Duma, only two figures stood out: M. Kerenski, leader of the Labour party, and M. Cheidze, leader of the Social-Democratic party. Those two sections of Republican tendency had been diminished on several occasions

PARTIES BEFORE THE CHANGE

by the grim gaps made in its ranks by the political police which under all sorts of pretexts used to deport the deputies of these advanced parties.

When reaction was at its height, when Rasputin rule spread terror on all sides, these two, Kerenski and Cheidze, both lawyers, did not fear to deliver from the rostrum violent diatribes against the now defunct system. Their speeches crying for retribution were often applauded by the moderates, so fine was the bearing of men who dared to risk paying for their patriotic audacity, when the House rose, by exile to far Siberia, from which so few returned.

It is only just to say that if the parties of the Extreme Left were necessary in those days to counter-balance the dishonesty of the reactionaries, their tendencies, too marked for the present moment, are not altogether suitable for a Russia which has now won her freedom. Their pacifist theories are too opposed to the ugly realities for which Germany stands, their conceptions are premature for a country so insufficiently prepared politically as Russia is.

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On the right of the Octobrists, who divided the Duma into two almost equal parts, the Centre party took its place. This party had broken off from the Nationalists who, without wishing to adopt frankly the orthodox constitutionalism of the party of October 17th, none the less desired to show themselves more liberal than their old political friends, and not to have, as they had, any alliance with the Right.

Although numerically it had no importance, the

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

Centre has often played an appreciable part in the voting, sometimes giving its support to the Left sections, sometimes to the Conservatives. Its chief, M. Krupenski, active, enterprising, was a sort of go-between during stormy meetings, a kind of peace-maker among his neighbours in order to bring them to mutual concessions. This party was only important because of its leader, and he, it would appear, was in the pay of the Government !

With the Nationalists the Right began. This party had put down as an item in its programme the intention to struggle for the possession, some day, of that Red Russia in the hands of Austria. It lost a great deal of sympathy by the narrowness of some of its conceptions. It opposed an equitable solution of the Polish question, because it was opposed in general, by virtue of a sort of nationalism which its adversaries have called zoological, to all concessions to non-Russian subjects. The chief tendency was towards a Greater Russian Imperialism, although such ideas never were adopted by the great mass of the nation. But little exaggeration was needed to change its ideas into an intolerant jingoism which infected most of the Russian Nationalists. We must except the leader of the party, Count Bobrinski, who because he was a good European was able to avoid the gross errors of his followers. And while he never forgot the principal clause in the programme of his party, the reunion of Galicia to the Empire, he knew how to rise to the occasion, during the historical times through which the fourth Duma passed, and to mingle his voice with those of the orators of the Liberal Left in pouring contempt on the guilty dealings of the Government.

PARTIES BEFORE THE CHANGE

By his side another Nationalist who had been uncompromising in his day, M. Savenko, also took up the cudgels on behalf of progress against the crumbling system, thus breaking with the traditions of his set. This policy caused a division of tendencies in the party; it broke up into a true Nationalist section on the one hand and into a Nationalist-Progressive section on the other. The latter together with the Centre party adopted the declaration of the Progressive Block.

* * *

After the Nationalist party we come to the Right proper, to the reactionary part of the House. It seemed to take its place in the Duma only against its will and to be present at meetings simply in order to prevent deputies conscious of their duty from any possibility of doing useful work. When one came to the Right one must expect no more courteous engagements, no more purely parliamentary struggles, but a real hate which painfully animated a few ultra-Conservatives seated on the last benches of the Palais de Tauride. No more reasoning, little sincerity. We had now to deal with prejudice or toadyism. Apart from a few provincial priests and peasants, the members of the Right were recruited in the latter years from those who benefited by the state of affairs, from officials anxious to get on, such as Khvostof, an old bad governor out of whom they made a detestable Minister. As for the priests and peasants, the former were men whose lack of education and whose ideas warped by the class spirit made them unfit to be law-givers, while the peasants were men whose servile mentality and adherence to the spirit of the past made

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

them the amiable supporters of the very system which oppressed them.

There was one honest man in the party, M. Purichkevitch. At the very beginning, inexpugnable, holding fast to his convictions, a fanatical upholder of absolutism, he broke many a lance with those whom the *coup d'état* has now brought to power. When war broke out, he came down one day into the open space in the centre of the Duma and, speaking to M. Krupenski, the peacemaker, said, pointing to his old enemy, the leader of the Cadets, "Please introduce me to M. Miliukof." Then when the introduction was over, he embraced him, saying, "To-day there are nothing but Russians here!" The war opened his eyes and caused a notable evolution in his views. Confronted with the apathy of the rulers, M. Purichkevitch joined his voice to those of the Left in attacking them.

Although but a short time before he had voted for absolute monarchy, he welcomed the events of the 11th to the 14th March, 1917. There is little doubt that he will become constitutional and parliamentary in the full sense of the word, because, being both patriotic and sincere, he must be bound to see his country's salvation lies in the success of the new system.

By the side of that honest man there existed in the party a desperate extremist, M. Markof II., who was the "very spit" of Peter the Great, but unluckily lacked his reforming tendencies. This man who was behind the ultra-reactionary newspapers, never missed a chance, even during the war, of showing the hatred he had for France and England. He was and he has remained our open enemy, like all

PARTIES BEFORE THE CHANGE

extremist Conservatives whose orders could only have come from Berlin, an interested defender of Russian tyranny because it was a cause of weakness to the Empire.

The Right with rare exceptions never had more than an academic sympathy for French democracy. France might find admirers in its ranks, but the French Republic certainly did not count a single defender among them. It was in moderate circles and in the parties of the Left that France found wholehearted, frank, sincere friends.

I have tried to give above a picture as exact as possible of the grouping of Russian parties without forgetting that the picture is one of a past recent but abolished. The political features of Russia change fundamentally with the Revolution.

* * *

To-day the names of the parties and the parties themselves as we have described them have become mere memories. Some of the sections of the Duma, such as the Octobrists, no longer have any reason to exist. There are some which now that they are free from political shackles and from police annoyance will adopt more radical ideas, towards which they had always been secretly inclined. We have seen the Progressive, the Cadet, and the Extreme Left parties proclaim their Republicanism. Others no doubt will follow them and new groups will be formed. Socialism for instance is now a powerful influence in Russia. The Constituent Assembly will be quite unlike the Duma. None the less it seemed well to give some notice to the sections which constituted the Lower House of the Tsarist system, since that House was the corner stone of the Revolution.

CHAPTER II

THE GENESIS OF THE REVOLUTION

Origins of the conflict between the rulers and the nation—Its first manifestations—Waiting Russia—Russia becomes tired of waiting—The crisis becomes more marked—Last provocative acts—The climax approaches.

OF what nature was, in reality, that perpetual conflict between the rulers and the nation in Russia? What was the object of that Duma whose every session began with violent diatribes against the governing circles? That was a question which French opinion, at least, was constantly asking. The Press only referred to such matters in telegrams so disconnected that they never made a consecutive narrative and lacked any commentary which would have explained them to a public for which Russian matters, to its great loss, have remained almost unknown.

A regular evolution had slowly but surely taken place in the Empire of the North. Those who knew the country could see heaping on the horizon the signs of a storm which must burst sooner or later. The crash came suddenly, outstripping all forecasts, greater than any had expected. English public opinion felt in a hazy manner, because it was better informed, that

GENESIS OF THE REVOLUTION

changes were preparing. We saw it take up a definite position in favour of that Duma which was a true expression of the country's feeling. The French were silent : Russia was the unknown about whom it was unwise to emit judgments.

* * *

The first years which followed the accession of Nicholas II. passed away without the new Sovereign showing his intentions. His reign seemed destined to be colourless, without the breath of liberation which blew over that of his grandfather and also without the brutal energy of Alexander III.'s government.

But a day came, in 1901, when the Tsar showed himself, as he was to be ever after, uncompromising with regard to the nature of his power. He was receiving deputations from the Zemstvos and was handed by the delegates from Tver a petition asking him to grant a few mild liberties. Having read it, he became angry and he dismissed the over-bold delegates, saying "I beg you, gentlemen, to abandon such senseless dreams."

From that day on Russia knew that it had nothing to expect from its Sovereign, although as time passed it became less and less obedient to its rulers. That is why it resorted to rioting to obtain what it could not obtain from the wisdom of its new monarch, when it was tired of the anachronism of his system, from which twice already in the reigns of his predecessors it had hoped to be freed. Losing all patience with the wickedness of its directors, knowing them for what they were after the unpopular war with Japan, it rose suddenly in those historic days of October, 1905.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

That was its first attempt at liberation. But the Tsarist tradition was too strong, the government machine too powerful for the attempt to have any lasting result. The Russian people dreamed a beautiful dream which vanished soon : that it had become master of its destinies. Bureaucracy, which for a moment had lost its stirrups, soon recovered its balance. The obedient Cossack, the bullets of soldiers who knew not what they did, gave back the power to those who had nearly lost it.

The Prime Minister Witte felt compelled to advise the Court to make the best of things and handed to Nicholas II., as twelve years later M. Gutchkof was to hand him the act of abdication, the rescript which granted a Constitution to the Empire. The Emperor signed it, but only after he had begged Father John of Kronstadt to give him absolution for this act of impiety.

Yet this single act was to give ten years' respite to absolutism by creating a safety valve for public discontent : the Duma. Enmity between the nation and the policemen and the corrupt system which oppressed it was not to cease, but from October, 1905, it was to find free expression, all the more strong because the upholders of absolutism were now possessed of one idea only : to take back one by one the liberties they had granted against their wills. Till then the country had lacked a tribune where it might make known its sufferings. National representation although imperfect, elected by a complicated system of Electoral Chambers, gave it such a tribune. From that day the nation was able to demand its right to citizenship.

After having been so long without a voice it tried, as if to make up for lost time, to cry out aloud what

GENESIS OF THE REVOLUTION

generations before it had murmured, had moaned to themselves. The two first Dumas, born of a comparatively new liberty, became the mouthpiece, the ardent advocates, of popular opinion. They lacked moderation, they were radical, even revolutionary. Both of them were dissolved. The old *régime* at that moment took advantage of this to modify in favour of the privileged classes the laws which had been granted in 1905. The electoral system which had been agreed upon then was altered so as to give to 130,000 nobles more deputies than to 150,000,000 of peasants. These measures did not fail to increase the feeling of bitterness in the hearts of the masses. The country understood from the moment it was constituted that the Parliament was regarded as an enemy by those of whom it diminished the power until then limitless and irresponsible.

It realised as a result of its experience that moderation alone could secure for it even the limited benefits of the new order. This understanding and the new electoral system made the third Duma, when it met, less inclined to break out, especially as Stolypin's hand was heavy upon it.

* * *

The National Assembly then tried, in the very narrow limits allowed, to do some useful work. It gave up attacking and took to constructive methods. Too weak to fight, it accepted the inevitable to avoid giving, often at the price of offending public opinion, any excuse to those who criticised it, and to those who only awaited an opportunity of advising the Sovereign to abolish this bastard body born of a revolutionary riot.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

Obviously co-operation between an unwilling Government and the Parliament could not continue without friction. However, by making concessions, by intelligent management and by the opportunities or the weakness of Ministers who followed one on top of the other, session after session took place, and a *modus vivendi* was set up provisionally until events should bring about a more settled condition. It was in this uncertain state of affairs that the third Duma did nevertheless manage to do good work and to give to Russia important reforms.

In military matters, notably, under the energetic impulsion of the Commission of National Defence, presided over by M. Gutchkof, the House passed some laws which have had a happy effect in this war.

A fourth Duma met after its predecessor had run its full time. This new Assembly, a hybrid product of various Government influences, did not at first seem likely to legislate usefully, because the parties had been so broken up into numerically unimportant fractions, and because the Right was so effectively able to counterbalance the Left that the result was continual obstruction on one side and on the other.

Russian public opinion ceased to be interested in a House which represented it less and less accurately. Indeed, the Duma became included at one time in the general discontent provoked by the slowness, the patent recalcitrance, of those in power in giving effect to reforms, which had solemnly been promised. Little by little things resumed their former course, the old *régime* claimed again its ancient prerogatives, once more Government did as it pleased. Abuses began again, and the fourth Duma showed itself impotent, even to

GENESIS OF THE REVOLUTION

follow the example of its predecessor. There was a period of dead calm, of drowsiness, interrupted by way of diversion by the celebrations in connection with the centenary of 1812, by the tercentenary of the Romanofs and the first visit of President Poincaré. The Duma remained without distinguishing characteristics, busy with petty matters, incapable of approaching great problems, given over to the obstruction of extremists of the Right and of the Left who combined with differing aims to get the House discredited.

* * *

M. Kokovtsof, President of the Council, gave the first prick to that amorphous Duma and awoke in it a sort of *esprit de corps* by employing in his relations with it a rather too drastic method, that of a Government boycott because of the over-hasty speeches of a member of the Right. As a result, there was marked tension between the rulers and the popularly elected House. The recoil gave to the Duma the undivided sympathy of the country. But all that was still child's play. Since then many things happened to make some regret the golden age when the good M. Kokovtsof only sent the House to Coventry. To please the uncompromising sections of Court opinion many Ministers came out, after that, as relentless enemies of that institution which the Conservatives could never forgive for the manner of its birth, just as those who profited by the old ways could not accept without rage its interference in public affairs.

During the last months of the Kokovtsof Ministry, misunderstandings resulting from his colleagues' actions, slights, and provocative acts accumulated and raised

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

ever higher between the rulers and the nation a barrier built of grudges and disappointments.

First came the reactionary policy of the former Minister of the Interior Maklakof and of the Minister of Justice Scheglovitof. Their efforts to dam the current in favour of progress caused the most moderate sections of national opinion to oppose these courtiers. Since they were in power public opinion marked by a phrase which afterwards became common the gulf existing between the Russian nation and the bureaucracy which ruled its destinies; *they and us* was a short time ago the current expression used to point the difference between a nation eager for free development and a camarilla whose personal interest it was to crush out all attempts at freedom.

* * *

War came.

The Tsar, sincerely anxious to conduct the war to a victorious end, on his own initiative replaced the unpopular Ministers by men who, if they were not capable of bringing political peace, were at least not incapable, on their previous showing, of co-operating with the representative assembly whose existence their predecessors had ignored.

But in the meantime events happened which mercilessly showed up the faults of that Russian administration which was Germanic by origin in its traditions and in its sentiments. Such was the scandal of General Sukhomlinof, of which the full consequences will be known some day. Such were, at a moment when the enemy at the gates was knocking over like ant-heaps the fortresses of Poland, the wretched intrigues for place and honours of the sinister Rasputinian era.

GENESIS OF THE REVOLUTION

Such was the rout of a country delivered to incompetents or traitors, the retreat of 1915 of an army lacking everything. Such was the crime of Miassoyedof, the shameful exploitation of difficulties by men who sought their private ends. Now came anarchy and orgy, and the national dignity and conscience were trodden in the mud by cynics or blind men.

Officialdom was badly bankrupt and its bankruptcy threatened to ruin the nation itself. The country felt the blow to its patriotism and its self-esteem and reacted as one man. From the tribune of its Parliament it called for men instead of courtiers. From the summer of 1915, the Zemstvos, the Municipalities, the corporations, even the sects united in congresses, mingled their voices to that of the Duma. From all sides there rose to the Throne the call to suppress the sort of Prætorian Guard which surrounded it and divided it from the nation. Russia besought its Emperor, for an immediate purpose, that of the war, to break down the obstacles which prevented free intercourse between the Sovereign and his people, which quenched the vital ardour of great Russia.

The appeals which vibrated with loyalty to the Tsar became more and more full of anguish. One remembers the resolutions voted by the ædiles of Moscow, and the men elected by the nobles, the Exchanges and the merchants. All asked for the same thing : that the ruling men should possess the confidence of the country. An extraordinary thing happened. That Duma which was broken up into futile fragments of opinion now formed a Progressive Block for which the great majority of members voted. The basis of the understanding arrived at was its demand for a

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

charter of the liberties needed to give to the Empire homogeneity and the full use of its powers. This Block included the Nationalist-Progressives, the Centre, the Octobrists, the Progressives and the Cadets, that is, by the side of the sections of the Advanced Left, parties which a few months before would never have signed the historic document, the programme of the new Parliamentary Coalition. Times had changed.

The programme of the Progressive Block demanded :

I. The creation of a stable government consisting of persons who enjoy the confidence of the country, and should act in concert with the legislative assemblies to put into practice as soon as possible a definite programme.

II. A rational and consistent policy aiming at preserving internal peace and at stopping quarrels between nationalities and classes.

In order to give effect to this policy, added the proclamation of the Block, the following measures must be taken, either through administrative sources, or by legislation :

1. By the gracious permission of His Majesty the stoppage of prosecutions in purely political or religious matters ; the setting free and the rehabilitation of persons condemned for politics or religion, excepting spies and traitors.

2. The return of those deported by administrative order for offences of a political or religious nature.

3. The complete¹ and final cessation of all prosecution for religion, on any pretext whatever, and the rescinding of the administrative orders which followed the ukase of October 17, 1905, and vitiated its sense.

4. The solution of the Russo-Polish problem, the

GENESIS OF THE REVOLUTION

autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland, and the simultaneous revision of laws on landed property in Poland.

5. The introduction of legislation for the suppression of restrictions against the Jews. In the second instance, the suppression of the zone of residence, facilities for admission to public educational establishments and the abolition of restrictions in the choice of a profession. Re-establishment of the Jewish Press.

6. Pacific policy in the Finnish question, a change in the administrative *personnel* and the constitution of the Senate, and the stopping of prosecutions against officials and office-holders.

7. The freedom of the Ukrainian Press, the immediate investigation of cases against inhabitants of Galicia who had been remanded or deported, and the setting free of those who had been prosecuted in spite of their innocence.

8. The re-establishment of the Workmen's Unions, and the cessation of prosecutions against the workmen's representatives in the Benefit Societies, who had been charged with belonging to an illegal party. Freedom of the Labour Press.

This manifesto was signed by Count Bobrinski on behalf of the Nationalist-Progressives, by M. V. Lvof for the Centre, Messrs. Dmitriukof and Shidlovski for the Octobrists, M. Efremof for the Progressives, and M. Miliukof for the Cadets.

But the men in power were unfortunately incapable either of understanding the urgent necessity of giving satisfaction to the national feeling, or it may be of persuading their Sovereign to abandon his aloof attitude. The calling of M. Goremykin to the office of Prime Minister had been but a palliative whose effect

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

was short-lived. That old servant of the defunct *régime* could never bring himself to deal on an equal footing with the Duma. He went farther. When the Duma, after having shown the most admirable discipline, rose, as we have seen, to the height of circumstances, finding at last the right note in which to denounce the morbid condition of the country, to lay bare its lack of preparedness, to attack the apathy of an all-powerful bureaucracy, M. Goremykin, either because he diagnosed matters wrongly or because he did not dare to prescribe the right remedy to his master, was rash enough to have recourse in November, 1915, to the dangerous subterfuge of a prorogation of the House. The Prime Minister gave as an excuse for his decision the "need for getting on with the war." It was precisely with this object that Parliament and public opinion were making the demands which so much disturbed the President of the Council in what he was doing. He stood alone, however. The prorogation turned against him, this time, not only all classes of the population and their representatives, but even his own colleagues, who saw farther—Messrs. Krivosheïn, Samarin, Sazonof, Bark, Count Ignatief and General Polivanof. These had presented a petition to the Tsar, then at his headquarters at Mohilef, begging him not to suspend the labours of Parliament, as such a step would produce a painful effect on the country. This advice was ill received by Nicholas II. He commanded his Ministers to appear forthwith at General Headquarters and expressed his displeasure at the kind of strike against their President, who possessed his entire confidence. The petitioners defended their attitude and answered the Sovereign in a

GENESIS OF THE REVOLUTION

tone that was respectful but firm. Samarin especially in admirable language, as I was told several days after, declared that the duty of every subject was to tell the truth to his Sovereign and to speak to him according to the dictates of his conscience. Nicholas looked annoyed and answered nothing. He boasted after the meeting that he had given his Ministers the "talking to" they deserved. The Duma was prorogued and one after the other the petitioning Ministers were dismissed by the Tsar.

To satisfy his advisers' thirst for revenge the blind Emperor sacrificed to them first Krivosheïn, another Stolypin but with Liberal tendencies, then Ignatief, who had become that rare thing, a Minister of Education esteemed and loved by all, who had known how to soothe the University circles which had been irritated by Casso. Finally he sacrificed to them a Minister of War who was respected, Polivanof, a Procurator of the Synod who was honest to the core, and M. Sazonof who had rendered the greatest services to his Sovereign, to his country, and to the European cause.

So all the manifestations of the popular will were systematically treated as null and void. The Voice of the Russian Soil to which the Tsar sometimes seemed to listen was diminished and altered by the time it reached the foot of the Throne. The delegates from the Congresses of Zemstvos and of towns held at Moscow, of which Prince Lvof was a member, were not allowed to set foot at General Headquarters to give utterance to that Voice, loud and clear, loyal and patriotic.

The Duma thus disbanded broke up, treating with silent contempt the provocative attitude of Goremykin

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOV'S

and still cheering the name of the Emperor. It was not to a dying sense of loyalty that that calm was to be attributed, but to a very noble patriotism of whose existence the jacks-in-office did not seem to be aware. As in a tragedy of Corneille, the nation repressed its own feelings to listen only to the call of duty, that duty which bade it look to the frontier, now crossed by the enemy.

But the expressions of public opinion none the less began again, plainer than ever, the various organisations renewed their warnings, confirmed their previous resolutions, begged, most earnestly appealed, for a Government which should have the moral authority demanded by the situation. The movement was hastened by the final loss of confidence in the old forms of power. It would not cease till the fears which gave birth to it ceased. The opposition was now no longer a matter of parties, it came gradually to include the whole of Russia.

* * *

Far from attempting to allay public anxiety, those in power seemed by a kind of madness to be bent on increasing it from day to day. Mediocrities, always from the official class, made brief appearances in power only to yield their places to other officials. Scherbatof was replaced by the reactionary ex-Governor Khvostof, because he was a deputy. Nicholas thought that by this appointment he was yielding to the "unanimous desire for a Government composed of men who enjoyed the confidence of the nation." The apathetic Goremykin was to make room for the malevolent Stürmer. Because he would not assent frankly to the reform desired by his people, the Sovereign gave to the public

GENESIS OF THE REVOLUTION

gaze from that moment the amazing procession of Ministers we wot of.

The reactionary movement started under the preceding Cabinet was to gather momentum with the new vizier whom the Tsar trusted, in order to avoid calling upon those who really represented the Russian Conscience, the luminaries of the Duma or of the zemstvos, such men as Lvof, Miliukof, Gutchkof. Did not his wife and her counsellors say that they were the enemies of his dynasty?

The Duma, whose sittings became pathetic, now showed signs of open sedition. Von Stürmer lost no opportunity of showing his contempt for it. Anger now surged among the masses, they were still kept back, repressed by patriotic feeling alone. But in the depths glowed already the old fire of revolt. The division of Russia into those two camps which were irreconcilable because they were too different, the *Guard of Ivan* and the *People of the Land*, was now so extreme that those Russians no longer felt that they were fellow citizens.

* * *

It is not more than a few months since the problem appeared insoluble. The two camps faced one another divided by a wall "impervious not only to the voice of the national conscience but also to that of reason or ordinary common sense." We have seen that Stürmer fell as the result of the attack by Messrs. Miliukof and Purichkevitch on the intrigues for a separate peace. Trepof made his brief appearance to give way almost at once to Prince Galitzin, whose incompetency was equalled by that of his colleague,

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

Protopopof, a new incarnation of both Rasputin and Stürmer.

This Protopopof, as it has already been said, showed vast ingenuity in stirring up against himself and the Government even his former friends. In fact, if not in name, head of the Government, his methods became more and more reactionary to please the ladies of Tsarkoyë-Selo, enraged by the murder of Rasputin.

The current of public opinion which at the beginning had been set in motion by patriotic anxiety and purely anti-governmental feelings now became anti-dynastic. The Tsar, and especially the Tsarina, were now the object of the public anger. Nothing was to be expected from that couple, which had lost touch with realities. The aristocracy became alarmed. From Moscow it sent an urgent appeal to the monarch, "believing that it was its duty to warn him of the danger of not giving in to the reiterated demands of the Duma concerning the reforms to be introduced into the country."

Even the Right raised its voice, for it could see, with alarm, the clouds that were gathering on the horizon. In the columns of a paper belonging to one of its members it called for a dictator. In the paper owned by M. Purichkevitch this party spoke to the Ministers of Nicholas II. in a manner worthy of the greatest days of our Revolution.

"Messieurs les Ministres," wrote M. Purichkevitch, that extreme Conservative of former days, "if Duty is to you more than the desire for honours, if you are loyal subjects and if the future of Russia and the brightness of the Imperial name are anything to you, throw yourselves at the feet of the Tsar and say to him: 'Things cannot go on like this!' Beg him to

GENESIS OF THE REVOLUTION

open his eyes to the awful truth. Beg him to free Russia from Rasputin and from all those secret influences, great and small, which direct our country and at the same time betray it. Let this scandal end ! ”

The leading families, the Grand Dukes, in their turn tried by individual and collective efforts to represent to their Sovereign, to their relatives, the gravity of the situation. A memorandum with seventeen signatures to it was handed to him which pointed out plainly the danger to which the Romanof family was exposed. The Grand Duke Nicholas Michaelovitch, the Emperor's cousin, a man of Western ideas living far from the Court, came in his turn to the Tsar to tell him of the danger which he refused to see. Speaking of the interview on that occasion the Grand Duke said that the Emperor showed the greatest indifference. At the end of the audience the Grand Duke said half in earnest and half joking : “ Now send for thy Cossacks and have me killed and buried in thy garden.” But the Tsar only smiled and thanked his relative. A few days later Nicholas II. sent him this note, which followed a few hours after a visit from his Court Chamberlain : “ Count Frederiks has made a mess of things. He was told to transmit to you my verbal orders to leave the capital and to take up your residence on your estate of Grushevka. I beg you to obey my instructions and not to appear at the Drawing Room to-morrow.—‘ NIKI.’ ” The Empress had intervened and the Grand Duke was compelled to leave for his estates just as the young Dmitri had been exiled to Persia some days beforehand.

That courageous man had written to the Tsar a letter which does him honour, an historical document

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

of which the following is a complete and exact copy :—

“ On many occasions you have proclaimed your intention of continuing the war to a successful conclusion. Are you quite sure that the present condition of the country enables you to realise your intention ? Do you sufficiently understand the internal situation of the Empire, and particularly of Siberia, of Turkestan and of the Caucasus ? Do you know the whole truth or is most of it kept hidden from you ? Wherein lies the root of the evil ? Let me tell you in a few words.

“ So long as the way in which you chose your Ministers was known to only a small number of people, things could jog on without much danger. But as soon as it was generally known and everyone began to talk about it in public it became evident that it was impossible Russia should continue to be governed in that way. You have often told me that you trusted no one and that you were frequently deceived.

“ If that be true, that remark applies particularly to your wife who loves you but has nevertheless led you into error, because she is surrounded by people in whom the spirit of evil works powerfully. You believe in Alexandra Feodorowna. That is natural. But the words she utters are the result of clever manipulation and do not represent the truth. If you are powerless to free her from those influences, at least be on your guard against the constant and systematic influence of the schemers who use your wife as a tool. If your suasion is without effect—and I feel sure that you must on many occasions have tried to combat those influences—have recourse to other methods and get rid of those influences for good and all.

GENESIS OF THE REVOLUTION

"Your first impressions and decisions are always correct. But as soon as there is interference by another you begin to hesitate and your final decisions are no longer the same. If only you could stop this constant intervention of maleficent forces the regeneration of Russia would immediately take a giant stride forward and you would regain the confidence of the vast majority of your subjects who have ceased to believe in you. All would be well. You would have before you a nation which under a new system would consent to work under your guidance.

"When the moment comes, and it is not far distant, you will yourself be able to proclaim from the throne to the people, that Ministers are responsible to you and towards legislative institutions. That moment will come of its own accord, without pressure from without and not like the memorable proclamation of October 17, 1905.

"I have long hesitated to tell you all the truth, but I have decided to do so because your mother and your sisters have persuaded me that I ought to do so.

"You are fated to undergo very soon fresh trials—I will say more, you are threatened with fresh attempts on your life. Believe me, if I am so insistent in my appeals that you should throw off the shackles that bind you, it is not because of any personal motive—you know that I have none—but solely in the hope of saving you, and your throne and our dear country from the ghastly and irreparable misfortunes which threaten it."

Even the Dowager Empress Maria Feodorowna uttered a warning. But the wife undid all the work of the family. It was to her that they sent the Grand

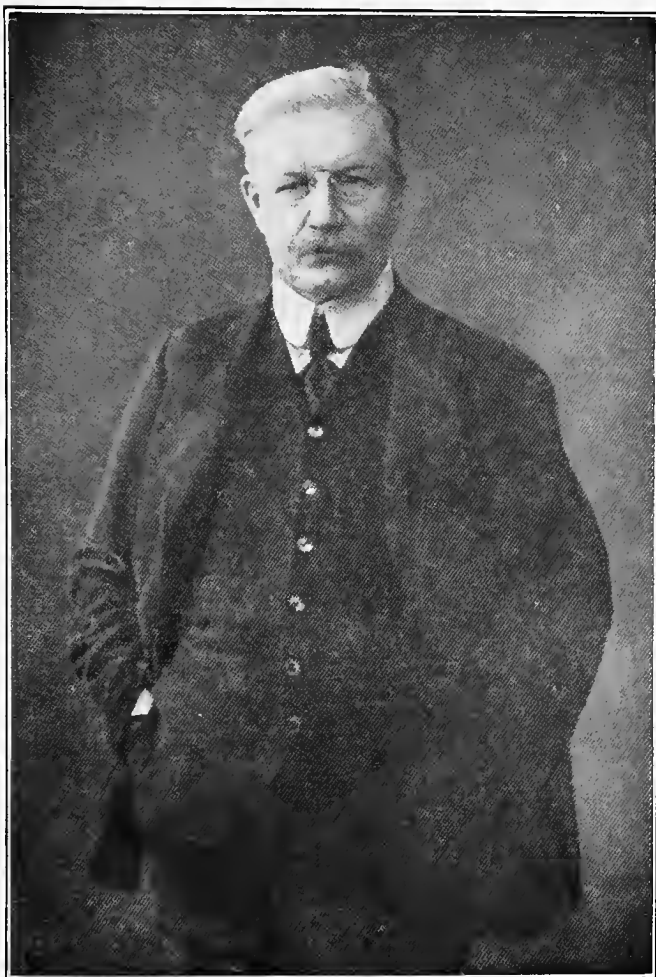
THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

Duchess Victoria, wife of the Grand Duke Cyril. This lady pointed out the abyss yawning at the feet of the Imperial couple. She showed that the whole country with its nobles at its head—those nobles who had taken part in every movement of liberation—was calling for a public system of government to replace the wretched farce. Whereupon Alexandra Feodorowna replied : “ I have been twenty-two years on the throne, I know Russia, I know that the nation loves our family. Who then would dare to attack us ? ” The former wife of the Grand Duke of Hesse and the Tsarina parted coldly, the former shocked by the threats she had heard her sister-in-law utter against all, no matter how highly placed they might be, whom she suspected of condoning the execution of Rasputin. This was the blindness against which no effort was of any avail. Destiny must take its course and Nicholas II. remain faithful to his character. *Quos vult Jupiter, perdere dementat prius.*

* * *

The Russian Government, with its dictator Protopopof at its head, was dancing on a volcano. The British Ambassador, Sir George Buchanan, took upon himself to point this out to the Emperor. It was in vain. M. Miliukof, from that tribune of the Duma where he had already delivered so many warning speeches, drew at the end of December, 1916, a picture broad but accurate in its outlines of a Russia tired of waiting.

“ The present hour,” said M. Miliukof, “ is a terrible hour. We can see the political and social struggle overflowing the limits of strict legality. We can see the symptoms which were noted in 1905. In the



MONSIEUR MILIUKOF.

GENESIS OF THE REVOLUTION

collective declarations of the last few months, there is something of that ; Gentlemen, it is impossible to deny it. That is a warning to those in power, but a warning intended for the ears of statesmen, not for those of policemen.

“ Let no one come and say to us ‘ It is merely the mob that is concerned.’ Not so, gentlemen. It is the social classes to which you and I belong. And often in the congresses the most trenchant remarks are made by men of the Extreme Right. The Russian political movement has now a single front as it had before October 17, 1905. But these ten years have borne fruit. The principles and forms of the struggle will no doubt be very different this time. And this is the moment chosen by a handful of blind men and madmen to attempt to dam the headlong course of the torrent which you and I with the country’s help are trying to keep within legal bounds. That is still possible, gentlemen, I repeat it. But time passes, thunder is in air, the storm is coming. No one can tell where or how the lightning blow will fall.”

* * *

Patience, indeed, was exhausted. As the eloquent orator of the Cadet party said to me, Liberals with such strong Left tendencies as he had would be incapable of checking the torrent. The atmosphere was overheated, only a spark was needed to start a raging fire. The war would no longer be sufficient to prevent the outbreak, for the war itself required imperiously that the destinies of the Empire should no longer be left to men who placed the interest of their clique before that of their country, profiteers who con-

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

centrated all their energies on the war inside the nation to assure their own safety. While the Army was fighting heroically for a new order of things, while the nation and the Duma were doing their utmost to help it, the bureaucracy and the Government were fighting, for their part, to maintain the old errors and profitable injustices. The head of the Government, that foul Stürmer to whom Rumania owes her downfall, had semi-officially re-adopted that motto which all thought had been for ever abandoned: *Friendship with Germany*. The reactionary elements were becoming more and more alert before the danger of national freedom arising from military victory.

The *Union of True Russians* to which belonged all the ultra-Conservatives, after a scandalous conference held in 1915 under the chairmanship of Dr. Dubrovin, who inspired the pogroms, declared itself openly in favour of the enemy. A Black Block was formed in opposition to the Progressive Block. One of its organs, the *Moskovsky Viedomosti*, announced its programme when it wrote: "Rather a German victory than liberty."

To what was one coming? Even a bureaucrat now asked the question. That was Count Benckendorff, Ambassador in London, who said to a journalist "Either I am getting old and stupid or else an epidemic of madness is raging in Government circles at Petrograd."

This madness made them commit the final mistake, and that at the very moment when starvation was adding still more to the causes for popular anger. The Duma, whose return had been adjourned by the new Premier, was after a few days prorogued by the advice

GENESIS OF THE REVOLUTION

of Protopopof. Thus he suppressed the only method of criticising the Government and keeping a check on its actions. During one of its last sittings, the House had uttered, M. Miliukof again being its mouthpiece, the warning that a crash was imminent. "Every day," cried the great orator, "from all points of the country there come to the Duma pressing appeals. The population of the provinces beg us to act and act now, saying that the country is with us. It is those assurances which allow me, even in the difficult situation of the moment, to preserve my hopefulness and to silence my pessimistic inclinations.

"When the nation perceives that in spite of all its sacrifices its destinies are imperilled by a gang of incompetent and corrupt rulers, it becomes a nation of citizens, it resolves to take in hand the conduct of its own affairs.

"Gentlemen, you are near that moment. In all we see around us we note the thrill of the patriotic anxiety which fills our hearts. It is in that anxiety and not in silence and reconciliation that I see the promise of safety for our country."

Prophetic words indeed. A week later, the people who had come out into the street to ask for bread, resenting for the last time this new insult of the rulers in dismissing the Duma, turned the protesting processions of women into a revolutionary rising. The Duma announced that it would disregard the ukase ordering it to suspend its sittings. Surprised by events at first, it canalised the movement which had its origin in the mob, in order to attempt to co-ordinate it and to prevent it degenerating into mere anarchy. Russia was now making history. This time it was

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

Revolution. The hour of reckoning had come, precipitated by the Mayors of the Palace of Tsarkoyë-Selo.

* * *

The Russian peasant, whom religious sentiment had made philosophical and whom indolence had made characterless, had made the best of his abnormal circumstances. But his son who had been to the University, the official who had some gleaming of Westernism, the nascent middle class to which the minor noble was now added, the great merchant or the aristocrat living far from the Court, felt that their democratic opinions, their patriotic feelings, were touched to the quick by this anachronism of a degenerate Government. Suffering was common to many classes of the nation more cultivated than the rural population. The workman of Petrograd, raising the flag of revolt, was only fighting to realise what all prayed for and believed must inevitably come.

The old *régime* was so utterly worn out that it fell without resistance. The drama which had been preparing for many years needed but a few hours for its climax and end. The Tsar, aloof, haughty, the plaything of contradictory influences, signed his abdication in the blue carriage of his Imperial train, drawn up in the station of Pskof, as if he did not realise what had happened. Events had outdistanced the comprehension of that spectral figure who lived enclosed in his palace like a priest behind the eikon screen.

CHAPTER III

THE EPILOGUE

The days of the Revolution—The Revolution and Nicholas II.
—His abdication and his arrest—The Empress—The end
of a reign—The character of the Revolution.

THE first signs of excitement showed themselves in Petrograd on Thursday, March 8.

For many days, the poor had been standing under the bitter blast of the North wind waiting in lines in front of shops meagrely stocked. Queues were formed before bakers' shops, grocers' shops, butchers' shops, but when the waiters' turn came only slender rations were doled out. One day when the supply of food was less than ever the patience of the people came to an end. The jacks-in-office tried in vain to explain the shortage by pleading exceptional circumstances—lack of trucks, snowstorms interfering with the traffic. The workmen's districts refused to be satisfied with excuses. When the Government, on the proposal of M. Rodzianko, President of the Duma, handed over to the Municipal Council the task of supplying food, this palliative proved to be insufficient to pacify the over-excited population.

On the 7th a meeting had been organised at the

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

Putilof Works. The directors caused the buildings to be closed. Although the papers made no mention of this first demonstration, the workmen of Petrograd that same day knew of all that had happened. Fresh conferences were held and a strike decided upon. On Friday, the 9th, there were only a few factories at work. On that day the trams stopped running. Processions were formed going through the streets crying out: "We want bread!" A few bakers' shops were sacked. The crowd hustled one or two officers.

The police had that morning organised barricades to prevent the workmen from spreading through the principal streets of the capital. In spite of this a number of the workers managed to cheat the vigilance of the police and reached the Znamenskaya Square, where gradually thousands of demonstrators assembled, to whom were added students and young fellows from the secondary schools.

Improvised orators began to harangue the crowd, timidly using as their platform the statue of Alexander III., which stands in that square. The police charged with drawn swords, making its first victims. A regiment of Cossacks dispersed the crowd which then flowed into the Nevsky Prospekt, which opens on the Znamenskaya Square. The processions reformed. Before the Town Hall a new meeting was organised only to be dispersed by another charge.

Led by habit the crowd then surged towards that square in front of the Cathedral of Kasan, which was quite near, a square in which all the previous demonstrations had taken place. The meetings begin again under the eye of the mounted police which has turned



BARRICADES AND GUNS ON THE LITEYIN PROSPEKT.

THE EPILOGUE

out in full force and of the Cossacks who pass at the trot peculiar to their little horses, with the rattle of lances. These Cossacks—is it an illusion?—seem to be no longer the fierce guardsmen of Tsardom whom they had seen at work in 1905. They seem slack this time in dispersing the crowd and show a certain indulgence for its excesses. The demonstrators seem to guess this. They applaud those patrols which used to be hooted.

The Government makes no move except to order reprisals. It does nothing to calm the excitement. In that direction, too, the people feel that one will yield before bold measures. That is why, that evening of the 9th, the workmen's suburbs are feverishly active. Forces are organised, leaders reveal themselves, committees are formed. The inertia of the Government heartens the timid.

Yet Protopopof thought he was master of the situation. He told them at Tsarkoyë that he could bring the rioters to reason. And that night, machine-guns were set up in the attics of private houses and buildings, in church towers, at the *Gostiny Dvor*, the Palais Royal Galleries of Petrograd. The populace replied next morning, March 10, by a general strike in all the factories. The shops closed in the expectation of serious events. The Government proceeded to make arrests in masses among the working-men's organisations, troops were posted in greater numbers at the cross-roads, at the entrance to bridges leading from the outer districts to the centre of the town, bodies of police were beyond the military. But the crowd rushed the barricades, the first serious collisions took place, blood was shed in streams. The workmen,

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

after breaking the cordons of troops at the Litény Bridge, poured into districts near the Nevsky. The bridges were not broad enough to give room to the crowd to pass, so it crossed the frozen Neva itself, black masses of men on the white snow.

The demonstrations had ceased to be movements of a blind crowd crying for bread. They now gave one the impression of definite organisation. On Sunday, March 11, a ukase of Nicholas II., dated the day before, ordered the suspension of the Duma. The newspapers having ceased to appear, the decree was pasted on the walls. The news immediately caused the rising of all those who until then had taken no part in events.

The whole garrison was mobilised. The policemen were now in mufti. The "Pharaohs," as they were called, did not want to stir the anger of those who hated so bitterly that abject limb of the Government. As on the day before, the population of the suburbs made for the centre of the capital and assembled in processions in the streets empty of all vehicles. Revolutionary songs broke forth, solemn and slow like religious songs. The demonstration is less and less peaceable. Numerous orators now harangue the rebels.

From that day dates the evolution of the rising into a political movement. The volleys still fired on that Sunday by the troops which still obeyed their chiefs, in the Znamenskaya and Kazan Squares especially, must have helped to make the change in people's minds. In order that the political movement should take an open form, they must have the help of the Army and of the intelligent opportunism of the Duma leaders.

There is a symptomatic incident: in Basseinaya

THE EPILOGUE

some Cossacks cut down the Commissary of the district, who has just wounded a workman. There is no illusion. A revulsion has indeed taken place in the minds of the soldiers. But to-day this Imperial Guard is in effect the nation in arms. The old, the domestic Guard is swallowed up in the plains of Eastern Prussia. A second case of insubordination takes place: the 4th Company of the Regiment of Paul, formerly the finest ornament of that Guard, mutinies, makes common cause with the crowd, and fires on the troops who have remained obedient to the jacks-in-office.

The Duma sits continuously after having decided to disregard the Emperor's order to suspend its sittings. At midnight of that day, it appoints from among its members an Executive Committee charged to restore order. That Committee was the first Provisional Government of the new Russia in the throes of birth. The other, the last Cabinet of Tsardom, was conferring at the house of the President of the Council, Galitzin, and kept issuing every now and then contradictory orders, in which, however, one word was always present: *Repress!*

Monday, March 12, is a decisive day. It is known that at the Palais de Tauride the representatives of the nation, under the energetic presidency of M. Rodzianko, are making order out of what is still chaos. Noting the character of the Revolution they have understood whither it leads and its possible consequences. On the other hand, the workmen have been energetically preaching their views in the soldiers' barracks and even among the troops patrolling the streets.

General Khabalof, commanding the district, has

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

certainly concentrated under his authority all available troops and police and is about to show himself pitiless, but there is a feeling that his subordinates are not all to be depended upon. And, indeed, defections take place, more and more numerous. A captain, one of the organisers of the shooting the day before, is killed by his men. A whole regiment, this time the Volhynian, which two days before had fired on the populace standing thick in the Kazan Square, throws in its lot with the Revolution. Next it is the turn of the regiment of Lithuania, then of the Presbajensky regiment, then finally of the Engineers. But this revolutionary force is without a soul, without leaders; the officers have abandoned their men. A very young sub-lieutenant, George Astakhof, puts himself at the head of them and leads them towards that symbol of Russia struggling for freedom, the Duma.

There are fires in the city, here and there civil war rages, the machine-guns of Protopopof rattle, but the Government of Nicholas II. loses ground. Red flags flutter on high in ever greater numbers. Military lorries now patrol the town, full of soldiers with bayonets fixed. But now they are no more reinforcements for the police, but Revolutionary pickets going hither and thither to rout or convert the last followers of the dynasty, while in a veritable deluge, regiment upon regiment, the garrison of Petrograd instinctively sweeps towards the Palais de Tauride, the only islet of dry land in the midst of the surging waters, the only beacon in the night suddenly closing on the minds of those men, simple of wit, startled by the upheaval of conditions they had believed to be immutable.

THE EPILOGUE

The first deputy to meet the troops is the Labour member, Kerenski. The crowd he has come out to address bareheaded, without his overcoat, in fourteen degrees of frost, gives him a frenzied reception. Then in a headlong torrent army and populace rush into the Palace, take their places, and presently will elect representatives. In their turn well-known orators speak: Labour reforms, social theories, suggestions and programmes, a whole new world is conjured up in those speeches between the white columns of the Catherine Hall, which is to be the centre of action of that Government creating itself on the ruins of the one which has just fallen. Thither comes all news: the Law Courts are in flames, the Kresty Prison has been stormed, the fortress of Peter and Paul has surrendered, the Arsenal has been sacked, the police-stations, those strongholds of Tsarism, are blazing like torches. The crowd which now rules the streets is giving vent to its age-long hatred for the police who had but recently again killed so many victims. The reprisals were terrible. Some "*pristafs*," those corrupt commissaries, blackmailers of the poor, were mercilessly lynched, while patrols arrested the "Pharaohs" and killed those who were serving machine-guns for the Government.

On March 13 the Revolution was in full swing. The regiments had all raised the banner of revolt and, led by their officers, marched past the Duma, whose President, the kindly giant M. Rodzianko, knew how to find exactly the right words to electrify those great babies who called out to him: "Do with us what you will. We are at your orders!"

Civil war continues, the Government fires its last

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

cartridges. In order to paralyse its last efforts, the Executive Committee orders the arrest of its members and chief supporters and has them brought to the Ministers' room at the Palais de Tauride. First comes Scheglovitof, President of the Council of the Empire, former Minister of Justice, a faithful adherent of the Reaction. There, too, is Stürmer, cadaverous, mortally afraid, and Goremykin, a Carnival figure with his St. Andrew's decoration pinned to a grey coat. There is the ex-Minister Rhein, and Sukhomlinof, who is compelled to tear off his epaulettes with his own hands, in order to appease the fury of the soldiers. There is the Commandant of the Palaces, Voyekof, one of the nefarious viziers of Nicholas II. ; there, too, is Frederiks, the Lord Chamberlain, sickly and absurd in his musical-comedy uniform. Then come the General of Police Kurlof, a notorious liar, the ex-Minister Maklakof, a noxious clown, the Metropolitan Pitrim, the boon companion of Rasputin and Protopopof, and then, after such men as Kommissarof, Klimovitch, Giers, Kartsef, all the great criminals of the national crisis, comes Protopopof himself, who gives himself up and going to Kerenski calls him "Excellency" from an irresistible desire to toady to someone.

All those men whom we saw a while ago strutting in their many-coloured uniforms, gay as bunting, haughty, unapproachable personages, now sink, lamentable rag-bags on the settees of that Ministers' room where—was it yesterday?—they still spoke with no uncertain voice. Timidly they now address as "Comrade" the good-natured soldiers who are guarding them, they sweat with fear in the presence of the

THE EPILOGUE

students whom they used to harry and who now bring them tea and sandwiches.

On March 14 Russia awoke to find herself free. The hated rulers were now struck down, never to rise again. But the nation, cautious, unable to believe in its victory, still gave an ear to pessimistic rumours. Nevertheless, the capital began to calm down, the streets almost took on an air of festivity. An enormous crowd pressed through the streets, soldiers, citizens, workmen, every one with the red ribbon in buttonhole or cap. Only sotnias of Cossacks passing with the sound of revolutionary songs, motor-lorries heaped with soldiers and armed with machine-guns, the Red Flag flying above, told the passer-by that this was indeed no dream.

The troops of the neighbourhood came in their turn to report to the Duma, even to and including the private escort of the Emperor. All promised their armed assistance to those Parliamentarians who, worn-out, by day and by night, were hastily reconstructing the administrative frame-work of that immense country.

Here and there men were beginning to take down the Imperial Eagles. A sort of feverish haste prevailed, everywhere, to do away with all traces of the past in order to make more room for the future. On all faces was to be seen profound satisfaction, an inexpressible joy, but also an incomparable earnestness and gravity. They had destroyed, but there was so much to build up again! Well, a Government would now tackle the job, a Government mainly composed of Progressive elements. It would attempt to bring Russia to the enjoyment of free institutions by a gradual evolution.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

Well, zealots have prevented it from succeeding. They alone must bear the blame for the mistakes which have since been made.

* * *

The importance of the Revolutionary events taking place in the capital was not at first understood at Mohilef—the seat of the Russian General Headquarters—where the Emperor was at the time. They thought that the occurrences in Petrograd were simply riots which it would be easy to repress. And in reply to a telegram from the President of the Council of Ministers, Prince Galitzin, who asked for full power to crush the disturbances or else the appointment of a successor with dictatorial powers, the Emperor sent an immediate order to proceed as he felt necessary. A similar reply was sent to a request from the officer commanding the military district of Petrograd. It was thought that these steps would result in restoring order. Besides, Protopopof was busily engaged in convincing his master that the discontent emanated solely from the nobles and the intellectuals. The people and the Army, said this self-deceiving Minister, remained loyal to the Monarchy and the Emperor. And once more the Empress—that Empress!—interfered to blind her husband, begging him to make no concession. “They would not dare!” was the phrase expressing the rooted belief of the Romanoff, the phrase which Nicholas II. had already used when speaking to Kuropatkin and Witte, who in 1904 warned him of a possible war with Japan.

But when the disturbances continued and Protopopof's machine-guns failed of their object, it was decided to send to Petrograd General Ivanof, the former

THE EPILOGUE

Commander-in-Chief of the Southern Front, with a contingent of soldiers, all members of the Order of St. George. The sight of these heroes, faithful to their Tsar, would, no doubt, recall the mutineers to their duty.

The Imperial circle saw in the workmen's riots nothing but an explosion of rage on the part of a populace suffering from starvation. The far different and far deeper motives for the general discontent were altogether overlooked. The Tsar only knew part of what was happening. General Alexeief gave him a daily summary of the telegrams received from the President of the House. The General attempted from the first to make the Sovereign less uncompromising, but his efforts were wasted.

One morning, however, the Emperor seemed to rouse himself from the kind of lethargy into which the opiate assurances of his false friends had plunged him. He expressed a wish to go to Tsarkoyë-Selo to talk to M. Rodzianko, whose name was then much mentioned. The fact is, the Empress had at last changed her tune in her correspondence with her husband. On March 11 she telegraphed to her husband: "Things are getting worse." On the 12th she wrote: "Yesterday, scandalous riots. Many troops have joined the mob," and she added in a second message dated the same day: "Some concessions are inevitable." And as the Tsarina changed her mind, the Emperor who had a blind faith in her opinion began to feel apprehension for the first time.

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On March 12 the members of the Emperor's suite were invited to prepare for departure. They were to

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

leave Mohilef at 2 a.m. Whereupon this little world of the Court became rampant with indignation. What exactly was happening? None could say. Shreds of the truth reached them, but even then they were not official. The Court dignitaries had certainly noticed the frequent conferences between the Emperor and the Chief of Staff, but as Nicholas II. said no word, it was not till later that they knew the subject of them.

Towards the evening of the same day, a telegram received from the Commandant of the Palace of Tsarkoyë-Selo reported that the town was in an uproar. He said that he was afraid the popular excitement might threaten the safety of the Palace and its inmates. The telegram begged the Emperor to come at once. Another message did not reach the Tsar. It came from the elected members of the Council of the Empire: "We, the undersigned, elected members of the Council of Empire, fulfil by addressing Your Majesty the duty towards you and Russia imposed upon us by our conscience. As a result of the complete disorganisation of the transport system and the stoppage in the supply of raw material and fuel, the factories and works have been obliged to close down. The compulsory cessation of work and the extremely acute crisis in the matter of food supply also caused by the chaos in the transport system have stirred the masses to violent anger."

In spite of the utmost haste in preparing for departure, the Imperial trains were not able to leave General Headquarters till the 13th, between four and five o'clock in the morning. Two trains had been made up as usual. The first carried a part of the suite and the servants. The Tsar was in the second. Both trains

THE EPILOGUE

went in the direction of Tosno. The Revolution was in full swing in Petrograd, but Nicholas II. still understood but dimly how serious was the situation. There was a good reason. His circle intercepted the telegrams of his generals and of M. Rodzianko. These became more urgent. The Throne was expected to act, but it did nothing. The Tsar, unaware of the headlong rush of events, remained dumb. In the night of the 14th the commandant of the train implored the blind fools who were keeping the master shut up to tell him the truth. They replied that he was asleep and must not be wakened.

On the way, at the station of Likhoslavl, a telegram came from Lieutenant Gregof, Commandant of the Nicholas Station at Petrograd, ordering that the two trains should be brought not to Tsarkoyë-Selo but to the capital. The order was handed to the Commandant-General of Palaces, Voyekof. He said he would not obey it. The Emperor's two blue trains arrived at midnight at the station of Bologoyë. It was there learnt from an officer of the Railway Battalion that Tosno and Liubane were in the hands of rebel troops. Voyekof still refused to heed this warning. In his mind, "Everything would still be all right," the mighty monarch before whom all things had bent till now would assuredly put everything right again by his mere presence. He got as far as Malaya Vishéra. But at this station they had to stop the second train, that in which was the Emperor, as a signal was received that the first train was in the hands of the rioters. It then became inevitable, in the face of this compulsory stoppage of the train, that the Emperor should be told of the events which were happening so rapidly.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

He was awakened ; the Commandant of Palaces told him that it was impossible to get to Tsarkoyë-Selo as the railroad was in the hands of the Revolutionaries and that the troops of the Petrograd district had joined the rebels. The wretched man appeared dumb-founded : “ Why was not I told all that earlier ? What is the good of telling me the truth now that all is over ? ” Then after a pause, amazed by what they were telling him and even in the chaos of his thought understanding that nothing was left for him to do, Nicholas II. said :

“ If the people wishes it I will abdicate and go away to Livadia.” Whereupon he began to weep bitterly. “ If only,” he added between his sobs, “ if only my wife and children are safe and well.” “ Yes, we will go to Livadia,” he kept saying, as if he were talking to himself, “ to lead a peaceful life there.” The Emperor went out on to the observation platform of his carriage, his face convulsed. Admiral Nilof was at his side.

* * *

They decided to run back to Pskof to consult General Russky there. The train of him who was in fact no longer Emperor reached Pskof on March 14 at eight o'clock in the evening. General Russky was at the station. The Emperor welcomed him with his customary cordiality, although a certain bitterness was in his voice. After a few minutes of conversation he said that he was ready to grant the country a responsible Government. Russky, who knew from Petrograd sources of the amazing march of events, answered : “ It is too late, Sire ; Your Majesty's

THE EPILOGUE

decision comes too late and that concession to-day is not enough."

On March 15, towards four o'clock in the morning, General Russky managed to establish telephonic communication with M. Rodzianko. The conversation lasted two hours. When Nicholas II. learnt the upshot of it and when the Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front had shown him the reply to telegrams he had sent to Generals Evert and Brussilof, both of whom agreed with Russky that abdication was necessary, he signed a telegraphic despatch to Rodzianko in which he expressed his decision to abdicate in favour of his son Alexis.

The telegram was not sent as the news came just then that a delegate of the Executive Committee of the Duma, M. Shulgin, and a member of the Provisional Government, just constituted, M. Gutchkof, were on their way to Pskof. The Emperor decided to await them. They arrived on March 15 at ten o'clock at night.

It is easy to imagine what that day meant for the Emperor. The last Oriental potentate in Europe, who shortly before was blindly obeyed, who had left his General Headquarters wielding absolute power, and now suddenly without transition found himself compelled to await in an icy station, on a side-track, two men, one of whom, M. Gutchkof, he had considered as his enemy since he had made his first revelations in the Duma on the Rasputin scandal, and the other—the deputy Shulgin—a man utterly unknown to him. Did these two messengers from his people, whom he believed to be infinitely loyal to him personally, bring him a gleam of hope? He may have thought so as

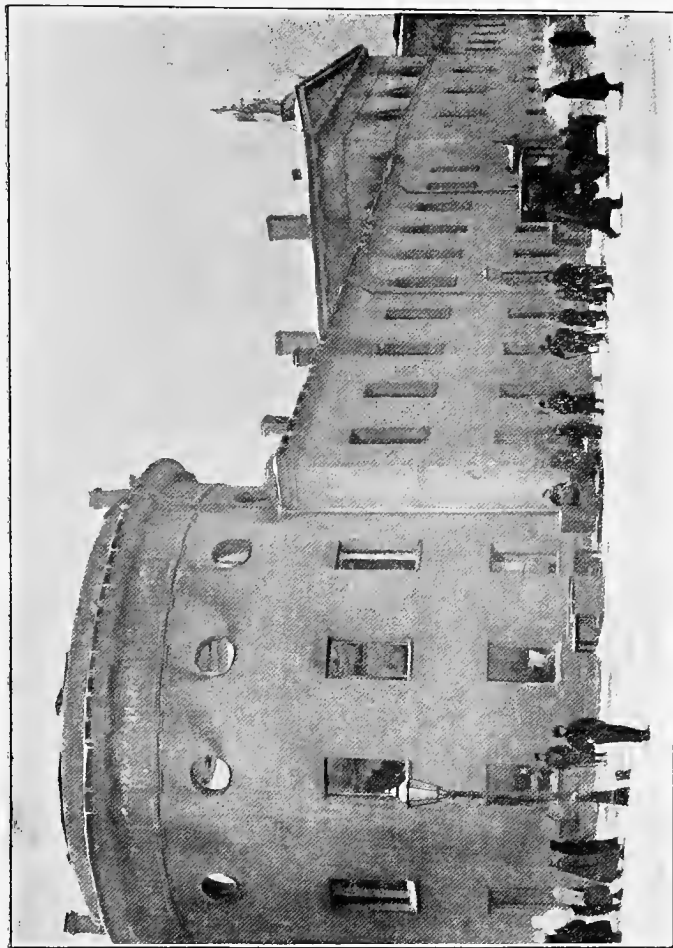
THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

he seemed relieved at the news of their coming. Yet he was under no illusions. It was indeed during those long hours of reflection that the father, anxious about the future of a son whom he loved devotedly, decided to abdicate in favour of his brother, the Grand Duke Michael.

The meeting between the delegates and the Sovereign took place at the station itself. Here we will let one of the actors in the scene, M. Shulgin, speak :

“ As our train stopped at the station of Pskof, one of the Emperor's A.-D.-C.'s entered our carriage and said : ‘ His Majesty awaits you.’ It was only a few steps to the Imperial train. I was not at all excited. We had reached that extreme limit of physical fatigue and nervous tension, after the days we had gone through in Petrograd, when nothing can astonish one any more, nor seem impossible. One dreams awake. Nevertheless I was uncomfortable at having to present myself before the Tsar in a lounge suit, dirty, with a four days' growth on my face. I had the appearance and the face of one of those prisoners the crowd had recently set free from the gaols before burning them down. ”

“ We stepped into a saloon compartment very much lighted up, upholstered in a light green material. The Court Chamberlain and General Narishkin, Lord High Steward, were there. The Emperor came in at once. He was in the uniform of one of the Caucasian regiments. His face was as calm as in days before the troubles. He shook hands with us and his manner was quite civil. He sat down and asked us to do so too. Gutchkof sat down by his side, near an occasional table, I sat opposite Gutchkof, Frederiks sat a little



A STATE PRISON (LE CHÂTEAU DE LITHUANIE) AFTER IT
HAD BEEN SACKED AND BURNED.

THE EPILOGUE

farther away, and General Narishkin took a seat in a corner before a table, ready to write, as the Emperor had asked him to take down in writing all the details of the interview.

“General Russky entered at that moment. He begged the Emperor’s pardon for not having come in with us, he bowed to us and sat down next to me, that is in front of the Tsar.

“Gutchkof began to speak. I was afraid he might be pitiless, that he might say something cruel to the Emperor. I was soon reassured. Gutchkof spoke long, fluently, the parts of his discourse followed in perfect order. He did not touch upon the past, merely setting forth present conditions, trying to make the Tsar understand to what a depth the country had fallen. The Tsar listened without making a single gesture. Gutchkof spoke without looking up, his right hand on the little table. He could not see the Tsar’s face and in this way it was easier for him to go to the end of his painful speech. He ended it by saying that the only way out of the situation was the abdication of the monarch in favour of the little Alexis, with the Grand Duke Michael as Regent. As Gutchkof said this, Russky bent over to me and whispered :

“ ‘ That’s already settled ! ’

“The Emperor replied. His voice and his manner were much calmer than had been the tone and words of Gutchkof, deeply moved and made involuntarily emphatic by the greatness of the occasion. ‘ Yesterday and to-day I have thought a great deal and I have decided to abdicate,’ said Nicholas II. to us, in a tone he might have used to speak of some commonplace matter. ‘ Until three o’clock to-day I was ready to

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

do so in favour of my son, but I then felt and feel now that I cannot separate myself from him.’*

“ The Tsar here made a short pause and began again on a tone as level as ever,

“ ‘ You will understand me, I hope ! ’ and he went on, ‘ That is why I have decided to abdicate in favour of my brother.’

“ He ceased as if expecting a reply. I then said : ‘ This proposal surprises us, we had only foreseen an abdication in favour of the Tsarevitch Alexis. That is why I ask permission to speak a while in private with Alexander Ivanovitch (Gutchkof) in order to give a reply upon which both of us agree.’

“ The Tsar consented. We went away for a few minutes. I do not remember how we started the conversation again, but one thing is certain : we accepted without difficulty the objections that were raised. Gutchkof acknowledged that he had not the courage to go counter to the feelings of a father and stated his belief that all pressure was useless where such things were concerned. It seemed to me that when he said that an expression of satisfaction lighted up the face of the Sovereign whom we had come to dethrone. I then declared for my part that the wish of the Tsar, although it ran counter to a decision which had been taken, was perfectly reasonable. The separation of father and son would indeed create a delicate situation. The little Tsar would constantly

* NOTE.—Nicholas II. felt that he could not leave in the hands of strangers the little Alexis, who suffered from a disease inherited in his mother's family by all the male descendants. This disease was hæmophilia, of which he had nearly died twice already.

THE EPILOGUE

be thinking of his absent parents and perhaps would as a result nourish a dislike for those who had separated him from his father and mother. Besides, it was a question whether the Regent could take an oath of fidelity to the Constitution on behalf of the little Emperor. On the other hand all difficulties were solved by raising to the throne the Grand Duke Michael, who could give the required oath and be in truth a constitutional monarch.

“ In the circumstances we therefore accepted the Emperor’s solution.

“ The Tsar then asked us if we could take upon ourselves to guarantee in some degree that the Act of Abdication would restore civil peace in the country and would not, on the contrary, give rise to a fresh disturbance. We answered that so far as it was possible to foresee the future we apprehended no such difficulties. I cannot say now exactly when it was that the Emperor rose and went into the neighbouring carriage to sign the Act. He came back at about a quarter past eleven holding in his right hand some small sheets of paper.

“ He said ‘ This is the Act of Abdication, read it.’ And we read in a low voice :

“ ‘ By the Grace of God, we, Nicholas II., Emperor of All the Russias, Tsar of Poland, Grand Duke of Finland, etc., etc., make known to all our loyal subjects :

“ ‘ In the days of the great struggle with the external enemy who for the last three years has been striving to enslave our country, it has pleased God to send to Russia a new and painful trial. Internal troubles threaten to have a fatal effect on the outcome of this hard fought war. The destinies of Russia, the honour

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

of our heroic Army, the happiness of the people, the whole future of our dear country demand that at any cost the war should be carried to a victorious close.

“ ‘ Our bitter enemy has shot his bolt and the moment is near when our valiant Army, in concert with our glorious Allies, will finally crush him.

“ ‘ In these days that mean so much for the life of Russia we have thought our conscience compelled us to make easy for our people a close union and organisation of all its forces for the rapid realisation of victory.

“ ‘ That is why, in full accord with the Duma of the Empire, we have judged it well to abdicate the Crown and to put off the supreme power.

“ ‘ Not wishing to part from our beloved son, we bequeath our inheritance to our brother, the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovitch, blessing him on his advent to the Throne. We ask him to govern in full accord with the representatives of the nation in Parliament assembled and to make to them an inviolable oath in the name of the beloved fatherland.

“ ‘ We appeal to all faithful sons of the fatherland, begging them to do their sacred and patriotic duty by obeying the Tsar at this painful moment of national trial, and to help him with the representatives of the nation to guide the Russian State along the ways of prosperity and glory.

“ ‘ God help Russia ! ’

“ The document was a fine and noble composition. I was ashamed of the draft we had scribbled hastily on our way. However, I requested the Emperor to add to the sentence ‘ We ask (our brother) to govern in full accord with the representatives of the nation in Parliament assembled ’ the following words : ‘ *and to*

THE EPILOGUE

swear to the nation to do so.' The Tsar agreed and added what I had asked, but changed my wording so that the text read finally '*and to swear it to them on his most sacred oath.*' By this, Michael Alexandrovitch would be a constitutional monarch in the full meaning of the term. The march of events, however, has outstripped the form of government we then expected.

"Two or three copies of the Act were typed on little sheets of paper which bore as headings, on the left, the word *Stavka*, and on the right '*Chief of Staff.*'* The Emperor signed in pencil.

"When we had read and approved the formula it seemed to me that we shook hands . . . but at that moment I was undoubtedly very much moved and I may be wrong. I remember that when I looked at my watch for the last time it was ten minutes before midnight. This scene, of supreme importance, therefore took place between eleven and twelve in the night of the 2/15 to the 3/16 March.

"We then took leave. It seemed to me that on neither side was there any ill-feeling. For my part, I felt an immense pity for that man who had just bought back, with a single act, his past faults. The Tsar was in full control of himself, friendly rather than cold.

* This peculiarity was afterwards explained. The Emperor having drafted the Act of Abdication before he knew that the two delegates from Petrograd were coming, had first thought of sending it to General Alexeief at the General Headquarters (*Stavka*). It was therefore on a telegraphic form that the representatives of the Provisional Government read the proclamation, and the typist recopied the document, preserving by an oversight the address of him for whom it was first intended.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

"We had agreed with General Russky that there should be two copies of the Act signed by the Emperor, for we feared lest in the troublous times through which we were passing the document we bore should be lost. One copy was kept by the General, we kept the other. As I have said, the signature of the Tsar was in pencil, while the Lord Chamberlain countersigned in ink."

* * *

It is curious to note that after this meeting Nicholas II. said no word of what had taken place to the members of his suite with whom he took tea. The Court circle were told by Count Frederiks. The man who was now only Nicholas Romanoff drank, ate, and slept as usual. The greatest events had always left this creature of little intellect almost unmoved.

On March 16 the Imperial train left Pskof for Mohilef, whither the Tsar had received permission to go, thinking he would be safer there and because he wished to take leave of his Staff and troops.

On his return the dethroned monarch continued to receive the report of General Alexeief. As before he lived in the Governor's house, but he had given up the walks he was accustomed to take before the tragic events of the last weeks. He took his meals in the company of his suite. They were silent and mournful meals where by common accord no reference was made to the past.

On March 17 the Dowager Empress Marie Feodorowna arrived at Mohilef, coming from Kief, sent for by "a deserted son." The Tsar went to the station to receive her. He was now to resume with his mother a friendship which had for some considerable

THE EPILOGUE

time been interrupted by the machinations of his wife.

From that day the ex-Emperor had nothing more to do with the Headquarters Staff. General Alexeief alone had short interviews with him. He advised Nicholas to send away from Mohilef the Chamberlain, Count Frederiks, and the Commandant of Palaces, Voyekof, who were fiercely hated by the officers and men of the garrison. The Tsar followed his advice. His two favourites were arrested on the way, by order of the new authorities.

* * *

The decision of the Provisional Government to deprive the ex-Tsar of his liberty was only known at Headquarters on the very day when this decision was to be put into force. When he was told, Nicholas II. remained unmoved as before. At the moment of starting for Tsarkoyë-Selo, with which he had been allowed to communicate by telephone at certain hours of the day, the former master of Russia's destinies did, however, show some signs of emotion.

The Provisional Government, in concert with the Executive Committee of the Duma, instructed Messrs. Bublikof, Gribunin, Vershinin, and Kalinin to go to Mohilef to arrest the Tsar. They left on March 20 in a special train and arrived on the next day at three o'clock in the afternoon. The Government delegates went to the quarters of General Alexeief, who had been informed by telegraph of the reason for their visit. He told them that the Imperial train had steam up and was awaiting their orders. The Government Commissioners asked for a list of the people who would accompany the fallen Sovereign. They refused to include

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

Admiral Nilof, one of his favourites. Nilof, sent for by the deputies, heard this decision with deference. His former arrogance was gone. He was their most obedient, humble servant.

General Alexeief preceded the Commissioners to the station to inform Nicholas of the Provisional Government's decision. The Emperor was then in the train with his mother, whom he scarcely left now. As soon as he was told that the Government's representatives had arrived, he at once took leave of Marie Feodorowna and went back to his train, which was ready to start. As he passed before a group of officers and of soldiers and those members of his suite who had been forbidden to accompany him, Nicholas said a few parting words to them. He had his hand to his cap as he spoke. For the first time in that kind of review an impressive silence followed on the usual applause. The Empress-Mother at the door of her carriage continued to watch the man who was responsible for the fall of the Romanof dynasty.

The train started at 4.50 p.m. Not a word had been uttered by the spectators, the public silently greeted the Government Commissioners, who had entered a special carriage which was the cynosure of all eyes. The stops and the programme of the journey had been settled beforehand. On the way the Emperor did not once refer to what had taken place, as he talked in turn with his aides-de-camp Mordvinof and Prince Dolgorukof, with General Narishkin and Colonel Komzin, commandant of the train. He spoke of his family, the speed of the train, the military operations.

It seemed as if nothing had happened, as if Nicholas Romanof—as he was called in the warrant for his

THE EPILOGUE

arrest—was still the absolute monarch. Only his glance, usually very gentle, but now feverish, and the fatigue visible in his pale face, revealed the struggle that was taking place in him, the emotion he restrained in order not to betray himself before courtiers who were already showing signs of defection. In the bosom of his family he would at last be able to let himself go, and it was of this coming reunion that the wretched man thought, as of the happy end of this humiliating journey.

He was told of the arrest of Frederiks and of Voyekof. He said spontaneously, nobly, "Poor fellows! I am sorry for them. They were not to blame." Thus the victim pitied his guilty betrayers.

* * *

His last retainers showed themselves much more anxious for their personal security than for the fate of the man whom they used always to call their "belovèd Tsar." Every unexpected stop caused a nervousness they did not conceal, and this became more and more marked as they approached the end of the journey. They kept saying "Shall we be arrested?"

From the station of Gatshina a telephone message was sent to the Commandant of the garrison at Tsarkoyë-Selo to have conveyances waiting for the train. The latter reached the station which was formerly reserved for the Imperial family at 11.30 a.m. on March 22. The only people present to receive the prisoner were representatives of the new *régime*.

Nicholas Alexandrovitch Romanof in the uniform of a colonel of the Cossacks of the Guard left his saloon

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

compartment. He spoke to nobody, merely saluting. He went through the special waiting-room, formerly built for him, and with Prince Dolgorukof entered one of the motor-cars waiting for him. Here again was the silence of the grave. Infinite sadness brooded over the human drama now being played out in the snow-bound scene of woody Tsarkoyë-Selo.

Ten minutes later, Nicholas II. heard closing behind him, as a prisoner, the iron gates of that Alexander Palace for which he had a special liking because its size so well suited the simplicity of his tastes.

* * *

From the depths of her retreat Alexandra Feodorowna, the neophyte of Gregory Rasputin, anxiously followed the course of the rising in the capital. She had gradually driven from her intimacy and that of her husband all the Grand Dukes. That is why before thinking of showing her sympathy or offering help they thought of their own affairs. One must suppose that it was not without satisfaction that they noted how the march of events proved them to have been right and the German woman wrong.

The news of the troops' defection reached the Empress on March 12. The order was at once given to the Guard to get ready for defence and to post machine-guns and armoured cars all round the Palace. But the greater number of the soldiers joined the Revolutionaries as soon as these appeared. A few faithful retainers had already trained their guns on the newcomers and were about to fire when the Tsarina begged them to desist. On March 13 she sent for the Grand Duke Paul Alexandrovitch, uncle of the Emperor.

THE EPILOGUE

"Go to the front," she said, "try to bring back the men who are devoted to us. We must at any price save the Throne which is in danger."

Paul Alexandrovitch refused, stating as an excuse that his control over the Guards was purely administrative. He understood the futility of such an attempt, seeing that all troops sent to Petrograd joined the Revolution.

On March 14 he was sent for a second time. "I refused to go," he said later. "At that time they were drawing up at my house a proclamation granting to the Russian nation a complete Constitution. Nicholas was to sign it. After having obtained the signatures of Cyril Vladimirovitch and Michael Alexandrovitch, and having signed myself, I sent the document to the Duma. It was handed to Miliukof and a receipt obtained. Then, only, did I go to Court. The first question Alexandra Feodorowna asked me was :

" 'Where is my husband? Is he alive? What must we do to calm the excitement? '

"I then handed her the draft of the proclamation I had drawn up. She approved it.

"On March 3/16, I was again sent for to Court. I had with me the latest edition of the newspapers giving an account of the abdication. I read them. Alexandra Feodorowna knew nothing about it all. When I had finished reading she cried out :

" 'I don't believe it! Those are all lies, newspaper inventions. I have faith in God and the Army. They have not deserted us yet.'

"It was my painful duty to explain to her that not only God but also the Army were on the side of the Revolution. It was then only, and perhaps for the

、 THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

first time, that the dethroned Empress realised the harm that she and Rasputin had done to the country and the monarchy.

"I saw the Empress for the last time on March 5/18. She was unable to speak. She kept sobbing and asking over and over again what she was to do. The ex-Tsarina was expecting the Commissioners from the Duma. Her one desire was to obtain from them leave to return to the hospital she had founded, in order to tend the wounded and to forget."

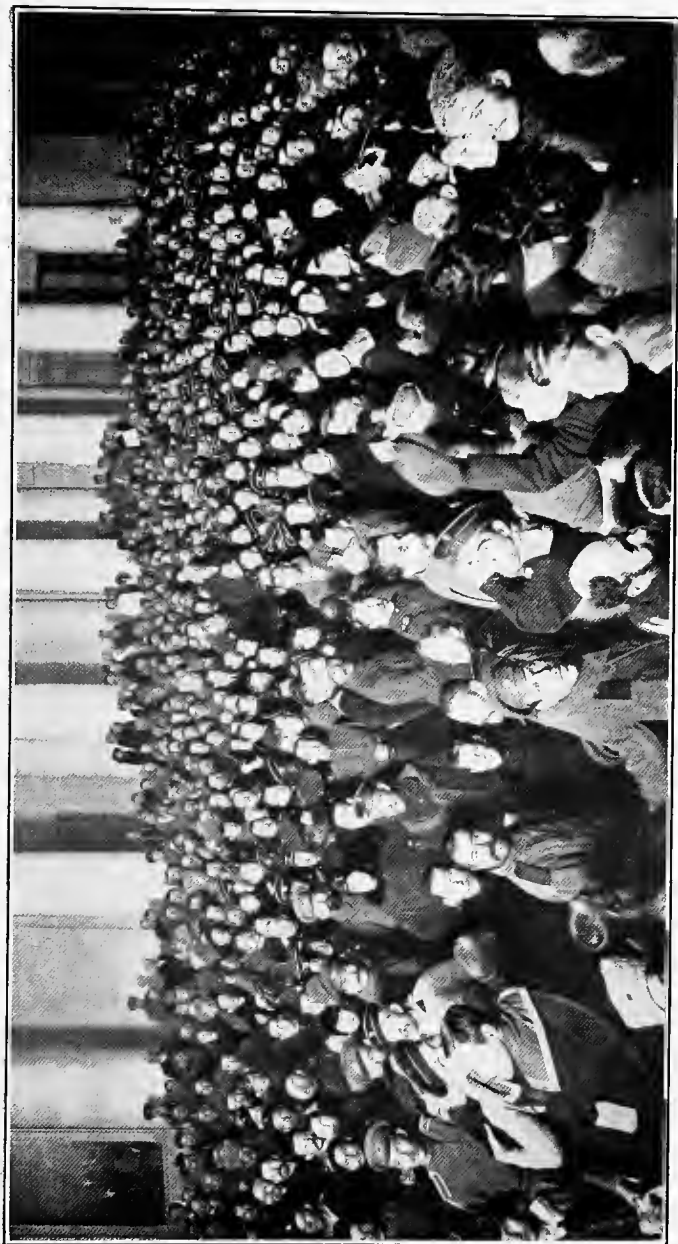
But quite as much in order to calm popular excitement as to checkmate any possible conspiracy by partisans of the old order of things, the Provisional Government thought it well to apply to the Empress the same measures as had been applied to the Emperor. General Kornilof, commanding the military district of Petrograd, was instructed to inform Alexandra Feodorowna that she was under arrest. The ex-Empress received him dressed in mourning.

"I have come," said the General, "by the order of the Cabinet to make known to you a decision which has been taken with regard to you and to put it into execution."

"I hear you," she replied.

When he had finished reading the Government's decision, she asked that the members of the domestic staff to whom she and her children were most attached should be allowed to remain. This was granted.

Nicholas II. and Alexandra Feodorowna took up their residence in a wing of the Palace, guarded by soldiers who but a short time since were very humble subjects and now gave to the Emperor no other title but that of Colonel.



MEETING OF SOLDIERS IN THE DUMA BUILDING
IN THE FIRST DAYS OF THE REVOLUTION.

THE EPILOGUE

Thus a reign begun in blood at the Coronation celebrations at Moscow ended wretchedly. It was a Grand Duke, Cyril Vladimirovitch, who preached its funeral sermon. "My doorkeeper and I," said he, "both understood that with the old Government we should lose the war, but it was useless to try to make the Tsar understand it."

Meanwhile from the awful Hell of the Siberian mines, sledges by hundreds brought to the stations of the Trans-Siberian Railway the wretched victims of Tsardom now restored to liberty.

Elsewhere, events outstripped all expectations. The Grand Duke Michael refused to accept the Crown from his brother's hands. A few days later all Romanofs became suspects. 1789 and 1793 ran together with but a few weeks between them. Russia, progressing by giant strides, now wanted a Republic.

The fortress of Peter and Paul at Petrograd, that Russian Bastille which rises grimly opposite the Winter Palace, on an islet of the Neva, is the symbol of moribund Tsardom. Its outer wall is darkly silhouetted against the red sunsets of summer evenings; it seems to spring straight from the river. The ventilators of its dungeons are only just above the level of the waters, of which the ceaseless lapping prevented inmates from hearing the sounds of neighbouring life, life which beat so strongly on the neighbouring embankment, where the rulers of the day rode to and fro in smartest of carriages.

The fortress! Although the spire of its Cathedral, the burial place of the Romanofs, seemed to call for the pity of God upon those whom it enclosed, that

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

jail in the very midst of the twentieth century was the insatiable Tyburn of a medieval system of Inquisition, whose name was never uttered without fear. How many young lives have withered in that sepulchre, how many lives have been suppressed in the grey mornings of Petrograd, on the gallows that lay concealed behind the high walls! No one could tell the tale of them, and least of all those who coldly ordered those sacrifices to the Orthodox God and His anointed. What could one life more or less mean to those who maintained their hold by Death!

And now the executioners have taken the place of their victims.

One enters the fortress by a drawbridge. Once past the high encircling battlement, leaving the Cathedral on the right, one comes face to face with a wall in which there is but one opening, an iron door. The public, admitted on general holidays, to visit the tombs of the Tsars, never saw that door open, and none might cross its threshold, save as one condemned to death.

This heavy door opens into a little yard bounded on the right by the blank wall of the Mint and on the left by a massive building, one storey high, like a block-house, defended by an impenetrable palisade. The walls, in which are closely barred loopholes, are painted that yellow ochre of Russian houses. The damp, here and there, has eaten away the paint. This is the Trubetskoy bastion, the stone pall of those who opposed absolutism, a name of funereal association in the history of Russian thought.

Entrance to this, too, is through a heavy door. Sentries are everywhere, but no longer are they the

THE EPILOGUE

black-capped jailers of former days. They are now good-natured soldiers who nevertheless are rigorous in the execution of their duty, for they know that they keep guard over the most redoubtable enemies of their country. In a passage, to the right and to the left of the entrance, are the doors of the cells, closed with enormous bolts, padlocked as well, and every one pierced with that grating through which the prisoner is watched, an intolerable torture for him, for he feels night and day the eye of the warder upon him wherever he may sit or stand in the tiny room. The two storeys are similar, the arrangement is the same, with this difference, that as the ground floor is on a level with the Neva, the damp is greater there. In the bastion there are more than eighty cells. Their arrangement is rudimentary: a grey-painted table and an iron bed both built into the wall. On the bed is a thin mattress, a pillow stuffed with seaweed, a grey blanket. There is a washstand of enamelled cast iron, an unclean night stool, and that is all the furniture of that room, with its musty smell, ill-lit by a ventilator at the top of the wall.

The lapping of the waters is the only sound which breaks the silence of that cell beside the notes, recurring at every quarter of an hour, of the Cathedral chime, of which every stroke clangs through the prison like a funeral knell. I have been told by a friend who had managed to come forth alive from that prison that nothing had been more painful to him than that pitiless gong, which ninety-six times a day marked how slowly time passed in confinement! And, as if to goad with a fierce irony those whom they tortured, they had arranged that at midnight and at midday the chimes

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

rang out the hymn *Bojé tsaria khrani* (God save the Tsar) !

Sic transit ! To that jail went after their arrest the most guilty of the sinister advisers of Nicholas. It almost seems that their punishment has purged the old prison. The supporters of despotic government are there, subjected to the same conditions as those who suffered there before, without a single difference. They have the same food as the soldiers who mount guard over them. The discipline is strict but without cruelty. They are not insulted in their fallen state. Side by side but unable to see one another are Sukhomlinof, the embezzler, protector of Miassoyedof ; Stürmer, the traitor, who is responsible for the crushing of Rumania ; Protopopof, the evil genius of the last days of the reign ; Vyrubova, the evil counsellor of Alexandra Feodorowna ; Catherine Sukhomlinof, trader in Court favours, who ruined her husband. There are others. The most wretched of all completes this band, the Constabulary officer Sobiéshtchansky, the former jailer of Peter and Paul.

One observer had the opportunity of watching them when they were off their guard. Sukhomlinof produces a painful impression. His hair is now white, he is thinner, his snow-white imperial sprouts from a face the colour of parchment. His glance when he raises it to the grating through which he feels he is being watched is weary and dull. His manner is anxious, his walk slow and dragging. He is the oldest inmate of this mournful place, for he was shut up there once before in the last months of the Emperor's reign.

The gendarme Sobiéshtchansky stretched on his

THE EPILOGUE

bed seems lost in a dream or in a nightmare which he follows to its end in the wreaths of smoke rising from the cigarettes he everlastingly puffs. Stürmer, bowed and broken, is seated on his bed. So as not to be watched he keeps his back turned. He sits motionless, lost in thought, revolving many things in his mind. And Vyrubova, too, sits on her bed. Her manner is calm, her face expressionless. Does she pray? From time to time she makes the sign of the Cross. Crutches are near her, for she cannot walk without them since her railway accident two years before. Protopopof like a wild beast goes to and fro in his cell. He is excited and does not notice the sounds at his door. Success, fortune, were in his grasp, and behold! they are gone again! Rage overmasters suffering with him. Remorse for the evil he did in his career is unknown to him.

Those who brought Nicholas II. to headlong ruin await the punishment for their misdeeds. In the silence of the Trubetskoy bastion their expiation has begun.

CHAPTER IV

AFTERMATH OF THE REVOLUTION

Political currents of Free Russia—The Liberals—The various Socialist shades—The War and the Russian Socialists.

Now that it is possible to delimit with a certain exactness the Russian social upheaval, we can understand fairly correctly what was the general trend, what were the fluctuations.

Before coming to the kernel of the matter it will be well first to explain what are the various Russian social currents which run counter to one another and clash violently at a chaotic period no doubt to be regretted but difficult to have avoided.

* * *

The Russia of a little while ago included, beside the revolutionary *pariahs* of various types, who had emigrated to foreign countries whence they agitated against the established order in their own land, a big party, also in opposition, but *recognised* to some extent by the Imperial authority, since its representatives were to be found on the benches of the Duma. We refer to the Liberal party. The word "party" is perhaps out of place here, as under the name of Liberals

AFTERMATH OF THE REVOLUTION

were meant and are still meant all the sections of the Moderate Left, as it was in the defunct order.

Russian Liberalism absorbed a notable portion of thinking Russia. Every intellectual who was not warped by a personal interest or unhealthy ambition was a Liberal. This generic term did not imply a definite political programme—Liberalism merely demanded in a general manner that fresh air should be let into the dank atmosphere of decadent Tsarism.

The accusations of the extremists who ruled the roost after the Revolution may have led foreign public opinion to believe that Liberalism in Russia was the concern of one class, a *bourgeois* theory. That is not entirely exact. Russian Liberalism having never at any time constituted a *party* in the narrow parliamentary sense of the word, as we have just said, never made any distinction between the social conditions of the people. It did not defend, either in 1905 or since, the rights of a caste. On the contrary it proclaimed the right of the whole Russian people to a less arbitrary form of government. The Liberal was only so far a *bourgeois* in that he did not adopt the Socialistic creed.

* * *

Next to the Liberals, more towards the Left came the Socialist sections. They made no stir before 1917, their most active or best-known representatives were exiled or deported. It is only since the Revolution that they entered the arena, making the Liberals take second place.

Russian Socialism is divided into two schools: *Revolutionary Socialism* and *Democratic Socialism*.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

Their doctrines are tolerably similar, but the revolutionary Socialists now known as National Socialists are inspired by ideas more suited to the Russian nation than those of the Social Democrats who follow German Marxian principles. That is why the former have made in the masses of the populace more numerous converts and especially more comprehending converts than the workmen crowd who sheepishly, without understanding them, have followed imported views.

Each of the two schools is in turn divided into three groups : extremists, centre, and moderates.

With the Social Democrats the first group has adopted the name of *Maximalists (bolsheviki)*, that is " whole-hoggers." The most extreme of them were too long allowed to preach views dangerous to the country and to the Revolution itself. That was the Leninist band, so called from the name of its leader, Lenin *alias* Ulianof. Its backers, mostly renegade Jews, sowed uncertainty and discord in people's minds and their work was doubly criminal, for a good number of the lieutenants of Lenin, (among whom was Zinovief, whose real name was Apfelbaum,) under the cover of Internationalism, were nothing but hired servants of Berlin.* By the side of this group, which was anarchistic and really in the nature of a provocative agent, whose newspaper organ was the *Pravda*, obtained by a betrayal, some comparatively sincere men, under the leadership of Maxim Gorki, of Sukhanof *alias* Himmer, Steklof *alias* Nahamkis, Kamenief *alias* Rosenfeld,

* It is alleged now that the German Government was in close communication with the Leninists by the instrumentality of another renegade, Ganetsky, whose real name was Fürstenberg, established at Stockholm.

AFTERMATH OF THE REVOLUTION

have contributed by their violence to rouse the simple-minded Russian populace, to obscure the national conscience by playing to the low instincts of a people too young in the exercise of its liberty. The Jewish community has disowned these men, who are as dangerous to their co-religionaries as they are to their adopted country.*

The centre of the Social Democratic party has received the name of *Minimalist* (*menshévik*). Cheidze, Skobelef, Tseretelli, all three well known to the general public, are the recognised leaders of it, and influential members of the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates (the *Soviet*).

The right wing is formed by the famous political refugee Plekhanof and his friends. Whilst Maximalists and Minimalists have more or less openly declared against the war and have only admitted its necessity as a defensive measure, M. Plekhanof has pronounced in favour of an energetic prosecution of the war against the Central Empires. But although he is universally respected and is a man of real standing, the master of Russian Socialism has not had on the populace an influence equal to that of certain tub-thumpers.

In the Revolutionary Socialist party the extreme Left is led by M. Tchernof, since the reconstruction of the Lvof Cabinet took place. Without sharing the Anarchist opinions of the Maximalists, M. Tchernof

* Indeed, the reactionaries in order to stir up pogroms have not failed to make capital out of the presence of a number of men of Jewish origin among the Maximalists in order to prove to the peasant population that the Revolution was a Jewish conspiracy aimed at Holy Russia.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

has sometimes shown himself to be more extreme in his opinions than the Social Democratic Minimalists.

The centre of the Revolutionary Socialists is led by Messrs. Avsenktief and Bunakof, both of them Westernised, like M. Tchernof by long exile in our countries. While the partisans of Lenin were spreading their subversive gospel through the suburbs of the capital, MM. Avsenktief and Bunakof canvassed especially among the peasant section, which represents 80 per cent. of the population.

The right of the Revolutionary Socialist party is constituted by the group of M. Lebedef, who came back to Petrograd at the outbreak of the Revolution, like most of the Socialist leaders, after having gone through the first part of the war as a lieutenant in the French ranks. He has become since then one of the most active lieutenants of M. Kerenski.

Finally by the side of the two great Russian Socialist divisions we must place a group which we have already had occasion to mention, that of the Labour Party (*trudoviki*), which played a considerable part in the Duma when Social Democrats and Revolutionary Socialists were forbidden all access to the popular assembly. The leader of the Labour Party, the courageous orator of pre-Revolutionary days, is M. Kerenski, whose name unknown a little while ago is to-day on all lips as that of the first citizen of the new Republic. One can also classify the various Russian Socialist groups, which are far from having attained the definite outlines of real political parties, according to the position taken up by their leaders with regard to the war.

The first group consists of those who are now called,

AFTERMATH OF THE REVOLUTION

in Petrograd, the *Antidefensivists* (*antioborontsi*) or *Defeatists*, and includes almost all the Maximalists, part of the Minimalists, and the Internationalist Social Revolutionaries (Revolutionary Socialists) of M. Tchernof's friends. According to this group, which was strongly represented in the deputation from the Soviet which came to Paris, peace must be obtained by an international agreement ; a war, even if it is defensive, has no object.

The second group, the *Defensivists* (*oborontsi*) includes a few Maximalists, the majority of Minimalists, the Social Revolutionaries, and the Labour Party. As their name shows, they support a war which shall be purely defensive, but are opposed to the idea of peace at any price.

The last group, the *Offensivists* (*nastuplentsi*), is that of M. Plekhanof. He considers a defensive war inadequate. Attack may not be a principle, but it is a strategic necessity which one cannot give up for political reasons. The Offensivists number but few adherents in the Socialist ranks.

This rather dry classification was necessary for the proper understanding of Revolutionary events in Petrograd. Let us now consider those events themselves.

* * *

The Revolution sprang from a revolt of the populace exasperated by hunger. The movement of protest only took on its political significance when the Army took sides with the crowd. What had been a demonstration against famine then became a broader movement, and by the final co-operation of the Duma it was to rise to the height of a social upheaval.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

The real author of the Revolution was the people. Its victor has been not the Duma but Socialism. The former was not ready for what took place and was outstripped by events which it did not believe to be so near. Its first movement indeed was to obey the Emperor's will. In obedience to the ukase of March 10, it was going to disperse when the mutineers of the Guards Regiments presented themselves at the Palais de Tauride to announce their support of the people. There was a moment of complete confusion in the House. Its President was the first to regain his self-control. He understood how much there was to be gained by the rising, now that it had every chance of succeeding with the military support. He realised that the Duma, in order to preserve its influence, must also declare for the Revolution. In the supreme interests of Russia and in order to spare it the horrors of anarchy it must try to direct the movement. And in order to do that it was necessary first of all to follow it. Unfortunately, they followed it too long. The idealist Liberals were over-anxious to allow full freedom to the expression of every sort of opinion. The anarchists and the emissaries sent by Germany across an ill-guarded frontier hastened to take excessive advantage of that freedom.

The Army in the first days of the upheaval had come to the Duma to ask for its support. The Duma did not have the sense to take advantage of the occasion. It hesitated, displayed a weakness which was fatal to its influence. The next day the Army, changing its character, and not having found in the popular assembly the leadership it sought, became a self-governing body, swayed by various opinions, and offered its *protection*

AFTERMATH OF THE REVOLUTION

to those who might have been masters of the situation.

That, for a time at any rate, was the end of Liberalism, which numbered among its adherents some really great statesmen.

* * *

The Duma certainly appointed an Executive Committee of twelve members *to enter into relations with existing bodies*; it did everything in its power to re-establish order out of chaos, not losing sight of the fact that the Revolution must before all benefit the active prosecution of the war.

But the workmen's leaders were watching. The Duma saw in the movement a political revolution, but they wanted a social revolution. In other words, the Socialist leaders had in mind to use for the re-institution of the International a Revolution which had been so astonishingly, so easily successful because it took place under a common banner uniting all the patriotic elements of the nation, the banner of national defence.

The Socialist party therefore set up on its own part a "Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates"—the *Soviet*, which took its place by the Duma, published a Gazette, issued proclamations, gave orders, and saw to it that M. Rodzianko and his colleagues were well invigilated. The proletariat was checkmating the Third Estate. A duality of control was about to begin.

This duality shows itself from the very first. On March 13, the Committee of the Duma appealed to the Russian people in the following terms: "*In very difficult circumstances the temporary Committee takes upon itself the heavy task of reorganising social*

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

and administrative order. Realising the seriousness of its decision the Committee feels sure that the nation and the Army will help it to form a new Government in accord with the wishes of the people." Thereupon the C.W.S.D., speaking more particularly to the proletariat, issued a proclamation which read: "*The old power must be upset and replaced by a Government of the People. Therein lies Russia's salvation. To achieve that object and in the interest of democracy, the people must organise the new power. The Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates means to organise the popular forces to ensure political liberty and democratic power in Russia. We invite the entire population of the capital to gather round the Council, to set up local Committees in the various districts, and to take into their hands the direction of all local affairs.*"

Nevertheless, on March 15 the two Committees arrived at a partial understanding. A Ministry of National Defence was elected. They agreed about questions raised by the new political order, but the question of the expropriation of landed estates, to which the Socialist party attached great importance, was set aside for the moment.

They were expecting at the same time the abdication of Nicholas, to whom two delegates had been sent. It was also intended to proclaim Emperor the Tsarevitch Alexis, with his uncle the Grand Duke Michael as Regent. Everything thus seemed settled for the best in the interests of the Liberal party. With it, Russia was to follow the path of constitutional monarchy and the extremists would find their activities limited.

On Friday, March 16, the whole plan crashed. In

AFTERMATH OF THE REVOLUTION

the historic night of the 15th to the 16th, more than in the Revolutionary days of the preceding week, the fate of the Romanoffs had been decided. Instructed to obtain the abdication pure and simple of the Tsar, the delegates had been obliged to modify their demand. The Act of Abdication they brought back from Pskof was not that expected by M. Rodzianko, that which M. Miliukof had already made public in its broad outlines, and of which Mr. Bonar Law spoke in the House of Commons. The Emperor, though fallen, still claimed authority by the very act of changing the succession and even by confirming in a rescript the nomination of Prince Lvof as President of the Council.

The sensation in the Duma, when the changes were made known, was enormous. Readers know the rest. The Grand Duke Michael, unable to accept the Imperial Crown from the deposed Emperor, left it to the nation to pronounce on the form of government which should follow the Provisional Government. In that way, the Constituent Assembly, elected by Universal Suffrage, would have not only to draft a Constitution, but also to decide whether Russia should be a constitutional monarchy or a republic.

* * *

In this way the door was thrown open to politics by auction. The parties of the Extreme Left entered the scene again. They who had acted in the prologue were now to play out the second act. Dual control was to begin again, but to an increased extent. Some members of the Provisional Government for the first time spoke of resigning. They gave in, however, to the appeals of their friends and continued to occupy posts which were evidently to be no sinecure.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

The propaganda in favour of a republic and also of an inopportune internationalism now began, to become more violent day by day. These ideas pleased a nation of dreamers, the doctrinaires found in them an ideal setting for humanitarian theories.

* * *

Yet, although it knew what a shifting sand Russian opinion is, knowing how easy it is to delude by generous Utopias, or by the glitter of some promised Eldorado, the creature known in Russia as the "Mujik of Riazan," that Russian peasant, slow at the uptake, who to-day has in his hands a rifle, the first Cabinet of free Russia thought it good policy to compound with the extremists. Its successive proclamations were the outward, visible signs of the surrender of its principles. The Socialists deleted what Miliukof had written. Meanwhile, Cheidze caused the C.W.S.D. to pass a motion affirming that Russia would only continue the war in its own defence, giving up all idea of territorial expansion. Miliukof by consenting abandoned the whole of the traditional Russian programme as regards foreign policy. It is certain that Prince Lvof and he did not put their names at the bottom of documents revised by the Extreme Left except to save what had already been won, hoping to act like the French Convention, which resumed the policy of Louis XIV. after saving the country, in this case to take up again the true Russian policy as soon as the new order was firmly established.

It was certainly not with a light heart that the statesmen of the first free Russian Ministry jettisoned the whole testament of Peter the Great, but, for a nation

AFTERMATH OF THE REVOLUTION

as little prepared as theirs was for the exercise of liberty, surrender of principle became a grave error, inasmuch as it left to Anarchy and Germany all freedom to sap the strength of a Revolution which had till then been the admiration of the world.

The Liberals in the Government were the first victims of their weakness. One after the other they were compelled to resign, surrendering their portfolios to Socialists. Their departure made every excess easy and for that reason was another mistake. The Liberals lacked adaptability after having lacked energy. They drew upon themselves the reproach that they had abandoned democracy. Far be it from us to heap accusation on them. Indeed, let us hasten to say in their defence that while with its *artels* (Workers' Guilds), its syndical unions, and its secret political organisations the Russian proletariat was more or less ready for action, the Revolution, although it had been prepared and gradually brought about by them, actually surprised the Liberals cut up into isolated parties which were often at daggers drawn with one another.

The Third Estate consisted of skirmishers acting independently; the proletariat on the other hand, in spite of police persecution, formed a disciplined brigade obeying the orders of recognised leaders. In that lay to a large extent the temporary predominance of the extremist bosses over the great majority of cultured Russians, a majority moderate in opinion, Monarchist yesterday, Republican to-day as a concession, but anxious to see the country develop gradually through the intervening stages.

* * *

The Russian Liberalism which was the begetter of

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

the new era has stood by watching impotently the internationalist machinations of some and the German manoeuvres of others. It refused—and was wrong to refuse—to begin a struggle which might have seemed to be a defence of its own interests. But its inactivity does not at all mean that it has been swallowed up in the whirlwind. It will certainly play its part in society again. It knows now, in face of the excesses which have been committed, what it owes to the country. It knows that the welfare of Russia can only be jeopardised by its disciples who are not mature enough to act without guidance. It knows that the enormous majority of Russians is only too anxious to follow it, as that mass is Russian first and foremost and cannot make head or tail of German Marxian theories.

Russian Liberalism is still a living force which centres round the Cadet party, which has worked out in detail, in view of coming struggles, an agrarian programme which should win over the rural population. We shall find the Liberals, now condemned as “burjui,” sharing with Moderate Socialists the direction of public affairs. A few tub-thumpers have been able to deceive Europe about their importance by the deafening uproar they made. They were either traitors or neuropaths who found expression in noise. The vast majority of Russia does not sympathise with them. It will find itself again after a moment of aberration of which the Leninist propaganda was one of the principal causes.

* * *

Turning from these causes to their effects, we have already been able to see that they are terrible for the



NATIONAL MILITIA FIRING ON A HOUSE SUSPECTED OF HARBOURING POLICE, DURING THE REVOLUTION.

AFTERMATH OF THE REVOLUTION

Anti-Germanic Coalition. The Army, infected with politics, poisoned by traitors or enemy agents, has written some painful pages in the book of Russian history. Must we then conclude that all those who voice opinions dangerous at the present moment are to be regarded as guilty of treason? Certainly not! In the disorders which have darkened the dawn of new Russia there was, we know, a large element of German influence, but also a good deal of deliberate reactionary provocation, and finally, in that country of dreamers, a calculable element of Utopian idealism.

In order to judge Russian events many have looked at them only from the angle of the war. The Russian Socialists, however, have raised the tone of the debate. Humanitarian ideas found among them a soil all the more suitable because the Allies in general and France in particular—for reasons to be given later on—weighed less in their calculations.

But among them there are not only men of Lenin's type. There are still dreamers who in the obscurity of their minds still believe what the French have believed in their day. And have not all of us who are Westerners once cherished the pleasing fallacy of universal brotherhood? Life has undeceived us. The Russian proletariat, young and inexperienced, has not had our lessons.

In any case, putting all fine shades of opinion aside, Russian Socialism desires an honest peace to be concluded with the German people. That it is under a delusion is probable. But did not the Stürmers and Protopopofs of the dead order also want to make peace with German militarism?

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

We judge to-day without the perspective which the lapse of time will give. Let us leave to the future the task of deciding how much the extremist views of the Russian democrats have made the Allies lose and how much they have endowed the cause of humanity.

PART THREE

FRANCE AND RUSSIA

CHAPTER I

THE FRANCO-RUSSIAN ALLIANCE

The Dual Alliance, what it was in the mind of its initiator and the French conception—The Potsdam Agreement and its consequences—The problem of armaments—The mistaken attitude of France—The mythical strength of Russia of the Tsars—Russian bluff.

THE Frenchman is profoundly ignorant of foreign affairs, it was said in the original introduction to this book. Convinced of his superiority, his views on people and matters beyond his frontier are only of such fragmentary sort as his newspaper gives him. Given up entirely to parochial politics which destroy the best of him, foreign affairs seem to him dry and unattractive, matters to be left to a very few solemn organs of the Paris Press.

This defect has caused the French nation many troubles. The world-war has been a series of revelations, mostly of a painful kind, for a public fed with ready-made ideas and capable of infinite self-deception. How many Americas discovered since 1914 which should have been explored before that date !

Russia was the first revelation. The ingenuousness of the French middle classes who at the beginning of

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

the war consoled themselves for the German march on Paris by thinking that the Cossacks were advancing on Berlin was enough to make one cry. What a catastrophe such incredible lack of knowledge might have precipitated! Since, the most ardent admirers of the "steam roller," invented by our English friends, have been obliged to change their tune. The Russian disaster of 1915, the failure of Tsarism, tore the scales from their eyes and showed them a Russia new, unsuspected, totally different, unfortunately, from that which one was accustomed to praise so fatuously in the panegyrics of the French dailies.

Many hard knocks had been necessary to produce this result. The mistake—a mistake all along the line—had lasted since the visit of Admiral Avellan.

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The Franco-Russian Alliance was a political precaution, nothing more, in the mind of its begetter, the Russian sovereign who prepared it. Alexander III. was too reactionary to seek for anything else in a *rapprochement* with the French Republic. His great hand in the hand of Marianne was symbolic only of a marriage of convenience with a touch of condescension on his part which a Russian journalist, influential at the time, Alexis Suvorine, director of the *Novoye Vremya*, did not let us forget.

The Grand Panjandrum was good enough to marry beneath him as a matter of necessity. The Frenchman, always an enthusiast, saw at once in this union a love match which flattered his conceit. He went off his head with joy, and his childishness, the pleasure he took in making himself cheap, gave a wrong impression to

THE FRANCO-RUSSIAN ALLIANCE

his new friends as to the respective value to the other of the two contracting parties.

The Frenchman did not realise that. He took delight in unending sentimental demonstrations, even discovered that he had certain features in common with the people of the North. Self-deceiving, intoxicated by the glitter of gala performances, he never tried to find out what there was beneath the tinsel.

The honeymoon continued for a very long time. The Germans were at Compiègne, the Russians had scarcely mobilised their troops, when the French realised that there had been room between the gala performances for practical exercise of the Alliance in a strictly realistic sense. And even then, even while they realised it, they did not put the new conception into concrete form by some energetic and salutary measure. The French had to such an extent accustomed themselves to admire open-mouthed everything which emanated from the "Tsar" that a spirit of bargaining would have seemed a profanation. This acting of the bashful lover by the Frenchman continued during the war, in spite of circumstances which suggested that it should be stopped. We see the proof of this from the Balkan policy of M. Delcassé to the silence, heavy with consequences, of M. Briand at the dangerous provocative acts of the Russian Governments.

To put the Alliance to practical use! That axiom was only discovered in 1912 and emitted during a journey to Russia of M. Poincaré, at that time Prime Minister. And it was only in 1912—at the time of that journey—that I was able to write in the *Temps*, by way of warning: "A current of ideas, on which we cannot sufficiently congratulate ourselves, in favour

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

of a more effective operation of the Alliance, seems at last to be noticeable in French governing circles. It appears to be no longer a question only of the stagnation of economic relations which M. Ribot attacked from the rostrum of the Senate in 1911, but definitely a question of our political inertia. It appears at last to be understood that the question of French financial assistance may permit us to raise others, to our benefit this time, that it has long since been time that we should decide a number of problems which affect the two countries perhaps in different ways, but which taken together amount to a question of proper return for services rendered. Is M. Poincaré coming to Russia for any other reason but that of a courtesy visit ? ”

The result was a fatuous naval convention. France, hypnotised, got no farther than the delights of naval reviews at Kronstadt and Toulon !

* * *

Since those memorable times Tsarist Russia had been clever enough—in order to help in the repression of its awakening people—to borrow from France a matter of fifteen milliards of francs. As she was not requested she did not think it necessary to vary, by the least shade, her traditional policy.

Alexander III. feared Prussia, which had become powerful during the reign of his father, who had watched the crushing of France without raising a finger in her defence. But Alexander III. was an exception in the long line of Russian Tsars who had always followed the policy of maintaining close relations with their neighbours on the West in order to be more free to attend to the question of expansion on the East.

THE FRANCO-RUSSIAN ALLIANCE

For that matter Alexander III. at the beginning of his reign, as the result of secret negotiations conducted with Berlin in 1880, by the Danzig agreement in 1881, took up again the friendly relations which had been interrupted since the conclusion of the Austro-German treaty of 1879. He even signed again in 1884 the *Dreikaiserbund*, or Alliance of the three Emperors.

But when Bismarckian policy finally scared him, the son of Alexander II. determined to "hedge" against Germany. He believed he could best do it by a *rapprochement* with France.

His successor, although faithful to his memory and anxious scrupulously to tread the path his father had marked out for him, none the less followed the ancestral tradition, under the influence of his wife and his favourites, as much as owing to the influence which William II.'s personality had upon him. He resumed with the Hohenzollerns relations which the Russian Court Gazette described as the "traditional friendship."

* * *

France, pacifically inclined, would have been only too pleased that such amicable relations should exist if Tsardom had not thought it necessary to reinforce them by an agreement which, delivering it from all anxieties in Europe, was to allow it to cherish once again its dreams of Asiatic expansion, and make it guilty of more than one imprudence with regard to the French. That was the Potsdam Agreement. From the date of signing it Russia practically ceased to interest itself in the European balance of power at a moment when anxiety for maintenance of that

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

balance of power, together with a sound internal policy, could alone have made of the Alliance a really effective instrument of peace.

First, the existence of this Russo-German agreement of November, 1910, was denied, then it was admitted, but as having no importance. Without it perhaps and with a more active policy on the part of France, supposing that the great war could not have been avoided, at least it would not have found the adversaries of Germany unprepared.

The Potsdam Agreement gave Russia a free hand in Persia and, as we have said, turned her again to the East. After the war with Japan, she had remained for a moment undecided as to her action: Europe or Asia? She might have been dissuaded from looking towards the East, for a time at least. But Paris did nothing towards that, hypnotised by the Moroccan adventure. Petrograd turned again to the Continent which always allured it, with all the more determination that it was now free from all anxiety for the freedom of its Western frontiers. The agreement between our ally and our enemy did in fact bind them, reciprocally, "not to belong to a combination of Powers formed against one or other of them."

Thus the slender agreement between France and Russia,* an agreement which was never signed by the Tsar nor by any President of the Republic, was made

* The Alliance was especially a military convention drawn up by the Chiefs of Staff of the two countries. It was due to run definitely for a certain time and was renewable with modifications at the end of such time. It was actually renewed and modified several times since the day when Generals Obrutschef and de Boisdeffre originally signed it.

THE FRANCO-RUSSIAN ALLIANCE

less valid still by the unexpected codicil, carefully thought out in Berlin, unknown at first to the French Government, and signed, this time, by both William and Nicholas. The Alliance might have become very dangerous for the French if the Russians had wished to betray them. Fortunately they preferred to keep in with both sides. As an English writer said, in 1911, in the *English Review*, "Russia could fulfil towards France all the obligations imposed by elastic agreements without failing by a hairbreadth in its friendship for Germany."

At the time when the Alliance was in full force, Russia had concentrated in Poland half her military forces. As soon as the Potsdam Agreement was concluded, Russia withdrew her troops from Polish soil. The old entrenched camps of Warsaw, Grodno, and Brest-Litovsk became again ordinary garrison towns, and after 1910 it took thirty days for a Russian army to threaten seriously the Prussian frontiers. We saw that in 1914, and if it had not been for the miracle of the Marne. . . Hard facts have destroyed the fantastic argument which consisted in saying that the withdrawal of the Russian divisions from Poland would hasten their concentration, and that as a result—there were actually found men to utter this monstrous folly!—the consequences of the Potsdam agreement strengthened the Franco-Russian Alliance. Optimism rampant!

Contrary to the allegations of certain newspapers which have taken vast trouble to charge Nicholas II. with imaginary crimes, since his fall, after having toadied to him when he was Tsar, we do not believe that there were any other Russo-German

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

agreements after the Alliance. That of Potsdam was enough.

* * *

Since France had not been able to keep Russia in Europe, it was obvious that she would not be any more successful in making that country treat the question of armaments seriously. It would in any case have been a very difficult task for us, having regard to the attitude of the French Parliament to military matters and, in the second place, to the servile habit France had contracted in its dealings with the omnipotent Tsar of that great Russia. So French capital was poured into the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway, of Vladivostok fortifications, and of those at Dalny and Port Arthur. Not once did France ask seriously that its money should be spent on strategic measures of direct interest to it. Take this instance. In July, 1913, official France, suddenly bitten with the desire to transform the formidable Russia of the legend into a real military power, sent to Petrograd the chairman of the Paris financial agents to propose to the Russian Government that it should float a loan on the French market of 2,500,000,000 francs by annual payments of 500,000,000 francs for five years, for the Russian railways. In return, the French Government asked (i) for an increase of armaments ; (ii) for the immediate construction of strategic railways ; (iii) that the Russian Government should itself request that the shares of the railways be quoted on the Paris Exchange, which would give France a sort of check to let her know what was being done with regard to the Russian promises about armaments and the construction of military railways.

THE FRANCO-RUSSIAN ALLIANCE

The President of the Council, M. Kokovtsov, said that he was willing to accept all those conditions. Having obtained that reply, Paris showed no more signs of life. It was not till August '23 following, when M. Delcassé, having completed his mission, left the Embassy at Petrograd to return finally to France, that a note was received at the Embassy requesting that the verbal agreement should be ratified in writing. The undoubted prestige of Delcassé—of which he might have made better use—would have made this belated action successful. The Chargé d'Affaires did not succeed. The Russians declared—with that charm when evading a point which was the secret of the Tsar's diplomacy—that the agreement must first of all be submitted to the Ministers concerned and that their opinions must be awaited. In September the French Ambassador went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ask how things were progressing. He was told that the Russian Government was disposed to sign the agreement. But which agreement? In the meantime, the original draft had been entirely amended by the good Russians and was now a vague statement containing no single one of the French conditions. M. Kokovtsov knew that he could obtain as much as he wanted from French bankers for purely commercial railways without subscribing to the demands of French statesmen.

At that time I tried to put the matter clearly before the French public. Some of my despatches to the *Temps* managed to excite both M. Kokovtsov and the French Embassy. Both said to me: "Be good enough to stop. You will annoy Germany by speaking of strategic lines on her frontier."

Russia, faithful to her traditional friendship, thought

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

it her duty to watch without raising a finger her ingenuous neighbour's concentration of troops at her very gates. It would never do to offend them. Everything was conceivable except a quarrel with Prussia, whose pardon Russia seemed to be asking because of her politeness to France when she wanted money from her.*

* * *

Quarrel with Germany ! Why, M. Sazonof himself, a determined upholder of the Franco-Russian Alliance, based his policy quite as much on friendship with Berlin !

The German Government, it will be remembered, secured a great diplomatic success in the East when the Sultan asked it to send a German military mission. This was done at once, with General Liman von Sanders in charge. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, although it felt this direct blow at Russia, which showed that William II. might realise on Germany's behalf the dream of Catherine the Great, nevertheless hushed up the matter, lest it should become embittered by a rattling of swords in the Russian Press. By some

* The money obtained from Paris was mainly used for paying for orders given to Berlin. We have said that a naval convention with France was arranged, but the construction of Russian ships of war was entrusted to German firms which received, in 1913, 69 million roubles' worth of State orders, while France—coming after England—only received 59 millions worth.

At the beginning of 1914, while France had given to Petrograd its engineers and its secrets for the construction of the Russian artillery, Krupp would have become a shareholder to a considerable amount in the Putilof works but for the indignant protests made just in time to prevent it.

THE FRANCO-RUSSIAN ALLIANCE

telegraphic despatches to Paris and some articles in Petrograd I thought it my duty to sound an alarm on a matter which Russian diplomacy was trying to conceal. I thought both countries should know how serious were both the German manœuvre and the attitude of Russian officials.

M. Sazonof, inspired by a sincere desire for peace but also quite as much by the desire not to engage in a duel with the "military instructor" of his country and the "friend" of the country, passed suddenly from violent protest to a surprising timidity as soon as it became necessary to put principles into action. His conversations and the instructions he gave his agents were marked by the most extraordinary somersaults. In face of this spirit of recantation I made my Press campaign much stronger. M. Sazonof, much annoyed, asked me to stop it. I did nothing of the sort. It was then the Minister for Foreign Affairs voiced the predominant thought of his Government at the time by saying to me, "Whatever you may do, Sir, you will not get us to quarrel with Germany!"

Well, Germany in 1914 took upon herself to do what M. Sazonof so dreaded. *Tant mieux!* What, indeed, would have happened if France had been compelled to be the first to draw the sword? Russia had yielded over a matter most closely affecting her pride, that of Constantinople. Would she have stood by France, ready for every sacrifice, if it had been a question of "our Moroccan sands"?

Events have made that question unnecessary. But they are there, too, to prove that Russia, which had been deflected partly from European ambitions by the skill of our enemies, as well as weakened

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

internally by their minions, was in no way ready to undertake a European war, either in proportion to its real means or to the extent of the power which Frenchmen quite gratuitously attributed to it.

* * *

How gratuitously indeed ! But the optimism of my compatriots was indestructible. The Russian Colossus impressed them by his size. No one would try to find out of what substance he was made. Yet that Colossus stood on a rotten base weakened by the incompetence of the governors and the growing discontent of the governed, but most people were unaware of it, and the few who knew considered such internal matters concerned Russia alone.

Foreigners, even if those foreigners were allies, consequently partners and creditors into the bargain, had no right to interfere in Russian life. It was Frenchmen who voiced these opinions. The Polish question was an internal matter concerning Petrograd alone. Trespassers would be prosecuted. The conversations with Berlin again were a strictly Russian matter. The apathy, the folly, or the treachery of Ministers of the Tsar, these matters again concerned Russia only.

In the month of November, 1916, I wrote in a Swiss paper—French papers being less able than ever to tell the truth—" Believe us, M. Briand, there are certain internal Russian matters in which it is not your right but your duty to interfere. If this ' realistic ' policy had been adopted before the war you would not have seen such a man as Sukhomlinof as Minister of War, traitor to his country, you would not have heard the

THE FRANCO-RUSSIAN ALLIANCE

gratuitous affirmations of that man that the Russian arsenals were overflowing with munitions when three months later it was necessary to confess that all the ammunition wagons were empty. You would not have witnessed the astonishment of M. Albert Thomas at the disparity between the enormous potentialities of Russia and her actual manufacture of munitions, the bewilderment of French technical missions in Russia at the monstrous contrast between the French or English patriotic straining and the apathy or corruptness of certain Russian Departments. You would not then have seen treachery throned and crowned in your Ally's country !

“ Help Russia, M. Briand, to get rid of what the Russians themselves call ‘ internal enemies.’ You will do it a signal favour. You have a perfect right to do so, just as the Tsar had thought it his right—as well he might—to interfere in your affairs when he told M. de Gontaud-Biron in audience some time before the war that he was sorry the French had passed the law fixing two years as the period of military service.

“ When you take in Russia, without their bad manners and with the tact they lacked, the place the Germans took without any right to it, be assured that the only people who will lose by it will be those Germans. The Russian nation will be infinitely grateful to you for doing so, and the Russian, M. Briand, is of infinitely more account than the declared enemies of France in Russia whose susceptibilities your Censors are so anxious to spare. May you realise it before long so that we may frankly tell our compatriots what is happening in the land of that Ally for whom, after all, they went to war. Has not the hour come when they

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

should know? They could but benefit by it, they and those who count for something in Russia, those who are the faithful expression of the thoughts and aspirations of the whole Russian people, Russia awakening, Russia of to-morrow."

It seems that I was right, as things have turned out, but whether from Switzerland or France, such appeals were but the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

France had a peculiar conception of the Alliance, due from the first to our quaint attitude: a little boy looking at the Russian giant. Like poor relations we had to be satisfied with what we got.

Our Ambassadors, with the example of M. Bompard before them, who had been recalled for having tried to act differently, followed the safe practice of nodding assent to all the demands of the Russian Foreign Office.

It has not been considered necessary to give in this book an outline of Franco-Russian diplomatic collaboration during the last few years. It will be sufficient to remember that in our Balkan policy we did no more than conform strictly to the desires of Petrograd. We followed M. Sazonof in all that excellent and friendly Minister's whimsies, for he was so astonishingly a creature of impulse that one never knew what he would do next. The late M. Georges Louis, to whom we must give his due as the one Ambassador beside M. Bompard to act independently of Russian Governments, was also brutally recalled. His crime had been to put the case of France. "He was an Ambassador of Austria," said M. Sazonof triumphantly to me, on the morrow of the recall. The punitive measure which consisted in the transfer of French representatives seemed quite natural to the

THE FRANCO-RUSSIAN ALLIANCE

Russian Foreign Office. "I will treat you as I did M. Bompard," said M. Sazonof to me, one day that he had to complain of my following in those two Ambassadors' footsteps. Judge of the effect such measures had upon French Ambassadors in Russia, when the Quai d'Orsay abetted the Russians.

As for our military attachés, they would have considered it the extremity of bad form to inquire personally into the veracity of a Sukhomlinof's statements, yet he was a man every well-informed person knew to be both incompetent and dishonest.

* * *

It was impossible to swim against the current, when French newspapers at every possible opportunity wrote fatuously that the "innumerable mujik," "the gigantic forest of Russian bayonets," constituted the greatest force in Europe! How they harped on that belief! How every ignoramus boasted of that prodigious Russia!

The power of Russia was neither more nor less than a hypnosis and even sheer bluff. The French Press invented it and exaggerated it to such an extent that the Russians themselves became bashful. One Parisian paper went so far that—three months before the war—M. Sazonof, on the publication of a series of articles which left French residents in Russia in doubt whether they should laugh or cry, exclaimed "They are advertising us in a way that would be indecent for a patent tooth-powder!"

By constantly speaking of that colossal power which did not exist in Tsarist Russia, French papers ended by offending serious people in the Empire.

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

The *Retch*, scarcely a week before Germany's declaration of war, wrote as a comment on the lucubrations of French reporters who had come with the President of the Republic and were wildly rattling the *Russian* sabre: "Does France only lend us her milliards in order to dispose of the bones of our Grenadiers?" How serious would such a liberal state of mind have been, taken in conjunction with the Germanophile sentiments of the reactionaries, if we had not gone to war for a Slav ideal, and as the faithful henchman of Russia! The Serbian affair and its consequences fortunately undeceived those Russians who had been persuaded by the boastings of irresponsible fools that if fire broke out some day in Europe, it would be France that would light it.

CHAPTER II

FRANCE AND THE RUSSIAN NATION

The ignorance of Russia and its consequences—The Government was not the nation—The cry of the Russian people—A new definition of the Franco-Russian Alliance—The paradoxical position of France and Russia yesterday and to-day.

It has already been said in the course of this book that France remained as profoundly ignorant of Russia after the signing of the treaties as she had been in the days when the great Slav country was awakening from the darkness to become a semi-European nation.

We repeat this advisedly, for that ignorance of our Ally was the source of all the French disappointments, beginning with the Russian impotence at the beginning of the war, to continue with the Revolution totally unexpected by the French public, and to end with the very disquieting turn that Revolution is taking for the Allies.

If we had known Russia as the Germans knew it we could have foreseen and warded off the blows that have been dealt us. But it has been seen how ignorant France was kept about her "friend." Considerations of alliance which made us suppress the truth, a docile

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVs

Press of which M. Isvolsky boasted, as well he might, that he held it in the hollow of his hand, a tendency too marked in our country to take no interest in anything that was happening beyond our frontiers, all these combined to leave French and Russians altogether ignorant of one another. The alliance which joined them was not at all, either in political or in economic matters, a medium for the exchange of opinions on the principle of *quid pro quo* between the two nations. To the last day of the last Romanof it remained a sort of secret of ministerial offices, a sort of talky-talky between the heads of the Governments.

* * *

The Government of the Tsar—encouraged by the very behaviour of the leaders of French opinion—never failed to let those men understand that, whatever its follies might be, even to the extent of affecting the force of the pact concluded, Revolutionary France would not be allowed to teach the men of Nicholas II. For that matter, Paris obediently suppressed of its own accord any effort of that kind by its servants.

The powers of observation of our representatives were only exercised on a Court which hypnotised the fiercest of our Republicans. The country was negligible, the Russian people did not count, the Courtiers were to be cultivated.

“What means,” asked the *Temps* of March 27, 1917, “had the men of the Duma, now politically important, of getting into touch with certain diplomats? What steps had been taken to ensure real contact with those who represented the future?”

I can reply to that. It was not till 1916 that

FRANCE AND THE RUSSIAN NATION

M. Miliukof was introduced by me into the French Embassy, and then only unofficially and with every possible precaution lest someone from the Court should see him.

The diplomacy of the French Republic never considered in Russia that it was speaking in the name of a democracy, and when it did remember it was only to apologise for it. Thus the Russian police had arrested as he crossed the frontier and had deported to Siberia the Revolutionary Burtsef, who had returned to Russia at the outbreak of war on the strength of the appeals for a sacred union made by those in power at Petrograd. The French Socialists became indignant and asked their comrades in the Viviani Cabinet to make known their feelings to the Russian Ministers.

French diplomacy was compelled to deliver the message. M. Paleologue, French Ambassador from 1914 to 1917, much disliking the task, was careful to gild the pill by a number of oratorical explanations. But note the result, a proof of the influence we might have exercised in Russia : Burtsef was brought back to Russia in Europe and set free !

Since 1905, the year in which M. Ribot laid the foundations of a political accord which might have borne good fruit, official France had nothing but smiles and praise for the Ministers of the Emperor, knowing none and desiring to deal with none but the master and his flunkies, without troubling at all about the Russian nation, that great dumb creature hidden by the puppets who pretended that they represented it. The French Foreign Office made a mistake about the initial formula of the Alliance. The public was allowed to believe it was a closer understanding between two peoples, but

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

the fact was, France was becoming the humble servant of the Tsar's personal clique. The French took for Russia what was in reality the worst expression of that country.

That optical illusion is responsible for all the trouble. The real Russia has shaken off Tsarism and its satellites. Can we blame her if to-day she seems to have little care for those who too exclusively attached themselves to the fortunes of her tyrant ?

It is only a short time since the moderate Russian Liberals, watching the approach of the Revolutionary wave which would one day sweep them too away, desperately appealed to French enlightened opinion to exercise the beneficial and especially effective pressure which it had the power and the right to exercise on the ruling set in Petrograd. Those appeals never passed our frontier. I heard the last, interpreted in so expressive a form on the occasion of the visit to Russia of Messrs. Viviani and Thomas. The Cadet deputy, M. Maklakof, unexpectedly rose to speak, thus breaking away from the official programme. He said, speaking to the two French Ministers (to the utter amazement of Stürmer, who was also there, but as if under protest) :

“ It is not to the France we admired yesterday that we turn, Gentlemen, nor is it to the France of to-day before which we make respectful obeisance, but it is to the France of to-morrow, to the free and strong France of after the war, that we make our most urgent appeal. . . .” That speech was not understood in France ; besides the Republican Censorship had suppressed all passages in it which appeared to be seditious.

Russia had not been heard, and with the affection

FRANCE AND THE RUSSIAN NATION

she felt for the motherland of men like Diderot, Voltaire and Mirabeau was mingled a certain bitterness towards a country which she thought to be forgetful of its traditions, but which in fact scarcely suspected how Russia groaned under her chains.

Not heeding the cries of a whole nation, France out of her savings helped to make those chains more heavy by sending liberally to Petrograd the loans which went to fill the Exchequer of Autocracy, to help it keep its grip. In that way French democracy became not only the friend but also the support, by its gold coins and without personal profit, of Russian despotism. Loan followed loan without a single desideratum being included in the terms. The Germans, without advancing to their neighbours any of the milliards we so extravagantly poured into their laps, on more than one occasion formulated something more than a request. It is true that in Berlin they went in for politics. "You French go in for nothing but finance" said to us one day, at his house on Elagin Island, the President of the Council at the time, M. Kokovtsov.

And because we concerned ourselves with nothing but finance in Russia, at the expense of a nation, we saw that nation reveal itself in March, 1917, practically a stranger to us, practically unaware, in its turn, of our existence, not realising that we fought the war in a common cause or that there were what we French believed to be duties common to us both. The fact is—we must have the courage to say it so that we may turn over a new leaf—the Franco-Russian Alliance, as it was understood and practised under the Tsarist Government, was a fraud, a painful political

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

joke, for which the French middle classes put up all the money, and of which the Russian nation has suffered all the terrible consequences.

* * *

Nothing, neither fine speeches, nor official utterances, nor all that hollow rhetoric which constitutes the literature of the Alliance, will exonerate France from having occupied in Russia under the old *régime* the falsest of false positions.

The Russian Conservatives never had for France anything but the most open dislike, since the Republic was in their minds a focus of ideas subversive of and pernicious to the state of affairs they defended.

The Liberals, on their side, although they professed sincere good will towards the country of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, proved to be singularly bitter towards the benevolent bankers of the hated *régime*. *Thus caught between two fires France was loved by neither one party nor by the other.*

"Your Republicanism is for home consumption," said the Russians of the Left, "and your people are doing us a singular disservice. Your Press approves of it, and those who represent you would not dream of altering things in any way. Are you afraid of the 'colonel's' frown, or do you think you would be hurting the dignity of the Russian Colossus with its cardboard thunderbolts if you tried by any other attitude to help it break free from its bonds?" And others more passionate declared that our one anxiety was to keep in with the autocrat in order to make use of his *mujiks*.

* * *

"Russia for me is only a diplomatic and military

FRANCE AND THE RUSSIAN NATION

entity, and the fate of its 180 million mujiks does not interest me." So said to me just before the war a French politician who had become Ambassador at Petrograd. What is one to say of such a remark? Was not that indifference to the fate of the mujik—apart from its lack of humane feeling—a deplorable political heresy? Besides the fact that Russia, in the position due to its internal policy—a position which made it fear all foreign complications which might be propitious to the Revolution which had been in the air since 1905—was scarcely a diplomatic "entity," was there not the very danger of that threatening Revolution? We were blind to that. And if we had seen the possibility we should have taken refuge behind the excuse that we must not meddle with internal affairs. Yet I may say with a full knowledge of the conditions that intervention on our part, in order to put a stop to the foolery of the governing elements, would have been altogether successful. The Tsarist Government was extremely sensitive to foreign opinion. By such intervention we should have won the affection of those whom our silence, our exaggerated civility to Nicholas II., had alienated. And they were those who to-day are Russia.

Moreover, and I stress this, if we had taken advantage of our rights as partners, if we had fulfilled what was for us a duty by representing to the last Tsar the necessity for him, for his country, for us too, to listen at last to the voice of his people by calling to power men who enjoyed the confidence of the whole nation—as he did, but too late, decide to do—we should have postponed the Revolutionary explosion to the time which all Russians had in their minds, that is, the end of the war. I believe this firmly,

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOFFS

and M. Paleologue, if he remembers the conversation he had with M. Miliukof one evening, at a party, could confirm it.

Timid people will, of course, argue that we could not well interfere in Russia, that it was very difficult to express wishes to the Ministers of the Allied Sovereign. Acting on this theory to absurd extremes, we suffered everything, we even went so far as to allow ourselves to be vilified by the Russian official Government organs in the very thick of the war, without uttering a protest, before Verdun had shown what the French Army was. "The French captured a tree yesterday," wrote, in substance, the *Russky Invalid*, the official military paper.

But what we did not dare to do, others dared. What we did not say to the Tsar, England, a new Ally, did say. And while we suffered in silence the attacks of a certain section of the Russian Press, Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador—who a little later was to express to the Emperor the annoyance felt by England at the operations of the favourites of Tsarkoyë-Selo—insisted that a notorious reactionary, the lawyer Bulatsel, should personally apologise, at the Embassy itself, for an article in which the author had given expression to the Anglophobia of the Germanophiles in power.

If France had had the courage to act thus from the moment of the Potsdam Agreement, or rather if public opinion had realised its duty, how many misfortunes we might have avoided. We should, at the very least, have caused men to overlook the anachronism which the Alliance constituted, and we should have been forgiven by the real Russia, now confronting us, for

FRANCE AND THE RUSSIAN NATION

the monstrosity of that alliance with its oppressors which was politically necessary.

* * *

Because of the excesses of extremists who seized some part of the power in Petrograd, going beyond the intentions of such prudent evolutionists as Messrs. Miliukof, Guthkof, Rodzianko and their friends, we came to the paradoxical position of regretting the Russian Revolution, of execrating Socialists upon whom every epithet may be heaped, but whom we have no right to consider as traitors. In the light of the facts set forth in this chapter, it is easy to understand why the advanced parties, in the theories enunciated by them, to the legitimate horror of Frenchmen, have been able so little to care what the application of those theories might mean to us. "Did you ever bother about us?" is what the Russian Socialists will say to you.

Besides, going back to first causes, are the agitators of Petrograd alone responsible for the state of anarchy raging in Russia? It is the peculiar attribute of an autocratic *régime* to destroy in the individual the sense of his duties and of his responsibilities. An evolutionary stage was necessary. The true friends of Russia might have prepared it.

M. Albert Thomas said one day, "I abominate secret diplomacy. The truth must be known and democracy demands that it be known by all."

Well, France never followed any but a secret diplomacy in Russia. The Russian nation tore down the veil to its own benefit.

CONCLUSION

SHORT-SIGHTED people, and there are many of them, have thought of nothing but the first consequences of the historic event that has happened in Russia, that is, the more or less prolonged stoppage of military operations.

It is wise to avoid prophecy, but judging merely by facts, are there not consequences of the Russian Revolution which should raise our minds to loftier views, taking them a little from immediate pre-occupations to direct them to a juster appreciation of the Russian social upheaval in all its bearings?

Can we so insult young Russia by regretting the form of government she has just crushed? The Allies went to war as a Crusade for the liberty of nations. Well, the hundred and four nationalities of that complicated chess-board, which was the Russia of the Tsars, have just been set free to develop along their own lines.

Only a few days were necessary to make of medieval Russia a modern State where the noblest human aspirations can be realised freely, where that Russian soul, so misunderstood by our West, will be able to display all its treasures of goodness and nobility. One week . . . and to an Era of oppression and irresponsible

CONCLUSION

government succeeded an Era of pure democracy in that most democratic of all nations.

Have we not heard a voice of passionate enthusiasm crying that in the whole of Europe the only serfs are those of Germany, since Russia was now free? How can we fail to be glad? Have not the Allies been freed of the dead weight they dragged behind them since 1914? The Russian Revolution has delivered us from the humiliation of being bound to a tyranny. It deprives George Brandès of the right of denying to us the title of champions of civilisation. And with him, how many neutrals, sincere admirers of France the liberator, of free Britain, could not make up their minds, owing to the presence of the Russian bully by our side, to give us all their sympathy! In the Balkans, Tsarism inspired only a limited confidence. In Europe, many disliked the idea of a Muscovite police succeeding the Sultan's police at Constantinople. Too much was made of the military advantage Tsarist Russia gave us, too little of the moral wrong she did us.

The Germans, taking advantage for their own ends of the Russian trickery with regard to the Poles, tried to rally them to their side. It was known that a new manoeuvre had been prepared by them—they were getting ready to use the Jewish question to checkmate the Jewish Americans and to win over, possibly, those of Russia. Germany was to proclaim herself the champion of the Jews against France and England.

Nothing of that has survived. Prejudices and trickery fall with the fallen Tsar. Free Russia, the Czech Professor Massaryk has said, is a terrible blow at Prussianism. The Russians have won a formidable

THE LAST OF THE ROMANOVS

victory for us. One must not deny that, because of the excesses of a few extremists. Let us not revile the Russian Revolution; that would add to the wrongs we have already done to Russia.

For one who has lived through many of the tragic hours of the last reign, in the intimacy of the people as well as in the wake of the great, it would be a crime against humanity not to rejoice greatly at what has happened.

No, we give thanks for this dispensation with all our heart and all our mind. Because we brand with unutterable contempt the excesses of pseudo-Russians in the pay of Prussia, we are not behindhand in our praise of a new democracy striving magnificently to realise in its effort for peace the very ideals of our own Revolution.

THE END.

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