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LIFE AND TIMES

OF

ALEXANDER I.

EMPEROR OF ALL THE RUSSIAS.

BY

C. JOYNEVILLE.

"My rival in glory and power."—NAPOLEON, *log.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

INTRODUCTION.

Ancestors of the Imperial House of Romanof, 1. Conjugal Unhappiness of Peter and Catherine, 4. Opposition to Peter's Accession, 6. Catherine's Coronation, 7. Pugachef's Insurrection, 8.

CHAPTER I.

THE FATHER AND MOTHER OF ALEXANDER.

The Childhood of Paul, 9. His Treatment by Catherine, 10. Inoculation of the Court by Dr. Dimsdale, 10. Paul's Tutors, 11. Catherine's Views as to Paul's Education, 11. Paul's First Marriage, 11. Death of the Grand Duchess Natalia, 12. Paul's violent Grief, 12. His temporary Loss of Reason, 13. Second Marriage of Paul, 17. State of Poland, 18. Condition of the Poles, 19. John Sobieski, 21. Treaty between Catherine and Frederick the Great, 23.

CHAPTER II.

ALEXANDER'S EDUCATION AND MARRIAGE.

Character and Conduct of the Grand Duchess, 26. Birth and Baptism of Alexander, 26. Inundation of St. Petersburg, 27. Rejoicings on Account of the Birth of a Prince, 28. Sir J. Harris's Interview with the Empress, 29. Letter of George III. to the Empress, 30. Visit of the Grand Duke and Duchess to Louis XVI.,

31. Education of Alexander and Constantine, 35. Paul Banished to the Castle of Gateschina, 41. He is ordered to join the Russian Army in Finland, 43. Catherine's Visit to Cherson, 45. The French Revolution, 46. Gaiety and Dissipation of the Court, 48. Insurrection at Cracow, 54. Alexander's Marriage, 56. Illness of Alexander, 60. Extreme Opinions of the Grand Duke, 68. Polish Views as to the Conduct of Prince Adam Czartoriski, 70.

CHAPTER III.

PAUL'S REIGN.

Expedition against Persia, 71. Illness of Catherine, 74. Her Death, 78. Proclamation of Paul, 78. Funeral of Catherine, 81. Paul's Retrenchments, 85. Paul's Coronation at Moscow, 89. Paul's Sympathy with the French Royalists, 95. Treaty of Alliance with Great Britain, 96. Field-Marshal Suvorov recalled from Exile, 99. His Victories over the French in Lombardy and Piedmont, 101. Capture of Schorldam and Bergen, 106. Dismissal of Alexander from the Governorship of St. Petersburg, 111. Rostopchine's Friendship for the Emperor, 112. Increasing Irritability of Paul's Temper, 115. Conspiracy for placing him under Restraint, 115.

CHAPTER IV.

ALEXANDER'S ACCESSION.

Republican Feeling in Italy, 120. Paul's Proposal for a Tournament of the Sovereigns of Europe, 124. Conduct of the Legitimists in St. Petersburg, 126. Defeats of Austria at Marengo and Hohenlinden, 129. Passage of the Alps by the French Army, 129. Estrangement between Russia and Great Britain, 131. Embargo on English Ships in Russian Ports, 132. Treaty between Russia and Denmark, 133. Louis XVIII. ordered to leave Russia, 135. Building of St. Michael's Palace, 136. Conspiracy against Paul, 137. Failure of a Plan to Assassinate him, 140. Paul's Suspicion of Alexander, 141. Arrest of the Princes ordered, 142. Assassination of Paul, 147. Alarm and Indignation of the Empress, 148. Lying in State of the Body of Paul, 151. Proclamation by Alexander, 155. Abolition of the Secret Police, 160.

CHAPTER V.

ALEXANDER'S FIRST ACTS.

Feelings excited by the News of Paul's Death in the European Courts, 161. Napoleon's Mortification at the Intelligence, 162. The Empress-Dowager and her Party aid Napoleon's Schemes of Ambition, 164. Alexander's Attitude towards Napoleon, 166. Alexander visits all Classes of his Subjects, 168. His Relations with England, 169. Description of Alexander's Personal Appearance, 171. Publication of Important Ukazes, 172. Treaty of Peace between France and Russia, 172. Alexander's Coronation, 174. A French Female Spy detected and expelled, 177. Princess Dashkov appointed Lady-in-waiting to the Empress, 178. Enfranchisement of the Serfs, 181. The Princess Galitzin appeals to Alexander to protect her Husband from his Creditors, 183. Commission appointed to draw up a New Code of Laws, 184. Luxury and Wealth of the Russian Nobles, 185. Annexation of Georgia, 188. The Widow of the last Georgian Czar, 189. Russian Boundary extended beyond the Caucasus, 190.

CHAPTER VI.

THE IMPERIAL FAMILY.

Desertion of St. Michael's Palace, 191. Death of Alexander's Eldest Sister, 192. Marriage of the Grand Duchess Mary, 192. Education and Training of Nicholas and Michael, 194. Character of Constantine, 195. His Personal Appearance, 197. Splendour of the Imperial Fêtes, 200. Annual Appropriation to effect the Emancipation of the Serfs, 201. Personal Adventures of Alexander, 203. His Visit to Lithuania and the Polish Provinces, 204. Meeting of the King and Queen of Prussia with Alexander, 206. Departure of the First Two Russian Vessels on a Voyage Round the World, 207. Alexander's Educational Projects, 209. Reorganization of the Senate, 213. Coolness between Russia and Sweden, 215. Peace of Amiens signed between England and France, 218. Coronation of Napoleon, 221. Recommencement of Hostilities between England and France, 223. Offer of Mediation by Alexander, 225. Napoleon's Design to Conquer England, 230. End of the Russian Mediation, 231. Napoleon's System of Espionage throughout the Continent, 234.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CAMPAIGN OF AUSTERLITZ.

Threatening Aspect of the Continent, 236. Execution of the Duc d'Enghien, 237. War Declared between Sweden and Prussia, 245. Russian Squadron sent to assist the English on the Coast of Naples, 247. Treaty between England and Russia, 249. Cruelties and Depredations of the French in Germany, 251. Inexperience in Military Tactics of Russian Commanders, 254. General Mack Surrounded in the Fortress of Ulm, 259. Arrival of the First Russian Army in Moravia, 260. Capture of Vienna, 262. Alexander's Gallantry at Wischau, 265. Battle between the Russian, Austrian, and French Armies, 272. Destruction of the Imperial Guard, 274. Retreat of the Russian Infantry, 275. Meeting of the Emperor Francis with Napoleon, 276. Armistice Concluded, 277. False Bulletin published by Napoleon, 278. Death of William Pitt, 292. Refusal of Russia to join in the Peace of Presburg, 297. Deposition of the Bourbon Dynasty in Naples, 298. Peace Negotiations between France and Russia, 299. Dissolution of the German Empire, 301. Rejection of the Treaty Signed by D'Oubril, 301. Marriage of the King of Holland, 303. Character of Frederick William III. of Prussia, 305. Battles of Jena and Auerstadt, 309. Napoleon's Arrival at Potsdam, 310. Napoleon's Strictures on the Queen of Prussia, 311.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CAMPAIGN OF EYLAU AND FRIEDLAND.

General Michelsen sent to occupy Moldavia and Wallachia, 313. War declared between Turkey and Russia, 314. Jealousy of the Austrians, 315. Reorganization of the Russian Army, 316. Application to the British Government for a Loan by Alexander, 320. Ottoman Army crosses the Danube, 322. Russia's Second Campaign against France, 323. Disorder in the Russian Army, 327. Marshal Kamenski's Insanity, 328. Defeats sustained by the French, 328. Action at Seeberg, 331. March of the French Army from Warsaw, 332. Defeat of the French by Benningsen at Eylau, 333. Misrepresentations of Napoleon, 335. Heavy Losses of the French, 337. Medical Staff and Arrangements for the Wounded in the Russian and French Armies, 343. Separate

Peace with Russia proposed, 344. Battle of Ostrolenka, 345. General Bertrand sent to propose an Armistice, 347. Alexander's Interview at Memel with the Sovereigns of Prussia, 348. Treaty signed at Barstenstein, 349. Desertion of the Poles, 350. Illness of Benningsen and Platof, 351. Defeat of Ney at Guttstadt, 353. Russian and French Losses, 355. Armistice suggested by Benningsen, 357. Meeting of Alexander and Napoleon, 359. Napoleon's Opinion of the Russian Troops, 367. Napoleon's Account of the Interview with Alexander, 368. Napoleon's Precautions against Poison, 371. Death of the Sultan Selim, 377. Capture of Anapa, 378. Treaty of Tilsit, 379. Distrust of Russia by the British Government, 383. Alexander's Departure from Tilsit, 385. Napoleon's Demands from the King of Prussia, 386. Rapacity of the French Marshals, 386. The Peace of Tilsit, 390.



LIFE AND TIMES
OF
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EMPEROR OF ALL THE RUSSIAS.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the thirteenth century the ancestors of the Imperial House of Romanof were chiefs and hereditary high priests at the altars dedicated to the sun in Lithuania. The religious zeal of the Teutonic knights drove them to Moscow, where they embraced Christianity, and were enrolled among the nobles for their services in the wars with the Monguls, who oppressed Russia during 300 years. They shared in the vicissitudes of the empire, at one time marrying daughters of the royal family, and giving a wife to Ivan IV.; at another being almost exterminated by torture, execution, and exile. But after years of revolution and civil war Michael Romanof* was chosen by a general election, preceded by three days of fasting and prayer, to fill the vacant throne (1613). His father, the Patriarch of Moscow, lingered in a Polish dungeon, Moscow lay in ashes, and the Poles, Swedes, and Crimean Tartars had partitioned Russia, when this youth of fifteen was brought out of a convent to expel the invaders, and restore the honour and fortunes of the empire.

The Romanofs, through female alliances, could boast of a descent from the Emperor Constantine Monomachus and the Paleologi, from Zingis Khan, from Rurik, the earliest Slavonic princes of Novgorod, and from the last of the Anglo-Saxon kings. The first emperors of this dynasty married Russian

* His mother was a daughter of Ivan IV., says the Austrian Secretary at Moscow in 1698. His father was appointed to the Patriarchate in 1618.

wives, but united with the royal line of Denmark and the Swedish House of Vasa in the person of Peter III., a prince who was the grandson of Peter the Great and the grandfather of Alexander I.

The long war between Peter the Great and Charles XII. not only ended in the close alliance of Sweden and Russia, but after their death Charles's nephew and intended successor married the daughter and intended heir of Peter the Great. When the bi-centenary of Peter's birth was celebrated in 1872, the Swedish ambassador absented himself from the ceremony, which was attended by the rest of the diplomatists in St. Petersburg. He may not have remembered that in Peter's descendant was united the nearest collateral descendant of his antagonist; for Charles's family—the House of Vasa—are replaced by aliens on the throne of Sweden, and the country which enjoyed an ephemeral distinction from their exploits has now entirely cast them off.

The nephew of Charles XII., the Duke of Holstein, was offered an asylum in Russia when deprived of his throne in Sweden, but soon displeased his protector by his passion for drill and military manœuvres, a taste inherited by his son. With his wife, Anna Petrovna, a clever and handsome woman, he was obliged to quit Russia in 1728, that their first child might not be born in the empire and increase the rival heirs to the throne. The Duchess died of consumption, brought on by grief and disappointment, at the age of twenty-one, two months after giving birth to the unfortunate Peter III., and was taken to St. Petersburg for interment. Her husband, who sank early into a state bordering on imbecility, survived her only ten years; his cousin Adolphus, the Bishop of Lubeck, taking charge of his orphan son till the Empress Elizabeth of Russia sent to demand him from his guardian, and appointed him her own heir. The youngest daughter of Peter the Great had been raised to the Imperial dignity in the place of her infant cousin, Ivan VI., consigned with his parents* to a prison; but desiring partially to carry out her father's intention of leaving his crown to his eldest daughter, she resolved never to form a public marriage, but to adopt that deceased sister's son as her successor. When eleven years

* See Chap. I., Vol. ii.

old he was given up to Russia, and accompanied his aunt to her coronation in Moscow.

The sister of the Prince Bishop of Lubbeck was married to Prince Christian of Anhalt Zerbst, a general in the service of Prussia, and a member of an ancient Slavonic family. Their daughter, Sophia Frederica Wilhelmina, was several years older* than young Peter, and had no fortune, but was selected by the Empress Elizabeth as a suitable bride for the heir of Russia. She went to St. Petersburg for the betrothal, and three years was deducted from her age in the baptismal register when she was received into the orthodox Greek Church with the name of Catherine. Her father, a strict Lutheran, objected to her change of faith, but his wife wrote to him that the Greek Church was exactly like the Lutheran in doctrine, and that this rebaptism in reality only answered to the Protestant rite of confirmation.

As Peter III. is described almost exclusively by the partisans of his wife, or those who received their information from that source, little credit can be given to witnesses who had only too much reason to place his character in the worst light, as an excuse for the tragedy which cut short his reign and life. For thirty-five years after his death his name was forbidden throughout Russia, and all memorials of him carefully suppressed. His portraits represent him as a handsome youth, with fair hair and complexion, up to seventeen, when he was attacked with malignant small-pox, and for three weeks hung between life and death. He grew considerably during his illness, and was of an unusual height, but stooped, and his features were so disfigured that his intended bride nearly fainted when next they met. But to use her own words, though indifferent to the Grand Duke, she was not indifferent to the crown of Russia; and the marriage was solemnized August 21st, 1745.

When Peter was twelve years old an embassy arrived from Sweden to offer him the crown on the death of his great-uncle, Frederick I. The Empress refused it, as an existing treaty provided that Sweden and Russia should not be united; but she advised the Swedes to confer it on the Prince Bishop of Lubeck, whose son, Charles XIII., was the last sovereign of the

* Plato Zoubof.

old native dynasty. Peter's own preference lay with Sweden, for he was prouder of being the great-nephew of Charles XII. than the grandson of Peter the Great, and his ambition was to serve under the most noted military hero of his time—the King of Prussia. When the Seven Years' War broke out, and Elizabeth joined the league against Frederick, he made no secret of his hopes that the victory might lie with Prussia, and even obtained the plans of the campaign matured in the Russian cabinet and sent them over to the enemy. The Russian generals were often at a loss to know how far to proceed when they heard of the serious illness of the Empress, and knew the contrary disposition of her heir.

Eight years of conjugal unhappiness followed Peter and Catherine's marriage, and then a temporary reconciliation, and on October 1st, 1754, she gave birth to a son, afterwards the Emperor Paul. The Empress was delighted. She proclaimed a universal amnesty, and took immediate possession of the child, whose own mother was only permitted to see him at very rare intervals as long as Elizabeth lived. A daughter, called Anna Petrovna, born in 1758, but who died when three years old, was also adopted by the Empress; and her minister, Bestujef, seeing her affection for these infants, urged her to name Paul as her successor in place of his father, and to give himself the post of regent. But on her deathbed she was reconciled to Peter and his wife, and bade them farewell with great tenderness, recommending to the first the welfare of his subjects, to live on good terms with his wife, and to seek to make himself beloved, "and finished by enlarging much on her love for the young Duke Paul, saying to the father that she asked him as the most lively and surest mark of his gratitude to her to cherish his child." She died on Christmas-day, o.s. 1761.*

According to the Princess Dashkov, Catherine's intimate friend, they had plotted the downfall of Peter III. before he began to reign. He soon made himself unpopular by neglecting the national customs, and by his infatuated admiration for the King of Prussia. The Russian arms were victorious in the two last campaigns, Frederick was defeated in a decisive battle, Berlin was threatened, and East Pomerania annexed to

* Despatches from the French and English ambassadors, 1761.

Russia. But now all was changed, and Peter's brief reign had a material effect on the future of Europe. He reclothed and restored the Prussian prisoners, recalling all the Russian officials from the conquered province. He released its inhabitants from the oath they had taken to the late Empress and her heir, and even sent 15,000 of his own troops to assist Frederick against his other enemies, which timely aid completely turned the fortunes of the war. Yet, on the other hand, he passed more than one measure entitling him to the gratitude of his people. He exempted the nobility from corporal punishment, and gave them permission to travel abroad when and where they chose; he seemed anxious to perform his duties as a sovereign, for he often rose at two in the morning to give an early audience to his ministers, though he seldom retired to rest till twelve at night, and he showed great kindness to the unhappy prisoner Ivan VI. He recalled hundreds of exiles from Siberia, and sent scarcely any one in their place; he, however, alienated the priests by proposing to establish a committee for the administration of the Church estates, a measure which Catherine II. not only effected, but she sequestered a great part of those lands and distributed them among her favourites. He is accused of taking no interest in the education of his son, but it was natural that, being very illiterate, he should leave it entirely to the tutor, one of the most learned Russians of his time, though he was always goodnatured to the child if he happened to come in his way. When asked to see him go through his drill, he came to look on, and saying that "the little rogue seemed to know more about it than he did himself," added that he would reward him for his diligence by appointing him a sergeant in the Guard. Count Panine, the tutor, said it would make the child conceited; on which Peter offered the tutor a military title instead. The Count was a valetudinarian, with a horror of a soldier's duties, and declined it most impressively; but either offer would not have been thought absurd in the reign of Nicholas, whose son, the present Emperor, at eight years old commanded a regiment in a review of 20,000 men, and executed the manœuvres with the coolness and precision of an old campaigner.*

At the time of Peter's accession, the party opposed to him,

* *Mémoires de Marmont.*

supported by the French and Austrian ambassadors, was so strong, that a far more practised statesman could hardly have kept his throne without a decisive blow. Keith, the English ambassador, was his friend, and resigned his post at St. Petersburg when he was deposed, for he believed him to be well intentioned, but slandered and beset with snares, though owning that "the perpetual hurry in which he lived seemed in some measure to have affected his understanding." Peter abolished the secret police, and while depriving himself of their support completely separated from his wife, whose partiality for the gigantic guardsman, Gregory Orlof, gave him just cause for indignation, which was fomented by the Chancellor Voronzov who, hoping to see his own daughter Elizabeth share the throne, even tried to set the Emperor against his son. Among those arriving from Siberia were men who as ministers had driven each other into exile, and returned with their mutual hatred increased by the wasted years they had passed in poverty-stricken deserts. They took opposite sides in the approaching struggle, in which Count Panine was gained over for the Empress by the hope of placing his pupil on the throne, and taking an important part in a council of regency till the prince should be of age; the Guards were also induced to declare for Paul I.

When the dark deed in the castle of Ropseha was completed (July 7th, 1762), the ministers made an effort to proclaim Paul, who was hastily roused from his sleep, and taken in a droshky to the Winter Palace, where his mother had assembled her Court. The crowd of soldiers in his bedroom and the noise and lights in the streets frightened the timid boy to such an extent that he did not recover from the effect for years, and Panine brought him trembling in his night-clothes to his mother standing in the window, where she presented him to the soldiers. They threw up their caps, shouting, "Long live Paul I.!" She was displeased and drew him back, taking care the next day that her claims should be admitted by a solemn investiture with the sceptre and globe, notwithstanding Panine's bold remonstrance. "The proud Russians," he said, "would never permit themselves to be ruled by a Princess of Anhalt while a descendant of Peter the Great survived in her son. Was she of sufficient rank to take her place among the

Czars?" Catherine answered that her son would be better off in her charge than in that of a fantastic father, and that when he was of age she would of course retire from public life. She was induced to sign a written engagement* to reign only during his minority, but she more effectually silenced Panine by making him Chancellor in the place of Voronzov, and paying him a handsome sum of money, while she distributed gratuities to all her other followers, the usual mode of accomplishing a *coup d'état*. Her entrance into Moscow and coronation were carried out amidst a cold and silent crowd, who warmly cheered the carriage which contained her son; but having no wish to reign merely as the wife and mother of a Romanof, she called a council of the ministers, and represented to them that Paul's delicate health making it very improbable he could reach manhood, it would be advisable to provide for the succession by forming another marriage, and she proposed the name of Gregory Orlof as in all respects suitable for her second husband. The opposition of men she feared made her renounce this project, and all hope of being able to acknowledge the boy,† who a month after the revolution was born in the seclusion of Czarco-Selo; but she spared no pains to make her subjects forget her foreign blood. The kings of France and Sweden refused to admit her title for several years; she treated these slights with indifference; her ambassadors received orders to claim precedence over those of Louis XV. whenever occasion presented itself, and through her influence her old lover, Stanislaus Poniatowski, the son of a house-steward and a spendthrift, was raised to the tottering throne of Poland, and protected by Russia from the hostility of his own subjects.

It was long before Russia submitted quietly to Catherine's rule, and in the next ten years disturbances continually broke out in the provinces and at Moscow, where plots were formed for the elevation of Ivan VI. to the throne, and also to substitute the young Grand Duke for the Empress. An attempt to liberate the first from his prison ended in his murder by the guard, in accordance with their instructions if there was any fear of his escape; but five pretenders had appeared in different parts of the country, each claiming identity with Peter III.,

* Dolgorukof.

† Alexis, the ancestor of the Counts Bobrinsky.

when a sixth sprung up in 1773, in the person of a Cossack, named Pugachef, whose insurrection seemed to threaten the very existence of the empire. The invasion by the French in 1812 was not a greater calamity, for at least 320,000 people fell victims in the civil war; but as the lower classes and the Dissenters joined Pugachef with an eager ferocity to plunder the aristocracy and the religious establishments of the orthodox Church, the nobles perceived that their safety depended on that of the Empress, and rallied round her. The Court had nearly retreated to Riga, for the rebels, having laid waste Eastern Russia, were within a few miles of Moscow; but they spent their time in besieging minor fortresses, till the Empress's army had received reinforcements, and they were finally suppressed. Catherine certainly owed her subsequent security to this outbreak, for henceforward she was supported by the upper classes, and in return allowed them every licence so long as they showed no sympathy for her son; and in a country where women were maintained in Oriental seclusion till the end of the seventeenth century, a woman for the fifth time within forty years was permitted to exercise sovereign power.

CHAPTER I.

THE FATHER AND MOTHER OF ALEXANDER I.

1754—1776.

THE only surviving child of Peter III. and Catherine II. was born in the Summer Palace* of St. Peterburg, where his mother, oppressed by the most gloomy forebodings, had been recently brought from Moscow. The Empress Elizabeth had him baptized Paul, after one of her young brothers, who died in infancy, and made him her constant companion in her perpetual journeys from one palace to another, and in her invalid chamber during her last illness. He was brought up in an atmosphere of superstition. The Empress had no stated times for rest or refreshment. She only went to bed when exhausted with fatigue in the day or night, and then her women tickled her feet to compose her, and told her weird stories of spiritual appearances till she went to sleep. Paul was a small weakly child, with a remarkably vivid imagination, early imbued with a belief in dreams and a dread of ghosts. At four years old he used to sit on Elizabeth's lap during the performances at the theatre, when she praised his beauty and intelligence to the courtiers as fondly as if he had been her son, but under his mother's auspices he was educated on severe Spartan principles. His little court, where presentations were made to him, was abolished, and his only companions were his various tutors, with whom his favourite game was to play at keeping a monastery, his governor being the abbot, and himself one of the monks.

Catherine showed little affection for Paul during her husband's lifetime; but this coldness became aversion as soon as Peter was no more. He was then seven years old, and had one or two defects which had always annoyed her in Peter—an inability to pronounce the letter R, a nervous twitching in his features, and incessant restlessness. All her life she dis-

* Pulled down in 1798 to build the old St. Michael Palace.

liked every one who was ill: beauty, size, and strength were necessary for her favour, and Paul was sickly, taking cold with the slightest keen air. Elizabeth indulged and humoured him while she was neglected, and she could not forget the Empress's inclination to appoint him her heir; nor after Peter's murder that Panine attempted to proclaim him Emperor, and to give herself only the title of regent. The frightful insurrections which broke out, ostensibly to place him upon the throne, made her look upon him as a rival, and yet one whom she dared not remove. Though in her letters she spoke kindly of him, she took little trouble to conceal her real feelings from those around her, so that when he was ill it was at once supposed that he was a victim to slow poison. The singular medical treatment he received was attributed to foul motives, though it was probably more the result of the ignorance of the time; but the appointment of Dr. Kruse, who had mixed a dose of poison for Peter III., as his surgeon, was not likely to allay suspicion. Paul's nerves, never very strong, were much shaken by the alarms of the night of the revolution, and he was subject to convulsive fits at the sound of thunder, or anything which gave him a sudden fright. Dr. Kruse prescribed a diet exclusively of half raw meat as likely to strengthen his nerves, and forbade him milk, hitherto his principal food. The child loathed this regimen, and having been taught by Elizabeth to keep all the fasts of the Greek Church, he thought that to eat meat on those days was a deadly sin. He gradually wasted away, and was afflicted with the scurvy and rickets, till at last it was publicly announced that he was seriously ill. A menacing crowd collected under the walls of the palace, and loudly demanded him. The Empress, pale and alarmed, brought him to the window, and with assumed tenderness allayed the public apprehensions. She also replaced Dr. Kruse by a celebrated Swedish surgeon, Epinus, under whose care he gradually gained strength, though his stunted figure and distorted features showed traces of his youthful maladies through life.

Catherine dreaded the small-pox, which had been a fatal complaint in her family, besides destroying the good looks of her husband and causing the death of one Russian sovereign; and she sent for Dr. Dimsdale from England in 1768 to in-

oculate the whole Court.* He was rewarded with imperial liberality, the title of baron, 12,000*l.*, and an annuity of 500*l.* The same year she tried to procure the celebrated D'Alembert as tutor for her son. He declined the post, and Paul was educated by very indifferent native tutors, with the exception of Plato, the Archbishop of Moscow, and an Englishman, who taught him mathematics. Plato was supposed to have imbibed to a slight degree the so-called philosophical or free-thinking opinions then prevalent in Germany and France, and openly applauded by Catherine, Frederick the Great, and Joseph II. of Austria. An effort was made to instil them into Paul, but he always professed the greatest horror of them, and was a faithful, though by no means illiberal, member of the orthodox Church. The English ambassador writes, in 1777,† that Catherine was not desirous for the success of the education of her son, but that he was well informed as to general history and the government of the country; though, "as his person was awkward, and his address ungentle, the greatest part of his time was employed in learning to dance, to ride, and to speak French, all which he does to a certain degree of perfection. Till his first marriage he was kept in the most complete subordination and retirement; and if he has any filial piety, he owes it rather to fear than to affection. He is very temperate in his food, but still more in his drinking, and has by these regularities strengthened a constitution naturally infirm."

Paul's first marriage took place in 1773, when he was eighteen years of age. In "Memoirs after the Peace," by Frederick the Great, the king relates his anxiety for the heir of Russia to marry a connection of his own; and after "employing every engine" to accomplish it, he obtained his hand for one of the princesses of Hesse Darmstadt, whose elder sister was the wife of the Prince of Prussia. She was baptized into the Greek Church by the name of Natalia, and being older than Paul, and educated by a clever politician in her mother, soon acquired an influence over him, which Catherine began to mistrust. During a visit the Court paid to Moscow

* In the doctor's published account he described Paul as a pale unhealthy boy, with glandular swellings in his neck.

† Memoirs of the first Lord Malmesbury.

after the execution of Pugachef, the people made lively demonstrations in Paul's favour, while he rode without a guard into the Kitaigorod, and talked freely to the citizens who crowded round him, though, as it was not a year since the close of a most formidable rebellion, the Empress was more than usually suspicious. It was the last time she ever allowed him to come to Moseow, and henceforward caused him and his wife to be strictly guarded in the palace, till the princess began to lose both her health and spirits. She had been married three years when there was a prospect of an heir, and at the same time Prince Henry of Prussia was sent to St. Petersburg by his royal brother to soften the Empress's displeasure with an ambitious daughter-in-law, "whose conduct," said Frederick, "was not such as was expected from a person of her birth!" "Scarcely," says the same authority,* "had Prince Henry been favoured with an interview by the Empress before the Grand Duchess died, after bringing a dead child into the world. The prince being present at this scene, aided the Empress at a moment so mournful as much as was in his power. He particularly directed his cares to the Grand Duke, who was overwhelmed. He did not quit him, and after having contributed to the restoration of his health, he completed his work by effecting the entire reconciliation of the mother and the son, the misunderstanding between whom had been greatly increased since the marriage of the Grand Duke, and had inspired apprehensions that very serious consequences to one or the other might be the result."

The Grand Duchess Natalia died in May, 1776, apparently a victim to her own ambition or to the Empress's fears.† While Dr. Almann, the cleverest physician in St. Petersburg, was kept away from her deathbed by the threat that if there was a calamity to either mother or child he would answer for it with his head, the nurse who attended her alone with the Empress was most handsomely pensioned and furnished with a residence in St. Petersburg, where even the exclusive Prince Potemkin paid her friendly visits, and Paul's violent grief was abruptly checked by his mother, who told him his wife had

* Frederick's Memoirs after the Peace.

† Paul's second wife was convinced that her life had been purposely destroyed. See Dolgorukof, *La Duchesse d'Abrantés*, *Private Anecdotes of Foreign Courts*, Wrazall, &c.

deceived him with his greatest friend, and showed him some letters said to have been found in a secret drawer addressed to her by Count Razoumovski. Catherine perhaps hardly expected the effect it would have upon him. He dried his eyes, but it temporarily upset his reason; the first appearance of that calamity which periodically darkened the rest of his days.* Count Razoumovski was appointed to the embassy at Naples, but it is now believed the scandal was invented by the Empress, and the letters a clever forgery, for the memory of the Princess is held in respect by her husband's family. Her great-niece is the present Empress of Russia, and her brother was forced to give up his betrothed in order to provide her successor.

Prince Henry recommended that the young widower of twenty-one should be married again as soon as possible. He had been taken away to Czareo-Selo before the funeral ceremonies began, and the day after his wife's death Prince Henry had already written to the Duchess Eugene of Würtemberg, his own niece, telling her to bring her eldest daughter to Berlin, where he hoped soon to conduct Paul, and "to do all that the king would prescribe to her on this subject." Some objection was raised on the score of the previous engagement to the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt, and he was most unwilling to relinquish his intended bride, who was only sixteen, but such scruples were utterly disregarded by Frederick and his brothers. Their relatives of Würtemberg were poor, with a large family, and the Empress offered them at once 40,000 roubles to pay their debts. "Desire everybody about the Prince and Princess of Würtemberg," wrote Frederick to his brother Ferdinand, "to beg them to make the Prince of Darmstadt desist. If he is at all reasonable, he will not wish to disturb the happiness of two states, whose union may be useful to the peace of Europe; and if he has any heart he will not obstruct the welfare of a family, who will find themselves in a flourishing state, compared to their present one, through the generosity of the Empress and the Grand Duke." To the Duchess Eugene, Prince Ferdinand wrote that she might "break politely with the Prince of Darmstadt, by telling him it was the king's wish, and he will yield rather than offend so powerful a sovereign,

* Dolgorukof.

who might make him repent of the difficulties he opposed. . . . You are in a position to strengthen the bond subsisting between the two Courts. You may render a most essential service to the country which gave you birth. You may prevent the effusion of blood. In case of refusal, think what may be the fate of your two sons in the king's service; while, on the other hand, supported by the title of mother-in-law of the Grand Duke, you can solicit for them most elevated posts; you can implore your son-in-law's assistance," &c.* Prince Henry added, "I give you my word of honour that your daughter cannot marry a more amiable and more virtuous man than the Grand Duke is, and that she cannot find a more tender and *respectable* mother-in-law than the Empress." "She has promised me," he writes again, "that she will endow and marry your two younger daughters." The king closed the correspondence by telling the Duchess that the Empress would give her 60,000 roubles for the journey, which would enable her to save much for her husband and children, "of which they have great need. Such opportunities do not come every day; they should be caught at when they appear. Your sad situation is known to me, and this marriage will enable me to put you a little more at your ease." He also told her she need not even give the bride a trousseau. The Duchess owned the money would be a great relief to her, and it was accordingly paid.

The Prince of Hesse Darmstadt soon found another bride, and in 1827 celebrated his fiftieth wedding-day, while his rival only saw his twenty fourth. He never quite forgave Russia, and lived to wreak his vengeance on Alexandér, being one of the first of the German princes to range himself on the side of Napoleon and the French.

The Duchess Eugene of Würtemberg was the only daughter of Frederick's second sister, the Margravine of Brandenburg Schwadt, and was married in 1750 to a younger brother of the elector of Würtemberg, a soldier of some talent, and a general in the service of Prussia. He owned the small principality of Montbéliard, united to France in 1792, but then an appanage of the German Empire, and here in the Château

* Memoirs and Correspondence, published by the Historical Society of Russia.

des Etupes, where he retired in 1769, he brought up a numerous family. Of his eight sons three afterwards entered the Russian service, one the Austrian, another the Prussian, and two more the Swedish; and of his daughters, the eldest, Sophia Dorothea, became the wife and mother of three emperors of Russia; the second married a prince of Holstein, and died young; and the third married the Archduke Francis, afterwards Emperor of Germany, who was early left a widower, and consoled himself with three subsequent brides.

Sophia Dorothea was born October 25th, 1759, at Stettin, in Pomerania, where her father was governor during the Seven Years' War. Brought up in the Roman Catholic Church, he received the tonsure at Constance when eighteen years of age, but quickly abandoned it at the outbreak of the war, when his courage in the desperate battles with the Russians gained him Frederick's especial notice and a wife. His daughters were taught no particular creed, that they might join without difficulty the Church of the country which would become their home. They passed a happy and domestic childhood in the Castle of Montbéliard during the winter, and in the summer months among the gardens and vineyards surrounding the rural Château des Etupes. It was here that, in June, 1776, the young Sophia Dorothea received the unexpected command to repair to Berlin as quickly as possible to meet her future husband, the Grand Duke of Russia.

The Princess was tall and very fair, with aquiline features and bright blue eyes, still enjoying the games of her younger brothers and sisters, and as gay and wild as a mere child. She had never left Montbéliard since she arrived there at the age of nine, and in spite of her previous betrothal heard of the new fate in store for her with infantile delight. Her mother did not share her joy. She wept bitterly at the idea of the wide separation: perhaps she thought of the doubtful end of Paul's young bride, so lately carried to the grave; and she almost prophetically exclaimed, "Terrible misfortunes sometimes befall the Czars, and who knows what fate Heaven has decreed for my poor child!" Her grief cast a passing shadow over the young girl's anticipations of the splendour of the Russian court; and while amusing herself with practising the ceremony of presentation to the Empress, she sometimes

stopped suddenly, and said, "I am very much afraid of Catherine. She will terrify me, I am sure; and how foolish I shall seem to her! O, if I could only succeed in pleasing her and the Grand Duke!"

The Princess set off with her father to Berlin, where her baptism and betrothal took place. In the mean time, Prince Henry hardly lost sight of Paul till he had brought him to the same city, escorted by Marshal Romanzov and a detachment of troops. He constantly endeavoured to amuse him with stories of military adventures, and excited a desire to see foreign countries and the heroes of the Seven Years' War. The most flattering welcome awaited the young man, hitherto almost a prisoner. On his road through East Prussia, burgo-masters met him with addresses, and ladies filled his carriage with flowers. "Nothing," wrote the English ambassador from Berlin, "could exceed the attention and even court that his Majesty pays to the Grand Duke, nor the pains he takes to captivate and please him;" and the Prussian courtiers remarked that the King ordered new clothes for the occasion, else his ordinary garb was snuff-stained and threadbare, and the same coat usually lasted him for many years. They thought the Prince's first address to the King displayed much tact and self-possession. He dwelt on the pleasure it gave him to make the acquaintance of so renowned a monarch, and after several conversations with him, Frederick wrote to D'Alembert, "This prince possesses great and noble qualities. He is rather serious; that agrees with his character, but the foundation is excellent." An accident happened on the evening of his arrival, when the Grand Duke took supper with the King, for the dining-room ceiling partly fell in; but though it caused much confusion, no one was hurt. On July 25th, he was introduced to Sophia Dorothea, and seemed much pleased with her, though Wraxall says, "She did not possess the natural ability of the first Grand Duchess." On her baptism she took the name of Mary Fedorovna. She wrote almost daily to her mother, and appeared perfectly satisfied with her intended bridegroom, representing him as "exceedingly amiable," and, she thought, likely to love her, and relating that she had been given precedence of all the princesses and royal duchesses in Prussia. Nevertheless she cried very much

when she parted from her father at Memel, and was transferred to a Russian and Cossack guard to conduct her to St. Petersburg; but the dreary aspect of that part of the country to one accustomed to the brighter skies of France was of itself sufficiently depressing. Her marriage took place on Paul's twenty-second birthday, October 1st, 1776.

The arrangement of a marriage and the reconciliation of a dispute were not Prince Henry's sole motives in his two visits to St. Petersburg. The state of Poland had become a serious embarrassment to the neighbouring governments, for it was a hotbed of foreign political intrigue and civil war, while the utter absence of all sanitary precautions and the poverty and dirt of the peasantry were a constant source of the plague, cattle murrain, and other epidemics being communicated to the rest of Europe. Poland had long been governed by a semi-barbarous aristocracy, the King being a mere cipher, and the peasants absolute slaves; but a nation where 1,500,000 of its people and their descendants could only occupy themselves in cultivating their own land, if they possessed an estate, or in war, was an anachronism even in the eighteenth century: and as there was no power superior to that of the representatives of these numerous nobles, and they met only for a few weeks about every two years, when all the votes had to be unanimous in order to pass a measure, and every measure had to be unanimous, or the whole series was annulled, Poland was in reality more completely without active law than any country since the most primitive times. The nobles armed their retainers against each other on small provocation; all public works were neglected, or never begun; literature and education were confined to the Roman priests—for Rome, to counteract the influence of the Greek Church, sent the most distinguished members of the Order of Jesuits to protect her eastern frontier—and the trade of the country was entirely in the hands of the Jews. The Polish religion had relapsed into infidelity or the extreme of superstition, and public opinion placed no restraint on their excesses. A divorce was obtained so easily that it was no unusual thing for a man to meet in society six or seven ladies who were formerly his wives. Neither party suffered in public estimation, and a beautiful young woman, still a bride, might be cast adrift by her

husband for no other reason than because since his marriage he had seen another he preferred. No act of the Russian legislation was more unpopular than that of 1832, which assimilated the marriage law of Poland to that of Russia by forbidding divorce. The case of the Countess de Witt, at the end of the last century, was nothing unusual, when Count Potecki demanded her of her husband, who, to save his life, gave her up on a payment of 2,000,000 florins.

“The character of the Poles is bad, very bad,” writes an English traveller in January, 1797. “Women and priests have governed the country from time immemorial. The morals of the upper class are detestable, their manners are pleasant. Believe me there is no liberty lost by the revolution of Poland. The peasants are quite as well off as before; and in the Austrian division infinitely better, without any comparison. Yet the nobles affect to repine that the republic is ruined: these very nobles exercised the most grievous oppression, and were bought as often as a foreign court chose to buy them.”* “In a court and capital such as Warsaw,” writes Sir Nathaniel Wraxall in 1776-7, “it is not easy to resist the seduction of example added to the torrent of immorality. Here all that I see announces not less the internal dissolution than the external destruction of Poland.” He describes the prisons as horrible, gambling† as being carried to a greater extent than in any country in Europe. “What else could rationally be expected as the natural death of a country where the crown is at once elective, venal, and powerless, where the nobility are independent, uncontrollable, and tyrannical, while the people are sunk in slavery, ignorance, oppression, and poverty. We should rather wonder that in the present progressive state of Europe, Poland has lasted thus long, instead of being surprised at its ruin and approaching extinction. . . . The Poles seem scarcely to be conscious that the Vistula is navigable, and it is rare to see upon it a vessel of any kind, though at Warsaw it is broader than the Thames at Windsor. A bridge of boats conducts to Praga on the eastern side—a wretched collection of cottages or huts built of wood, and scattered irregularly in the sand without order or

* Tweddell's Remains and Correspondence.

† Also Baron Ompteda, who says it was a passion with the Poles.

plan, such as Tartars, and only Tartars, would construct or inhabit. Yet this is the principal object seen from the windows of the Royal Palace on the opposite bank. Hardly a single public monument of art, taste, or devotion exists in this metropolis. The very churches and palaces are unfinished or fallen to decay. Even in this beautiful season of the year, after violent rain many of the streets are totally impassable on foot, and nearly so on horseback or in a carriage. In front of Stanislaus' palace the smell is pestilential. A nation too indolent to remedy such inconveniences, or so accustomed to them as not to perceive how incompatible they are with safety, comfort, and salubrity, seems not far removed from barbarism. The people accord in their appearance with the aspect of everything around them. I never beheld so many objects of horror or compassion as present themselves in the streets. Warsaw is likewise crowded with Jews, who form a considerable proportion of the inhabitants. From time to time they are plundered, exiled, imprisoned, and massacred; yet under such accumulated vexations they continue multiplying, and are here found in greater numbers than even at Amsterdam." There were no lamps in Warsaw, and it was dangerous to walk in the streets at night unarmed or alone. Both this writer and Archdeacon Coxe, who travelled through Poland in 1779, assert that it was generally believed "the rise and progress of the terrible disease called the Plica, was chiefly owing to the horrid nutriment and inconceivable filth of the Polish people." "I never before," says Coxe, "observed such an inequality of fortune, such sudden transition from extreme riches to extreme poverty; wherever I turned my eyes, luxury and wretchedness were constant neighbours. The boasted Polish liberty is not enjoyed in the smallest degree by the bulk of the people, but is confined to the nobles and gentry." There was a nominal fine imposed on a man who killed his slave, but it was scarcely ever exacted, "on account of the numerous difficulties which attend the conviction of a noble for this or any other enormity. So far indeed from being inclined to soften the servitude of their vassals, the nobles have asserted, and established it by repeated and positive ordinances." The severest measures were taken to prevent them from deserting their native

villages, so often did they make the attempt, though their only alternative was a refuge in the forests. The Polish peasant was distinguishable from the labourer of other lands by his dejected expression, his servile manner, his long, dirty, ragged hair, and the extreme wretchedness of his unfurnished abode. In drawing a comparison between the inhabitants of Poland and Switzerland—both republics, and both held up as the seat of liberty—Coxe remarks that in the one country, “freedom has spread comfort and happiness through the whole community; in the other it centres in a few, and is in reality the worst species of despotism. . . . Poland appears to me, as far as I can judge by the specimens which fell under my observation, of all countries the most distressed. Upon expressing my surprise at one instance of the abuse of liberty to which I had been myself a witness, to a person well versed in the laws of the country, he returned for answer, ‘If you knew the confusion and anarchy of our constitution you would be surprised at nothing. Many grievances necessarily exist even in the best regulated states; what then must be the case in ours, which of all governments is the most detestable?’ Another said to me, ‘The name of Poland still remains, but the nation no longer exists, a universal corruption and venality pervades all ranks of people. Many of the first nobility do not blush to receive pensions from foreign courts; one professes himself publicly an Austrian, a second a Prussian, a third a Frenchman, and a fourth a Russian.’ The nation has few manufactures, scarcely any commerce, a king almost without authority, the nobles in a state of uncontrolled anarchy, the peasants groaning under a yoke of feudal despotism far worse than the tyranny of an absolute monarch.”*

“I entered Poland,” writes Sir James Harris, “October 27th, 1767, about half way between Glogau and Frauenstadt; had houses in ruins, great appearance of poverty, and crowds of beggars. And here I may say once for all that the few towns I passed through on the road are of the most pitiful sort. . . . Villages, such as they are, frequent, but the greatest poverty reigns. No houses but huts; all the family in one miserable room. The head of it has a sort of mock bed, the rest lie on the floor, and the children that are small enough creep into the stove.”

* Coxe's Travels in Poland and Russia.

There were no inns on the post roads leading direct to Warsaw ; but the Polish nobility exercised sumptuous hospitality, both in their country houses and in Dresden, Vienna, and St. Petersburg, where they lost or renewed their shattered fortunes at play, and the peasantry were transferred by their masters from one estate to another irrespective of marriage or filial ties. Yet with all their faults, the accomplishments, the grace, and the easy manners of the Polish ladies, "combining eastern imagination," says Madame de Staël, "with the vivacity of the west," their elegance, their hospitality, and their utter absence of reserve made a favourable impression on all with whom they came in contact, and excited a strong feeling of sympathy for the Polish nation, which the fate of their lords would otherwise have failed to produce.

While Russia was still struggling against the yoke of the Tartars, Poland assisted the Mahometans in trying to extinguish her very name. From that period till the reign of Peter the Great the two nations were constantly at war. The Poles supported a formidable insurrection in Moscow, and finally invaded and burnt it in 1611, carrying away an almost incredible amount of silver from the Kremlin, and giving to a son of their king the title of Czar. "The high Polish nobility," says the Abbé Pradt, "did nothing else for a hundred years than endeavour by its intrigues to induce Russia to assume the protection of Poland. The cries with which Western Europe has resounded on the subject of this partition, are caused by the prevailing ignorance of all the events that had passed for seventy years between Poland and Russia. Poland is always represented as a free state, and independent at home. On the contrary, Poland had been morally invaded for half a century, and what remained of her strength she employed in disputes to which there was neither object nor end. Peter and Charles XII. were the real authors of the partition of Poland. Charles attracted the Russians into Europe as Napoleon has drawn them to Paris, so much were these thunderbolts of war deficient in understanding."*

One of the most eminent of the Polish kings, John Sobieski, declared when dying that vice had increased to such a degree among his countrymen as "to be almost beyond the Almighty's

* Pradt's Considerations for the Congress of Vienna.

forgiveness. I hear a voice perpetually ringing in my ears, 'Yet forty years and Babylon shall be no more.'” One gift of freedom—religious toleration—with which Poland is accredited was entirely withheld in respect to the Uniates, an offshoot of the orthodox Greek Church, permitted by one of the Popes to remain in Poland and Hungary, retaining all the forms and doctrines, and even the language of the Eastern Communion, provided they acknowledged the supremacy of the Pope instead of that of the Greek Patriarch. Periodically their houses were burnt and their clergy massacred, and Peter the Great and his successors had interfered both by action and remonstrance on their behalf. In 1768 fresh disturbances arose, when many were murdered, and one Uniate was crucified. The Empress Catherine twice protested against this ill-treatment, but her representations obtained not the slightest notice from the King, who was absorbed in his pleasures; and as indeed the regal authority was utterly powerless to enforce order in the disturbed districts, she caused them to be occupied by a detachment of her own troops.

During the Seven Years' War Frederick felt the great inconvenience of the disjointed shape of his territories. By the acquisition of Posen and the part now known as Polish Prussia his communication by land between Berlin and Königsberg would be secured and his dominions compact. In 1769, when a civil commotion, supported by some French officers, was disturbing Poland, at the same time ravaged by the plague, he took the opportunity to advance his troops into their provinces under pretence of forming lines to prevent the spread of the infection, but aware that the security of his new acquisition depended upon the goodwill of Russia and Austria, he had an interview with Joseph II. in 1769, and again in 1770, to suggest the permanent reduction of Poland. Joseph had secretly encouraged the revolutionists, and even begun a negotiation with Turkey against Russia, but now altered his measures, and increased his army towards the Polish frontiers. He followed the King's example in giving the prevention of the plague as a reason for stationing troops within Polish territory, and in 1772 occupied the whole of Galicia,* while the Polish rebels thought he was advancing to act in their favour. But Prussia

* Coxe's Travels.

was the real gainer by the movement, for though Austria seized on the rich salt mines of Wielicza, she obtained Posen—by far the most advanced and most commercial of the Polish provinces; while it would have been to the advantage of Russia to have preserved Poland *in statu quo*, for the will of the Empress was fast becoming predominant over the whole country, whereas the partition gave her a district more primitive and uncultivated than the central provinces in her own empire.

Frederick waited to impart his scheme to Catherine till she was involved in a war with Turkey and internal disputes. He then sent his brother to St. Petersburg to suggest that Austria was forming an alliance with the Porte, which would create a formidable combination against her; nevertheless Austria's friendship might be bought by acceding to the partition. On this condition the Emperor was willing to renounce his alliance with the Sultan, and would suffer the Russians to prosecute the war without interruption. Catherine accepted the proposal, and the treaty was signed by the Plenipotentiaries of Russia, Austria, and Prussia (February, 1772).

Poland was so jealous of the rise of Prussia that till 1764 she never acknowledged Frederick by any other title than Elector of Brandenburg, but she was powerless to resist the coalition, which tried to present its claims in a plausible form. Russia had once possessed Lithuania, the cradle of the reigning dynasty, and the Hungarians had once occupied Galicia for a short time by right of conquest, when it formed an independent monarchy; and in return for what they called the restoration of these provinces they put down the insurrection in Poland, and placed the fortresses captured from the insurgents in the hands of the King. The bill for the dismemberment was carried through the Polish Diet probably by the same means of bribery which were found successful in Ireland in 1800, and the Courts of London, Paris, Stockholm, and Copenhagen vainly protested against the act. Subsequent disturbances gave the three partitioning Powers a motive for continuing their work. In 1793, when Frederick and Joseph were both in their graves, a second dismemberment was effected; and in 1795 Poland was blotted out from the list of independent nations.

As Frederick probably owed his political existence, and certainly his title of "Great," to the timely interposition of

Peter III., he perhaps felt kindly disposed towards that Prince's son, and he relaxed his usual cynical humour so far as to make himself exceedingly agreeable to Paul, who left Berlin perfectly charmed with him. The Grand Duchess had been educated in profound respect for her great uncle, and he gave her much useful advice as to her future conduct. In an age not abundant in eminent men Frederick had acquired great renown, and was regarded as the Nestor of Europe. His long reign, the vast increase of his territories, his energy and perseverance, the Seven Years' War, and his undoubted military genius, rendered him the hero of his time, and enthusiastic young Frenchmen would undertake a journey from Paris for the chance of catching a glimpse of him in the gardens of Sans Souci, where he lived retired from the Court, on ill terms with most of his family, and particularly with his Queen and his heir. His brother-in-law, Prince Anthony of Brunswick, lingered for years in the prison of Kholmogri, on the White Sea, and he appears never to have made an attempt to obtain his release. All his efforts were concentrated in the aggrandizement of the House of Brandenburg, and he turned to ridicule every theory founded on religion, honour, or public justice. His father bequeathed him a full treasury and a model army, and he wrested Silesia from Austria without a shadow of excuse or even declaring war. In youth he disliked military exercises, and bought his experience at the head of his army after he came to the throne, at first encountering defeat, but by degrees, as his enemies gave him experience, learning how to obtain success. He considered that Prussia ought to be a purely military nation in order to maintain her supremacy, as she possessed no natural frontier; and he discouraged commerce, obliging every Jew to spend a certain sum in porcelain at the royal manufactory before he was permitted to marry, and laying exorbitant duties on all foreign and exported goods.* He was cruel in war, advising indiscriminate pillage, and the most stern though equitable disciplinarian, apparently inaccessible to any of the ordinary sentiments of humanity. Wraxall describes him in 1776 as a little bent man, with an eagle physiognomy, scanty hair, covered by an enormous cocked hat, and wearing high boots, an old uniform

* Coxe's Travels.

coat, and extremely dirty waistcoat. His chief pleasure lay in his dinner, and he ate largely, for which he paid the penalty of severe attacks of gout. His pockets were lined with tin, so that he might be always well supplied with snuff, and the quantities he took rendered him frequently a disgusting object. Though irritable he possessed a philosophical temperament, and the mean and vindictive motives which sometimes influenced his conduct should be attributed more to the outbreaks so common in the possessors of despotic power than to his natural disposition. Such was the man who excited the enthusiastic admiration of two successive Emperors of Russia. His most enduring policy was the strengthening of those ties by which friendship and marriage had firmly connected them with his House. The power he unscrupulously cemented under the crown of Prussia was swept away in 1806 in a ten days' campaign, but the fascination he exercised over the hearts of the Russian sovereigns survived the fall of his kingdom; to Russia it owed its restoration, and the feeble existence a remnant was suffered to maintain till the memorable War of Independence, and the support it received from Russia laid the foundation of the modern German empire.

NOTE TO CHAPTER I.

The absurd stories once circulated about Paul's birth are now acknowledged to have no other source than the political jealousy which invented the same with regard to the Pretender, Louis XIV., Ferdinand VII., Queen Isabella, Napoleon II., the Comte de Chambord, and George II. Even if the book purporting to be Catherine's autobiography were genuine, which is very doubtful, it proves no more than that she was an unfaithful wife two years before his birth. "Ruhlère's book," says the Princess Dashkov, "was merely composed of gossip;" and early in her reign Catherine may have encouraged such reports as a check to the murmurs publicly uttered at her usurpation of her son's rights. Would Elizabeth, who had children of her own by a private marriage with Razoumovski, have lavished almost maternal affection on Paul if he had no connection with her by blood, and not have tried to substitute one of her sons in his place? Catherine's very dislike to him proved his descent from Peter, and although his appearance more resembled her (alleged) description of Peter's father, the Duke of Holstein, "ugly, little, sickly, and poor," the Romanof beauty was revived in his children, and even Masson and other hostile writers draw a close comparison between him and Peter III. Talleyrand believed in their relationship, and no one can read Bassewitz's description of Anna Petrovna and Mrs. Vigor's of Elizabeth and Peter II. without being reminded of the present Imperial family.

CHAPTER II.

ALEXANDER'S EDUCATION AND MARRIAGE.

1777—1796.

THE bride from Montbéliard, taking warning by the fate of her predecessor, conducted herself with the utmost reserve and prudence from the moment she set foot in her adopted land. Yet it did not protect her from the Empress's jealousy or the most irritating supervision, and when all the delightful anticipations of the dignity of her position had passed into stern realities, she endured the restrictions attendant upon her rank with little to counterbalance them. Catherine even looked unfavourably on her warm attachment to her husband, who was superseded in the position of first subject in the empire by a succession of men of obscure birth, raised in turn to the highest political appointments, acting as masters within the palace, and enjoying enormous revenues, with no other qualification than a good manner and imposing personal appearance. To please the Empress, they studied to neglect and insult her son, and the Chancellor, Potemkin, carried his familiarity so far as to address him as Little Paul, and to laugh openly at his plain appearance and short stature. Those letters that the Grand Duchess was able to send to her family by private hand were written in a melancholy strain, filled with affectionate messages to her old acquaintances round Montbéliard, and saying that to live with her husband as a private citizen in the Château des Etupes would be far more to her taste than in a Russian palace. She spoke much of his kindness to her, and their attachment to each other. They read together, and she was teaching him music, for which he had considerable taste. In the following year, Christmas Eve, so dear to every German, was the birthday of her eldest son (December 24th, 1777), and in a country which had suffered so much from a disputed succession, the arrival of an heir was a subject of great rejoicing to the whole empire.

The future autocrat was baptized when he was a week old, and received the name of Alexander Paulovitz, after St. Alexander of the Neva, one of the most popular of ancient Russian heroes. Count Alexis Orlof and Madame Czernichef were his sponsors. The poet Derzhavin wrote an ode for the occasion; and, describing the recent inundation of the Neva, the loss of life and property, and the consequent famine and distress, he showed that the Prince had been bestowed as a consolation to the afflicted people, and ends with a representation of Russia upon her knees receiving the infant in her arms, and offering up prayers for his future happiness. The low and marshy situation of St. Petersburg renders it liable to inundations, occasionally rising so high as to threaten the submersion of the entire city. On September 22nd, 1777, the Neva rose 10 feet 7 inches above its usual level (one authority states 14 feet), but the wind shifted in the course of the day, and the flood subsided with unusual rapidity, though it rose again 7 feet on October 18th. An instance of Russian military discipline and passive courage is recorded of a soldier who was on guard at the Winter Palae. The Court retreated into the upper rooms, and the Empress, looking out of the window, saw the man in danger of being drowned. She called to him to leave his post and save his life. He replied he could not do so even at her command without the permission of his corporal; and he remained till, with some difficulty, the corporal was found and ordered to give him his release.

The inundation disposed of one pretender to the throne, the Princess Tarrakanof, said to be a daughter of Elizabeth by a private marriage, and whom a Polish nobleman endeavoured to set up as a rival to the Empress. A deep-laid plot brought her within Catherine's power, and she was imprisoned for nearly six years in a dungeon in the fortress of St. Petersburg, when the rising of the Neva filled the cells with water as well as the church which contains the Imperial tombs, and it was officially stated that the unfortunate girl had perished. The flood carried many wooden houses entirely away, and a ship from Lubeek was hurled on to the wooded island of Vassilli Ostrof. The injury sustained by the shipping and merchandize was estimated at several millions of roubles, and

the dampness of the houses during the following winter brought on a fearful amount of sickness.

In the midst of this period of want and gloom Alexander the First came into the world; but the prevailing scarcity had no effect on the gaiety of the Court, for the fêtes and banquets held in honour of the young Prince's birth continued from Christmas till Lent, and began again at Easter, when Prince Potemkin gave a sumptuous entertainment which cost 50,000 roubles. The child's nurse was a Scotchwoman, married to a German, and before he was a year old he was surrounded by attendants. An Englishman named Parland, whom he afterwards pensioned, and who long survived him, was appointed his diadka, or bearer, as it would be termed in India—a functionary who takes charge of the young Russian nobles as soon as they can walk, but has nothing to do with their education; and he was brought up under the immediate superintendence of the Empress, who took possession of her son's children in exactly the same way as Elizabeth had acted with regard to herself. The fear of her mother-in-law made the Grand Duchess nervous and out of spirits, and when her second son was born, May 8th, 1779, she was extremely ill, and nearly died. The recent conquest of the Crimea had inspired the Empress with a hope of restoring the Greek Empire, and she caused this grandson to be baptized Constantine Paulovitz, and intrusted to a Greek nurse from the Isle of Scio, fully intending before she closed her reign to place him on the throne of Paleologus.

Sir James Harris arrived in Russia at the end of 1777, with instructions to secure the Empress's alliance in a war with France, who was giving assistance to the American colonists in their struggle for independence.

St. Petersburg is further east than Constantinople or Smyrna, and Moscow than Aleppo or Jerusalem, yet the Oriental indolence, luxury, magnificence, and corruption of the court and nobles seem to have amazed him. He writes that Paul and his wife must be excepted from this description. "They live on the best of terms, and offer an example they neither receive nor can get imitated. . . . He observes the conjugal ties with the most rigid severity. . . . They interfere in nothing. I wish sooner or latter he may not be tempted to

take advantage of the confused state of things, and attempt a project which would prove fatal to him. I know evil spirits are not wanting to excite him to it. . . . A general discontent prevails," &c.

Though Panine extorted a written engagement from Catherine to relinquish the throne when her son was of age, this was restored to her by Voronzov within a few months, and she destroyed it. When Paul attained his majority, Potemkin had firmly established the Empress's authority, and kept her in constant dread of her son,* as a means of preserving his own influence, which he persuaded her was necessary to her safety. Panine gave the Prince sound advice when he urged him to abstain from politics, and to root out of the nation the unfortunate idea that the crown of Russia is the prize of a riotous and bloody night. "You will mount the throne," he said, "perhaps at an advanced age, perhaps not at all, and your elder son may succeed his grandmother, but through your forbearance you can render a signal service to your descendants." To a less cautious councillor Paul replied, "I will never give my son an apology for conspiring to dethrone me."

Panine was so much opposed to a war on behalf of Great Britain that he suppressed portions of the English minister's despatches before he showed them to the Empress, but at last, in 1779, Sir J. Harris obtained a personal interview. He tried to prove that "France was as much the natural enemy of Russia as of Great Britain," and he asked her assistance against America, France, and Spain. "She objected on the ground that she did not wish to end her reign in a state of war, and hinted at the possibility of restoring peace by renouncing our struggle with our colonies. I asked, if they belonged to her, and a foreign Power proposed peace on such terms, whether she would accept it? She replied with great vehemence, 'I would rather lose my head. Admitting what you say,' added she, 'what right have I, after all, to interfere in a quarrel foreign to my own concerns on a subject I am not supposed to understand, and with Courts at such a distance from me?' I answered, that if in the last century a sovereign of Russia held this language I should have been puzzled for a reply, but since Russia was become a leading

* Diary and Correspondence of the first Lord Malmesbury.

Power in Europe, the answer was obvious—she was too great to see any great events with indifference; the concerns of Europe were now the concerns of Russia.” It is curious to read of a British minister urging a course on Russia which has formed Western Europe’s great complaint against her in the present century. Catherine’s policy was before her time, and if it had been followed by her immediate successors, much misery might have been spared to her empire.

On November 5th, 1779, George III. wrote an autograph letter on the same subject to Catherine, and the English Government tried to hire some regiments of Cossacks. It went so far in its importunity as to offer the island of Minorca to Russia in return for her alliance,* but even that bribe, and the need of a depôt in the Mediterranean for her fleet during the Turkish war, was not a sufficient inducement. Harris encouraged a growing coolness between the Courts of Russia and Prussia, having been alarmed by their close friendship, for Panine spoke of Frederick as the sentinel of the Russian empire, and when the Empress sent her son and daughter-in-law abroad in 1781, with orders not to pass through Prussia, he interested himself in supporting this command. Their children had just undergone inoculation for the small-pox, and they wished to see how they took the disease before leaving home. The question of their departure became quite a party matter. Panine took their view of the subject, and the British ambassador, Orlof, Potemkin, and the Empress tried to hurry them off.

They were soon consoled by Catherine’s cheerful letters,† showing they had no cause for alarm. “The inoculation,” she wrote, “has not had serious consequences. Mr. Alexander’s small-pox goes on very well. The marks are disappearing by degrees.” Again, when they had suffered from influenza: “Your children, and particularly Alexander, are better. The youngest still coughs.” In an allusion to Gregory Orlof’s‡ in-

* Lord Malmesbury’s Correspondence.

† Memoirs published by the Historical Society in St. Petersburg.

‡ Gregory Orlof had lived abroad some years, and married, but on the death of his wife in 1779 he returned distracted to Russia. He reproached the Empress in the midst of a Court ball as the author of his misery, saying he was being punished for the murder of Peter III. He died at Gateschina in 1783 in the last stage of idiocy.

sanity, she says, "Thank God, he is in the hands of a man who—you know how little faith I have in doctors' medicine and charlatanism—has never yet failed to cure, though only the desperately sick have recourse to him. So every doctor is enraged against him. . . . Your children accompanied me to the Hermitage one Sunday when there was a comedy, during which they played in the upper rooms, but when it was finished they danced the polonaise. They now delight in balls. Yesterday, at Count Skavronski's wedding, they danced with all the ladies they could catch. You can imagine how amusing it is to see such babies imitate grown-up men. . . . You must please to observe that Alexander dictated himself what is written in pencil, and that he inked it over. I have told them in future to follow the same plan with the youngest, that you may receive what they say themselves. . . . The eldest asked to-day to be shown Vienna, Kiof, and Petersburg on the terrestrial globe, 'to see,' he said, 'the distance.' He spells syllables with four letters, and by his own wish spends sometimes two or three hours over his A B C. The depth of this child's questions are astonishing. The youngest begins to talk very distinctly, and becomes more and more amusing; he comes every day with me to find cherries. He is growing very pretty." She also speaks of taking them out in her sledge, Constantine sitting on her knee, and of Alexander "jumping about on one foot like a bird." She describes the last as being "more inquiring every day," so she had written a little book, which he liked so much that he constantly asked to have it read to him, and had "learned it by heart." She alludes jestingly to the two kisses which the Pope had bestowed on Paul, who waited in St. Peter's at six A.M. to take leave of him as he was quitting Rome on a visit to Vienna, and rather contemptuously to Marie Antoinette and the amusements of the French Court. The Grand Duke and Duchess, under the title of the Count and Countess du Nord, visited Warsaw and Vienna, where they stayed a month, and where Paul wrote to his mother that he "had gained much information;" then proceeded to Munich and Italy, whence they made their way to Paris, and met with a brilliant reception from Louis XVI. No royal entertainment ever received such a splendid return, for Paul never

forgot the attention paid him by the Bourbons, and especially the Prince de Condé, and when the Revolution of 1789 drove the whole family into exile he warmly embraced their cause. For a time he supported them all in regal state in Russia, and from personal feeling, as well as from dislike of the infidel opinions of the republic, adopted the policy of resistance to its principles which ended with the entry of Alexander into Paris. It was only seven years before the destruction of the Bastille, but the ancient régime of France and its oppressive aristocratic government were in full force, and few were far-seeing enough to perceive the coming storm. The Dutch had just refused a loan to Russia, considering the reigning dynasty as most insecure, and her resources an insufficient guarantee; yet, though the credit of the Bourbons was low, they were regarded as safe in their seats as London on the banks of the Thames. A horde of Tartars might again overrun Russia and sink St. Petersburg beneath its primitive swamps, but was it possible that one Bourbon should not succeed another as month succeeds month in the course of the year, and who imagined that a foreign sovereign would ever enter Paris as a conqueror, and dictate the constitution and form of monarchy to govern humiliated France?

Paul made a most favourable impression* there on all with whom he came in contact. The interest he took in the state of the prisons, which were unusually wretched† in Paris, and his liberal donations to the unhappy inmates; his extensive information, bon-mots, and the good temper with which he treated the disparaging remarks of the crowd on his personal appearance, observing to the Russian ambassador that the French people were more truthful than polite; his indefatigable activity, and even his eccentricities, were attractive to a nation fond of novelty. "He is twenty-eight," writes a lady from Paris: "his first appearance is not prepossessing; he is very small, and plain even for the northern races, but with a refined and intelligent expression, an astute smile, and his eyes are brilliant and animated." Of the conduct of the Duke of Orleans he observed, "The King of France is very patient. If my mother had such a cousin he would not remain long in Russia. The consequences of these rebellions in the

* Madame d'Oberkirch, Princesse de Lamballe, Madame Campan, &c.

† See Howard.

royal family are of more importance than may at first appear." . . . "The Count du Nord made many just and profound reflections,"* she wrote later. "They have often been recalled to my memory by events of which I have been a witness." He was received at the Academy with a eulogistic oration comparing him to his great-grandfather Peter the Great. He replied, "It is my ambition to resemble him one day, and to continue the work he began; but at present I do not deserve to have my inglorious name inscribed beside his."

When the Imperial visitors took leave of Louis XVI. and the Queen, June 18th, 1781, Paul kissed little Madame Royale, afterwards the Duchess d'Angoulême, and told her he should never see her again, for he should not come any more to Paris. "Oh, but I shall see you again," said the child; "for if you do not come to see me I shall pay you a visit in Russia." Years passed, and one gloomy December day she fled with Louis XVIII. from his empire, and the daughter of France, whose birth was too exalted to marry any other than a French prince, was thankful for a piece of black bread to escape starvation, and was lodged in a wretched Polish posting-house half buried in snow.

On quitting France the travellers visited Poland and the residence of Peter the Great at Zaandam. At Utrecht they were received by the Austrian Governor, Count Loekhart, and his wife, who were Scotch by birth, and were surprised to find Paul well acquainted with Scotch history and the part the Loekhart family had played in it. At Stuttgart they were entertained by the uncle of the Grand Duchess. He lamented to his niece his extravagant youth, when he expended his money in building palaces. Paul overhearing him, said: "The erection of palaces is, after all, not so unwise. The grandeur of princes is the greatness of the people, and all the money you have spent here has only given employment to your subjects and added to their comforts." On September 29th they left for Russia, much grieved on hearing that a nobleman who wrote to Paul on merely the ordinary topics of the day was banished to Siberia for this offence, and the rumour reached them that the Empress had some thoughts of appointing the young Alexander as her successor.* Catherine also found an

* Lord Malmesbury's Correspondence.

ingenious mode of tormenting her daughter-in-law, who was fond of dress, and had bought a store of fine clothes in Paris, for she altered the Court costume so as to resemble the ancient Muscovite style rather than that of France, and these expensive dresses were now useless. They visited Mittau on their way to St. Petersburg, and stayed nearly a month with the Baron de Krudener, lately married to the young Julie Veightinhof, the daughter of a Livonian nobleman, and the granddaughter of the celebrated Marshal Munnich. This lady became renowned for her extreme religious opinions and her renunciation of all worldly amusements, when she received her full share of admiration, scorn, and persecution; but now she was a gay and entertaining hostess, and Paul and his wife spent the Christmas season in the midst of an agreeable family circle, whom they joined in charades, sleighing parties, and other games. While they enjoyed the Baron's hospitality Madame de Krudener's first child was born, and named Paul after his imperial godfather, who held him at the font the day before he left for St. Petersburg. The Empress received her son and daughter with marked coldness in an interview lasting only a few minutes, and they had hardly reached the capital when Panine was struck with apoplexy and never spoke again. Paul watched by his dying bed, and showed great sorrow at his loss. He had been a harsh preceptor, but was his only influential friend in the empire, and when he was gone Potemkin ruled without a rival, and soon made the Prince feel his power.

Yet though Catherine was deficient in maternal affection, she showed the greatest solicitude for the welfare of her grandchildren, and in their turn Alexander and Constantine regarded her memory with filial indulgence, though perfectly aware of her faults.* They resided with her alternately at Czarco-Selo and the Winter Palace, under the charge of Madame Benkendorf, the wife of an Esthonian nobleman, till Alexander was five years old, when a governor was chosen for them in Count Nicholas Soltikof, the President of the War

* It is curious that Alexander II. is the first Russian Emperor since 1684 not educated under female superintendence—Peter I., Peter II., Ivan VI., Peter III., Paul, Alexander I., and Nicholas having all been subjected to the guardianship of a sister, a grandmother, a mother, or an aunt.

Office, who accompanied Paul on his foreign tour. At the same time Pratasov, a Russian of the old school, was appointed sub-tutor to Alexander; and Sacken, formerly one of Paul's tutors, to Constantine, who was attended by a Greek officer and Greek servants. Even at this early age the characteristics which afterwards distinguished these princes were displayed, and Alexander's gentleness, intelligence, conscientiousness, and amiability were in strong contrast to Constantine's fretfulness, caprice, and violence. It was with great difficulty that the younger brother was taught to read, and, unlike Alexander, who was fond of natural history, and would not willingly hurt a living creature, he delighted in tormenting animals and killing flies and cats. His oddities amused his grandmother, who humoured him in every whim, though she said of them that Alexander was an angel, but Constantine a fury, for when opposed in his wishes he would attack his tutors and playmates with his nails and teeth. He was attached to his brother, and they shared the same rooms and amusements, as Catherine, hoping that he might profit by the companionship, relinquished her first intention to educate them separately, one with young Greeks, and the other with Russians. They were delicate children, but received extreme care. Their meals were regulated entirely according to medical advice, and Pratasov and Sacken made a minute report of their health every day to Soltikof; but they were, nevertheless, kept much too closely to their tasks, and both in consequence grew up most inconveniently short-sighted, while Constantine hated anything connected with literature for the rest of his life. Catherine composed a plan for the education of her grandsons, compiled from Locke and Rousseau, in the form of a letter addressed to Count Soltikof, and she particularly desired they should not be allowed to study either poetry or music. Peter III. used to play on the violin, and she had since hated every kind of harmony. She wrote a series called the "Alexander-Constantine Library," and as children's books were very scarce at that time, they obtained a large circulation in Prussia. The princes were certainly taught to the utmost extent that a juvenile capacity would admit. Their games were dancing and military exercises; their walks were devoted to natural history and botanical researches; their recreation was to share in the

private theatrical performances and gambling parties at the Hermitage. By the time Alexander was fourteen years old he was able to read and speak the Russian, Polish, French, German, and English languages, besides being a good Latin and Greek scholar. He was remarkably well informed in ancient and modern history, geography, polite literature, fortification and drawing, and had been initiated in the duties of a sailor on board a little frigate built expressly for the purpose, and launched on the lake at Czarco-Selo. Colonel Masson instructed him in mathematics, for which he showed some ability, though he preferred the study of history and classics. He also took a particular interest in horticulture and natural philosophy, and was a very fair artist, a talent common to several members of his family.

Pratasov, described by his colleagues as "ignorant, fanatical, and reserved," was the Princes' religious instructor, and they were frequently heard when very young to leave their beds in the same room and kneel down to ask the Divine forgiveness, in their own simple words, for some childish misdemeanor before they ventured to go to sleep. Catherine, professing to be a follower of Voltaire, was alarmed lest her grandchildren should grow up what she considered superstitious, and she desired the reigning favourite, General Lanskoï, to look out for another tutor of similar views to her own. He recommended La Harpe, a young Swiss from the Pays du Vaud, who was a Republican and of Protestant descent, though he had early imbibed the free religious opinions which were fast spreading through Germany and France. He is sometimes confused with Jean François La Harpe, the French correspondent of the Grand Duke Paul, and the author of the "Cours de Littérature," who was born in Paris in 1739, and died in 1803, but they were not even related. Frederick Charles La Harpe was born at Rolle, on the Lake of Geneva, in 1754, and was made a Doctor of Laws in Tübingen when only twenty years old. Lanskoï heard of him from Baron Grimm, and after the death of Lanskoï, in 1784, the Empress felt the more partial to La Harpe for his sake. His political opinions were no drawback in her eyes, as it was an age in which the despots of Eastern Europe affected to be Republicans, before the French Revolution warned them of the extent

to which such principles might go. La Harpe commenced his duties in 1783, and as his education was far superior to that of the Russian tutors, who were more numerous than efficient, he soon became the Princes' chief instructor, with the exception of Michael Muravief, a member of a distinguished Russian family, appointed in 1785 to give them lessons in Russian literature, Russian history, and Russian philosophy. The last wrote several books for the benefit of his pupils, and two of his nephews, with Prince Alexander Galitzin, were their fellow students. Pallas also gave Alexander lessons in botany, and Kraft in astronomy and experimental physics. When he was eleven years old Kraft was speaking to him of the various conjectures on the nature of light, and said that Newton considered it to be a continual emanation from the sun. The boy answered, "That cannot be true, for the sun would become smaller every day." Constantine was quick, but seemed perfectly incapable of fixing his attention upon any subject except military exercises. He learned Greek from his nurse, but when a Greek tutor was provided for him he refused to speak the language, and said he would always be a Russian and nothing else. On one occasion Saeken was endeavouring to make him read, when he declared he was resolved not to learn to read, for he saw Saeken always reading, and found him growing more and more stupid every day.

La Harpe occupied a house near the Palace of Czareo-Selo, which stands in a park stretching over several miles of garden, field, and forest; but he spent a great part of every day with his pupils, who learned here to ride, to shoot, and to steer a boat, as well as sword practice and drill—Constantine being placed at the head of a corps of 200 young Greek cadets, and Alexander of the same number of Russians, chiefly sons of the nobility. This juvenile band included the Princes Galitzin, Dolgorukof, the Muraviefs, Aratchaief, and others whose names were prominent in the history of their country at a latter period. La Harpe received strict rules as to his method of education from the Empress, and in obedience to her instructions gave Alexander lessons on the various forms of government, and especially on the duties of an absolute sovereign. He always denied having tried to put Republican notions into their heads, but he requested permission to inflict any

chastisement he thought proper when it was required, and compelled Constantine to submit to his authority. He has gained credit for his system from those who imagine that Alexander's character was due to it; but it should be remembered that he also formed Constantine, and from his earliest infancy Alexander was represented by his instructors as a remarkably clever and well-disposed boy. The Swiss Republicans of those days, pupils of Rousseau, were very severe trainers of royal youth: it was their object to convince princes that they were but dust of the earth like their subjects, and it may be doubted if the sensitive feelings of a child of seven were not too much worked upon; and on the other hand, if Constantine was not rendered callous, by being compelled to dwell too long on his faults, from seeing them written up for a week before his eyes. Alexander was made to keep a journal of the occupations of each week, and his own shortcomings, and also what La Harpe styled, "the archives of shame of the Grand Duke Alexander," written down by himself from the time he was seven years old. Constantine had a similar task imposed upon him. When they had committed some fault they were obliged to write an account of it, and their unavowed motives for being idle or negligent. Alexander was fond of reasoning with his masters, and he was made to write out the whole conversation as a punishment, with comments on the folly of his arguments; and the writing was then posted up on the wall of his study till replaced by a more favourable report. Some of these documents in his own hand are preserved, and the wafers still attached to them show that the last penalty was no mere threat. "The Grand Duke Alexander having forgotten himself so far as to say uncivil things, has been sent away, and to remind him that incivility is inexcusable, this paper is hung up in his study as a fit ornament for it." . . . "The Grand Duke Alexander has read so badly and with so little attention that we have been obliged to make him spell like a child of eight years old. This second proof of it has been hung up." Another, when he was thirteen, states: "Instead of redoubling my efforts to profit by the years of study which remain to me, I become every day more careless, inattentive, and incapable. The older I grow, the more I approach zero. What shall I become?"

Nothing, according to all appearances. Sensible men when they bow to me will shrug their shoulders with pity, and will perhaps laugh at my expense because I shall attribute to my distinguished merits the external respect they show me. Thus they offer incense to an idol, though laughing at such a farce. I the undersigned have told an untruth by pretending I had not time to finish what was given me to do two days ago, while my brother has completed the same things in the same space of time. I have trifled, chattered, and conducted myself from the beginning of the week like a man devoid of ambition, and insensible to shame and reproaches. I console myself with the idea that I shall always know as much as men of my rank whom I do not wish to offend by acquiring too much knowledge." . . . "I am a bare table as regards ambition and desire to learn. I shall always be clever enough. Why should I give myself the trouble to become so? Princes such as I am know everything without having learnt it," &c.

On Constantine's "Tables of Shame" we read, under date of 1790, in very bad spelling: "As I was uncivil they reproved me, telling me I was a little boy; at which I was so much offended that I answered very boldly that I was a prince, but hardly had I finished when they burst out laughing, and I felt that I had said a very silly thing."* "At more than twelve years old I do not know anything, not even how to read. To be rough, uncivil, and impertinent are my only aspirations. My knowledge and my ambition are worthy of a drummer." One day Constantine said that a subordinate ought to execute everything his commander ordered, even if it were a crime—a soldier was a pure machine. La Harpe made him write out all the consequences of such a maxim. An officer who ordered his soldiers to fire on passers-by must then be punctually obeyed. An officer who received an order from his commander to commit an infamy was punishable if he dared only to require an explanation or show the least doubt. An officer must, then, make no use of his own good sense. Information, reasoning, sentiments of honour were hurtful to good discipline, &c.; "but," added the tutor, "I have vainly tried to make Monseigneur reflect on the folly of uttering unreservedly

* He signed himself "the ass Constantine."

maxims which give a false idea of his heart, and I have begged him to avoid repeating them to me for the future.”*

Even the best education of a prince is very inferior to the mental training boys obtain in a large school, forced to make their way through a crowd of rivals, and able to exercise some choice in their studies and pursuits. It would also have been far happier for Alexander if he had been brought up in the doctrines of the Church he was ultimately to direct, instead of in the most profound ignorance of the orthodox faith. La Harpe instructed his pupils in moral precepts such as were taught by the sages of Greece and Rome, but he depicted the Christian religion as a mere system of philosophy, the most suitable perhaps for the early stages of a nation, but to be cast aside when it had reached its full growth; and to consider the ceremonies of the Greek Church as antiquated forms which it might be necessary for the leaders of a people to respect from political motives so long as they were held as efficacious by a large portion of their subjects, but utterly disbelieved as realities by all enlightened men. This doctrine,† laid on to the foundation imbibed from Pratasov and the attendants of his earliest years, added to the views of his grandmother, who professed to believe in destiny, and when her horses ran away with her near Sevastopol, coolly remarked to the English ambassador that she confided in her lucky star, must have made rather a strange confusion in the mind of a reflecting boy, and it was the substance of an energetic remonstrance from his father when La Harpe was appointed in 1783. Besides possessing a strong religious feeling, Paul had long been impatient at his paternal claims being utterly ignored, and he now considered he had ample cause of complaint. More than one very angry discussion took place between him and the Empress, in which his wife was obliged to take a part, and a great deal was said on both sides that neither could easily forget. In his early years Catherine frequently told her son that his understanding was as deformed as his appearance, and he retaliated by saying she neglected her duties as a sovereign in permitting the nation and herself to be governed

* *Recueil de la Société d'Histoire de Russie.*

† Chateaubriand says Alexander was brought up an atheist, but he probably means what is generally called a deist.

by unworthy favourites. She had threatened to marry Potemkin in order to spite him, for the crown should then descend to their children. But even stronger language was used at this moment, and he said that she wished to deprive him of his children, as she had already deprived him of a father and of his paternal inheritance. The result was that the Empress banished him to the Castle of Gateschina, just left vacant by the death of the wretched Gregory Orlof, and he was no longer permitted to reside at Paulovski, his palace near Czarco-Selo, except when she was absent from that neighbourhood, or to occupy rooms in the Winter Palace. She could not bear to hear him mentioned during the next twelve years. His wife shared his disgrace. She went to Czarco-Selo or to the Winter Palace, according as to whether it was winter or summer, to give birth to each member of their numerous family, and cheerfully leaving her children to the care of the Empress, returned to Gateschina as soon as she could bear the journey over the bad road between the two establishments. There she gave herself up to the task of amusing her husband and joining in his pursuits, and even in a capital as slanderous as St. Petersburg no breath of scandal ever ventured to approach her name. She was allowed to visit her children once a week if she chose to do so, and as they grew older they called at Gateschina for a few hours once or twice in the summer to see their father, though Soltikof, who attended them on these occasions, had strict orders not to leave them alone with him. Paul was remarkably fond of children, and the separation was a bitter trial to him. In January, 1783, immediately after his return from abroad, his eldest daughter, Alexandra, was born at Czareo-Selo; a second, Helena, at St. Petersburg, December 24th, 1784; and a third, Mary, February 21st, 1786. On the two last occasions he was forced to remain at Gateschina. He became melancholy, and begged his mother to allow him to take part, if only as a common soldier, in the Turkish war. "All Europe," he wrote to her, "knows my desire to fight against the Ottomans. What will they think of me on hearing that I stay at home?" "They will think you an obedient son," she answered, drily, and always refused to let him hold any post in the public service. As heir to the throne he bore the title of Grand Admiral of Russia, yet he was never once

permitted to visit the head-quarters of the fleet at Cronstadt.

Paul regulated his expenses at Gateschina with close economy; for while the Empress expended 17,000,000 roubles, besides estates, on the Orlofs, and a still larger sum on their successors and Potemkin, who received more titles than the heir-apparent, and the cost of each courtier was 600 roubles a day, he was restricted to an allowance of 30,000 paper roubles yearly; which, owing to their depreciation, became worth little more than 1000*l*. Catherine sent a lady and gentleman from her own household, who were changed every fortnight, to wait on him and his wife; and they were allowed a corps of soldiers for an escort. He farmed his estate; and Sir John Sinelair, who visit him in 1786, thought it much to his credit that in his trying circumstances he could occupy himself with agriculture, his garden, drawing and music, and take a pleasure in entertaining strangers. "Never did a private family," writes the Count de Ségur, who also went there, "do the honours of a house with more ease, grace, and simplicity. Their dinners, balls, plays, and fêtes were all marked with the stamp of a rigid decorum, the best style, and most delicate taste. But we soon perceived in Paul a restlessness and apprehension, a mistrust and extreme susceptibility; in short, those eccentricities which were in the end the cause of such errors."*

Another guest describes him as a devoted husband and fond father, but morbidly sensitive; and in consequence a self-tormentor. On the few occasions when he was summoned to St. Petersburg, he affected a disregard of his own children he by no means felt; as he said, if the Empress thought he cared about them he should never see them at all. His oddities were developed by seclusion, and his once amiable disposition soured by his wrongs and indifferent health. He possessed the same military mania which made his father and grandfather ridiculous, and was inherited by his son Constantine, fortifying Gateschina, and holding miniature

* At St. Petersburg Ségur was presented to Alexander, then seven years old, it being the first time he had received an ambassador. "I have always," he writes, "thought it ridiculous to address serious language to a child, so I only said a few words to him on his education and the hopes entertained of him at a future day."—*Memoirs of Ségur*.

reviews with his guard. But he also established a school for the sons and daughters of military men, which became his wife's chief object of interest during the long years of her widowhood. She was naturally of a placid temperament, and sustained her spirits in adversity with the hope of not only sharing her husband's throne, but ascending it some day in her own right. The separation from her children, who enjoyed Imperial honours while she met with no consideration, gave rise to a jealous feeling towards her elder sons, whom she regarded as rivals, and the obstacles to her future hopes. Constantine's plain face, marked with the small-pox, his dislike to the idea of a Greek throne, and the very trouble he gave his attendants were more pleasing to her than Alexander's good looks and accomplishments, as offering less probability that he would attract the Russian people and stand in her way. Her own family were also constantly asking her for money, or appointments in the Russian service; and she knew they looked forward to her elevation for unlimited aid. She was much attached to them, and had many trials respecting them between 1786-90. Her next sister, married to the Duke of Oldenburg, to whom Paul had relinquished his paternal right in Holstein, died in 1786, leaving two infant sons. Her youngest sister, married to Francis of Austria, was also dead. Her eldest brother was expelled from St. Petersburg for cruelty to his wife, and that wife was now imprisoned for life in Russia, owing to a dispute at cards with the Empress.

The Grand Duchess's fourth daughter, Catherine, was born May 21st, 1788, and immediately afterwards Paul was ordered to join the Russian army in Finland, as an aide-de-camp, to oppose the Swedes. Gustavus had suddenly attacked Russia without declaring war, and St. Petersburg seemed at his mercy. Every available soldier was engaged against the Turks at the other extremity of the empire, so that even the stove-heaters of the Imperial Palace were compelled to serve. Catherine prepared to retire to Moscow, but did not wish Paul to follow her to a city which had once shown him proofs of attachment, and she was too suspicious to leave him near St. Petersburg. In Finland he joined in several engagements, showing coolness and intrepidity; but the campaign was early closed by a victory over the Swedish fleet, commanded by the king's

brother, afterwards Charles XIII., and the capital was saved. The conquest of Finland, in Alexander's reign, was partly due to this war, which showed how completely St. Petersburg lay open to a treacherous ally. Paul returned to Gatchina seriously indisposed, it was said, from disappointment at not having received at least the lowest Order of St. George.

Even Masson,* no favourable authority, speaking of Paul in 1799, said he had "several excellent attainments, and above all a sobriety and regularity of manners; till now, very rare in a Russian autocrat." But his character and intellect were represented to his sons in the most unfavourable light, for Catherine took La Harpe into her confidence, and desired him to prepare Alexander to set aside his father and proclaim himself Emperor whenever she should be no more. "Tell me," she said to the tutor, "what do you think of that madman?" as she often styled her son; "and what will become of Russia, if he ever reigns? What a difference between him and his son Alexander! That amiable child consoles me, and reassures me for the future. He is so precocious that if he already remarks his father's whims, I hope it may be to avoid them. Point out to him the dangers and absurdity of such follies in a man born to reign, and give him, above all, boldness and self-confidence: it is best to prepare him for the steps that his father's conduct will perhaps render necessary." From time to time she pressed this advice on La Harpe, who felt some difficulty in trying to set a child against his father; but still he carried out her directions so far as to teach him that the welfare of many millions must occasionally be superior to filial duty; and others about him asserted that his life or liberty would be in positive danger if Paul were ever permitted to wear the crown. Yet Alexander could not but feel that his parents were treated with injustice; and a sentiment, natural to any well-disposed youth, made him contemplate a collision with his father, or a rival candidature for the throne, with the utmost repugnance. So as he grew up he thought of settling the difficulty by retiring to another country, and living on the banks of the Rhine; but he never seems for a moment to have contemplated carrying the Empress's idea into effect.

Yet many important events were to occur before this mode

* A Republican whom Paul dismissed from Alexander's service.

of solving a hard problem seemed the most feasible course. The arms of Russia were victorious in several engagements over the Turks, and the Crimea was added to her territories. The town of Cherson rose in the midst of a desert, and Catherine looked upon it as the nucleus of a restored Greek empire. She prepared to pay a visit to this new portion of her dominions, and wished to take Alexander and Constantine, then seven and nine years old, that the youngest might be crowned Emperor of the Greeks at the edge of his future sovereignty, and Alexander be proclaimed at the same time Czarovitz, or heir-apparent of Russia. Everything was arranged for the journey to take place January 7th, 1787, when Constantine fell ill with the measles, and Catherine, fearing Alexander might already have taken it, was obliged to leave them both behind. The foreign ambassadors accompanied her, and she was joined on the road by Stanislaus of Poland, and the Emperor Joseph, who travelled under the name of Count Falkenstein. Suvorov and other generals distinguished in the Turkish war met the Imperial cortége at Kiov and at Cherson. Catherine drove under an archway inscribed with "The way to Byzantium," a device afterwards copied at Antwerp and Amiens by Napoleon when engaged in war with England. Potemkin was the hero of the occasion, for he was not only the director of the campaign, which he had prosecuted with vigour, saying it would both add to Catherine's glory and be good for trade, but he governed all the southern half of Russia. The Empress never questioned his proceedings or raised a voice in favour of the hapless people driven from the new province of Taurida, to make room for the Russians, and sent to occupy remote Muscovite deserts. She was fond of classical literature, and particularly pleased with the acquisition of an ancient Greek colony in the former kingdom of Mithridates; but had scarcely quitted the borders of the Turkish empire on her return to St. Petersburg when the war was renewed through the intrigues of the French ambassador in Constantinople, who fomented hostilities between Russia and Turkey, to divert her attention from the affairs of Poland. The sieges of Oczakov and Ismail were its most noted incidents, and accomplished by a reckless expenditure of money and blood; but Potemkin had the whole treasure of the empire at his dis-

posal, and was able to increase her forces from a population of thirty-three millions.

In 1789 General Tamara was charged with reeruiting the Russian naval force in the Mediterranean at the various foreign ports, for service against the Turks. Napoleon, at that time twenty-one years of age, had returned from Paris to his native island of Corsica, where he was elected commander of the local militia in Ajaccio. At the moment there did not seem to be any prospect of his future advancement in France, and he possessed no small share of the Corsican bitterness to the recent conquerors of his native land.* He asked Tamara to obtain a commission for him in the Russian armies, but was refused because he wanted the rank of major as equivalent to that of lieutenant-colonel of militia, and Russia would only receive foreign officers on condition that they accepted a grade lower than they held in their own country. The letter is still preserved in which he made this request.†

In the same year the outbreak of the French revolution appeared likely to shake the foundation of every despotic throne. Autocracy seemed to be dying a natural death; liberal opinions in religion and politics were rapidly gaining ground; and the new republic of America was setting an example of sobriety and prosperity which in time might have found an echo in the mother continent. But as a violent religious persecution has never been proved to do otherwise than strengthen the doctrines it was intended to eradicate, so the extravagance of the leaders of the new French government brought liberty into disrepute with all interested in the maintenance of peace, and enabled Napoleon to turn against the patron who had raised him from obscurity, and re-establish aristocratic and monarchical institutions in France. Before the revolution there was a rage for everything French in Germany. The Germans were ashamed of their native language, and French milliners were taken as governesses to German princesses, hairdressers from Paris as tutors to their boys. Learned men and theologians in Germany were eagerly embracing modified views of the doctrines of D'Alembert

* When at the Military College at Brienne Napoleon used to say he hated the French, and would do them all the harm in his power.

† Rostopchine.

and Voltaire, and a love of liberty and unbelief went together as a matter of course. The influence of France in Germany was far greater than since they have experienced the exactions of their models during the war between 1806 and 1814. Napoleon tried to substitute material for moral force, and lost both. "Germany," wrote Jung Stilling at this epoch, "will be severely punished by France for becoming her partner in her sin." An immense association allied with the French demagogues existed in Germany, and they opened the doors to the army of the French Republic, which in 1792 overran Belgium and the Rhenish provinces, and a few years later to the armies of Napoleon, whom they regarded with enthusiasm as the offspring of the Republic.

The French revolution had a great effect upon Catherine, who in her youth sustained with courage the threatened destruction of her empire by the hordes of Pugachev, but now in her old age above all things dreaded civil war, and feared lest the torch of Jacobinism flaring on the banks of the Seine should fling sparks to light up insurrections as far as Russia. She no longer coquetted with liberalism or infidelity. The censorship of the press was strictly enforced, the busts of Voltaire and Charles Fox were displaced from their pedestals at Czarco-Selo, and Novikov and other men of letters who had professed liberal views or joined secret societies were thrown into prison. She expressed the utmost aversion to revolutionists, to Washington, the American patriot, to Cromwell, and the ancient heroes of the Greek republics. The French emigrants flocked to Russia, and the exiled princes were partly maintained by her bounty in the foreign countries they had made their home. Paul felt as strongly as his mother, though from different motives, on the same side of the subject, and when the Republic raised the standard of atheism, and erected a statue to the Goddess of Reason in Paris, his increased dislike to the idea of La Harpe remaining in the post of tutor to his children, secured him for the time at least in his office. "Have you still that Jaecobin always about you?" he said to Constantine the next time his son called at Gateschina. "You see, my children, the result of a weak and timid government, and that a ruler ought to keep his subjects as thoroughly in hand as a Kamschatkadate his dogs," was the

lesson he tried to impress on them, when on another occasion they came to see him and he had just heard of a fearful outbreak of the demagogues in Paris. To repress liberal opinions in religion and policy became his fixed idea, and when after the execution of Louis XVI., the Empress ordered all Frenchmen to take the oath of allegiance to his young son or else depart from her dominions within a week, Paul exacted it from even his French cook. It proved a safeguard to the immigrants, for it showed the undoubted loyalty of those who remained, and the brother of Marat appeared openly at the Court of St. Petersburg in a moment when he could hardly have shown himself with safety in a London street.

La Harpe was dismissed at the beginning of 1794, owing to a scene with the Empress, in which he said, "she found she had to deal with a man as proud as herself." Alexander much regretted his departure, and corresponded with him regularly for some years. The tutor requested to be informed how Constantine conducted himself, and in 1796, his brother reported of him that he was "very violent, very self-willed, his views not often coinciding with reason; military matters turned his head, and he was sometimes brutal with the soldiers of his company." A description borne out by all contemporary authorities. Constantine continued to write to La Harpe after Alexander's death, and to the year 1829, while the tutor returned to Switzerland and lived till 1836 in the enjoyment of a handsome pension from Russia.

No contrast could have been greater than the sombre propriety of the household at Gateschina, and the feverish excitement of the Court where Alexander and Constantine were educated, one of the most profligate of modern times. The princes grew up amidst a round of gaiety and dissipation, which proceeded with reckless extravagance as if there was no future beyond the current year. Fortunes of a million roubles, hundreds of serfs, and many acres of valuable estate, were all lost and gained at cards in a single night; and it is recorded that on one occasion during a card-party in the Hermitage, the Empress rang the bell for a glass of water, and as it was not answered, went out herself to look for a page, when she found the gentlemen and ladies of the antechamber, the servants on the staircase, and the very guards at the entrance of the

palace, all too much absorbed in their own cards to be able to attend to the summons. The income Catherine might have preserved for the benefit of the empire, and which she had derived from the confiscation of property in Poland and of the Church lands in Russia, was wasted among the nobles, who expended it in every species of folly, French actresses, and foreign luxuries, while a heavy national debt was fast growing to hang as a weight round the necks of her successors. Her victories, like those of Napoleon, have partially veiled the great errors of her administration from the eyes of posterity. The law was a dead letter as regarded the nobles, for they paid no tradesmen's bills unless they chose, and instances were known of a police agent being kicked out of the house of a nobleman into the street. No amount of immorality received a censure, and in Catherine's old age the chosen companions of her evenings and out-door exercise were Plato and Valerian Zoubof, two of the most dissolute young men in St. Petersburg, with other youths of the same stamp. On the departure of Potemkin for Moldavia, in 1791, she brought Alexander more prominently forward: when he dined with her she placed him at the head of her table in the seat usually occupied by the favourite, and he received all distinguished foreign visitors, and acted the part of master of the Court.

Before setting out for the army on the Danube, Potemkin gave a sumptuous entertainment in the new Taurida Palace, which he bestowed as a truly imperial gift on the Empress. The fête had been months in preparation, and every costly luxury the four continents could provide was produced. The musicians were concealed in enormous chandeliers, and Alexander and Constantine at the head of a band of young nobles, all dressed in white velvet, performed a ballet, after which they came forward and sang an ode in praise of the Empress. Catherine stayed till midnight, and a few days afterwards took leave of Potemkin for the last time. "The Grand Duke Alexander is an angel, a prince after my own heart, born and educated to be a blessing to the nation," were almost the last words he said to her. Soon the news arrived that the most powerful subject in the world had died on the side of a deserted road near Jassy. Potemkin had been ill for several weeks, but paid no regard to his health, and refused to follow

his physician's advice. As he was driving with his niece in his travelling carriage, he became worse, and was laid on the grass, where in a few minutes he expired. Catherine fainted three times when she heard of it, and months passed away before she recovered from the loss. She looked upon him as her safeguard against the possible designs of her son, and she felt she wanted a protector. For this she turned to her grandson Alexander, with whom she began to hold frequent conversations in private, apparently instructing him in her views of government, and preparing to proclaim him publicly as her successor; for her greatest wish now was to see him married and in the possession of an heir. Some thought in that event she meant to cast aside the cares of royalty and place the crown on her grandson's head with her own hands. But before her abdication she must procure a settlement for Constantine, and put down the spirit of republicanism beginning to manifest itself in Poland.

When Alexander, then thirteen years old, heard of the death of Potemkin, he observed that there was one bad man the less in the world. Soltikof begged him to be careful of what he said, and told him of the Empress's distress. The Prince replied, that he loved and valued his grandmother, but that he loved his country still more, and Potemkin was an enemy to her real interests. The old courtier was not unfrequently a little alarmed by his pupil's expression of opinion on public affairs; he openly showed his horror at the fearful loss sustained at the siege of Ismail, and at the frivolous recklessness which led to its attack, for Potemkin sent the order to Suvorov to take it at all risks in three days, merely for the sake of gaining a bet. Soltikof advised his pupil never to join an opposition. "A man," he said, making use of the common simile, "who rows a boat with the tide has a fair voyage, and arrives safely to the shore; but he who persists in making head against the stream has a fatiguing journey, and is probably upset in the end."

In 1791 a deputation of Greeks waited on the Empress, and read an address: "Heaven has reserved our deliverance," they concluded, "for your Imperial Majesty. It is under your auspices that we hope to rescue from the hands of the barbarians the empire they have usurped, and our Patriarch and holy

religion which they have despised. Our superb ruins speak to our eyes and tell us of our ancient grandeur. Give us for a sovereign your grandson Constantine—it is the wish of our nation, as the family of our Emperors is extinct.” The Empress dismissed them with assurances of redress and support, and they were introduced to her grandsons. The deputation offered to kiss Alexander’s hand, but he pointed to his brother Constantine, telling them, in Greek, that it was to him they were to address themselves. They did homage to Constantine; and stated their mission, giving him the title of Basileus-ta Ellenon. Constantine answered them in the same language; “Go, and let everything be done according to your wishes;” and Catherine caused a medal to be struck bearing the inscription, “Constantine, Emperor of the Greeks.”

But England had seen with great dissatisfaction the transfer of the Crimea to Russia, and now stepped forward on behalf of the remains of the Turkish Empire. A Christian government could in reality say nothing in the cause of a Mahometan Power who had stolen from Christians every foot of its empire, and ruled the prostrate nation with a tyranny and barbarism seldom equalled even in the East. The cathedral of St. Sophia and other churches throughout Roumelia, Greece, Asia Minor, and Syria were stripped of all the accessories of Christian worship, and set apart for the use of the followers of Mahomet. The conquerors were fast diminishing as a people from the enervating influence with which the luxury of the old Greek monarchy had told upon the savage yet manly warriors who traversed half Asia to arrive at Constantinople, where for several centuries they had been the dread of Europe. The world would hardly have been the worse, and much bloodshed might have been spared, if Russia and Austria had completed the partition of Turkey at that moment, and the crown of the restored sovereignty of the Byzantines had been placed on the head of a Russian prince and made independent of Russia. Probably Russia would not have been so strong as it is now, for Catherine’s scheme included the annexation of the Crimea to the new Greek Empire, and she would therefore have been completely cut off from the Black Sea.

England now fears for her Indian possessions and her in-

fluence in Egypt when she hears that Russia has formed a political friendship with a neighbouring state, but then she thought the safety of her Protestant ally Prussia might be compromised by the preponderance of the Roman and Greek Catholic Powers.* "His Britannic Majesty cannot see with indifference the dissolution of the Turkish Empire," was the message conveyed to the Courts of Vienna and St. Petersburg, and which, with the republican sympathies of his own subjects on the borders of France, was sufficient to draw the German Emperor from the alliance. Joseph II. and Potemkin were dead, and, as if taking advantage of their departure from the scene, and of the advancing years of the Empress, Poland, imitating the example of revolutionized France, adopted a constitution which, though it made the crown hereditary in the House of Poniatowski, completely annihilated the small remains of regal power. The death of her ally, and of the chief promoter of the original Turkish war, the defection of Joseph's successor, and the advance of Prussia into Poland to take possession of Dantzic and Thorn, two of the most important towns still left to it, induced Catherine to conclude the peace of Jassy, January, 1792, and content herself with the acquisition of Oczakov, and the territory between the Dniester and the Bog, to be prepared for contingencies with regard to Poland. The captivity of Louis XVI., by alarming the Austrian and Prussian monarchs, in reality hastened the fate of Poland; and to prevent their frontiers from extending as far as Lithuania,

* "The way to the very gates of Constantinople lay open to the Russian arms. Great Britain attempted a mediation between the belligerents. Her services were cavalierly rejected by Catherine, who refused to renew the commercial treaty with this country, consequently Mr. Pitt announced to the House of Commons an approaching rupture with Russia. Mr. Fox went at large into the matter. He maintained that Prussia could not be endangered by the victories of the Russians over the Turks, and that whatever pride the Empress might have shown in declining a peace dictated by us, yet that her offer to cede all her conquests between the Dniester and the Danube, reserving only what she had gained between the Bog and the Dnieper, was a reasonable offer, considering the vast ascendancy of her arms. 'Are we to plunge ourselves into war,' said Mr. Burke, 'into bloodshed, debt, and calamity, for the disputed possession of a distant territory, which is either a desert or the haunt of people oppressed with the yoke of savages? Are we to lavish the lives of Englishmen in order that Christian nations should be brought back to the dominion of infidels, whose expulsion from Europe would be a blessing, as their empire is now a scourge to those quarters?'"—*Burke's Public and Domestic Life of the Right Hon. E. Burke.*

on the way to Moseow, Catherine agreed to the second partition of her old admirer's states.

Poland may be compared to a man who has lost his health and fortune through gambling and drunkenness till, finding himself near the end of both his life and estate, he begins to reform his habits and expenses to an extent which would once have saved him, but is now at least twenty years too late. The *liberum veto* and slavery were to be abolished, and the Roman Catholic religion to be established, though all other denominations were to be tolerated. A hundred years earlier these reforms might have had some effect, but the nation was corrupted to its centre, and the old spirit of insubordination broke out, many preferring submission to Russia rather than the loss of their privileges or their slaves. The country was agitated by the recent partition, and bands of lawless patriots traversed the provinces, so that even without the interference of the neighbouring Powers it is doubtful whether the few enlightened Polish legislators were strong enough to enforce their views upon the entire kingdom. But their last struggle procured for them the sympathy of Western Europe and of none more than the young heir of Russia.

When we look back at the views of the old royalist and aristocratic party of the last century, its haughty denial of all educational or other privileges to the labouring classes, whom it regarded as merely created for the benefit of the nobility, monarchs treating their dominions as their private estates formed to yield incomes to supply them with luxuries, and even Frederick the Great considering the interests of the House of Brandenburg as entirely separate from the Prussian people, it is not surprising that a generous and enthusiastic boy, brought up where a despotism was carried out to its fullest extent, yet instructed in ancient classical history, in the glories of the Greek and Roman republics and the debasement and gradual decay of Imperial Rome, should have been disgusted with his surrounding influences, and eagerly hailed the French Revolution as the beginning of a regenerated system for the whole world. Alexander felt absorbing interest in the welfare of the French Republic, so hateful an object to his father and grandmother, and he heard with equal pleasure of the spark of liberty it had apparently lighted in Poland. When that spark of liberty

was crushed by the second partition, his feelings were hardly concealed from the vigilant eyes of the Empress. Then came the final act of the Polish tragedy. Koseiusko and Niemcewicz put themselves at the head of an insurrection at Cracow in March, 1794, and organized a massacre of the Russian garrisons in Poland. Hundreds of the unsuspecting soldiery fell victims to their assailants, but they were quickly avenged by their countrymen, though the Poles were defeated in fair engagements, and the assault on Praga was stopped and the carnage ceased as soon as they offered to lay down their arms. Suvorov's genius and the superiority of the Russian discipline decided the fate of the war. He was so much dreaded by the Poles that when they heard of his approach their commanders tried to make them believe it was another officer of the same name who was advancing against them, and not the formidable general who had put down the insurrection of Pugachef, and wrested Oczakov, Kinburn, Ismail, and Fokshani from the hands of the Turks. The negotiations for the final division of Poland extended several months after the capture of Warsaw, and ended in this town being made over to Prussia, who again obtained the most populous portion of the confiscated territory, while Austria and Russia divided the rest. Catherine, it must be owned, was not exorbitant in her demands when she concluded a peace, considering the advantages she had obtained and the amount of blood and treasure expended on a war. She had once meditated forming the Russian share of Poland into a separate kingdom, but though she might conquer nations, there was only one prince of her own family whom she felt would be equal to the task of government. Her dislike to her son increased as years went on, and her partiality for her grandchildren could not conceal the fact that Constantine's eccentric, wayward, and childish character rendered him utterly unfit to be placed in any important command. Alexander was therefore the only hope of her house, and she hastened his marriage for the chance of more heirs. She had no difficulty in finding a princess who was willing to change her religion for the prospect of a throne. The French revolutionary army had taken possession of Baden, and obliged the Grand Duke and his family to retreat to Berlin. He had several granddaughters, and their mother, one of those princesses of Darmstadt who

had visited St. Petersburg to enable Paul to choose a wife, now accepted the Empress's invitation, and sent the two eldest to Russia, where they arrived without dowry or trousseau, under the charge of Madame Shuvalov, at the beginning of November, 1792, and were lodged in the Taurida Palae. They were all wearied out with the journey, as the weather had been particularly unfavourable, and it was late when they reached their destination, but Catherine was there to meet them with one of her ladies, Madame de Branicka, whom they at first mistook for the Empress, and fell down on their knees before her. Catherine received them most graciously, and at once took an extraordinary fancy for the elder princess, whom she thought remarkably like herself when she first came to Russia. The next day she gave them the Order of St. Catherine, besides sending them splendid jewels, and a stock of suitable clothes. In the course of the afternoon she paid them another visit with Alexander and Constantine. The princes were both aware of the Empress's motive in bringing these young ladies to Russia, and Alexander spoke little and seemed rather embarrassed during the interview. On their return to the palae he said he thought the eldest pretty. "Oh, not at all," said Constantine; "they are neither of them pretty. They ought to go to Riga for the princes of Courland; they are good enough for them."

The Princess Louisa Augusta of Baden was hardly fourteen years old when she came to Russia, and her future husband was not fifteen. She remained as she was then, of small stature, and wore her long light hair down her back, like a child. The old-fashioned decorous Court of Baden, where her grandfather, who lived till 1811, ruled his sovereignty like the father of a large family more than a king, was but a small preparation for the brilliancy of the Russian capital, where she never learned to feel herself otherwise than as a stranger, though she was baptized into the Greek Church when she took the name of Elizabeth Alexievna. Her sister was only twelve years old, and an unformed girl, though more lively and clever; but Catherine did not wish for much ability in her new granddaughter, and at once selected Louisa for Alexander's bride. The youngest was impatient to return to her home and friends, while the eldest thought no more of her

parents or of her country, but wished to remain always in Russia, and appeared so struck with the charms of the young prince that the Empress thought it could not fail to be a happy marriage when love was so evidently on one side at least, and it was therefore arranged. At this time Alexander had not yet reached his full height, which was six feet, and was still slender, like a growing boy, but he was a remarkably handsome youth, his hair auburn, and inclined to curl, a fair complexion, as clear and almost as colourless as marble, dark blue eyes, deeply set in his head, a straight, rather short nose and Greek profile, a long chin, and a small, well-formed mouth. He was well proportioned, graceful in his movements, a lively talker, and very animated. In the face he recalled Catherine in the days of her innocent girlhood, and held his head in the same fearless, erect posture. The Princess thought herself the most fortunate of women when, added to the possession of such a husband, there was the prospect of a future Imperial Crown. The example followed since the time of Peter the Great of a widowed Empress succeeding to the authority of her deceased spouse, gave reason for the belief that the Princess of Baden might some day wield the sceptre in her own right. Love and ambition were both equally gratified when, in the early part of the year 1793, the ceremony of betrothal took place.

The first time the princesses appeared at Court, the future Empress met with an accident, which the Russians thought was an unfortunate omen, and they decided she would not be happy in Russia. On approaching Catherine's throne she caught her foot against the lowest step, and fell at full length before it. Her baptism took place some time before her betrothal, as soon as she had learned a little of the Russian language and been very slightly instructed in the doctrines she was called upon to profess; and the marriage was solemnized with extraordinary magnificence in May, 1793.*

Russia had just completed three successful wars, and a crowd of general officers and other heroes decorated with various military orders came to swell the wedding procession, accompanied by ambassadors from Bokhara, Tartar khans,

* Masson's Mémoires, &c.

Persian satraps, Turkish pashas, Greek and Moldavian deputies, Polish magnates, a large number of Swedish nobles, and the French emigrants who were gathering in St. Petersburg with the hope of inducing the Empress to take an active part against the French Republic. The Comte d'Artois (afterwards Charles X.) had arrived, and made the same favourable impression on the aged sovereign as on her daughter-in-law when she visited France. She presented him with a jewelled sword, telling him to go and head the insurgents in La Vendée. But the prince was better fitted to dance at a Court ball than to command an army, and he sold the sword for 4000*l.* in London for the benefit of his fellow exiles. All these foreigners, in addition to the Russian nobility, increased the brilliant throng, and the Empress herself held the marriage crown for a moment over the youthful bridegroom, and then transferred it to Constantine, while Plato Zoubof bore the one over the head of the bride. At the banquet Catherine dined on a throne raised above the guests, and was so covered with diamonds that she appeared like a glittering mass of stones. The evening closed with a ball, joined in by all the Imperial family. A German* guest describes the sight as most fascinating: "The beautifully illuminated hall, the splendid jewels, the handsome chevalier guard, all picked young men of uncommon stature, with their silver armour and the helmet with its waving plume, stationed at the doors, the crowd of pages covered with gold. The ball was opened by the mother of the bridegroom and a nobleman, succeeded by all the younger branches of this noble family, with the grace distinguishing them. Catherine stood in the circle, and smiling attended to the dance of her fair grandchildren. Even Paul was present in a red velvet suit, with that stern and gloomy countenance which nothing in this assembly was able to cheer. He stood with his head thrown back, only half turned towards the company, puffing out his cheeks as usual. A certain resoluteness was the character expressed in his figure, look, and position. He would occasionally converse with some general near him; in other respects he seemed to interest himself little in passing events; it was plain he was obliged to be there." But the

* Reinbeck's Travels, pub. 1805.

spectacle which most astonished the stranger was the clearance of the supper-table, including the gold and silver plate, by the servants and courtiers as soon as the Imperial party had returned to the dancing-room. This was the ordinary conclusion to the fêtes of the nobles at that time in Russia. It was thought penurious to use the same table furniture a second time, and was one of the extravagant points which wrecked the fortunes of the Russian courtiers and was checked with despotic severity in the reign of Paul.

Catherine seldom appeared in public at this period, though more often than early in her reign, and when she did so was surrounded by a large and brilliant suite, on horseback, and accompanied invariably by her grandsons and Prince Zoubov. Though below the middle height, her whole demeanour was imposing, and her face, which had been beautiful in youth, was now adorned with white hair. Her dress was a mixture of the Oriental and European, and she wore the diamond star of St. Andrew's Order; her mild expression showing little of the unscrupulous determination which had marked her career.* Alexander and his bride continued to reside with her till 1795, when a small palace was built for them at Czarco-Selo.

Madame Shuvalov was appointed governess or chief lady in waiting to Elizabeth; and till La Harpe was dismissed, when Alexander was sixteen, he continued to study with his tutors. In a letter to La Harpe the young husband apologizes for not having completed his tasks, because his wife had been ill. "I count the more on your indulgence," he says, "as you are also a married man, and consequently know the care that a wife requires." But this did not continue long, and at an age when most boys are still playing cricket at school, he was expected to settle down contentedly as a married man in the monotonous round of ceremonies belonging to a Court life. His ardent imagination was to exhaust itself in dancing and cards, with no more serious occupations than to observe a strict neutrality in the midst of family quarrels and ministerial intrigues, and to adhere rigidly to the prescribed points of etiquette and the most elegant form of dress. No life could be less elevating than that in Catherine's palace; and at the best the mind of

* Reinbeck, Margravine of Anspach, Coxe, Countess Hahn-hahn.

a prince is taught to dwell on the merest trifles, and has little scope for a wholesome development. What can he learn from courtiers who never contradict him, and hardly volunteer an observation? Compared to other men he is like one born deaf and blind; and if kept in a womanish seclusion his knowledge of mankind must be theoretical and derived from books—very different to that acquired in a barrack, a college, or a public school, or when struggling in a busy world for promotion, preferment, or even the means of existence. The Empress disapproved of hunting and any dangerous pursuit for her grandsons, and while great events were agitating the whole continent, in which some day they would be called upon to take a part, they were neither permitted to travel abroad nor to visit other parts of the Empire.

There could have been nothing more unlike this fettered existence than the mode in which Alexander's future rival, Napoleon, passed the same period of his youth—the one like a hothouse plant forced to flower prematurely; the other left to grow according to nature, and arrive more slowly to maturity. Napoleon said the happiest days of his life were from sixteen to twenty, when he went about from one Paris restaurant to another, living moderately, and inhabiting a lodging for which he paid three louis a month. There he saw every variety of character, listened to every theory in politics, and heard the voice of public opinion on all passing events. At fifteen, according to the report of his schoolmaster at Brienne, he was advanced in mathematics, but weak in Latin, possessing no modern language except his own; and backward in other elegant accomplishments.* He was four feet ten in height, and that same year (1783) was nominated a pupil at the Royal Military School in Paris. At fifteen Alexander was nearly six feet in height, an excellent linguist, and otherwise remarkably well informed. He was master of the ceremonies in the Court of the largest empire in the

* Napoleon professed to have been born on the 15th of August, 1769, but some authors worthy of credit assert that he was really born on February 5th, 1768, and from vanity and a desire to be apparently born a French subject (Corsica was only united to France in 1769) deducted eighteen months from his age. His first marriage register states he was born in 1768.

world, and already provided with a wife, yet as much restrained in his actions and occupations as the merest child. Napoleon became a Republican because he was a subaltern ; if he had been a general he said he should probably have adhered to the king. Alexander became at heart a Republican from reflection, and because from his experience of a despotism he imagined that a republic was more likely to conduce to the general happiness of mankind. The poetical sentiments in the mind of most intellectual youths led Napoleon to delight in Ossian and the works of the French and Latin poets ;* but Alexander was not permitted to indulge in such literature, and with him the same feeling effervesced in an enthusiastic admiration for the military and patriotic heroes of the day. Napoleon's views were contracted through the narrow channel of self-interest into personal ambition, because he early depended on his own exertions for bread. Alexander had no such care, and being naturally of a noble disposition, his visions consisted of utopian schemes for the universal amelioration of the lot of man. He only wanted experience to turn these visions into a practicable channel ; but it is unfortunate for a people when its ruler has to buy his experience on the throne, and such was the case with Alexander, who at twenty-three was released from his golden thralldom to wield a despotic sway over a seventh part of the earth. Paul was displeas'd by his son's marriage, as he had hoped for Madame Royale as a daughter-in-law, though at that time the young French princess was a prisoner in the hands of the revolutionists. Elizabeth was the niece of his first wife, and recalled melancholy associations to his mind ; he had also a particular dislike to Madame Shuvalov, who accompanied her in her drives and visits. When the Court was at Czareo-Selo Alexander went over very frequently to Gateschina to call on his parents, and for a whole year Paul refused to see his son because on each of these occasions he brought his wife. But in 1794 Alexander had a serious illness, apparently arising from inflammation of the membranes of the brain, which after his death were found to be displaced from that cause ; and two medical men were brought over from London ;

* Bourrienne asserts that Bonaparte was inaccessible to the charms of elegant poetry, but Joseph states that his brother knew by heart, and often recited, the most brilliant passages in the tragedies of Corneille, Racine, and Voltaire.

then celebrated for the treatment of such complaints. The prince's malady was supposed to arise from over-study; and after a short course of the severe remedies* which formed the soul of the English medical science of that day he recovered his health, though he always felt the effects in a liability to headaches and the entire loss of hearing in one ear, which deprived him of the enjoyment of general conversation and made him shy and reserved. A young man, particularly in a prominent position, feels a personal defect far more keenly than at a later time of life, and in Alexander's case the inconvenience was increased by his shortness of sight. He was advised to abstain from all study, so he employed his leisure hours in music, once a forbidden pleasure, but in which he now made some progress. Beethoven has dedicated three sonatas to him in compliment to his skill on the violin. He became distressed with the idea that he was unfitted to govern the empire, and under its influence he wrote the following letters to Count Victor Kotchoubey lately appointed to the Russian embassy at Constantinople. Kotchoubey was ten years his senior, but had been a Court page, and was one of the young noblemen with whom he had been most intimate before the Count went abroad in 1793. The Englishman mentioned in the letter was an amateur musician who had practised with the prince on the flute:—

“This letter, my dear friend, will be brought to you by Mr. Garrick, whom I mentioned in one of my former letters, so I can speak freely to you on many subjects. You tell me too little of what concerns yourself, for I have just learned that you have asked for leave to go and make a tour in Italy, and will then proceed to England for some time. Why did you not tell me this? I begin to think you doubt my friendship for you, and have no confidence in me; though I venture to say that I really deserve it for my unlimited friendship for you. So pray tell me all which happens to you: you cannot do me a greater favour. I am very glad to hear you are leaving that place, which can only procure you *des désagrémens* without being compensated by any enjoyment whatever.

“This Mr. Garrick is an agreeable young man; he passed

* Bleeding, blistering, and the most lowering remedies.

some time here, and is now going to the Crimea, where he will embark for Constantinople. I consider him very fortunate, as he will have the opportunity of seeing you, and in some measure I envy his lot, as I am not happy with my own. I am glad this subject has introduced itself, for I hardly knew how to begin it. Yes, my dear friend, I repeat it, I am not at all satisfied with my position; it is much too brilliant for me, who love tranquillity and peace. The Court is not a dwelling made for me. I suffer every time that I am obliged to show myself, and it makes my blood run cold to see the base means constantly employed to acquire some distinction not worth three sous. It is distressing to be forced to live in the society of men whom I would not have for my servants, and who here enjoy the highest posts, such as this P. S—— (probably Plato Zoubof, or Soubof), this M. P——, this P. B——, the two C. S——, M——, and a host of others not worthy of mention, who, haughty with their inferiors, crouch before those whom they fear. In short, my dear friend, I do not feel myself at all made for the place I fill at this moment, and still less for the place which is one day destined for me, and which I have inwardly sworn to renounce in one way or another.

“ This, my dear friend, is the great secret I have long been unable to communicate to you, and on which I need not ask you to be silent, for you know that it is a resolution which might ruin me (*peut me casser la tête*). I have told Mr. Garrick to burn this letter in case he cannot give it into your own hand, and not to send it to you by any one else. I have weighed this matter well and discussed it with myself, for I must tell you that it occurred to me even before I knew you, and that I came to an early decision on the subject.

“ Our affairs are in an incredible disorder. Pillaging goes on in every direction; all the departments are badly administered; order seems banished, and the empire does nothing but enlarge its dominions. So how can one man be enough to govern it, and still more to remove the abuses from it? It is absolutely impossible—not only to a man of ordinary capacity like myself, but even to a man of genius. It has always been my principle that it is better not to accept a duty than to fulfil it badly; it is in accordance with this

principle that I have taken the resolution which I have just told you. My plan is, that having once renounced this perilous place—I cannot fix the exact time of such renunciation—I shall go and establish myself with my wife on the borders of the Rhine, where I shall live quietly as a private individual, making my happiness consist in the society of my friends and the study of nature.

“ You will laugh at me—you will say it is a chimerical project; you are at liberty to do so, but wait the event, and after then I permit you to judge. I know you will blame me, but I cannot act otherwise, for the peace of my conscience is my first guide; and it would never be easy if I undertook a task above my strength. This, my dear friend, is what I have long wished to tell you, and now I have done so it only remains for me to say, that wherever I may be—happy or unhappy, in pomp or in misery—one of my greatest consolations will be your friendship for me, and believe that mine will only end with life. Adieu, my dear and true friend. The happiest thing that could befall me in the mean while would be to see you. My wife sends a thousand messages to you. Her ideas entirely agree with mine.

“ ALEXANDER.

“ 10th May, 1796.”

It is evident from this letter that Alexander meant to refuse the crown when it should fall to him by the death of his grandmother, who had already informed him that he must regard himself as her immediate successor; for his father was at that time only forty-one years of age, and in the ordinary course of nature might live for twenty years more; whereas, in a second letter written a month or two later to Kotehoubey, the prince speaks of the day when he must be called to the head of the empire as not being far off. Alexander evidently did not consider that existence would be desirable in his father's Court, and it was generally supposed that Paul would revenge his mother's harshness towards himself on the son who had supplanted him in her confidence. In other respects this letter was a remarkable one for a boy of eighteen, who was subjected to the authority of only a frivolous old woman and surrounded by her dissipated courtiers. It showed penetration,

a strong sense of the duties of a sovereign, honesty, straightforwardness, and an utter absence of selfish ambition, though it erroneously concluded that his own capacities and judgment were already matured, and would not be further developed by time and experience. In the second letter, written in July of the same year, he says that "the thought that one day, and that day not so far off, when I shall be placed—thanks to fate—at the head of an empire, makes my very hair stand on end. I am not made to govern. My greatest happiness would be to remain a simple citizen, surrounded with my wife, my children, my friends, and all that I love." He alludes to La Harpe as being a native of the country where Kotchoubey was about to make a tour, and says he owes a debt to him as to a spiritual father, "for he made a man of me."

In 1795 Alexander formed an intimate acquaintance with Prince Adam Czartoriski, a Polish nobleman, who had been educated at the University of Edinburgh and in London, and fought against Russia in the war of 1792, when his father's estates had been confiscated, but they were restored on condition that Prince Adam and his brother should live as hostages for his fidelity at St. Petersburg. Their sister was married to Alexander's uncle, Louis of Würtemberg. The young men were enrolled in the chevalier guards, on constant duty at the Imperial residence; and Prince Adam was made aide-de-camp to Alexander, and his brother Constantine to the Grand Duke Constantine. Here they heard of the final struggle of their countrymen, when Kosciusko and his fellow patriots were brought prisoners to the Russian capital. Prince Adam was at this time twenty-six, and years afterwards, when in exile, described his early friendship with Alexander to excuse the fact of that friendship, with which he has occasionally been reproached:—

"At the end of April St. Petersburg enjoys a few days of fine weather and a clear sky, and the quays are filled with pedestrians; even the most elegant ladies in careful morning toilettes. The Grand Duke Alexander often walked there, sometimes alone, sometimes with the Grand Duchess. This was another reason for the fashionable world to crowd to it. My brother and I were also among the assembly; and every time the Grand Duke met either of us, he stopped to talk, and showed us an especial goodwill.

“These morning meetings were a continuation of the Court soirées, and we daily became better acquainted with him. In the spring the Court used to remove to the Taurida Palæe, where the Empress pretended to be in retreat, and only admitted a select circle in the evening, when the chevaliers were seldom present, unless there was a state concert and they had a special invitation. The Grand Duke walked on the quays as before; meeting me one day, he said he was sorry to see me so seldom, and invited me to call upon him at the Taurida Palace, to walk in the garden, which he wished to show me. I went at the appointed time. My devotion to the Grand Duke began from that day, and a series of events of which the chain still endures and will make itself felt during long years.

“As soon as I entered, the Grand Duke took me into the garden, which we paraded for three hours in a lively and unbroken conversation.

“He told me the conduct of my brother and myself—our resignation in an existence which must be painful to us, the calmness and indifference with which we had accepted our fate and the favours which could only be displeasing to us—had gained his esteem: he sympathized with our sentiments and approved them. He could not bear to think we misjudged him, for he shared none of the doctrines of the Cabinet and the Court; he was far from approving the policy of his grandmother; his sympathies had been with Poland in her glorious fall; he deplored her fate, and Kosciusko was in his eyes a great man, not only for his virtues, but for the cause he had defended, which was that of humanity and justice.

“He said he detested despotism everywhere, and in whatever manner it was exercised; he loved liberty—it was the right of every man—and he had taken the most lively interest in the French revolution; while reproving its terrible outbreaks, he wished success to the republic, and rejoiced at it. He spoke with respect of his tutor, M. de La Harpe, as a man of virtue, true wisdom, severe principles, and an energetic character. It was to him that he owed all that there was good in himself, and a knowledge of the principles of truth and justice.

“While we traversed the length and breadth of the garden

we met the Grand Duchess also taking a walk. The Grand Duke told me that his wife was his confidante, and she knew and shared his sentiments; but excepting her, I was the first and only person since the departure of his tutor to whom he had dared to speak of them, for no one in Russia was as yet capable of sharing them, or even of comprehending them. He was therefore particularly glad to find some one to whom he could open his heart. I was deeply moved.

“What! a prince of Russia—the successor of Catherine, her grandson, and her beloved pupil, for whom she desired to disinherit her son, and to see him reign after her; of whom they said that it would be he who would be a continuation of Catherine—this prince denied and detested the principles of his grandmother, repulsed the odious Russian policy; he passionately loved justice and liberty; he pitied Poland, and wished to see her happy! Was it not miraculous that in this atmosphere, with these surroundings, such noble thoughts, such high virtues could spring up? I was conquered. There was so much candour, innocence, resolution, forgetfulness of himself and elevation of soul in the words and the countenance of this young prince, that he appeared to me a privileged being whom Providence had sent on to the earth for the happiness of humanity and of my country. I devoted unlimited attachment to him, and the feeling he inspired in me at that moment has lasted, while the illusions arising from it have successively vanished; it resisted the blows it received later from Alexander himself, and has never been extinguished though sorely tried by so many sad disappointments. It must be remembered, the opinions called liberal were then much less extended than at present; they had not penetrated into all classes of society, and least of all into royal cabinets. All semblance of liberalism was, on the contrary, shunned and cursed in the courts and drawing-rooms of most of the capitals of Europe; and above all, in Russia and at Petersburg, where the convictions of the old French régime pushed to extremes were grafted on to Russian despotism. To find in the midst of these elements a prince called to reign over this nation, to exercise an immense influence in Europe, with such decided—such generous opinions, so opposed to the existing state of things, was it not an accident of the highest importance?”

“When at the end of forty years we look at the events since that conversation, we see only too well how little they have responded to our hopes. Liberal ideas were surrounded by a halo since pale, their essays in practice had not yet led to the cruel deceptions perpetually renewed. The French republic, throwing off its terrors, seemed to march invincibly towards an astonishing future of prosperity and glory. Its finest moment was in 1796 and 1797. The Empire had not yet cooled and destroyed the warmest partisans of the revolution.

“The Court soon set out for Czareo-Selo. The chevaliers (the privates in the chevalier guards were all gentlemen) appeared there at the fêtes, and on Sundays assisting at mass, at dinner, and at the soirées. We were privileged to join the Empress's evening parties, to share in the promenades, and in the games of bars, which were repeated every fine day. We did not dine at the Empress's table, except when we were on duty. That happened once to me, and I was placed opposite to Catherine, and charged with serving her, in which I acquitted myself rather awkwardly. She saw with a favourable eye the intimacy between her grandson and ourselves; she approved of it, but certainly could not have divined its true motive or its consequences. Perhaps she thought the attachment of an influential family might be useful to her grandson. She little imagined it would confirm him in the sentiments she detested and feared; that it would be one of the causes among a thousand others of the progress of liberal ideas in Europe, and the reappearance—alas! ephemeral—on the political arena of Poland, whom she believed she had for ever consigned to the tomb. As the Empress approved of the Grand Duke's marked preference for us, other censors were obliged to shut their mouths, and we were encouraged in our intimacy, which was besides so attractive.

“The Grand Duke Constantine, from the spirit of imitation and seeing it pleased the Empress, began to be friendly with my brother, made him come to see him, and obliged him to be on easy terms with his household; but there was no question there of policy. My brother had in this respect the worst share: none of the motives which bound us to Alexander existed with regard to Constantine, and his capricious, hasty character, restrained only by fear, made any intimacy with him

very undesirable. Alexander asked my brother to accept it with a good grace, provided that his confidences should remain unknown to Constantine, for whom he had, however, a brother's feeling.

“At the beginning of this summer the Grand Duke was lodged in the great castle (at Czarco-Selo), and did not yet live in the separate palace standing in the park, which was just finished. To look at it was often the object of our walk after dinner. The Grand Duke removed to it, and was then more at liberty to see us. He often made us dine with him, and the day rarely passed without one of us returning with him after the drawing-rooms were over at the castle. We also took walks every morning, which sometimes extended several leagues. The Grand Duke was fond of walking through the surrounding villages, when he indulged in his favourite discussions. He was in the charm of a youth hardly begun, which creates images for itself, enjoys them without being stopped by impossibilities, and builds projects beyond the view for an unlimited future. His opinions were those of a student of 1789, who wished for republics everywhere, and considered that form of government as the only one conformable to the requirements and the rights of humanity. Though at that time very enthusiastic myself, and born and educated in a republic,* where the principles of the French revolution had been received with ardour, yet in these discussions I was the cool-headed man who moderated the Grand Duke's extreme opinions. He maintained among other things that the hereditary principle was an unjust and absurd institution, that the supreme authority ought to be confided not by the chance of birth, but by the vote of the nation, who would choose the most capable of governing it. I represented the arguments against this opinion, the difficulty and the risk of an election, that Poland had suffered by it, and how little fit and prepared Russia was for such an institution. I added, that now at least Russia would gain nothing by it, since she would lose him who was most worthy of directing her; he who had the most benevolent and the purest intentions. Sometimes in our long walk the conversation turned to other topics—from politics to nature.

* Poland could never properly be styled a republic, the peasants being slaves, and none but nobles possessing rights.

The young Grand Duke was a great admirer of its beauties ; enthusiastic over a flower, the verdure of a tree, a view slightly extended opening on rather an undulating prospect—for there is nothing less picturesque than the environs of St. Petersburg. He liked to see the agriculturists and the rustic beauty of the villagers ; the occupations, the works of the country ; a simple life, quiet and retired, in some pretty farm in a varied and sunny country, was the romance he wished to realize, and to which he often rather mournfully returned.

“ I felt it ought not to be so ; that for one destined to work high and great changes in the social order there should be more elevation, strength, ardour, and confidence in himself than he chose to show ; in his place it was blamable to wish to get rid of the enormous weight reserved for him, and to sigh for the leisure in a quiet life. It was not enough to see difficulties in his position and to dread it, but he should have been inflamed with a passionate desire to surmount them. This reflection did not decrease my admiration for him. His sincerity, his uprightness, the ease with which he gave himself up to beautiful illusions had a charm it was impossible to resist. Besides, still so young, he might acquire what he wanted : circumstances, necessities might develop powers which had not had the time or means of showing themselves ; but his views, his intentions remained precious as the purest gold, and though he may have since changed, he preserved to the end of his days a part of the tastes and opinions of his youth.

“ My countrymen have reproached me later with having attached too much faith to Alexander's assurances. I maintain his opinions were sincere and not affected. When at eighteen he spoke to me with the greatest mystery and with an effusion that relieved him of the opinions and feelings he concealed from the world at large, it was because he really held them and felt the need of confiding them to some one. What other motive could he have had ? Whom would he have wished to deceive ? He followed assuredly the inclination of his heart, and confided his true thoughts.”*

When Prince Czartoriski thus wrote in 1834, he had quitted his native country for ever, but could still speak with affection

* Correspondence de l'Empereur Alexandre I. et le Prince A. Czartoriski. M. Ch. Mazade.

of his former friend. While the Poles accused him of accepting a post in the Russian government, the Russians, on the other hand, declare that he was a traitor to his sovereign when he served in the Foreign Office at St. Petersburg, and only considered the interests of Poland as opposed to those of Russia. They say that at the time he supported Alexander in the idea of giving Poland an independent government by impressing upon him that it would be an indissoluble union and satisfy the aspirations of his fellow patriots, he yet made the Poles believe that he only looked upon it as a stepping-stone to their future entire separation, and that he retarded the real union of Russia and Poland by at least fifty years. But there is no reason to suppose that in 1830 his views had not undergone a thorough change since 1814, and that, like Alexander's own ideas respecting the superiority of a republican form of government, they had not been altered by unforeseen events. The Poland of 1815 differed so essentially from the bleeding nation of 1796 as probably for the moment to satisfy the immediate desires of every Polish nobleman who had position or estates to lose in another insurrection; and she had never increased so rapidly in internal wealth and prosperity as between 1815 and 1826. If young statesmen and boy princes were to start in life with stereotyped plans, not to be varied subsequently in a changing world, and in the midst of the most startling episodes or unlooked-for progress, we should be governed by children's theories, and experience would be useless.

CHAPTER III.

PAUL'S REIGN.

1796—1800.

THE year 1796 was an eventful one, and opened in peace ; but during May a military expedition under Valerian Zoubof was organized against Persia, and a levy of 180,000 recruits was ordered, to form an army to march under Suvorov against France. Catherine's permission to all officers or public servants to increase their incomes with bribes and plunder made any measure popular which produced a foreign loan and spread money through the country, for her subjects were too shortsighted to perceive the ruin this system must sooner or later entail. Yet one of the highest noblemen did remark on her government, that if "she lived to the natural term of human life she would drag down Russia itself with her to the grave."

It was a great vexation to the Empress that Alexander and his wife had no children, and in the hope of securing her dynasty by a larger number of male heirs, she found a bride for Constantine, though he was only seventeen, and much averse to the idea of marriage. Early in 1795 she invited the Princess of Saxe-Coburg to bring her three eldest daughters to St. Petersburg, and they arrived in the course of the year. Constantine did not like either of them. He said they were too German to please him, and he preferred Russians ; but at last Catherine chose the youngest, the Princess Julie, who was very pretty, and a mere child of fifteen. The wedding took place in January, 1796. This bride was baptized into the Greek Church by the name of Anna Federovna. Her sister Antoinetta afterwards married Constantine's uncle, Prince Alexander of Würtemberg, who entered the service of Russia in 1803.*

* The Grand Duchess Constantine was the first of the illustrious House of Coburg to marry into an imperial or royal family. Her relatives have since allied themselves with all the leading Powers of Europe. Her brother Leopold became aide-de-camp to Constantine, and in 1814 ac-

Catherine had given up any hope of another grandson, for six princesses followed Constantine into the world; the fifth, Olga, was born in 1792, and died in 1795, some weeks after the birth of the youngest, Anna, who, as widow of a king of Holland, died, the last survivor of her mother's children, in 1860. But as this long reign was drawing to a close, Paul's third son was born in the palace of Czarco-Selo (July 6th, *n.s.*, 1796), to the great delight of the Empress; who caused him to be baptized Nicholas, after the patron saint of Russia. She wrote to a friend, "This grandson is born for the throne," and pleased herself with thinking the infant's features resembled her own. She no longer regretted that Alexander and his wife had no heir.

Since 1793, when Gustavus III. fell by the hand of an assassin, the throne of Sweden was filled by his son, Gustavus IV., who was now seventeen, and Catherine had tried to arrange a marriage between him and her eldest granddaughter, Alexandra. The princess was only fourteen, but a contemporary describes her as already tall and formed, and like most of Paul's children, she inherited the beauty of the earlier Romanofs.* Gustavus came with his uncle to St. Petersburg, and seemed captivated by her charms. Alexander did the honours of the empire to the royal Swedes, who attended him to a review, where Constantine conducted himself with such folly, mimicking everybody present, that his grandmother caused him to be put under arrest for the remainder of their visit, during which the wedding was to take place. But on the very day when the Empress was already in the chapel, and the beautiful bride attired for the ceremony, with her family standing round, Gustavus absolutely refused to sign the marriage contract unless a stipulation that the princess should remain in the Greek faith was erased. His uncle, who had

accompanied Alexander to England, where he first met his future bride, Princess Charlotte of Wales, but being early left a widower, retired from his adopted country in 1830 to ascend the newly made Belgian throne. His second wife was a daughter of Louis Philippe of France, and his son and daughter married into the House of Austria. His sister became Duchess of Kent, and the mother of Queen Victoria, and his cousin the King Consort of Portugal. His elder brother, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, was the father of the English Prince Consort.

* See descriptions of Elizabeth Petrovna, Peter II., &c., by Mrs. Vigor, Bassewitz, &c.

secretly offered Finland to Catherine if she would assist him to the throne of Sweden by detaining Gustavus in Russia,* out of revenge for her refusal, worked on his nephew's religious feelings, and convinced him that he could not marry a Greek Catholic. The company in the chapel waited three hours, and they never appeared. When the Empress heard the reason and rose from her seat to leave the hall, she had a slight attack of apoplexy, a forerunner of the fit which caused her death within seven weeks. The bride preserved her composure till she reached her own room, but never recovered the wound, which for a time it was feared might affect her reason. She died in a melancholy decline at the age of nineteen.

The day after the intended wedding there was a Court ball; but Alexandra remained ill in her bedroom, and the Empress only appeared for a few moments. Gustavus came and spoke to Alexander, but soon went away, and eight days afterwards left Russia. Two years later he married Alexander's sister-in-law, the Princess Frederika of Baden, hoping this connection would avert any ill consequences which might arise to Sweden from having recklessly incurred the wrath of Russia. But although Catherine did not live to accomplish her revenge, she bequeathed it to Alexander, and while the failure of this marriage project cost Russia its Empress, it eventually deprived Sweden of Finland and Gustavus IV. of his crown.

Alexander's mother attended all the fêtes at St. Petersburg given in honour of the King of Sweden, wishing to claim her parental rights when a foreign sovereign was present. The road was very bad between Gateschina and St. Petersburg, and owing to these journeys, Paul had a new one made, for the royal visit lasted more than a month, and she said if all her daughters cost her as much she should really die on the way. The first time they used the new road was to meet at Catherine's death-bed.

Catherine's sight was beginning to fail, and she was growing infirm from the gout, but she took a daily walk in fine weather, using a stick and either Plato Zoubof's or her grandson's arm. The loss of her teeth was her chief sign of age, and her excellent spirits, which still enabled her to enjoy the jokes of the Court jester, and her temperate habits, seemed to promise her a

* Baron Armfelt.

lengthened life. She never drank wine till she grew old, when it was recommended by her physician, and then only one glass late in the day. She was gradually withdrawing herself from the Court fêtes, leaving her grandchildren to take her place, and during the visit of the King of Sweden kept much later hours than usual with her for some time. The shock of being frustrated by a boy, and a nation she despised, coming after she had been tried by so much gaiety, was severe, but she revived,* and on the evening of November 4th, o.s., she laughed and talked as usual with a small party in the Hermitage. She had received news that the Austrians had obliged General Moreau, at the head of a French army, to recross the Rhine, and she announced it in a joking letter to Count Cobentzel, the Austrian Minister. She was in unnaturally high spirits, and having heard of the death of the King of Sardinia that morning, rallied Count Narishkine on his reputed fear of dying. She retired to bed rather early, saying she had given herself a slight pain in the side by talking so much.

The next morning she rose at her accustomed hour, had her usual early interview with Zoubof, and transacted some business with her secretaries, telling the last who came to wait in her ante-room till she called him to finish his work. He waited a long time, till one of the equerries opened the door, and saw the Empress lying on the floor. They did not lose a moment in calling Zoubof and the physicians, and raised her on to a mattress placed near the window, to give her the benefit of air and light. She was bled three times, her head bathed, and all the ordinary remedies tried to restore her, but though her heart beat regularly, she showed no other sign of life. She was accustomed to send for Alexander every morning at eleven o'clock, for he lived in the Winter Palace in the quality of heir to the throne, while his brother Constantine was established in the Marble Palace; and that morning he had walked out very early to pay Constantine a visit. In his absence the doctors kept the Empress's critical condition as secret as possible, but Zoubof sent for Count Bezberodko, Soltïkof, and several officials to consult with them. Perhaps they were

* Rostopchine says that all about Catherine were convinced that her granddaughter's disappointment hastened her death.

aware that Alexander held them in little esteem, and thought it would be more to their interest to ingratiate themselves with Paul, and offer him the crown ; for before the Prince returned to the Winter Palaece at half-past ten, each of them had sent off a courier on his own account to Gateschina, and strict orders were given that no one else was to be allowed to leave St. Petersburg that day. Rumours began to circulate in the city early in the afternoon, but people hardly dared allude to them lest they should be false. Six couriers arrived almost simultaneously at Gatesehina, and found Paul and his wife gone out to see a mill he was having built ; but they made up for the delay by taking only three hours for the drive to St. Petersburg, as Zoubof's brother, who acted as his messenger, went on first to proeure a relay of horses at Sophia, a village on the road.

Paul seemed for an instant quite upset when he heard the news, so that Zoubof could hardly tell if it was from joy or sorrow. Count Rostopchine, since conspicuous in the history of Russia, an especial favourite at Gatesehina, had accidentally called to see a relative in the Winter Palace, and was summoned to an audience with Alexander, who came straight out of Catherine's room. The Prince was very pale, and his eyes filled with tears as he asked Rostopchine if he had heard what had happened to the Empress, and told him there was no longer any hope, so he must go as quickly as possible to announce this fact to his father. Demetrius Zoubof had gone to Gateschina, but he thought it would be more proper the details should be transmitted to Paul direct from himself. Rostopchine set off, and at six in the evening met the Grand Duke and Duchess at Sophia, where they had just arrived. Paul, hearing his voice, sprang out to speak to him ; then desired him to join the escort ; and the Imperial carriage, drawn by seven horses, sped rapidly on its way. They halted for a moment at Tchesmé, when Rostopchine, reflecting on the change probably only a few hours more would produce for his master, to whom, he writes, he was "devoted heart and soul, not less than to his country, on the importance of his first steps, and on the influences which might act on the feelings of an autoeratic sovereign full of strength, of health, of fire, and who had *lost the power of being master of himself*,"*

* Rostopchine, when on duty at Gateschina, was once not relieved at

seized Paul's hand and said, "Monseignor, what a moment for you!" The Grand Duke answered, "Wait, my friend, wait. I have lived forty-two years. God has sustained me. Perhaps He will yet give me strength and reason to support the state to which He destines me. I hope everything from His bounty."

They arrived at half-past eight at the Winter Palace, where numbers had assembled, "waiting the end of a long reign and the passage to a new." Paul was received, not as the heir, but as the sovereign, though all seemed to hope for the Empress's recovery, and when it was reported that strong mustard-plasters had caused her to open her eyes, there was universal congratulation. He went into his mother's room, and after speaking to the physicians and giving the necessary orders, retired with his wife into the antechamber, where he received the officials, transmitted various directions, and spoke kindly to Plato Zoubof, who was overcome with fear and grief. "Zoubof's despair," says Rostopchine, "was beyond everything. When he passed across the Empress's room he broke out into sobs. I went into the antechamber and saw him seated in a corner; the courtiers fled from him as from one infected, who but the day before founded all their happiness on one of his smiles; the room where they crowded each other to suffocation to approach him was now for him an uninhabited desert."

So passed the night. The nobility dispersed to arrange their private affairs, not knowing what to expect from their new master. At the Senate-house business was going on ever since the first rumour of the Empress's illness, for there were 30,000 suits on hand, and as Paul was known to be very impatient of anything like delay, the senators tried to settle as many of them as they could. Alexander and Constantine had kept watch by the dying Empress's bedside, since the previous afternoon, and in the morning Paul returned to the almost deserted chamber, and looked at his mother, but without feigning impressions of filial grief which he could not feel. Then he asked the physicians if they had still any hope.

the expiration of his fortnight, and expressed his willingness to remain, which being considered over-zeal, Catherine exiled him for a year. Paul therefore looked upon him as a martyr in his cause. The foregoing description is taken from Rostopchine's work entitled *The Last Day of Catherine's Reign*, pub. 1858.

They answered None; on which he desired the Metropolitan Gabriel and his clergy to be summoned at once to read the prayers for the dying, though by his wish her waiting women and the physicians continued to administer every remedy up to the last moment of her life; he also ordered seals to be put upon her bureaux, and sent to Bezberodko the President of the College of Foreign Affairs, to inquire if he held any papers of special importance.

Catherine had executed a will in which she bequeathed the empire to Alexander, and excluded Paul from the throne. According to the law of Peter the Great the sovereign might choose a successor, and consequently since his time the crown had never descended direct from parent to child. She caused Bezberodko to make a copy of this will, and deposit one with the Senate and the other with Plato the Metropolitan of Moscow. Count Bezberodko was sixty-four, and dreaded any violent political change, being only anxious to keep his place. While Catherine still breathed he sent for these two wills and gave the one in the hands of the Senate to Paul on the night of his arrival, and Paul burned it at once. The other came from Moscow a few days later, and was also destroyed. The Count was rewarded by being confirmed in his post, though Paul, still fearing lest Alexander should act upon this will, brought him away from the chamber of death to keep him under his own eye till he had taken the new oath of allegiance. But at nine o'clock that evening the English physician Rogerson came to inform them that the Empress was in the last agonies, and Paul and his wife went together to her bedside, where they were joined by their sons and the Princesses Alexandra and Helena, with Madame Lieven their governess, Rostopchine, Bezberodko, and a few more attendants. The Empress's face was convulsed, her breath had rattled in her throat for many hours, and the young Grand Duchesses Alexander and Constantine were so deeply affected that they were obliged to be taken away. "That moment," says Rostopchine, "I can never forget. A great sovereign, but yesterday the terror of her enemies and the admiration of the world, lay there for thirty-six hours almost inanimate. The silence of all present, their eyes steadily fixed on the same object, the obscurity pervading the room, everything announced the

approach of death. At a quarter past ten Catherine the Great, uttering a last sigh, appeared in common with every mortal before the tribunal of the Most High. Her features resumed their usual expression of grace and grandeur, and she seemed as if plunged in a deep sleep. Her son and her heir after kneeling beside her retired with the tears streaming from his eyes, and in a moment the room was filled with the women long attached to her service, who all displayed open signs of grief. But the ante-rooms contained anxious courtiers only occupied with their own future, to whom this minute was like the last judgment to the sinner." When Count Somoilof sounded the customary proclamation, "The Empress Catherine is dead, and the Lord Emperor Paul Petrovitz has deigned to mount the throne," they pressed round Rostopchine begging him to remember them with the new sovereign who had already offered him any post he chose to fill in his government.

Before eleven the whole Court and many nobles assembled in the Imperial Chapel to take the oath to their master. The Empress Mary was the first to kiss the cross, and the Gospel which in Russia confirms a vow, and she then advanced to kneel at her husband's feet, but he would not permit either his wife or children to perform this act of homage, and warmly embraced them. Though it was midnight, and all were exhausted with their long vigil, Paul sent Rostopchine to announce the Empress's death to Alexis Orlof, and invite him to come and take the oath. "He has not appeared at the palace," said the Emperor, "but I do not wish that he should forget the 29th of June," (the anniversary of the revolution of 1762). Orlof left his bed, where he had been ill for eight days, and seemed greatly moved on hearing of the national loss, but apparently had no misgivings with regard to his own fortunes under the new Emperor. In the mean while Paul left the chapel and returned to his mother's room, where she already lay in state. Two deacons were reading portions of the Gospel for the comfort of her soul. He knelt a few moments before the corpse, and then retired to look over her papers for the rest of the night. Among them he found Orlof's letter to announce the murder of Peter III., and thanked Providence that she had not, as he imagined, authorized the deed; and also some letters from Potemkin, showing that this

nobleman had been his determined enemy, and tried to widen the separation between them. Perhaps they softened his feelings towards her, though he always avoided any allusion to her, and would even shudder when anything recalled her or his wretched childhood* to his thoughts; but he took an unworthy revenge on the dead minister, for he ordered his body to be exhumed from its grave at Oczakov and cast into the ditch of the fortress. The religious feeling of the governor prevented him from carrying this command into effect, and he contented himself with erasing Potemkin's name from his monument.

The citizens of St. Petersburg heard of Paul's succession with some dismay. Those particularly who were concerned in the revolution of 1762, felt they had cause to tremble; and it was known that the strictness he exercised at Gatesehina and Paulovski, obliging lights to be put out at a certain hour, forbidding dogs to be kept because he disliked their noise, and interfering in other trifles, completely scared people from the neighbourhood. His daughters regretted their indulgent grandmother, and feared their parents, who were almost strangers to them. It was an agreeable surprise when his first measures seemed to refute the ordinary notion of his character, and he spoke most gently to all attending on his mother's death-bed. Instead of securing his eldest son in the fortress of St. Petersburg, he increased his income from 30,000 paper roubles to 200,000 roubles; † but during the first few weeks kept him constantly employed in writing letters or other occupations close to his side. He also gave him a different regiment from the one he had hitherto commanded, and showed mistrust of his loyalty by finding employments in distant provinces for all his intimate friends. Czartoriski was appointed to the embassy at Rome. It was an old custom that the heir-apparent should live in the Czar's palace, even though his younger brothers might be married and settled

* He called it so.

† At this time the official income of more than one of the Russian ambassadors was 44,000 roubles, and they were generally men of large private fortune. Paul borrowed from a merchant, Roghovich, whom he created a baron; and Prince Kurakin lent him money, and mortgaged his estate for the purpose, being munificently repaid. When Constantine was going to be married he sent the money to his father which Catherine had given him to expend in presents for the bride.

elsewhere, so there was nothing strange in Paul keeping Alexander in his own residence, and not permitting him to inhabit his new palace at Czarco-Selo; besides, Czarco-Selo itself was now deserted, and its gardens and gorgeous apartments were allowed to fall almost to ruin. He proclaimed him Czarovitz or heir-apparent, and passed a law which revoked the Act of Peter the Great, and settled the succession to the throne invariably on the nearest male heir. A female only inherited if all the princes were extinct. This law much amazed the new Empress, who intended to be her husband's successor, and she tried to persuade him to alter it. For her benefit he passed another law to give the dowager Empress precedence over the wife of the reigning monarch, so that after his death she would rank second in the empire, and before the wife of Alexander; a right she always jealously claimed. He also endowed her with a considerable independent revenue, which she well deserved; for she had led a most uncomfortable life for the last twenty years, and had yet remained devoted to her husband and his interests. In an Act he prepared eight years before, in case of his death, when he was going to take part in the Finland campaign, he thanks her for her "patient endurance."

Alexander was nominated to the post of Governor of St. Petersburg, and General Aratchaieff placed under him as guardian or assistant. It was a post of considerable responsibility, and the first time he had come much in contact with his future subjects beyond the atmosphere of the Court; but the justice and humanity with which he fulfilled his duties soon gained him great popularity. Aratchaieff, a celebrated character in the last years of Alexander's reign, was the son of a poor subaltern who lived in Novgorod. He obtained admittance into the cadet corps through the influence of General Melissino, and showed great talent in mathematics and military science, though he had no taste for letters, and learned no language but Russian. A contemporary* accuses him of cruelty and ill-temper, making enemies from his severity as a sergeant among the cadets even when he was a boy,

* Masson. This writer had been replaced by Aratchaieff, and is occasionally inaccurately virulent in his statements; but Aratchaieff was very unpopular.

and asserts that he restored an obsolete barbarity into the training of the Russian army, and more than once caused the death of a soldier by his blows. Yet he was recommended to Count Soltikof as a fitting companion for his pupils Alexander and Constantine when they were boys, and joined them in their lessons on artillery and fortification, and in 1787 he obtained a commission. He was favourably mentioned to Paul by Melissino and Soltikof, and was therefore appointed military instructor to the boys of his new school at Gateschina. At first Paul did not like him, but his punctuality and energy obtained his favour, and after Catherine's death he was promoted to be a major-general, and received the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Anne. In 1797 he was created a Baron, and received the Grand Cross of St. Alexander Nevskoi—a distinction rarely granted to a young man of twenty-eight. The Emperor also gave him 2000 peasants on lands at Grusino, near Novgorod. He had no friend except his Imperial master—the Russian nobility disliked him for his humble origin—and although very wealthy, he lived till the end of his career in an insignificant wooden house, despising all European refinements. In March, 1798, he was suddenly dismissed from his appointments, but recalled the following August, and named quartermaster-general. In January, 1799, he was intrusted with the command of a battery of artillery of the Guards, was appointed inspector-general, a Commander of the Order of Malta, and a Count of the Russian Empire. This rapid promotion provoked jealousy, and in October of the same year he was banished to his estates, it is believed through Count Pahlen's influence.

Plato Zoubof was at first permitted to keep all his honours, and Paul told him he trusted he would serve him as faithfully as he had served his mother. He was charged with the preparations for the Empress's funeral. But she was not to be interred alone. Thirty-five years before, her murdered husband was hastily buried in a grave in the church of the monastery of St. Alexander Nevskoi, and Paul now caused a service to be read over his remains. The prayers chanted twice a day for the Empress's soul also included the soul of Peter III., and Paul visited the monastery, where two old monks showed him his father's tomb. The coffin was deposited beneath the floor near the chancel, unmarked by any

inscription, and it was raised and opened while he stood by. He took up a mouldering glove covering one of the fleshless hands, kissing it several times ; and the next day, when the corpse was removed, came with his sons to meet it, all falling on their knees in the midst of the snow as it was carried past, in most inclement weather, following it bareheaded to the room where it was laid in state by the side of the Empress. Teploff, Bariatinsky, and Orlof, Peter's murderers, were waiting here by appointment, and Paul said to them, "I know the active part you took in the last moments of my unhappy parent, and shall therefore consign the guardianship of his remains to your especial care until they are again interred, not as they were by the infamous wretches who employed you to perpetrate the murder, but as the long neglected and much injured Czar of all the Russias by his affectionate son, who in silence bewailed his untimely death, and now takes the first opportunity of doing homage to his memory." Those who stood near the Emperor saw the tears gush from his eyes before the sentence was concluded, and prevented his utterance for some moments.

Peter had never been crowned or "consecrated," as the Russians call it, so this service was also read over his corpse, and a fortnight afterwards it was conveyed with the Empress's body to the Imperial vault in the fortress. Orlof and his colleagues were ordered to walk in the funeral procession immediately after the bier, and to stand on guard in the church the night before it was entombed. Orlof sustained his part with composure, and his age, his mild appearance, his gigantic height, which he still carried as in youth, and the remembrance of his public services, excited rather the admiration of the spectators than any feeling of horror on account of his crimes ; but Bariatinsky fainted repeatedly, and was never well afterwards. At the close of the ceremony they were exiled to Moscow, though, except the Princess Dashkov, who was sent into the country "to reflect on the epoch of 1762," Paul left the other actors in the last revolution at peace. He sought out all known as Peter's friends, and rewarded them ; among others Baron Ungern Sternberg, who had lived in philosophical retirement during Catherine's reign, and was now suddenly created a general-in-chief, and sum-

moned to appear at Court. After receiving him most graciously, the Emperor said, "Have you heard what I am doing for my father?" "Yes, sire," said the old man, "and was astonished." "And why astonished?" said Paul; "is it not a duty that I ought to fulfil? Look here," he added, turning towards his father's picture, which he had kept secretly for years, and now placed in his room, "I wish him to be a witness of my gratitude towards his old friends." He then embraced the general, and gave him the Order of St. Alexander.

The day after his accession, Paul took Alexander and Constantine to visit Kosciusko, who since his capture was lodged in a private house in St. Petersburg, and allowed to see his friends or receive presents, but not to leave his dwelling. Paul complimented his bravery, giving him an unconditional release, and offered him a high command and an estate in Russia. The general declined them on account of his health, but accepted money to take him to England, and with his head still covered with bandages, owing to his unhealed wounds, he dined with the Imperial family. His companion, Niemciewicz, also obtained his freedom, and the exiled Poles in Siberia were allowed to return. The levy of recruits was stopped, and the wars with France and Persia abruptly closed. Catherine expended two millions of livres on the French emigrants, and maintained Count Romanzov as her ambassador to Louis XVIII. at the camp of the Allied Princes at Coblenz. Since the death of Gustavus III. she was the soul of the confederation, but Paul proclaimed a peaceful policy, and for a time seemed absorbed in domestic reforms. He had passed his seclusion at Gateschina in brooding over the unhappy fate of various members of his family, and had made many plans for securing himself and his children from future revolutions, and for reforming the social system of Russia without necessitating the triumph of democracy and unbelief which had demolished the ancient régime in France; but the excitement of the times when all Europe was in agitation, and the cares inseparable from an autocratic government completed the wreck of a mind already disposed to insanity. He wished to convert Russia into a Utopia; but to cleanse the Augcan stable would have been a far easier task than to establish justice and honesty in a country systematically corrupt for a

century, when the wealth and privileges of the only educated portion of his subjects was opposed to it. Catherine's extravagance and destructive wars, glorious though they may have been, left him a bankrupt exchequer and an exhausted State. Her favourites filled almost every post with their retainers, who, obtaining these places by bribery, had no scruple in realizing a fortune by the same means. Such materials would have perplexed the most practised reformer, but Paul expected perfection from the officials at a time when integrity was most rare. He could not make the best of what he was able to obtain, or bend to suit wavering allies. Those who induced him to alter his line of policy, did so by satisfying him the policy they advocated was that of religion and justice, and would hasten a universal peace. He gave his favour with little reflection, and withdrew it as hastily on the first suspicion that it was abused. In the vain hope of carrying out his theories he concluded treaties, and declared war with almost every European power in less than four years and a half, and perpetually changed his ministers; but his confidential friends were of long standing, and superior men, with the exception of Count Kuttaisof, originally a Georgian slave, sold at Kutais to the Turks. He was rescued by a Russian vessel and brought to St. Petersburg, where he became Paul's valet, and, after his accession to the throne, master of the horse. He was ennobled, to the great indignation of the Russian aristocracy, and exercised a great deal of influence in the last few months of the Emperor's life.

Paul at first confirmed his mother's ministers in their offices, but the changes he introduced made several resign, and others were subsequently dismissed. He exacted an amount of work to which they were quite unaccustomed; for in Catherine's reign, though she rose early, no one else after constant midnight revels thought of beginning business before the middle of the day. Tersky, the master of requests, and reporter to the senate, had publicly sold justice to the highest bidder. He said that Catherine promised him an order of knighthood and an estate a few days before her death; and Paul, believing it to be true, gave them to him, but dismissed him from his office. The expenses of the Court were curtailed, the constant fêtes discontinued, the attendants reduced,

and instead of each member of the Imperial family having a separate table and maintenance, Paul and his children dined together at noon, as he said there was no reason an Emperor should be deprived of a pleasure every citizen enjoyed. He dismissed the Court purveyors, and caused the provisions for the use of the palace to be bought at the markets at market-price, and convoked a meeting of the merchants, personally remonstrating with them on the dishonesty of their dealings. As this did not check the immense profits the Imperial stewards and cooks drew from the provisions they supplied, often of very inferior quality, the Emperor boarded the entire household by contract. This system, pursued during the following sixty years, originated in the Empress Mary looking over the household accounts, and finding a bottle of brandy for the Grand Duke Alexander was regularly entered every day. She went to her husband, and told him their son must be privately a confirmed drunkard. Paul carefully examined the books, and showed her the entry continued through the Grand Duke's infancy up to the time he was a few months old; when it was remembered the Court physician ordered him a teaspoonful of brandy when cutting his teeth, and a bottle was furnished by the purveyors ever since, but appropriated for the benefit of the servants.

Even before his accession there was a conspiracy among the Guards to depose Paul;* and his whole reign was one of antagonism to the idle, luxurious youths who formerly thronged the Court. They turned him into ridicule, and imitated his peculiarities, even in the ante-rooms of the palace. His appearance had not improved with age, and in the spirit of that day, which had little mercy on personal defects, he was made the subject of numerous foreign caricatures privately circulated throughout Russia. At forty-two he looked ten years older, was bald and much wrinkled, and his nephew, Prince Eugene of Würtemberg, quite shrank back when he saw him, as he thought there was something unearthly in his leaden complexion and large glaring dark eyes. When young, the cartilage of his nose was removed by a surgical operation,†

* Masson.

† MS. of General Svetchine. Without excepting the Kalmucks, he was said to be the ugliest man in Russia.

so that it sank between his cheeks till it affected his breathing, making him constantly blow and gasp for air; in a room he hardly ever sat still, but, panting with heat, would open the window to put his head out, or walk up and down with a hurried step, in which he resembled Peter III. His costume was an old uniform coat reaching to his heels, and an enormous shabby cocked hat, which even on the coldest day he carried under his arm. He had a melancholy, almost painful expression, and his manner was nervous and impetuous; but his repentance, if he thought he had been unjust, was as violent and undisguised as his anger, and on more than one occasion gave him a convulsion fit. He thought his own face, which he would never look at, too ugly to be impressed on the coinage, telling his ministers they must wait till they had a better model in his son, and the Russian money has never since borne the head of the sovereign. Constantly by the side of this unattractive figure there was Alexander, one of the handsomest young men of his day, "and not requiring," writes Masson, "to be Grand Duke of Russia to excite love and interest. Nature has endowed him very richly with the most amiable qualities." The Russians are particularly sensitive to European opinion. It is a true pleasure to them when their sovereign is admired for his outward appearance and mental qualities, and they are mortified if they see him a mark for opprobrium. They can laugh at their own follies, and abuse their own government, yet cannot bear foreigners to take the same view when writing of Russia. Therefore all eyes were turned towards the prince whom they thought would be a credit to his country, with the hope of his speedy accession. Paul would have been superior to ordinary human feelings if he had felt no jealousy of a son who for years occupied his own place in the Court of Russia, and it was to the credit of both that they kept so long on friendly terms; but Alexander settled down more willingly than many would have done to the part assigned him by his father, and obtained for a time more influence over him than any one else possessed. He successfully opposed many extraordinary measures, and directed his reforming mania into channels where it was certainly required, and Paul, often mistrusting his own judgment, even asked his advice. An officer was arrested on suspicion,

and brought before a court-martial, when, hesitating in his reply, Paul at once pronounced him guilty and ordered him to be shot. General Svetchine knowing the circumstances hardly warranted such severity forbade the sentence to be carried out, and then went straight to the Emperor to tell him what he had done, expecting nothing less than exile. Paul heard his reasons, and squeezed his hand violently. "You were right," he said; "I wish I had first spoken to the Grand Duke Alexander. Let the officer have his liberty, but do not let this at least be known in St. Petersburg."

One of Paul's first acts was to introduce more attention to religion in his empire, and here he had to begin with his own family, who were all educated in the lax opinions then prevalent. He ordered Wednesdays, Fridays, and other fasts, which he always kept rigorously himself, to be observed; work was prohibited on the Sabbath (Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning), every member of the government and every foreigner in Russia was to confess and receive the Holy Communion at least once a year according to his own rite, or incur dismissal from his office or from Russia, while the priests were advised to admit none to the service who were not in a suitable frame of mind. The old custom of uncovering the head before the picture of the Virgin in Moscow was revived, and sentinels placed to see that it was done. Jews were ordered to pay double poll-tax, but all dissenters were allowed the free exercise of their religion who acknowledged the doctrine of the Trinity. A fanatic who had long asserted that he was the Saviour was sentenced to death, but Alexander interceded for him, saying he was probably insane, so he was sent to Siberia. The clergy were exempted from the knout and raised to the rank of nobles, and Paul visited his old tutor, the Archbishop Plato, in his hermitage near Moscow; and presented valuable offerings to the Troitza monastery and other ecclesiastical establishments.* He abolished foreign wines from the dinner tables of St. Petersburg to encourage sobriety, allowing only the native kvas and vodka to be served in his palace, and himself drank nothing but water or tea. He endeavoured to

* During a visit to Moscow he entered the church of St. John the Warrior, and there heard a sermon preached by a simple priest which pleased him so much that he asked for a copy, and always kept it, with a book of prayers, by his bedside.

enforce morality, at once banishing three ladies of high rank but unenviable notoriety ; and with his wife set an example of domestic virtue rare indeed at that period in any Court in Europe. But the strict etiquette he inaugurated kept his nobles away from it, and his early hours were much disliked. He rose at five in the morning, and by six was on the parade-ground, where he remained three or four hours, reviewing the troops, receiving petitions, and holding audiences in the open air. He had the power of bearing cold to an extraordinary degree, and in the midst of a St. Petersburg winter was seen every morning between his two eldest sons, with his head bare, but stamping to keep his feet warm, beating time with his cane while the troops marched past. Afterwards he generally visited some of the government offices, and once arriving at the military college rather early he found that the president, Count Soltikof (Alexander's old tutor), had not appeared. The Emperor waited two hours, and when he came he told him if his duties were too arduous he might resign them ; but on Alexander's intercession he was allowed to remain in his place.

The evening parties at the palace comprised the Imperial family and two or three old generals and aides-de-camp, when the Empress made tea herself for the guests, and at eight the Emperor retired, on which the visitors departed, and all lights in the city were extinguished.

His changes in the army excited universal discontent. He had dressed up his Guards at Gateschina in the old-fashioned German military costume, the most inconvenient they could wear, too unlike the long robes of an ordinary native Russian ever to find favour in his empire, and now decreed that this dress should be worn by the whole army, in addition to powder and pigtails. He mistrusted the Guards who assisted Catherine in the revolution of 1762, and incorporated them with the regiment of Gateschina, hitherto their laughing-stock, and nicknamed Prusski or Prussians.

The officers resigned their commissions en masse, being exceedingly angry at their new position under men who in some instances were raised from the ranks. Paul first visited their barracks and tried to flatter or persuade them into compliance, but this failing, ordered them to leave St. Petersburg

within twenty-four hours, and as most of them resided in the city, their rapid departure in the middle of winter was attended with great inconvenience.

“The reforms which the new Emperor is introducing,” writes an Englishman,* February 5th, 1797, “are, I fear, somewhat precipitate. I wish he may succeed in all his undertakings, for they are wisely aimed; but I have fears. Above 1500 officers have given in their resignation, the Emperor’s edicts all militating against plunder, which is the motive of entering into his service. I think there will be some great event soon in the Russian empire. I dare not say more; but I fear it. The Emperor, at the head of his Guards the other day, drew his sword, and said that he drew it once for all against all peupulation and all injustice; and that as soon as he departed in any shape from his own principles of equity, he cared not if any one did as much for him. It is not wise for emperors to talk in this way in these times, particularly before Russians. The Empress entreated the Emperor the other day to proceed more deliberately; he replied, he was determined to perish or to introduce a spirit of justice and order in his dominions. If that be the alternative . . . every part of Paul’s conduct is firm and bold, but he has undertaken a fearful task.”

The same writer went to Moscow to see the coronation, April 17th, 1797, which he describes as a splendid ceremony, and “likely to be one of the last things of the sort.” Alexander acted on the occasion as his father’s chief aide-de-camp, and held his sword during the most solemn part of the service. “Moseow is the largest city in Europe. The Emperor is a caricature of Peter III. . . . The troops of the late Empress wore certainly the handsomest uniforms in Europe. Paul has stuffed them into the most hideous sacks imaginable. Some of the reforms in the military are however good; he has prevented the plunder exercised by the officers. He is extremely severe, and very despotic—much more so than the late Empress; but he is pacific, a weighty virtue. He has given to one of his ministers at the coronation 16,000 peasants, and in another quarter 36,000 acres of land. The whole amounts to about 750,000*l*. To Prince Kurakin and his

* Letters and Remains of John Tweddell, 1816.

family he has given over a million and a half of our money. At least no other sovereign can do the same at this moment ; and no other sovereign of any country ever, perhaps, did make so prodigal a grant. He exercises his troops at six A.M., without his hat on, when the cold is at 16° (below 0 of Réaumur). He wishes to unite magnificence with economy ; makes superb presents to individuals, and great retrenchments in the general departments of state. He certainly has the most brilliant Court in Europe ; it is truly splendid. He is capricious and minute—attaching weight to trifles, . . . though he does not want sense. He is a little man, standing on tiptoe ; and reminds me of a poultry-yard when he traverses the palace in the midst of the dames of honour.”

Visiting St. Petersburg, the traveller was struck with the immense number of splendid carriages, and its appearance of wealth. But these carriages were much diminished two years later, from the revival of an old law, obliging everybody who, when driving, met the Emperor, the Empress, or the Czarovitz to dismount and stand in the street till they passed. The Emperor thought driving effeminate, and preferred the old national style of boot to the silk stockings and buckles commonly worn, and which were liable to be covered with mud if in bad weather the Emperor or his son passed.

In Catherine's reign, the generals and their staff appeared in plain clothes when off duty ; and in the winter drove even to a review in fur cloaks, and carrying muffs. The cuirassiers wore purple mantles embroidered with silver eagles over a silver cuirass. All this was abolished : the uniforms, instead of costing 120 silver roubles, were limited to 22, and the names of 22,000 supernumerary officers were struck off the Guards, consisting of civilians who had never appeared in uniform in their lives—children, ministers, and even unborn infants, for whom the government paid salaries and allowances as if they were in active service. But even the least unreasonable regulations were made oppressive by the barbarous manner in which they were carried out by the police. Constantine was placed at its head, and to organize the corps into the most passive and unquestioning obedience was a task much to his taste. His severity also set them an example perhaps not required to make them a perfect scourge. Under Catherine, all the

guardians of the public security, except the secret police, had fallen too much into contempt, and now exile to Siberia was the punishment for making them any resistance. In the same reign it was a penal offence to offer a petition to the sovereign. Paul abolished this law, and took all presented to him as he reviewed his soldiers on the morning parade; but they were so numerous that he opened a special post-office in the palace for letters and petitions, and for a time read them himself, and kept four secretaries to answer them. They still accumulated to such a degree that he adopted the plan of publishing his refusals in the Gazette, and Kotzebue says, these replies were very prompt; but it was complained that petitions were suppressed by his secretaries, and that Kutaissof and his aides-de-camp were the frequent arbiters of their fate.

Paul often declared that a Russian emperor ought not to be a gentleman, and that his eldest sons were brought up with too much refinement to obtain a firm hold over a people so lately introduced to western civilization. His younger sons, he said, should be educated as common soldiers. This sentiment was much the same as Napoleon's, that "Russia would be truly formidable to Europe when her sovereign grew his beard;" at that time considered a mark of barbarism. To please their father, Alexander and Constantine continued indefatigable at parade and drill; and Alexander soon excelled every officer at St. Petersburg in the precision with which he fired at a mark, while Constantine surpassed in beating a drum. "He is the worthy son of his father," writes Masson, of the younger prince: "the same eccentricities, the same passionate temper, the same severity, the same turbulence. He will never possess as much information, nor as much capacity; but he promises to equal, if not surpass him in the art of manœuvring automaton. The common people are never good judges, and they mistook the Grand Duke Alexander's reserve and circumspect conduct for pride, and were at first infatuated with his younger brother; but Constantine has not the amiable and prepossessing appearance of his senior, for with him giddiness takes the place of wit, and his buffoonery procures him popularity. In the same way the priests attached themselves to the unfortunate Czarovitz Alexis, with whom Constantine has some points of resemblance, above all, by his distaste for science

and his rudeness." Of his two sons, Constantine was always Paul's favourite, not being regarded as a rival; and Masson asserts that Alexander was ever treated coldly by his father, on account of Catherine's intentions in his favour. "He performs what his father exacts of him, more from obedience than inclination. The Emperor surrounds him with officers of whom he believes himself sure, and Alexander must fear him rather than love him. His beauty and moral purity inspire a sort of admiration. The soldier adores him for his benevolence; the officer admires him for his sense; he is the mediator between the autoerat and the unfortunate people who, for trifles, have provoked the Imperial anger."*

From five A.M. till the evening meetings in the palace, Alexander's time was now filled with incessant military duties and the occupations entailed by his new post; considerably in advance of his time, he tried to show that the soldier could be trained without the stick, and forbade it to be used on the men under his command. Desertion was frequent in other regiments, for the first time in the Russian annals, on account of the new uniform, and it was like a thunderclap to all Russia when Suvorov, the victor in a hundred battles, was banished to his estates.

This old man, a relative of the Imperial family, being the great grandson of a sister† of Peter the Great, entered the army in the reign of Elizabeth, when only twelve years old, and was in active service from that period, with merely an occasional brief intermission when he was suffering from wounds. With an army seldom exceeding 10,000 men, he had never known defeat; and he spent his pay on them, except just sufficient to keep him in the barest necessities of life. He

* Masson's Secret Memoirs. As the author wrote under great irritation, some of his statements are not worthy of credit. Paul sent for a copy of the book, and, Masson flattered himself, made some useful alterations in consequence, but it is supposed to have irritated him against Alexander.

Writing a year later, when Alexander was Emperor, Masson says, "They show in the Museum at St. Petersburg a wax figure of Peter I. of striking resemblance and beauty. It has much in common with the young Emperor, his elevated height and his imposing majesty, his eye, his forehead, and his complexion; but Alexander's features are softer, more regular, and more amiable. He has also his soul, as we should wish to see it in this century."

† Mary, daughter of Alexis, privately married a priest, who was executed for presuming to enter the Imperial family.

never accepted plunder, and was of the most tried integrity; and though his eccentricities, partly assumed to disarm jealousy, have made his sanity doubted, it is certain that he was the most successful general Russia ever possessed. It was his great wish to meet Napoleon in the field: and if he had lived to command at Austerlitz, there might have been a very different result. He made a joke about the hair powder and pigtails for the army, and a soldier turned it into a burlesque song. This was enough to irritate so susceptible a prince as Paul, who never liked him, for he supported Catherine in the revolution of 1762; and apparently much to Suvorov's astonishment, he was deprived of his command.

At this period the Imperial family, all residing together in the Winter Palace, nine children, two daughters-in-law, and their parents, presented a domestic picture in striking contrast to Catherine's household; but every subordinate felt the gloom of its head, who sometimes hid himself to escape from his mother's ghost, which he fancied haunted him, or put his sons, and even his daughters under arrest for as much as a week at a time on bread and water, for some trivial breach of the new formalities, or a slight inattention during the long church services.

Constantine and his wife spent part of the summer at Strelna, but during the winter were lodged in the Imperial palace. The Grand Duchess Constantine hated Strelna, for there she was subjected without redress to her husband's boyish caprices, and distracted by the constant noise he kept up with his drum. "If the Grand Duke's choice," writes her brother Leopold* (the late King of the Belgians), "had fallen on Antoinetta, the second sister, she would have suited the position wonderfully well. I knew much of all this from Constantine himself. He told me that the Empress-mother looking to the two younger sons, did not wish the 'ménages' of the two elder brothers to succeed. He was dreadfully teasing, and to make matters worse, the Grand Duke Alexander and his wife were Julie's great friends, and supported her in their little domestic squabbles. Without the shocking hypocrisy of the Empress-mother, things might have gone on. The Grand Duke admired his wife extremely, and with an amiable husband, generous-hearted as she was, she

* See his Recollections in the Early Days of the Prince Consort.

would have been an excellent wife. She felt unhappy, and ended without a formal separation by leaving Russia in 1802. He always wished for a reconciliation, and went with me in January, 1814, to Elfenay, near Berne; but she could not bring herself to consent to this reconciliation. The consequence was finally a divorce, much approved by the Empress-mother."

No one could have filled her difficult position at Gateschina with more good sense or amiability, but now ambition and a desire to mix in public affairs took the place of the Empress's better qualities, and having been her husband's sole consoler during many years, she was jealous whenever Alexander influenced him, and systematically opposed it. Paul founded a hospital for old soldiers in St. Petersburg, and also some schools, which he placed under her superintendence, as well as a periodical distribution of food to the poor. He was very liberal in granting pensions, and she made it her task to find out deserving objects. This charitable employment gained her some popularity, and she seemed to have no wish to renew the brilliancy of Catherine's Court, but quietly sought to form a party for herself. Her patriotic sympathies were centred in Germany, where her family were expelled by the French from her old home at Montbéliard, and she assisted the English ambassador to urge Paul to take an active part in the war.

Catherine's last financial measure was to double the value of the coin by altering the sum imprinted on it, and also to double the paper money to a ruinous extent. She died two months before the new issue was to be circulated, and Paul caused six millions of assignats to be publicly burned in the hope of raising the national credit, and ordered most of the Imperial plate to be melted up and put into the mint. He created universal dissatisfaction by augmenting the taxes, and yet lavished immense sums on the French emigrant nobility who now flocked to Russia. The old Prince de Condé, who had fêted him sumptuously at Chantilly, was accommodated in the Czernichef Palace at St. Petersburg, and supplied with a royal guard; all the expenses of his retinue were paid, and Alexander and Constantine were ordered to treat him with the deference usually only paid to kings. The Prince of Tarentum received an office in the Court, and lived there till 1815. The Comte de Blacas, the Duke de Broglie, Damas, Torcy, La

Garde, La Maisonfort, Rastignae, the Duke de Polignac, the Chevalier Augarde, and many others of the last adherents of Louis XVI., came to settle in Russia; and the Order of Jesuits, suppressed by the republicans and protected by Catherine, was allowed to increase its establishments in the empire, and received the rest of its property from France.

The brother of Louis XVI. since the death of the Dauphin was acknowledged by Russia as Louis XVIII. of France, and he had resided in Verona till the approach of Napoleon's victorious army in 1796 obliged him to seek another retreat. Paul offered him the palace of the Dukes of Courland, at Mittau, which he gladly accepted, with a pension of 200,000 silver roubles, equal to nearly 25,000*l.* a year. Paul also pensioned his retinue; but afraid lest the irreligion and frivolity of the French emigrants should corrupt his own people, he required those who were particularly notorious to receive the special ministrations of their own clergy with the object of converting them from their evil ways; and this put some check on the immigration. Madame Royale, the only survivor of the prisoners of the Temple, had been exchanged for several French captured officers by her relative the Emperor of Austria, but was against her will detained at Vienna, and efforts made to induce her to marry an Austrian Archduke. Paul sent a message to Louis to ask if there was any request he could grant him when he first set his foot on Russian soil, and on Louis saying that the society of his niece was now all he could desire, the Czar returned him this laconic reply:—
“Sire and brother,—Madame Royale shall be restored to you, or I shall cease to be Paul I.”

The Czar accordingly wrote to the Emperor of Austria, and his demand was so energetically worded that to have refused it would have been equivalent to war. The Princess was sent from Vienna to Mittau, where she arrived June 4th, 1799, and her marriage with the Due d'Angoulême, arranged in their childhood, was concluded in the chapel of the castle, the Abbé Edgeworth and the Cardinal de Montmorency performing the service, assisted by the Greek and Lutheran ministers of Mittau. The Czar signed the marriage contract, and sent a handsome present to the bride.

While Paul displayed so much sympathy with the French

Royalists, far more than Louis's relatives in Austria, Sardinia, and Spain, and had never acknowledged the government of the republic, it was natural that the allied nations who had taken up arms against France should spare no pains to persuade him to join actively in the war. Sir Charles Whitworth, the English ambassador, had particular instructions to this effect, but it was not till the end of the year 1798 that he could be induced to turn from his peaceful policy, in which Alexander warmly supported him, for not even the presence of the Royalist exiles had made the Princee forego his prejudices in favour of the Liberals of France. But Paul was touched by the mournful appeal of the Queen of Naples (who was aunt to the Emperor of Austria, and sister to the unfortunate Marie Antoinette). Her youngest son had lately died from the suffering entailed by the rough voyage the Royal family experienced on its flight into Sicily, where their only safety seemed to depend on the English fleet. The Neapolitan territory was distracted by republican commotions, and when their king retreated, the leaders received the French with open arms. Joseph Bonaparte, the brother of Napoleon, was sent as French ambassador to Rome, with secret orders to promote the same disloyal and irreligious feeling in the Eternal City; "and if the Pope dies," added his brother, "to try and bring about a revolution."* The King of Sardinia also appealed to the Czar, as his States were seized to form the Cisalpine Republic. The British Government at the same time renewed its application, and offered an advance of 225,000*l.*, besides a monthly subsidy of 75,000*l.*, if Russia would enter the alliance. Paul was easily flattered, and here all his sentiments were touched, of chivalry, policy, and religion, with the chief difficulty, that of finances, partly annulled. He therefore concluded a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, with Great Britain to put a stop to the further encroachments of France. By this treaty Russia engaged to permit an auxiliary force to act with the British army in the North of Germany, and at the same time promised to assist Austria with 40,000 men in restoring the Italian kingdoms and principalities, and her own influence over Lombardy. Paul fully expected to draw Prussia into the alliance, but at the last

* Napoleon's Correspondence with King Joseph.

moment the young king, Frederick William III., positively declined to take up arms, and evidently intended to remain permanently at peace with the French republic, for he permitted Louis Bonaparte, who was accredited to his Court, to examine all the fortresses in West Prussia, and take notes and drawings of their extent and capabilities, which information Napoleon afterwards turned to account. Paul declared war against Spain, because she chose this moment to make peace with France; but it only resulted in both countries withdrawing their ministers. The King of Spain had also refused to acknowledge Paul's title to the Grand Mastership of the Knights of St. John of Malta, when he was elected by a Chapter of the Knights, who deposed their former Grand Master, Hompesch, as soon as they heard that the island was surrendered to the French fleet on its way to Egypt. When Paul ascended the throne he restored the Grand Priorate of Poland and considerably increased its revenues, distributing pensions, grand crosses, and the knightly dignities with a liberal hand. The Order, which had fallen from its original purpose of converting the infidels to a splendid asylum for the younger sons of the noble families of the Roman Catholic States in Europe, felt its independence threatened by the contending navies of England and France, and offered to sell the island of Malta to either France or Russia, only waiting to see which would offer the highest price. The appearance of the French fleet decided the question, and Hompesch gave it up for 600,000 francs and a principality in Germany, and a pension of 700 francs per annum to each of the knights. Hompesch was unpopular in the Order, being a German, and those knights who were not Germans hastened to disavow his act, and requested Paul to fill his place. He was solemnly invested with the dignity by the usual ceremonies, and was more proud of the title of Grand Master of the Order than of Autocrat of Russia. The knights who came to Russia received wealth and estates, and the hope of including the restoration of Malta in the future conditions of peace was his only direct personal interest in the war.

But of whatever faults Paul may be accused, a keen search for his own advantage was not among them. Though possessing martial tastes, he had hitherto resisted the overtures of Great Britain, and refused the subsidy Catherine was willing

to accept, because he said "it ill became a great nation to make herself the pensioner of an ally." He declared that the part of a mediator was far greater than that of leading a successful war. "In whatever light and in whatever circumstances I view an Emperor of Russia, his noblest part will always be that of a pacificator." He had been only persuaded by an overpowering feeling of duty to take up arms, and having done so he had no idea of being lukewarm in the cause, but plunged into it with all the vehemence of his character.

This is not the place to inquire into the wisdom or justice of the long hostilities which Great Britain waged against republican France. It is enough that it was a grand mistake on the part of Russia. It involved her for the next fifteen years in the selfish disputes of the Continent, whereas it would have been clearly her interest to have kept out of them, for she had nothing to fear from French encroachments, and her Imperial family were not at that time even connected by marriage with either of the belligerent States. Russia could afford to look with profound indifference at the quarrels of other nations, and the more they weakened themselves by their divisions the stronger and more formidable she would be. This is a truth recognised by the government of Alexander II.; but in the days of his grandfather there was a feeling among princes that they ought to support each other when seriously menaced, and Great Britain was the most active in theory in carrying this principle into effect; but she gained much, on the whole, by this campaign in the acquisition of Malta and valuable colonial possessions in the East, while her navy enriched itself with innumerable prizes at sea. It cost her less to pay other nations to come forward in the field than to land forces sufficient to make any real demonstration on the Continent; for in the expedition to Holland alone, a German contractor for a part of the provisions of the army realized a fortune of 500,000*l.*, with which he settled down on a fine estate in Prussia, and obtained a title of nobility; and a British army is put on a war footing at all times at a far greater expense than the armics abroad. But if the struggle had been prosecuted by all parties with real vigour, the result of 1814 might have been attained in 1799, and an untold amount of blood and treasure preserved to Europe.

Though the force of circumstances may occasionally make Russia pursue a different course, as a rule she follows the same line of policy from one generation to another: an Emperor takes up the thread of his father's administration of public affairs when he inherits his throne, and it is probably this unity of purpose which has enabled her to overcome the fearful reverses she has encountered during the present century; and yet her seventy populations remain as strongly united, and her power of foreign intercession for good or evil as formidable and as much dreaded as before. Paul entered upon this, his first campaign,* with the same high objects in view as his son afterwards held when he entered captured Paris. The whole order of things swept away by the French republicans was to be restored; the integrity of the German empire, Naples, Bavaria, and Sardinia guaranteed; and he hoped to form a permanent league for the suppression of anarchy and democratic principles among the sovereigns of Europe, that all future wars might be prevented and a lasting peace established on the earth. He went further, and proposed that an œcumenical council should be convoked for the settlement of religious differences, in order to prepare the way for the union of all forms of Christianity in one common bond for the preservation of the true faith. The Eastern and Western Churches might join hands once more, and hold out offers of conciliation to the Protestants, which spectacle of unanimity, he declared, would do more to convert Mahometans and confuse the followers of Voltaire than any amount of material victories. But these visionary schemes were not at all shared by his allies, and the inclination of Austria to appropriate a portion of the recovered Sardinian territory gave rise to an early dispute between the two empires.

Suvorov was sixty-nine, yet still the Russian army looked to him as its undoubted leader in the war. Paul sent a letter to recall him from exile, but the irritable old veteran, when he read the direction, "Field-Marshal Alexander Bazilovitz Suvorov," refused persistently to take it, declaring it could not be meant for him, as a field-marshal would be at the head

* Rostopchine, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, was greatly averse to this war, but the united solicitations of England, Austria, Naples, Sardinia, and Louis XVIII. triumphed over his influence with his master.

of his troops, and not vegetating on a remote estate. The messenger brought it back to the Czar, who took no other notice than to appoint General Rosenberg to the command. When the Russian army approached Vienna, the sovereigns of Austria came to meet it, but expressed great concern on finding that instead of the renowned conqueror whom they confidently expected to see, its chief was an obscure officer whose name they had never heard. Francis II. wrote to Paul, entreating him to send Suvorov; so the Czar wrote a second letter to the field-marshal, directed to "my faithful subject Suvorov." As soon as Suvorov saw the letter he kissed it and pressed it to his heart, saying, "This is indeed new life to me," and read the contents in Paul's own hand: "I have resolved to send you into Italy to the assistance of his Majesty the King, my brother and ally. Suvorov has no need of triumphs or laurels, but my country has need of him, and my wishes agree with those of Francis, who has conferred upon you the command of his Italian army, and begs you to accept that dignity. It depends on Suvorov alone to satisfy the hopes of his country and the desire of his Emperor.—PAUL."* The delighted old man drove day and night to St. Petersburg; and when he arrived, and was summoned to an audience, entered the throne-room on his hands and knees. The Emperor angrily inquired what he meant. "Sire," he answered, "I am accustomed to the firm ground of the battle-field, and the floors of Imperial palaces are so slippery, that it is only by crouching one can make one's way." Paul saw what he implied, but kept his temper, and told him a council of generals would assist him in forming a plan for the campaign.

Suvorov listened without a word while the council proposed his march across the Tyrol, and then into the Lombard plains, but at intervals he drew off his boots, bounded up in the air, or in a tone of despair exclaimed, "I am sinking, I am sinking." The Emperor at last dismissed the council, but kept

* Paul's letters were always very brief compositions. In 1801 he dismissed Prince Dashkov from the army for openly expressing his belief in the innocence of a prisoner, in the following note:—"As you meddle with things which do not concern you, you are hereby dismissed from your command.—PAUL." To the Princess Dashkova he also wrote the previous year:—"Princess Catherine Romanovna.—As you are desirous of returning to your estate in the government of Kaluga you are at liberty to do so. I remain your well wisher and very affectionate PAUL."

Suvorov, and asked him the motive for his conduct. "Sire," said Suvorov, "these generals know nothing of Italy. I followed the road they traced for my army. When I jumped like a chamois, they took me over mountains where chamois alone could climb; when I took off my boots we were crossing rivers where the water, being up to our knees, would soon have been over our heads. Lastly, when I cried, 'I am sinking, I am sinking,' they led my artillery into marshes which must swallow us all up." "Then never mind their advice," said the Emperor. "I give you full powers."

But when Suvorov arrived at Vienna he found more difficulty with the Austrian council of war than with his own sovereign. He was commander-in-chief of both armies, and the council expected to direct his operations as well as those of the Austrians. Francis asked for his plan. "I never make any," he answered. "At the time, position and circumstances decide me." "But you must have some idea of the campaign," the Emperor answered. "If I had, sire," said Suvorov, "I should not tell it to you. The whole army would know it to-night, and the enemy to-morrow."

Although Paul refused to adopt the improved modern artillery in his armies, and the Russians were greatly inconvenienced by their new uniform and accoutrements, Suvorov swept the French out of Lombardy and Piedmont in three months by a series of glorious victories, and it was his purpose to penetrate into France by the Jura in concert with the Archduke Charles, the Emperor's brother, who commanded the Austrian detachments. Constantine accompanied the Russian army as one of Suvorov's aides-de-camp, and was mentioned in high terms in the Marshal's despatches. He showed great humanity to the wounded French prisoners, and in one of the engagements received a slight wound. Paul showered rewards and promotions on the officers of the victorious army, and in a ukaz commanding that Suvorov should be considered the greatest general who had ever appeared, he gave him the title of Prince Italski (or of Italy), and Constantine was dignified with that of Czarovitz, generally only given to the heir-apparent.

But this rapid success gained over three French armies gave the Austrians more jealousy than patriotic joy, and they began to be afraid lest Russia should acquire a permanent settlement

beyond the Alps, or prevent them from retaining the conquered territory. Suvorov had defeated the French without adopting the plans of the Austrian council of war, and the Archduke Charles was not superior to the meanness of grudging him his victories, but when writing to him omitted his new title, or to address him in the quality of commander-in-chief of the allied troops. "Very strong and unpleasant language," writes Mr. Wickham, the British Resident at Berne, "is openly holden on the subject; letters from the (Austrian) army affect sometimes to treat him as a madman, at others to throw ridicule upon his whole conduct, and to consider his military operations, notwithstanding their success, as wild and extravagant projects." Nothing is more ruinous in the end than only half finished wars, but the Austrians thought it enough to have cleared their own States of the invader, and to possess Piedmont and Turin, which they refused to restore to the Sardinian King. They tried to induce Paul to consent to this arrangement by proposing to make it into an independent State for the Archduke Joseph, the Palatine of Hungary, one of the Emperor's brothers, who had lately married the Grand Duchess Alexandra, the Czar's eldest daughter; but when they found he still adhered to his guarantees, and to his wish to prosecute the war with vigour till his end was attained, the Austrian council decided to get rid of Suvorov by sending him to occupy Switzerland (the Russians being utterly unaccustomed to mountain warfare), and to despatch in their place the corps of the Archduke, which was stationed among the Alps, on to the Rhine; to form a junetion with the English and Russian army, expected to advance through Holland. A third Russian army was gathered and forwarded to Zurich under Korsakof, a former favourite of Catherine's; and Bavaria received a subsidy from Russia to supply this army with a contingent of a thousand men.

The defeats of Macdonald, Moreau, and Joubert in the victories of Novi, the Trebbia, the passage of the Adda, and the capture of Milan and Turin deserve more space than they can receive here, and Austria had as much reason to be satisfied with her allies as Paul to be elated at the success of his troops; but the Austrians began by being accomplices with the French aggressor in the annexation of Venice, and they

were now resolved to consolidate and extend their power in Northern Italy. A letter from a Russian officer to Count Rostopchine, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, gives the feeling of the whole Russian army. "Our glorious operations are thwarted by those very persons most interested in their success. Far from applauding the brilliant triumph of our arms, the cursed Cabinet of Vienna only seeks to retard their march. It insists that Suvorov should divide his army, and direct it to several points, which will save Moreau from total destruction. That Cabinet which fears a too rapid conquest of Italy from designs it dares not avow, as it knows well those of our magnanimous Emperor, has forced the Archduke Charles into a state of inactivity, and enjoined our general to secure his conquests rather than extend them; and the army is to waste its time and strength in the siege of fortresses, which would fall of themselves if the French army were destroyed. What terrifies them even more than the rapidity of our conquests is the generous project openly announced of restoring to every one what he has lost. Deceived by his ministers, the Emperor Francis has with his own hand written to our illustrious general to pause in a career of conquest which fills him with alarm."

Suvorov, accustomed to a soldier's obedience, followed out the Austrian Imperial order, and detached a powerful train of artillery and considerable reinforcements, besides stores, to assist in the sieges of Mantua and Alessandria, which were both quickly reduced; and after the battle of Novi he proceeded towards the pass of St. Gothard, and speedily expelled the French from the whole valley of the Reuss. His army was at this time reduced to 12,000 men, and the French were numerous near Zurich, where Korsakof most imprudently gave them battle with a very inferior force, and was disabled by defeat from assisting his chief. The Austrian corps under Jellachich and Lucken was to meet Suvorov in the valley of Mutton, that both might threaten the enemy on the right; but while Suvorov faithfully performed his part of the campaign amid innumerable difficulties, neither of these reinforcements kept the appointment, by the express but secret orders of the Austrian council. He found himself shut in between the French armies of Massena and Molitor, and only two outlets

remained for him—one by advancing to Schwyz, and threatening the rear of the French position at Zurich; the other by an immediate retreat into Glarus and the Grisons, to join Jellachich's army, retired behind the Rhine. The Field-Marshal had never retreated, and selected the first course, but his officers, with Constantine among them, represented the impossibility of making any effect with their reduced and starving infantry on the reinvigorated French troops; and Suvorov was induced to alter his plan, though he wept with disappointment and indignation, wishing the grave had covered him before he was forced to go back on his footsteps.

This retreat was so admirably conducted, over rivers, glaciers, and precipices, and though harassed perpetually by the enemy, who hoped to secure an Imperial prince as their prisoner, was carried out so successfully, the columns halting more than once to give battle and drive back the French, when they carried off 4000 prisoners, that military critics consider it a greater proof of skill and daring than many an important victory. The French had drained Switzerland of provisions and money, and in one district alone massacred 2000 peasants, though they entered it professedly as her allies; and the Russians were supplied with neither bridges to ford the torrents, nor any of the requisitions of mountain warfare, and were dependent on the frugal peasantry for their provisions, too often imitating the French army in taking them by force. Heavy falls of snow impeded their progress, and the rocks over which they passed were bare of wood, so that many of the soldiers died of cold, and the others slept without covering or fire on the newly-fallen snow. They might well suspect the Austrians of treachery when they lured them into those defiles, as they had already discovered their hidden motives in the war; and it was in no amiable frame of mind towards them that the remnant of Suvorov's army reached a place of safety at Ilanz, in the valley of the Rhine. Nevertheless, he proposed to the Archduke Charles that they should unite to resume offensive operations in a quarter where they seemed likely to make an impression on the French, who had not followed up their victory at Zurich, but the Archduke sent an entire alteration of his plan, again transferring the Russians to the Swiss valleys; and Suvorov, annoyed at this conduct from one so much his junior, answered that his

troops were not adapted for any further operations in the mountains, and took them into winter quarters in Bavaria. A letter to Constantine from his mother, containing several family details, was interecepted ; but La Harpe, his old tutor, who held office in Switzerland, sent it back to him, with an earnest appeal to listen to the sentiments of peace and humanity, reminding him that in his childhood he loved to hear stories about this country, now so severely punished. Constantine softened, and horror-struck by the losses in the late retreat, loudly accused the Austrians and the Archduke of being the cause, and was unwilling to fire another shot for their advantage. The toils and hardships falling equally on officers and men, and the distress of hearing of Korsakof's defeat, completely upset the worn and aged Suvorov, and he fell seriously ill as soon as he reached his winter quarters, showing symptoms of a failing mind. In this condition Constantine easily influenced him. "Nothing is more just," writes Mr. Wickham,* "than Suvorov's way of seeing things, but he is no longer the master ; and we have lately abundant proof that his resolution and firmness is no longer unshaken as it used to be. . . . The Austrian Cabinet having turned a deaf ear to the necessity of really repelling the French, have begun to think of doing it in earnest when too late. . . . His Imperial Highness," he writes, October 31st, 1799, "is the cause of all this. His ascendancy over the Marshal is now so visible as to be notorious to the whole army ; as a natural consequence all applications for favours are made to him rather than to the Marshal, and every bad counsel which the Marshal receives either comes directly from him or by his authority. His Imperial Highness takes no pains whatever to conceal his personal jealousy of the Archduke Charles, of whose character and military conduct he talks with the greatest contempt even before the Austrian staff-officers, and this sort of conversation is repeated by the Russian officers, who hold a language on the occasion which leaves no doubt but that his Imperial Highness aspires to the command of the army, and is taking measures to gain the voice of the army in his favour. I am sorry to add that his Imperial Highness's personal character and conduct is in many other respects such as to give the greatest pain to the friends

* Wickham's Diary and Correspondence.

of his illustrious house. Among many other unpleasant facts known to the whole Austrian army, and repeated on every occasion, I will only mention his having corporal punishment inflicted for the most trifling offences on the soldiers and on the peasants in his own presence, often in his own apartments, and not unfrequently with his own hand." Count Voronzov, he adds, was much distressed at the state of things, and fully determined to press for his own immediate recall, "unless the Grand Duke was removed from the army, and the whole headquarters assumed a condition and appearance more suitable to the manners and customs of a civilized country."

The Russian army of 17,000 men, intended to co-operate in Holland, was conveyed by British vessels from Riga, and at Alkmaar joined an English army of 18,000 under the Duke of York (the second son of George III.), who assumed the chief command. This Prince was indolent and inexperienced, and his habits perfectly unsuited to a campaign. He sat drinking with a brilliant staff far into every night, and was not up and dressed till towards twelve in the day.

In the first battle, September 19th, the Russians led the advance, drove back the French General Vandamme, and captured Schorlham and Bergen, but they were not supported with equal ardour by the British, who left time for French reinforcements to come up, on which the Russians were repulsed and their General Hermann taken prisoner. Two more battles were fought giving a barren victory and heavy loss to the Allies, but in the end the Duke of York determined on a retreat, and concluded an agreement with the French to evacuate Holland before December 1st, but neglected to provide for the exchange of the Russian wounded and prisoners, who were left in the hands of the French, and despatched the remainder of their contingent to Guernsey and Jersey to be occupied in garrison duty, as if they were hired mercenaries. The British Government proposed to employ them against the rebels in Ireland, but it needed not what he considered as this additional insult to disgust Paul entirely with his allies. The news of Suvorov's retreat, and Korsakof's defeat, and that his armies were reduced to little more than prisoners and invalids, while in spite of a series of victories they had not attained the objects of the war, had already excited the Czar to a state

of frenzy, and he commanded the survivors to return instantly to Russia, and cashiered every officer who was a prisoner in France. He afterwards reversed this decree on Constantine representing that the Austrians were entirely to blame, and then his wrath fell upon Suvorov for not having early informed him of the deceptive policy of the Court of Vienna and prevented the Russian armies from being needlessly sacrificed. When he first heard of the Marshal's illness, he sent a kind message and his own physician to attend on him, saying that rooms were prepared for him in the Winter Palace. Suvorov pleaded his health as a reason for remaining at his post, but hearing that Paul was highly displeased, he set off for St. Petersburg. On reaching Riga by forced marches with great difficulty and pain, he was informed that the Emperor had not only deprived him of his well-earned honours, but had cashiered his only son, and ordered the elder Suvorov's disgrace to be officially proclaimed at the head of every regiment in the service. This quite broke the old man's heart, and he retired into an obscure lodging in St. Petersburg to die. Even his daughter could not visit him, for she was in Moscow, her husband, Nicholas Zoubof, being in disgrace; but Alexander and Constantine obtained permission to do so, and they were with him when he expired (May 18th, 1800). During his last moments he lamented over the change in the empire since Catherine's death, and drew a comparison between her reign and that of her son. Paul hearing he was actually near his end, sent to offer to do anything for him. Suvorov raised himself up to expatiate again on the past lustre and the present decline of Russia, and broke out into a passionate assurance of his attachment to the memory of the Empress. "I was only a soldier," said he, "and she felt the inclination I had to serve her. I owe her more than life; she has given me the means of making it illustrious. Tell her son I receive with gratitude his Imperial word. Here is the portrait of Catherine; I ask that it may be buried with me in my tomb, and remain for ever attached to my heart." Paul complied with his wish, but vexed at Suvorov's disparaging remarks on his reign to his sons, would not let them attend his funeral, though he went himself to it on horseback, heading a large detachment of troops. Very soon he bitterly repented of his

ingratitude to the Marshal. He restored young Arcadius Suvorov to all his honours, and Nicholas Zoubof to his command. He bestowed estates and pensions on several officers to whom Suvorov, when his mind was wandering, bequeathed money and lands he did not really possess, and gave orders for a colossal statue of bronze to be erected to his memory in the summer gardens. This was completed in the first year of Alexander's reign, and uncovered in presence of the Imperial family and the soldiers stationed at St. Petersburg, to whom Constantine made a suitable public address. The room in which Suvorov died was so small as scarcely to admit sufficient space for a canopy over the body, and his numerous cushions holding his different orders of knighthood. As his coffin was carried out of the house there was a difficulty in taking it through the narrow doorway, when a voice from the crowd exclaimed, "Bring it through, for what ever stopped Suvorov?" His old antagonist Stanislaus was interred with regal honours two years before in St. Petersburg, where he expired of apoplexy in the Taurida Palace. He frequently said he felt himself more a king at St. Petersburg than he had ever done in Poland, and Paul, with his sons, attended the magnificent funeral ceremonies.

One evening when the Emperor was much discontented with a review, he complained bitterly of the want of zeal in his troops, saying that with all the care he had bestowed on them, they were not attached to him. Alexander said he could answer for the loyalty of the garrison under his orders, whom at any moment he would put to the proof by sending a false alarm. Paul took his son at his word, and ordered him to call to arms that night at one A.M. ; but as his memory was become very bad, and he sometimes wondered at the non-appearance of an officer in the afternoon whom he had sent to Siberia in the morning, Alexander took the precaution to put it down in writing, and made his father sign it.

The Emperor went to sleep, forgetting all about the false alarm, when at one o'clock the bugle sounded in every quarter, and the troops immediately assembled. The citizens came into the streets, and the houses were quickly lighted up. The palace was soon in confusion, under the belief that there was an insurrection; and Paul being roused, ordered a horse to be saddled,

and rode off as fast as possible towards Gatesehina, followed by only two of his guard. A moment afterwards, Alexander arrived, to inquire if his father was satisfied, and to announce that the troops were all ready, and only waited his orders. When told that Paul had fled he galloped after him, and soon came near enough for the Czar to hear the sound of his horse's feet, but the fugitive thought he was being pursued by his enemies, and only redoubled his speed. At last Alexander left his suite behind, and followed him alone, when finally coming up with him they had an explanation, and rode back to the palace together.

Much has been written on the unreasonable measures of this unfortunate prince, yet even Plato Zoubof, who with his brothers was an especial sufferer, his immense fortune being confiscated, then restored, and again seized, and himself banished, said of the Emperor that his acts of tyranny and caprice were perpetrated in paroxysms of delirium, and that when restored to mental health he never failed to try to repair the ruin he had caused.* The Abbé Georgel, who came to Russia with a deputation of the Knights of Malta, writes, "The soul of Paul I., notwithstanding great inequalities, was fine; he developed genius and virtues which adorn a throne." When informed that the Princess Dashkov was visited by sympathizing friends in her exile, he said, "Nothing could be more natural; it is the very time for those who owe her gratitude to display it." He refused to listen to either his wife or to Alexander when they spoke in her behalf; but on a letter from her being sent to him in the hand of his little son Michael, then two years old, he took it with a softening countenance, saying, "You know, ladies, how to plead irresis-

* Two caricatures appeared at this time. In the first Paul was writing an order with one hand, a counter order with the other, and disorder was inscribed on his forehead. In the second Peter the Great carried a torch he had just lighted; Catherine II., with a pair of snuffers, was making it burn brighter; and Paul, with an extinguisher, was standing ready to put it out.

"With a brilliant but illogical mind," says Dolgoroukof, "this prince presented the strangest mixture of fine qualities and defects, of noble sentiments and wild desires, of chivalrous flights and fits of the most unbridled despotism. We have already related the deplorable cause which originated the constant vacillation of this otherwise brilliant intelligence, but submitted to the influence of the most nervous and the most irritable temper."

tibly ;” and gave it a favourable reply. He cancelled the sentence passed on a woman who had murdered her infant child, saying, that her feelings after committing the deed would be a greater punishment than any the law could inflict. Kotzebue, the German dramatist, was sent to Siberia and recalled before he had gone further than Tobolsk, as some one showed the Emperor a play entitled “The Coachman of Peter III.,” extolling Paul’s liberality in pensioning his father’s old servant. On his return he was made director of one of the theatres which the Emperor sometimes attended, if the performance did not last more than an hour and a half. A year after Paul’s death, Kotzebue met Kutaissof at Königsberg, and asked him the cause of the arrest, as if anybody knew he must. He answered with unscrupulous frankness that “Paul had acted on no particular motive, but that I had given him offence as an author. However,” he added, “you saw how readily and with what pleasure he corrected his error, and if he had lived, you would have received further proofs of his bounty.”

It often happens under such a régime that power falls into the hands of unworthy administrators, who plunder the State, and use the means of justice to wreak their own private malice and keep down informers ; and in the last two years of Paul’s reign this was the case with the ex-Georgian slave, Count Kutaissof, and the Court-Advocate, Oboulamof, an officer universally detested.* The old nobility kept aloof from Kutaissof, and would not admit his family into the society of their wives and daughters. He hated them in return with truly Eastern warmth, and through his guidance of his unfortunate master completed his revenge. The roads were crowded with carriages and kibitkas conveying all ranks to Siberia, and though a pardon often followed so quickly as to overtake them before they reached the Urals, it did not compensate them for the previous alarm and the loss sustained in disposing of their property in so much haste. Alexander often interfered with success on behalf of these exiles, who regarded him with the warmest gratitude before he came to the throne. “All his servants,” writes Kotzebue, “copied their master, and were evil and obliging ;” and he relates that driving near Czareo

* Kotzebue.

Selo he met him on horseback, commanding the troops at a review. It was raining, so in defiance of the Imperial mandate Kotzebue did not dismount, but the Prince allowed no notice to be taken of it. Paul read every foreign publication, however virulent, on Russia; and seeing his son's popularity was noticed, he thought Alexander might be secretly acquiring partizans to assist him in a revolution like that of 1762, and therefore dismissed him from his post of Governor of St. Petersburg, and became less disposed to attend to his requests. As Bezberodko gained the Emperor's confidence by delivering Catherine's will into his hands, he sent Alexander to work in his office as a mere copyist. Bezberodko was notorious for his slovenly habits, and the want of order in the various departments he held under the Emperor, though he liked routine and wrote with ease. Alexander obtained an insight into the correspondence with foreign governments, and perhaps imbibed at that time the taste he afterwards displayed for the direction of foreign affairs; but he could have learned nothing more. His mother took advantage of Paul's feeling towards him to try and persuade her husband to select the young Nicholas as his heir, and bequeath to her the dignity of Regent in case of a long minority. She could bring no charge against Alexander, who had been a most attentive son, except Catherine's unjust partiality; and his deafness, which she thought must unfit him for military duties or for the government of the empire; and as he was still without children, the difficulty would be less in setting him aside. On May 29th, 1799, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth gave birth to a daughter, who was named Mary, after her grandmother, but died while cutting her teeth. The Empress thought of the future of her younger sons, for she feared Russia, like Turkey, was not sufficiently advanced to allow of junior branches to the Imperial family. Even in France they were found a scourge, and in Russia had met with a miserable fate. But when Paul's mind was once unsettled as to his successor, his views went considerably beyond his wife's control, and during the last six months of his life they constantly changed. He took a violent fancy to his wife's nephew, Eugene of Würtemberg, and thought of superseding his own sons by this boy, and marrying him to his fourth daughter, Catherine, though she

was but twelve years old. It has even been said that he deposited a deed with the Senate to this effect. He also thought of Constantine, and again of Nicholas, whom he created a Prior of Malta on his fourth birthday; and then of his youngest son Michael, because he was the only child born (February 8th, 1798) after his succession to the throne. Like Peter III.—though without the slightest ground—he began to mistrust his wife, and one day ordered Rostopchine to prepare an edict to transfer the Empress to the convent of Solovetzkoi, and declare their two youngest sons, Nicholas and Michael, illegitimate. The minister tried to recall him to reason, and a few hours afterwards wrote to him:—"Sire,—Your orders are being executed, and I am occupied in composing the fatal rescript. God grant you may not be so unfortunate as to sign it, and furnish history with a page covering your whole reign with shame. Heaven has given you everything for the enjoyment of happiness, and for making the entire world participate in it; but you create for yourself a hell of your present existenee, and condemn yourself to it. I am too bold. I expose myself to ruin, but I shall console myself in my disgrace by having acted in a manner worthy of your benefits and of my honour."

A few moments afterwards he received a note in the Emperor's own hand: "You are a plain-spoken man, but you are right. Let it be mentioned no more; let us forget every trace. Adieu, Signor Rostopchine."

This was not the only occasion on which Rostopchine showed himself Paul's true friend. One day the Emperor left the parade-ground, angry because the cloth of the soldiers' uniforms was of bad quality. He ordered his minister to write that moment to Voronzov, his ambassador in London, and direct him to contract with some English manufacturer to supply the whole Russian army. Rostopchine said such a proceeding would close the native manufactories, and ruin many Russian traders; but as his observations increased the Emperor's irritation, he sat down and wrote the letter, which Paul read and signed. Rostopchine took his pen again and wrote below the Imperial signature, "Do nothing. He is mad." The Emperor was walking quickly up and down the room; he suddenly stopped and said: "It appears to me, sir,

you have added your own orders to mine." Rostopchine handed him the letter. The Emperor read it, grew pale, and walked up and down still faster; then at the end of a few moments he threw the letter into the fire, and shook Rostopchine violently by the hand. "I thank you," he said; "you are right. Would to Heaven all my servants resembled you."

Paul is said at one moment to have been so mistrustful of his own judgment as to have thought of abdicating in favour of Alexander; but his wife prevented a measure which might have prolonged his days, by her anxiety to be nominated his successor, though she never could induce him to annul formally his new law excluding Imperial widows. He created Rostopchine a privy councillor, in a long decree enumerating his honours and services; but the foreign policy this minister advocated had already displeased those in St. Petersburg under the influence of England, who continued the deadly foe of France. The exiled Court at Mittau carried on numerous intrigues to force the Czar into a new war with the French republic, while it annoyed Paul by very ungratefully opposing his nomination to the Grand Mastership of the Order of St. John. Dumouriez was sent to St. Petersburg early in 1800, by Louis XVIII., *if possible* to communicate personally to the Emperor a plan "of advantage to the common cause, and to the glory of the Czar." Rostopchine advised Paul to send him his congé, but as the general was put to much expense in his journey, the Czar gave him 1000 gold ducats. He entreated Rostopchine to let him at least receive the honour of being admitted to kiss the Emperor's hand, and Rostopchine arranged an audience in the riding-school where the troops were exercised in the depth of winter. Paul spoke to him for nearly an hour, and asked him to come there every day, forgetting all about the congé. The next morning he became quite confidential, and related in detail his dissatisfaction with the Courts of London and Vienna, whom he considered "dishonest and Machiavelian allies." Dumouriez tried to prove that Russia would be the same if she now turned to republican France. He spoke so ably that Paul desired him to put it down in writing; and said in a letter he wrote to him the same day, "You ought to be the Monk of France."

The third day Paul stopped the drums and ordered a silent

parade, which he gave over to Alexander's direction, and talked for more than an hour with Dumouriez on the dangers of the French Revolution, the faults of the last campaign, and the means of remedying them. At the end he said, "You have inspired me with confidence and esteem. I believe you are attached to my interests. I authorize you to treat with the English minister for the subsidy. I am going to order Rostopchine to give you the necessary authority." But Rostopchine and others of his views, including Alexander, persuaded Paul to wait till he received a categorical answer from Vienna as to the integrity of Sardinia, which would involve a delay of fifteen days. The answer was unfavourable, and a letter from Rostopchine acquainted Dumouriez with the result by the information, that "the general's presence must now be necessary elsewhere, and that his Majesty found it superfluous at St. Petersburg."* This was followed by Bonaparte's successful endeavour to ingratiate himself with the Czar. It is often stated that at this time Paul was influenced by a young lady of honour, a Mademoiselle Lapukhin, at whose request he created her father a Prince; but the scandal that she occupied the position of a Madame de Pompadour was gratuitous. She amused him because she was musical, and taught him ecclesiastical chants; and when he was out of humour with his family he used to spend the evening with her, and tell her his dreams. He suspected everybody of being in league against him by turns, and when he began to suspect the Empress, he said he should divorce his wife and marry her, upon which she offered to resign her duties at the Court. The Empress earnestly begged her to remain, and in the year 1800 she married Prince Gagarine, and was granted a suite of rooms at Czarco-Selo, as well as those she occupied in the Winter Palace. The Emperor practised chants to be able to celebrate mass, at which he said he had a double right to officiate in virtue of holding the ecclesiastical office of Grand Master of an Order of Monastic Knights, and as head of the Orthodox Greek Church. He announced a day for this service; but his old tutor Plato came expressly to St. Petersburg to prevent the profanation. "Sire," he exclaimed, "you may not celebrate mass." "And why not," said Paul, "since

* Vie de Rostopchine.

Greek priests are married?" "Yes," replied the archbishop, "but they may only marry once, and your Majesty has been married twice." The Emperor merely answered, "Ah, you are right—that had not occurred to me," and he returned to the subject no more.

But the acts which gave the greatest alarm to the nobility were those foreshadowing the emancipation of the serfs, for Paul decreed they should be allowed to work three days in every week for their own profit, and also take the oath of allegiance hitherto exacted only from freemen. This caused much ferment throughout the country: the peasants refused to work for their masters or pay their rents, and excited by the disaffected in the upper class rose in revolt, so that troops were obliged to be employed against them; at a time when Russia was entangled with either an offensive alliance or hostility with every State in Europe.

Meanwhile his own family and the Court were daily sufferers from the Emperor's increasing irritation, which showed itself in an extensive use of his cane, and even in putting the Empress under arrest. Alexander had long shown the utmost patience in trying to repair his father's errors, and keep him on good terms with his subjects, but now found himself a constant object of suspicion, harsh treatment, and arrest. He was a daily witness to misery he could often not relieve; the crown lands were being alienated to reward plausible, designing men, who took advantage of the Emperor's weakness; the country was exasperated, the finances in a desperate state, and Russia threatened by the nation most capable of doing her harm. Those involved in a conspiracy long afloat for placing the Emperor under restraint took the opportunity of some flagrant instances to point out his evident insanity, and the dangers which consequently beset the empire, to his son, who in the autumn of the year 1800 was a sharer in it. He was placed in a most cruel position between his feelings as a son and a subject towards the sovereign to whom he was bound by an oath, and his duty towards Russia, who looked to him as a protector, and to the memory of Catherine, who bequeathed to him the care of its renown. But his share in this conspiracy has caused him erroneously to be styled a master in dissimulation, and its fatal consequences pursued him through the

rest of his life. At that time Portugal and Denmark afforded instances of a kingdom being governed by a regent, owing to the insanity of the reigning sovereigns, and the same was proposed and afterwards carried out in England from the age and imbecility of George III. A similar arrangement appears to have been the only course Alexander ever contemplated, though Paul's violence, his restless character and frequent lucid intervals, and the numerous precautions he took to protect himself, made some different means necessary to secure him than were employed with the other mild and comparatively harmless monarchs. Admiral Rivas, the Governor of Cronstadt, and Count Panine were the leaders of the conspiracy, and Panine and Pahlen together undertook to get rid of Rostopchine, whose loyalty was inviolable. A forged letter was shown to Paul purporting to be from Rostopchine to a conspirator. The Emperor did not believe Rostopchine unfaithful to him, but thought he was trying to ruin his correspondent. He cried out, "Rostopchine is a monster; he wishes to make me the instrument of his private vengeance. Ah well! it is on him that the weight of it shall fall," and the same day the minister was banished from the Court. He was deprived of all his offices through the influence of the conspirators, and just before March, 1801, he was sent back to his estates. Count Pahlen, the chief cause of his last removal, succeeded to the confidence of the Emperor.

During the short time Pahlen was in office he acquired the unenviable notoriety of a Brutus, but closed his public career probably a disappointed man, without the wealth which rewarded Potemkin and Orlof, or the power wielded by Menzikof and Munnich and other ministers who had formerly assisted in the transfer of the Imperial crown. He was Governor of Riga in 1782, when Paul, then Grand Duke, and his consort passed through the city on their road from the continent, and saluted them with the honours generally paid to members of the Imperial family, but which they seldom received from men of rank; and Paul remembered the attention when fifteen years afterwards he came to the throne, and immediately sent for Pahlen to St. Petersburg, and made him his aide-de-camp. He was recommended to the Emperor for the office of Director of the Police by Rostopchine, who saw

the necessity of an active and decided man at a moment when all were inclined to take advantage of their master's unsettled mind to further their own schemes of ambition or revenge, and he quickly ingratiated himself into the Emperor's favour. At the end of 1799 he succeeded Alexander as Governor of St. Petersburg, and later Rostopchine in the department of Foreign Affairs, with which he combined the office of Postmaster-General, Military Inspector, and Governor-General of Ingermannland and Livonia. Yet at more than fifty years old, with these extensive powers, and decorated with every Order in the empire, he placed himself at the head of a conspiracy involving great personal risk and perhaps ruin, for he was not one of the original conspirators, but was acquainted with it by Count Panine soon after he first held office. He thought it essential to their safety that Alexander should lend his sanction to the plot, and Panine was intrusted with the charge of bringing him round to their views. Perhaps by that time Alexander regretted that he had not followed out Catherine's will: at any rate the negotiation, which opened very cautiously, succeeded, and in November, 1800, he held many secret interviews with Panine. To insure concealment they met at night in the connecting galleries of the vaults of the Winter Palace. One evening,* as the Count left his house alone and on foot, he thought he saw a spy following. He walked through several streets to elude him, and at last slipped into one of the entrances to the vaults. He was hastening to the place of rendezvous, dimly lighted by lamps, when a hand was laid on his shoulder, and he felt sure he was in the power of the police; but he suddenly recognised Alexander, who had been some time waiting for him. The Prince's reluctance to proceed to extremities caused considerable delay in the object of the conspiracy being effected, as without his consent they dared not stir; and the Emperor was at this time engaged in building a fortified castle on the Fontanka, smaller and more easily invested than the Winter Palace. It was agreed to wait till he had begun to inhabit it, and in the mean while the conspirators tried to obtain allies. Panine's banishment to Moscow embarrassed them, but he busied himself there in pre-

* Bulau's narrative of the conspiracy, published in 1850 at Leipsic. He gives this incident on the authority of Count Panine.

paring the nobility for a change, and Pahlen took his place in St. Petersburg.

One of Paul's aides-de-camp, General Svetchine, was appointed to a post giving him rooms in the palace, towards the end of 1800. One day Admiral Rivas called to congratulate him on his promotion, and was most flattering. Count —— (Pahlen) also came, contrary to his usual custom of paying visits. He asked the General to come and speak to him on business. When Svetchine went at six o'clock in the evening the house was empty; except the porter, not even a servant visible. The Count received him with a candle in his hand, showing that he was alone, and led him into an isolated room.*

"General," he said, "I have to reveal to you, in your quality of chief of the guard, a plot formed against the Emperor. I am the head of it. Remembering the glorious state of Russia at the death of the Empress, humiliated by seeing her now separated from Europe and without alliances, a congress of the most illustrious persons of the nation, seconded by England, propose to overturn a violent and shameful government to put the Grand Duke Alexander, our heir-apparent, on the throne, as his age and sentiments give us every hope. The plan is resolved, the means for its execution are secured, the conspirators numerous. We propose to invest the St. Michael Palace as soon as the Emperor takes possession of it, and ask for his abdication in favour of his son. The Emperor will be constituted a State prisoner, shut up in the fortress, guarded with all the care due to the father of the sovereign; we cannot, however, answer for accidents in the passage over the river in the season when the ice begins to break, and in the obscurity of the night. We want to know the part you will take in this national event."

"M. le Comte," answered General Svetchine, "I cannot share the opinion that subjects without other authority than their own have a right to change the order of a government. The death of Charles I. and that of Louis XVI. are assassinations—crimes of high treason. This is my opinion. For the rest be easy; I shall not betray your confidence to obtain favours by a mean denunciation. Forget, M. le Comte, that

* *Mémoires de Madame Svetchine*, from MS. of General Svetchine.

I have spoken to you, and look at our conversation as a dream." A few days afterwards Admiral Rivas came, and asked him what part he should take if there was an insurrection, which was not impossible. "I shall take the side of honour," said the General, "and adhere to my oath." The Admiral embraced him, and advised him always to remain loyal. Two days later he was named a Senator in the morning, and the same evening dismissed from his post.

CHAPTER IV.

ALEXANDER'S ACCESSION.

1800—1801.

THE rapid conquest of Northern Italy in 1796 drew public attention to Napoleon Bonaparte, who led the French army, which particularly distinguished itself by its barbarity and utter disregard of the rules of civilized war. He had obtained the command of the troops through Barras, an influential member of the French Republican Government, as the price of marrying the widowed Madame de Beauharnais, whose husband perished on the guillotine, and left her with two children and small provision for their maintenance. Barras had taken her into his household, and now wished to provide for her. She was older than Bonaparte, but her fascinating manners were sufficient to gain an ascendancy over a man who had no acquaintance with refined female society, and from her superior knowledge he obtained an insight into the customs of a higher class than his previous position had placed within his reach.

The Republican feeling prevailed so strongly in Italy since the French revolution of 1789, that the Directory of Paris fully expected to find there as many friends as foes, and in placing an Italian at the head of their army they imagined the inhabitants would be more likely to ally themselves with the invaders than if their forces were commanded by a Frenchman. All feeling of loyalty to their dynasties had completely died out in the Italian peninsula, which was divided among sovereigns of foreign origin. The people remembered the glory of the republics, and they looked upon the invasion as the means of restoring them to their ancient independence and position among the nations of Europe; but Napoleon was as false to nationality as to republicanism.* His proclamation to his soldiers incited them with the prospect of

* According to Las Casas, Napoleon said that his Italian birth was most useful to him in Italy.

wealth and plunder. Parma and Modena never armed against him, but received the French as friends, and yet they were forced equally with the belligerent States to pay enormous subsidies, and to give up their finest works of art for the embellishment of Paris, though in modern warfare paintings and statuary had been a species of property held sacred by an enemy. As Savoy embraced the cause of the French, the gate of Italy was opened without a troublesome march over the Alps, and the wolves in sheep's clothing admitted without resistance into the fold; but the spoliation of the churches and the exorbitant exactions raised the inhabitants to defend themselves when too late. Pavia was made over to plunder and massacre for twenty-four hours, and at Lugo, where a French squadron was gallantly defeated, the whole of the male population were put to death. The neutrality or even alliance of Venice was not respected, and by the treaty of Campo Formio, October 3rd, 1797, she was given up with Verona and her continental possessions to Austria, who acknowledged the new Cisalpine Republic formed of the Swiss territory of the Valteline and Lombardy, relinquishing this province as well as Flanders and the boundary of the Rhine, including the great fortress of Mayence, which she made over to France. By this appropriation and exchange, Austria constituted herself an accessory to the French system of annexation, and henceforward alternately allied herself with the Republic and Napoleon, or with Russia, according as to which alliance seemed to offer her the greatest advantage. She never joined Russia with perfectly good faith, and in the wars of 1805 and 1813 was at the same time corresponding with the enemy. That honesty and straightforwardness are in the end the best policy is as true of the negotiations between nations as of the inferior transactions of private life. Though the absence of it at first contributed to Napoleon's success it also caused his ruin, while Austria's fickle and dubious system has been equally injurious to her interests.

The Bonapartes were a striving family, assisting each other in adversity, all doing their best to push each other's fortunes, which at one time were rather low. The same spirit adhered to Napoleon throughout his career: the fame and enrichment of himself and his brothers and sisters was the moving spring

of all his acts, and France, forgetful of his foreign origin, meekly lent herself to the same purpose. As a boy of sixteen, he declared he could never forgive his father, who, though adjutant of the patriot Paoli, permitted the annexation of Corsica to France; but when in 1793 he went back to his home in Ajaccio, and Paoli, hoping to obtain the independence of his country from the French Republic, tried to enlist him in the cause, he had tasted the delights of Paris, and had wider and more ambitious views than could be realized in so narrow a compass as his native isle. He resisted Paoli's overtures, and offered his sword to the advocates of the French supremacy. He had received his commission in the French army from Louis XVI., but became a republican, as he said himself, because he was poor; and he was well acquainted with Robespierre and some of the chief actors in the Reign of Terror. Talma the tragedian assisted him with money, and for the sake of a livelihood he once proposed to his schoolfellow Bourrienne that they should hire one or two houses, and let them in lodgings. In 1795 he wished to enter the Turkish service as he had formerly wished to enter that of Russia, but his letter on the subject received no answer, though while he expected one he amused himself with thinking he might eventually become either King of Jerusalem or some province in the East, for to play a part which should attract the notice of the populace and raise his family from obscurity, next to wealth, was his great object of ambition.*

During the campaign of 1799, when Suvorov swept the French out of Italy, Napoleon headed an army in Egypt, intended as the first stage towards an expedition to India. The massacre of the garrison at Jaffa after they had capitulated on the promise of their lives, the abandonment of his sick and wounded soldiers in Syria merely to hasten home and take advantage of a favourable moment for pushing his fortunes in Paris, are acts at which Suvorov or the Emperor Paul would have recoiled, though both are denounced as cruel by many who profess admiration for the personal character of Bonaparte. The Republican Government had provoked the war with the Allies by seizing Turin and expelling the

* It is said that he also applied to Sir Gilbert Elliott for permission to enter the English service.

King of Sardinia after the treaty of Campo Formio; and the disasters the French army sustained, enabled Bonaparte's old companions and relations to bring forward his successes in a brilliant contrast (but then he had not been opposed by the Russians under Suvorov). Lucien and Joseph Bonaparte were influentially situated in Paris, and Bernadotte and Murat, their relations, were willing to espouse his cause. The ex-abbés, Talleyrand and Sièyes, also did him good service with the idea that a military dictatorship was necessary for the safety of the republic.

On November 10th and 11th, 1799, there were stormy scenes such as have so often occurred in the French capital; and in a fierce discussion in the Assembly, Napoleon's nerves forsook him, and fearing for his life he came out staggering and stammering among the soldiers whom he had collected to take his part; but Sièyes, accustomed to these disturbances, reassured him, and in the end he was chosen as First Consul for ten years, with two colleagues, Cambacères and Lebrun. Though he took an oath for the second time to preserve the republic inviolate, he already thought of destroying it, and chose the Tuileries for his residence because it was a good military position. The first act of the new consulate was to try and make peace with England; the second to conciliate the Emperor of Russia. According to the laws of the old Germanic Confederation, which still existed, the electorates of the Empire were bound to assist in Austria's defence; yet excepting Bavaria they preserved a strict neutrality during the late campaign, the necessary consequence of the fortresses on the Rhine having been given up to France by the treaty of Campo Formio. The immense secret association existing in Germany in alliance with the French demagogues also admitted Napoleon's armies into the heart of Germany before they discovered he no longer represented republicanism. Austria was therefore left without a continental ally, and ascertained too late that her want of faith had completely alienated Russia. It was not only the Emperor, but Rostopchine and others in the Cabinet were enraged at her conduct. Paul required, before he consented to renew the alliance, that the Austrian ministry "should answer, without *if* or *but*, without circumlocution or reserve, whether or not they would,

according to the terms of the treaty, restore the Pope and the King of Sardinia to their dominions and sovereignty." Cobentzel, the Austrian minister at St. Petersburg, replied, that if Austria were to give back Piedmont to the King of Sardinia, she must still retain Tortona and Alessandria, and that she never would restore the three legations and Aneona. He was forbidden to appear at Court, and shortly afterwards ordered to leave Russia. A notice appeared in the St. Petersburg Gazette, October 15th, 1800, to the effect that "according to advices received it has been made known that the Emperor of Germany intended to send an extraordinary embassy to the Court of his Imperial Majesty to offer excuses for what happened at Aneona, and for this purpose named the Prince of Auersperg as his ambassador. It has not pleased his Imperial Majesty either to accept the embassy or the ambassador, particularly in the person of the Prince of Auersperg, who, during the journey of her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Alexandra Paulovna, allowed himself to offer her several indignities. His Majesty orders that no answer shall be returned to this notification."

In September of the same year Paul held a conversation with the Danish ambassador, and said that instead of a Congress the Allied Powers should convoke a tournament, and that these sovereigns who had not courage to fight themselves might send their ministers to take their places; but as the ambassador repeated this conversation, he was ordered to quit the capital within twenty-four hours. The relations between Denmark and Russia were slightly wavering. An order dated August, 1799, decreed that "clubs and societies having been formed throughout Denmark, on principles similar to those which brought about the revolution in France, we order all Danish ships of war as well as merchantmen, and also all subjects of that kingdom to be strictly forbidden to enter any port in our dominions."

A notice similar to the one affecting Denmark was set forth with regard to the city of Hamburg, March 21st, 1799, but in November a second appeared stating, that "The city of Hamburg having satisfied our wishes by delivering up to the British minister resident at that place the Irish rebel, Napper Tandy, and his companions, and by sending away cer-

tain Frenchmen of suspicious character, has merited the return of our goodwill. We therefore forget the past, and direct that every communication with the town of Hamburg be re-established."

The Emperor was less rapid in his transition from an alliance to hostility with England than with the continental Powers; for he admired the character and government of the British people, and particularly the Scotch, and they had steadily adhered to the principles of legitimacy; but they certainly acted with very little courtesy towards Russia, considering the urgency with which they had pressed her to abandon her peaceful policy, and that the Emperor had invariably fulfilled his part of the compact with his allies.

At first he even allowed the Russian contingent which had assisted the Duke of York to remain in Guernsey, under the command of Vioménil, a French émigré, to join the English in an expedition against Brittany. But he was exasperated by England's refusal to exchange some of the French, of whom its prisons were full, against an equal number of Russians (who had been taken at Alkmaar); for he had allowed the prisoners captured by the Russians in Suvorov's campaign to be returned for Austrians and Sardinians. She also refused to listen to any arrangement respecting the Grand Mastership of the Order of Malta, and showed clearly she meant to secure the island for herself. Bonaparte took advantage of this disagreement to conciliate the Czar. He offered to send back 8000 Russian prisoners newly clothed and armed, and wrote to Count Panine, "that he was unwilling to suffer such brave soldiers as these Russians to remain longer away from their native land." The praise was not ill bestowed; for these prisoners, though in rags, and set to work on the roads for their maintenance, which was kept just above starvation, refused to sell the medals they had gained under Suvorov, or to accept any bribe to enter the service of France. In the same letter Bonaparte offered to place Malta in the hands of the Czar; and the Russian general Sprengporten, who was sent to France to bring away his countrymen, was to occupy Malta with them till some arrangement was effected. Paul had no idea of annexing the island. He had obtained a promise that in case it capitulated to the English fleet, then

maintaining a strict blockade, it should be ruled till the conclusion of a peace by commissioners appointed by Russia, England, and Naples; and he supposed it would come to the same thing, and save further loss, by receiving it amicably from France. But Nelson, who commanded the English fleet, cared for his own personal glory and British naval fame more than any political question or the peace of Europe. He had besieged the island for some time, and was determined it should capitulate to himself. He refused to allow the Russians to pass through the blockade, and a few days afterwards it was compelled to surrender. Paul had already named Balli de la Ferrette for his commissioner; but once having obtained their prize, the English declined to keep to their former engagement, or even to receive a Neapolitan in Malta. They also prevented the Russian troops from leaving Guernsey when the Czar ordered them to return; and induced Vioménil to remain some weeks longer, to prevent Bonaparte from hearing of the difference between the two Powers. Paul was excessively indignant, and ordered Sir Charles Whitworth, the English ambassador, to leave St. Petersburg. Vioménil was taken into the English service, for he dared not re-enter Russia.

At that moment Louis XVIII.'s ambassador, the Comte de Blacas, and many of the French emigrants to St. Petersburg, made the cause of the Legitimists very unpopular. They received Russian gold, and saw their allies fight their battles, while they danced and courted their neighbours' wives in the capital, utterly unable or disinclined to lend any aid to the cause. Paul had long been disgusted by their irreligion and frivolity; the very qualities he was striving to stamp out of his empire with such a heavy hand. Rostopchine and Alexander openly expressed their opinion that the young military chief, who was restoring order, law, and religion to the distracted republic of France, was far more capable and worthy of guiding the helm than any member of the Bourbon race. There was so little intercourse between the east and west of Europe that they only saw the result, and knew little or nothing of the means by which Bonaparte was obtaining his ends; and in Alexander's eyes, the hero of humble origin who raised himself by his own sword to the head of a State, was clothed with a halo of romance which could belong to no prince born on the throne.

In 1799 Rostopchine wrote, that he was a leader with all the attributes of sovereign power except the name, and as soon as the Consulate of France was fairly established, Alexander urged his father to acknowledge it as the real Parisian government, and adhere no longer to the fiction of Louis XVIII. being the only sovereign ruler of France. When Bonaparte restored the Russian prisoners, and offered Malta to the Czar, at the same time sending him a sword given to an ancient Grand Master by Leo X., and promising to re-establish the Pope and the King of Sardinia, which Austria would not do, contrary to her pledged word, there was no longer any reason for maintaining a hostile attitude towards the French republic, and Paul consented to the re-establishment of direct communication between the two Powers who for a long time had only corresponded through Prussia. "The relations of Russia with Bonaparte," says Lanfrey,* "had in nothing the admiring and sentimental character attributed to them on the faith of the memoirs of Napoleon. What Paul liked in him was the man of the eighteenth of Brumaire, the enemy of the Revolution, the destroyer of the Republic. His despotic instincts, more penetrating than so many enlightened spirits, had made him see in Bonaparte the future tyrant, the designated founder of Western Czarism." Napoleon told Las Casas that Paul wrote to him—"I set aside the abstractions of your revolution. I confine myself to a fact. In my eyes you are a government, and I address myself to you, because we can understand each other, and I can treat with you." He adds, it was curious the old Cabinets were unable to see the importance of this change (the establishment of the Consulate), and that Paul, who was considered mad, was the first to appreciate it. Yet "Paul's first act in return for all his advances and caresses, was to send M. de Sergcisef to Paris with a note from Rostopchine, written in a tone so thoroughly autocratic that we can hardly conceive," says Lanfrey, "how Bonaparte could endure it, greedy as he was to gain Paul's good graces. It treated him much like the governor of a remote province in the Russian empire. This circumstance has been twisted in Napoleon's memoirs with a hardly credible cynicism. Paul," he says, "basted to send to the First Consul a

* Count Lanfrey's *Vie de Napoléon I^{er}*.

ourier with a letter in which he said, ' Citizen, First Consul, I do not write to you to enter into a discussion on the rights of men or citizens. Every country governs itself as it thinks fit. Wherever I see at the head of a country a man who knows how to govern and to fight, my heart is drawn towards him.' The credulity of readers is seldom mocked to a greater extent. Rostopchine's note, which was accompanied by no letter, has nothing in common with this flattering composition. It is dry and imperious to insolence. What the Count signified to the Consular Government in this species of ukaz (September 26th, 1800) was not the desires, but the will of the Emperor, his master, and the conditions on which a good understanding might be re-established. These conditions were the restitution of Malta, the restoration of the King of Sardinia, the guarantee of the integrity of the States of the sovereigns of Naples, of Bavaria, and of Würtemberg. The First Consul made no difficulty in promising everything, but with the secret resolution of eluding his promise sooner or later, at least in what concerned Piedmont. He wished for the moment to satisfy at every price his imperious ally, but this *entente cordiale* of which he made so great a show reposed at the bottom upon a falsehood; it prepared us (France) grave dangers for the future." In a flattering letter to Paul, Bonaparte pressed him to realize promptly "the union of the two most powerful nations in the world" (December 21st, 1800). He founded this hope on "the greatness and loyalty" of Paul's character, and six days later he wrote to Fouché, desiring him to seize and suppress every copy of a pamphlet, entitled "No Solid and Durable Peace without the Restoration of Poland," by the Polish citizen, Charles Moller.*

The remains of the Polish army of 1794 were already enlisted beneath the banners of the French Republic. The French garrison of Ancona was entirely composed of Poles: and the Polish legion, under Dombrowsky, at the battle of Trebbia, was the most formidable division of cavalry opposed to Suvorov.

The neutrality of Prussia, in 1799, was of great service to France, and Bonaparte sent Duroc and Bournonville to Berlin, to gain over the King, by offering him the towns of the

* Count Lanfrey's *Vie de Napoléon I^{er}*.

Hanseatic League, which did not even belong to France by right of conquest. Prussia accordingly secured the neutrality of the smaller States of Germany, and now exerted herself to detach Paul entirely from the Coalition; while Austria continued the war alone, and sustained decisive defeats at Marengo (June 14th, 1800), and Hohenlinden (November 3rd, 1800), which completely reversed Suvorov's successes. By the treaty of Luneville (February, 1801) in consequence of these defeats, the Austrians were obliged to give up all the Sardinian territory to France, though their anxiety to keep it for themselves had originally caused the quarrel with the Czar. This campaign was opened with the famous passage of the Alps by the French army, and historians still differ as to whether Napoleon crossed the Great St. Bernard in person, or went quietly round through Lausanne, where he is said to have waited several days, to enable him to arrive in Italy by Aosta at the same moment with his troops. It is a serious drawback to the study of this great general's military exploits, that his own word cannot be depended on for the smallest fact, when a departure from the truth could apparently enhance his merit, while at the same time he systematically underrated the achievements of his lieutenants, and was unwilling to admit that their talents, which had already been displayed under the Republic, conduced in any measure to his extraordinary success.*

The withdrawal of the Russian troops from Italy and the Austrian reverses left Naples again at the mercy of the French, and the Queen of Naples set off from Palermo for St. Petersburg at the beginning of the winter of 1800—1, personally to implore the Czar's intercession. He was touched by her sorrows and admired her spirit, and despatched M. Loweschef, one of his confidential officers, to enforce the fulfil-

* See his strictures on Macdonald's passage of the Splügen, which paralysed Laudon, and enabled Brune to cross the Mincio. He never liked Moreau after Hohenlinden, which that general gained. General Mitchell asserts that he did not personally cross the Alps. (See Fall of Napoleon.)

Joseph Bonaparte told an acquaintance of the author that he sat for the picture of Napoleon Crossing the Alps, and had sat for several other portraits of his brother, being very like him, but taller, and with a clearer complexion. Napoleon particularly ordered the painter to depict him on a very restive horse—such a horse, in fact, as he never sat in reality, being an awkward and not very bold rider.

ment of his wishes on the Government of Paris. According to Bourrienne, the alliance with Paul gave Napoleon more pleasure than any event in his subsequent career. A soldier of fortune, who had raised himself to the throne of the Bourbons, was anxious above all to be accepted as the head of his nation and treated as a brother by the long-established potentates of Europe; and perhaps there was something congenial in Paul's high-handed measures and utter disregard of public opinion or conventional sovereignty, to a man who shortly afterwards exercised in reality as oppressive a tyranny as that of the northern autoerat, but without the check of an old-established nobility, to save France from the ruin which she only escaped in 1814 through the moderation of her enemies. He received M. Loweschef with extraordinary distinction, and on the envoy's departure for Italy he was treated with the honours usually reserved for crowned heads. He arrived in Florence with Murat, and the city was illuminated and decorated with the tricolour and Russian standards. This open display of the alliance of the two nations enabled Talleyrand to menace Austria with the co-operation of Russia, and obtain more severe conditions of peace than she would otherwise have yielded. But Paul had no intention of attacking Austria, as England was just now the especial object of his wrath. He obtained the exclusion of the affairs of Naples from the treaty, which Napoleon promised to regulate according to his wishes. The Roman States were to be evacuated, and an indemnity paid by the Neapolitan Government to the families of certain French emissaries who were murdered when the Court returned from Sicily to Naples, at the time of Suvorov's victories. The severe clauses of the arrangement were comprised in a secret article of the treaty with Naples, who consented to close all her ports against English commerce; but within a week of Paul's death the French troops repossessed themselves of her fortresses, and the royal family once more took shelter in Sicily and relinquished Naples, first to Joseph Bonaparte and then to his brother-in-law Murat.

Baron Krudener was now the Russian ambassador at Berlin, and his daughter was maid of honour to the Emperor's second daughter Helena, who in 1799 married the Hereditary Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. The Grand Duchess came

to Berlin with her infant son Paul, December, 1800, on her road to spend the winter at her father's Court. In company with the Prussian Sovereigns she was being entertained at a grand fête at the Russian Embassy, when a courier arrived from St. Petersburg bringing an order to the Baron to declare immediate war with Prussia. The ambassador was appalled by this totally unexpected command; but he quietly left his guests for a short time to write to the Czar that he had not executed and could not execute his orders; he gave his reasons, and said he was ready to submit to all the consequences of a disobedience which he thought alone worthy of his zeal and devotion to his sovereign.

The Grand Duchess and her suite left the next day for Russia, and the ambassador remained weeks in suspense, his health and sleep giving way from anxiety, till an autograph letter arrived from Paul, without any direct allusion to the subject of his despatch. "I knew well," he wrote, "that you were a skilful and zealous minister, but I was not aware you were so gallant to ladies. My daughter Helena has told me of the magnificent fête you gave her," &c. In addition to this letter Orders and presents were lavished on him, but in the last despatch Paul sent to Berlin, the day before his assassination, he again threatened Prussia with a force of 80,000 men. Pahlen added to it, "His Majesty is not well to-day, and serious consequences are apprehended." The ambassador had reason to regret his loss, as it left him no further hope of distinction, and owing to the financial embarrassments of Russia, the pay of the foreign ambassadors was curtailed.*

During the Grand Duchess Helena's sojourn at Berlin, a French émigré, Count Alexandre de Tilly, wrote some rhymes eulogistic of the Czar, for Mademoiselle de Krudener to sing to the little Prince whom she was charged to hush to sleep during their visit to St. Petersburg. Paul heard them repeated to his grandson, and rewarded the fortunate poet with the Order of St. John.

Affairs were rapidly coming to a crisis between Russia and Great Britain; and the estrangement was not decreased by

* Vie de Madame Krudener.

the British ambassador, Sir Charles Whitworth,* who was on intimate terms with some of the Zoubof family, and therefore naturally enough Paul regarded him suspiciously. He revived the idea of the principles of the Armed Neutrality as upheld by his mother in 1780, to which England had yielded with respect to Russia, and he made proposals in May and June, 1800, to the Courts of Stockholm and Copenhagen to join with him in resisting the right claimed by the British navy to search all neutral ships carrying merchandize. It was in fact a guarantee of the weak against the strong, for the British ships were then all-powerful at sea; and the Confederacy was willing to admit of the right of search with respect to vessels not convoyed by a neutral frigate, or when a port was strictly blockaded. It was first resisted July 25th, 1800, when a British man-of-war captured a Danish frigate and the merchant-ships in her charge after a sharp engagement, and the British Government despatched a fleet of sixteen armed vessels to Copenhagen with orders to bombard the city if Denmark did not at once acknowledge England's right of search at sea. No proceedings between Russia and Turkey were ever more tyrannical; and Denmark, utterly unable to resist, at once consented not to send her vessels any longer under convoy, and her frigate was released. Paul offered himself as arbitrator, and when Sir Charles Whitworth rejected his interference, he laid an embargo on all the English ships in Russian ports. The Master of Police waited on the English merchant houses in St. Petersburg, requesting that one person from each would attend the Military Governor at six in the morning. When they arrived he politely informed them, "Gentlemen, last night the Emperor laid an embargo on all English ships at Cronstadt." This time it only lasted eight days; and the vessels were released; but in September the English merchants were called on to contribute certain sums as an indemnity for some Russian vessels seized while conveying military stores to Holland. On November 7th, when the English refused to admit commissioners to administer the government of Malta, Paul laid another embargo upon 300 British

* He spent, besides his official income, between 6000*l.* and 9000*l.* a year in St. Petersburg from the fortune of Madame Scherobzov, sister to the Zoubofs. (See Sir G. Jackson's Diary.)

vessels in his ports, and sent the whole of their crews into the interior of Russia, allowing them each a few copecks a day for their maintenance. Some of the ships at Narva weighed anchor and escaped the embargo, on which the Emperor ordered the remainder to be burned, and in the official Gazette declared the embargo should not be taken off till Malta was restored. This was contrary to an article in the existing treaty of 1793, providing that in case of a war the merchants on both sides should be allowed a year to dispose of their effects. A liquidation office was appointed at St. Petersburg to receive and pay in all debts, but the English merchants lost more than usual in their cargoes, as owing to a bad harvest in England there was an almost unprecedented scarcity of corn, and during the winter of 1800-1 wheat was selling in London at 1*l.* 4*s.* the bushel, having risen nearly five times in price since the beginning of the war. The English colony in St. Petersburg also became the especial mark for the interference of the police—the ordinary English hat was forbidden—and there is little doubt they swelled the number of conspirators against the Emperor, and also the number of opponents to the alliance with France.

The Danes, emboldened by the approach of winter closing the channels to Copenhagen, renewed their treaty with Russia, and it was signed between the two Powers and Sweden December 17th, in St. Petersburg. Prussia rather ambiguously joined it. Gustavus IV. visited St. Petersburg at Christmas, and was received with great splendour by the Emperor, who seemed to be quite setting aside the economical measures with which he had begun his reign. There was little cordiality between Alexander and Gustavus, now married to the sister of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth; but the Swedish prince professed a great admiration for Paul, and it was thought afterwards imitated him. A few days before he left St. Petersburg the Emperor gave a tournament—a diversion he had liked in earlier days, and in which he took a part as a combatant. In the evening a despatch was received from Napoleon containing several caricatures published in England, representing Paul as a lunatic. The conversation turned on the French success, and the determination of the Northern Confederacy to humble the pride of England, and Gustavus

complimented the Emperor on his prowess in the tournament. The idea again occurred to him of a European tournament, and he resolved to challenge the other Sovereigns. Gustavus loudly supported the proposal in opposition to Alexander, who tried to dissuade his father from making himself publicly ridiculous, and Paul despatched this notice in his own handwriting to the Journal of St. Petersburg, where it appeared December 30, 1800:—

“It is said that his Majesty the Emperor, seeing that the Powers of Europe cannot agree, and wishing to end a war which has raged eleven years, intends to propose a place where he will invite all other potentates, to fight them in closed barriers; they are to bring with them their most enlightened ministers and skilful generals as squires, umpires, and heralds; such as Turgot, Pitt, and Bernstoff. He intends himself to have with him Counts Pahlen and Kùtaissouf.”

Although Alexander's remonstrance had no effect at the time, Paul seems to have reflected on it, for shortly before his death he sent a second notice to the Hamburg Gazette, written in German, commenting upon the first, and stating that it bore evident signs of what the Emperor “had been frequently taxed with.” He gave it to Kotzebue to translate from the original French, and laughing rather nervously, told this writer that he had often acted foolishly, and meant to impose a punishment upon himself. Kotzebue, “courtier-like,” laughed too, upon which the Emperor stopped, and rather severely asked him what he was laughing at. “Because your Majesty is so well informed of everything,” he replied. Paul also inserted the same paragraph as copied from the Hamburg Gazette, into the Gazette of St. Petersburg. The Governor of Moscow caused the paper to be seized, and was not a little astonished when he found the Czar was the author of it. Napoleon heard that Paul was fond of music, and sent an actress to St. Petersburg. Her lively songs and skill in amusing him gave Madame Chevalier a perfect success, and instructed by Otto, Sièyes, and Talleyrand,* who were all assembled at St. Petersburg, she influenced him considerably in the interests of France. “A courier arrived yesterday from Russia who had made the journey in fifteen days,” wrote Napoleon,

* The nephew of the celebrated Talleyrand.

January 20th, 1801. "He brought me an extremely friendly autograph letter from Paul I. It is difficult to negotiate respecting Germany without his co-operation." Pahlen had agreed with Rostopchine so far as to disapprove of the crusade against the French, though he equally objected to a war with England, but Kutaissof and Madame Chevalier were now Paul's advisers in foreign affairs, and Napoleon induced the Czar to send Louis XVIII. from Russia. Till this time the King had received the handsome pension Paul granted to him, but on January 19th, 1801, the Governor of Courland came very respectfully to convey the order, and on the 22nd Louis and his niece the Duchess d'Angoulême took their departure in the midst of rain and snow, the Queen being ill and obliged to remain behind. The Russian Guards paid them regal honours everywhere on their route, but owing to the weather and the primitive state of Poland, they had a miserable journey as far as Warsaw, being obliged to pass their nights in wretched posthouses kept by Jews, or in the Polish peasants' huts. Louis never forgot these privations, and even in 1814 had by no means forgiven the Russian Imperial family.

Although Napoleon gave contradictory opinions on the same subject to his various biographers if their statements are correct, they all show that he invariably spoke kindly of his unfortunate ally. He said to Las Casas at St. Helena, "that Paul had been promised Malta the moment it was taken possession of. Malta reduced, the English ministers denied they had promised it to him. It is confidently stated that on the reading of this shameful falsehood, Paul felt so indignant that seizing the despatch in full council, he ran his sword through it, and ordered it to be sent back in that condition by way of answer. If it be madness, it must be allowed that it was the madness of a noble soul, it was the indignation of virtue which was incapable until then of suspecting such baseness."* "Latterly," he added, in another conversation, "I think Paul was mad. If he had lived, England would have lost India."† They had agreed to send an army of 35,000 Frenchmen under Massena, 50,000 Cossacks, and 35,000 Russians to be embarked on the Caspian Sea, and after cross-

* *Mémoires de St. Hélène*, par Las Casas.

† *O'Meara's Voice from St. Helena*.

ing Persia to proceed to India by the Persian Gulf, but Napoleon's anticipations in setting out on a campaign were always much greater than he realized :* the distance was further than any he ever attempted elsewhere ; and, considering the climate through which they must have passed, they could hardly have arrived in sufficient force to make any real impression on the British power in the East. The Cossacks had assembled at Astrakan, when they were recalled on Alexander's accession. At the same time another army was encamped on the frontiers of Germany to overawe Prussia, and Pahlen, Kutusov (afterwards celebrated in the war of 1812), and Soltikof were to have the command ; yet the Russian credit was rapidly sinking, and owing to the quarrel with England her commerce temporarily destroyed. " France," wrote Napoleon to Paul, " can ally herself only with Russia, for Russia is master of the Baltic and Black Sea. She holds the keys of India in her hands. The Emperor of such a country is truly a great prince." Notwithstanding the complications of foreign affairs, Paul found leisure to interest himself in the construction of a new palace called St. Michael's, from a dream in which he thought St. Michael appeared to him. It was built on the site of the Summer Palace, and cost between fifteen and eighteen millions of roubles. He insisted on removing from the well-built Winter Palace to inhabit it while the walls were so damp that the water still trickled down them. His physicians often warned him of the danger he would incur by residing in it ; but they were at last wearied into a more favourable judgment, and he removed there with all his family in the depth of winter, being particularly delighted because his mother had never lived in it. The designs for the exterior and the allegorical ornaments and paintings in the interior were sketched by his own hand, and he procured innumerable treasures of art for its embellishment at a great cost from Paris and Rome. A draw-bridge over a canal thirty feet wide conducted to the interior of the palace.

On November 8th, 1800,† the Emperor celebrated the inauguration of this building, and gave a masked ball to the public, during which all the state rooms were thrown open

* Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}. † Kotzebue's Autobiography.

and lighted with thousands of wax tapers. A statue of Peter the Great cast in 1744, but never removed from the foundry, was exhumed and put in front of the entrance with an inscription, "The Great Grandson to his Great Grandfather." It was not inhabited by the Imperial family for much more than four months, but during that time every one's health was materially affected, particularly the Grand Duchess Elizabeth's. The ice in the galleries was generally an inch thick from the roof to the floor, in spite of fires continually burning there, and a dense fog often pervaded the mansion, discolouring the paintings and furniture. It stood facing the lime trees of the Summer Garden, with the bright gilt spire of its chapel rising in the middle. Over the door were two verses from Scripture in old Slavonic, "Not unto us, but unto Thy Name give the praise," and "Holiness shall dwell in Thy house for ever." The conspirators carefully wound their toils round the hapless monarch by the time he began to inhabit this fatal palace. The banishment of Panine to Moscow split them into two divisions; one headed by Admiral Rivas, the other by Count Pahlen. A large number of Russians preferred a female sovereign, and Rivas wished to put the Empress Mary in the place of her husband. Pahlen's party worked for the elevation of Alexander; but the Prince was particularly unwilling to act, because he had originally advised the peace with France, which had gradually led to the war with England, the reason now urged by Pahlen for dethroning the Czar, who stoutly refused any conciliatory measures towards the British Government. He hoped that the medical treatment Paul had undergone might have the effect of restoring him to calmness, for he was attended by two English physicians. In the meanwhile rumours of a conspiracy were beginning to circulate, and even the Russian priests were alienated by the report that Paul was going to turn Roman Catholic, based on his idea of reconciling the Eastern and Western Churches, and his encouragement of the Jesuits.* At his request this body was

* The Abbé de Sendilly, curé of the Roman Catholic church in St. Petersburg till his death, April 16th, 1817, was introduced to Paul in France, but in 1792 was driven from a rich benefice into Germany, where he was almost starving, when Paul sent him a passport and money to come to Russia, in 1797. He devoted himself to the poor in his adopted country. Alexander gave him a carriage when he grew old, but he sold it for the benefit of his pensioners.

re-established as an ecclesiastical order (but only in his dominions) by Pius VII., in a bull dated March 7th, 1801; upon which many came to Russia from Germany and other countries, where they had hitherto existed under other names.

Catherine permitted the Jesuits to establish colleges in Poland, because no papal bull (such as that which dissolved the order) could take effect in her dominions, and it was to prevent the collision between the Jesuits and the recognised orders of the Roman Catholic Church that Paul requested the Pope to legalize them in the eyes of the Roman communion. There was at that time a great scarcity of educated tutors in Russia: Prince Kurakin paid a German 35,000 roubles for instructing his sons during fourteen years, and Prince Dolgoruki gave 25,000 for the same purpose to a French émigré who lived some time in his family. Swiss shopkeepers, French cooks, and German porters came to Russia professing to be well educated men, and the children of the nobility were transferred to their care at enormous cost without further trial of their abilities; so that the fortunes of Zurich and Lausanne were completely made by the wealth of retired tutors and governesses from Russia. Paul knew the Jesuits to be anti-revolutionists and well educated, and placed the University of Vilna in their charge, confiding to them the colonies on the Volga. He admitted their Vicar-General, Father Grüber, to his intimate councils, and the Jesuits soon became the chief instructors of noble youths in Russia.

At the end of the year 1800 Paul published an amnesty permitting the return to St. Petersburg of dismissed and banished officers, and among them the three Zoubofs took advantage of it, as well as General Benningsen, an old officer who had served under Suvorov against the Cossack Pugachef, and married a daughter of Catherine II., from whom he received large estates in Lithuania. He was a Hanoverian by birth, and Paul consequently suspecting him of being in the interest of England, had sent him to reside on his lands. He was now enlisted in the service of the conspirators. Paul one day went suddenly into Alexander's room and found Valcrian Zoubof with him. He was indignant that he should venture into the palace, but the Prince took occasion to plead his cause,

and remind his father of his former services (for Zoubof had lost a foot in the Polish campaign), and he added that although the amnesty restored him to St. Petersburg, he was quite penniless, his estates being confiscated when he was banished. Paul thought over the matter, and gave him the post in the ministry Panine had held, whereupon Pahlen secured him as another member of the plot. Plato Zoubof sought to recover his lost influence in another way. He made a proposal of marriage to the daughter of Count Kutaissof, who was extremely pleased at a connection with a distinguished family. He also bribed Madame Chevalier, and these two obtained his restoration to Paul's favour, and even to his former rooms in the palace. He then worked successfully to gain over Kutaissof, and the Imperial aides-de-camp. Plato Zoubof always declared that he and his companions were actuated by no other motive than to prevent the final ruin of their country, and for this purpose placed their lives and fortunes in peril. Still they doubtless hoped for the immense rewards from the new monarch which had been showered on Catherine's accomplices in the deposition of Peter III., and on those who had transferred young Ivan VI. to a dungeon. Count Voronzov used to relate that shortly after the murder of Peter III. he met Bariatinsky, one of his executioners, and expressed horror at the deed. Bariatinsky shrugged his shoulders and remarked, "How else could I have restored my fortunes? I was so deeply in debt."*

After Panine's dismissal and Valerian Zoubof's return, Alexander was daily informed by the latter of the progress of the conspiracy, and the names of those newly enrolled. It was the knowledge that he was implicated in it that caused many who had little to gain by Paul's deposition to enter so readily into the scheme, for they thought its success would insure their own safety and elevation. But there is as little doubt that he never intended anything more than his father's abdication, or being put under some safe restraint where he could do no further harm. He made Pahlen give him his solemn word of honour that the Emperor should be treated with the

* Madame Chevalier is said to have made large sums of money by accepting bribes from the ministers and nobility to obtain the banishment to Siberia of persons whom they disliked.

utmost gentleness, and Pahlen gave it unhesitatingly, but apparently with a mental reserve.

The plan which Rivas and his party attempted in January, 1800, was more simple than Pahlen's, but quite failed. Paul was in the habit of assisting at the extinction of fires; so they arranged to burn a house, and when the Emperor appeared to surround him and kill him, and then spread the report that he had perished accidentally from a falling beam. But for the first time since he came to the throne, Paul did not hasten to the spot. He was fatigued by his exertions during the day, and had just undressed and gone to bed, when his attendants announced there was a blaze. He had taken a sleeping draught, and though he was going to rise as usual his aide-de-camp advised him to remain still, and looking out of the window said it only proceeded from a small wooden house in a poor quarter of the city, and set off to give assistance. Paul went to sleep again, and Rivas and his companions seeing the Emperor's aide-de-camp coming alone towards the building, thought they were betrayed, and returned as fast as possible to Cronstadt. Only a day or two afterwards Rivas was drowned during a hurricane and partial thaw, in trying to assist a vessel in distress among the ice. The Emperor expressed grief at his heroic death, not having an idea that chance alone prevented the Admiral from becoming his assassin. Pahlen's numerous appointments obliged him to see the Emperor constantly, often more than once in the day, and he knew his master had the greatest confidence in him, so that it necessitated a course of deception most distressing to a high-minded man such as Pahlen is represented by his friends. As to Alexander, his father had suspected him, and placed spies about him from the time he came to the throne. In defiance of his own law he talked of superseding him by one of his younger sons or daughters, and openly showed he disliked and feared him. He was released from the necessity of feigning loyalty and attachment while he was in league with the conspirators, for he spent much of his time under arrest in his own apartment, or at work in the Foreign Office; and Pahlen tried to keep up the Emperor's suspicions, lest there should be an explanation between them. Madame Chevalier also stimulated his hostility to his own family, because they tried to persuade him to send

her away. The Grand Duchess Elizabeth was ill nearly all the time she passed in St. Michael's Palace.

Aratchaief was still living on his estates, and only ten leagues from St. Petersburg, when Paul sent a courier to recall him. "Come to me," he wrote, with his accustomed brevity; "I confide to you my throne and my life." Pahlen detained the courier till he was sure that by hastening the execution of his design only a few days, Aratchaief would arrive too late. At the same time Paul sent a note to Rostopchine at Voronovo with these significant words, "I need you. Return quickly." The Count set off at once for St. Petersburg, but before he had gone further than Moscow he heard of the Emperor's death. His indignation was extreme: he went home resolved never to visit the Court or to re-enter the public service. Another circumstance besides the despatch of these two couriers showed Pahlen the danger of discovery while so many were involved in the plot. On the 22nd of March he was alone in a room of the Imperial palace, and took a letter from Alexander out of his pocket, in which he referred openly to their project. All at once the letter was taken out of his hand. He turned round and saw the Emperor, who holding the letter up, said, "Ah, a love letter." Pahlen tried to smile, took it from him and put it into his pocket, answering "Yes, sire." He thought it possible the Emperor had recognised his son's handwriting; for looking sternly at Pahlen, he asked for it again. The letter would have revealed everything, but a ready falsehood came to Pahlen's aid. Paul had a particular aversion to either the sight or smell of tobacco and snuff. "I took it," said the minister, "for it is scented with tobacco." This was enough for Paul, who uttered an expression of disgust and walked away; but Pahlen feared it might recur to him, and at once called the chief conspirators together, informing them the Emperor meant to remove him from his post. His dismissal would upset their scheme and lead to its discovery, so the night of March 23rd-24th (N.S.) was fixed for carrying it out. It was the week of the Carnival, and the Emperor talked of going to Moscow.

It was still necessary to bring Alexander to the point, and this Pahlen accomplished with an almost fiendish subtlety.

He went to Paul, and told him he had discovered details of a conspiracy, and the Empress and his two eldest sons were implicated in it. The Emperor gave him an order to arrest the Princes and send them to the castle of Schusselburg, but he disconcerted Pahlen's plan to obtain the Empress's sanction, for he said that as the mother of all his children he could only treat her with gentleness, and it was perhaps but natural she should have allowed herself to be over-persuaded by her sons. He deeply felt their conduct, but depended on Pahlen's fidelity. The minister took the order to Alexander, and told him he must deprive him of his sword, as the Emperor kept those belonging to imprisoned officers. He showed the danger he ran of incurring the fate of Alexis Petrovitz, and that not only himself but his mother and brother were in peril. Alexander was much concerned when told that his mother would probably be sent to a distant convent, and wished to see his father; but Pahlen said it was impossible, for the Emperor's commands were so positive he dare not disobey them in the present excited state of his mind, except so far as to lock up Alexander in his own rooms for that night instead of in the fortress. The Prince gave a written promise not to bring the conspirators to justice on receiving Pahlen's repeated engagement that they should treat Paul gently and spare his life.* He also signed the deed requiring his father to abdicate, but the statement sometimes made that he put his name the same evening to the proclamation announcing his father's death *from apoplexy*, and his own accession, is utterly untrue, for Pahlen wrote it out at Prince Talitzin's, where he passed the evening, and did not see Alexander again till after the deed was done. The Prince had already been under arrest for the last two days, and a guard placed at his door. The room he occupied in the palace was below the Emperor's, on the ground floor, and the adjoining sumptuous chambers inhabited by his wife were the most affected by damp in the whole building. The Grand Duchess's rooms were hung with rich Lyonnese velvet, which, with a carved stand filled with books, and an English piano, were all mouldy, and the latter out of tune. The splendid bedroom, lined with purple velvet, was uninhabitable, and the wax-coloured paintings over the door entirely defaced.

* All the accounts by the different conspirators agree in this.

Alexander's throne-room, or audience-chamber, was next to that in which he remained under arrest, and opened into another containing Greek and Roman antiquities. The gorgeous furniture of even the steam bath-rooms contrasted strangely with the misery which the young Princess endured from cold, for the stoves were perfectly insufficient to warm or dry the air. The little Grand Duke Nicholas, the Princess Gagarine, Count Narishkin, and Kutaissof, with other officials also lived on the ground floor, in rooms equally unfit for use. The Emperor and Empress, Constantine and his wife, and a lady of honour were lodged on the first floor, and the Grand Duchesses with their governess, Madame Lieven, were on the second. Both here and in the Winter Palace Paul had fitted up a small kitchen close to his rooms, where, to guard against poison, an Englishwoman prepared his food, almost under his own eye. His private apartments were magnificently painted, and furnished with porphyry vases, oriental alabaster, statuary, and landscape paintings. They led out of a gallery hung with copies of the celebrated works in the Vatican, almost covering a wall of 72 feet long. The third room, containing the Emperor's library, comprised in six mahogany bookcases, was the station of a hussar, and out of this one door led into the kitchen, and another to a winding staircase, opening into the courtyard through an entrance guarded by one sentinel. It was by this staircase that Pahlen meant to lead the conspirators. The Emperor's bedroom and study opened immediately from the library. It was between thirty and forty feet square, wainscoted in white, surrounded with landscapes by Vernet, Wouvermans, and Vandermeulen. In the middle behind a screen stood a small camp bed without curtains. Over the bed was an angel by Guido Reni, and in other parts there was a portrait of an ancient Knight Banneret, and of Frederick II. on horseback, and pictures representing the costumes of the Russian army. On the writing tables were medallions of the Empress, the Grand Dukes, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, and other specimens of the Empress's skill in carving and modelling. The floor was covered with a rich carpet, but there was no exit* except through the entrance, and the Empress's rooms, separated by folding doors, locked

* The trap-door some writers describe is an invention.

and bolted on both sides. At this time she was sleeping in one at a distance, as it was more nearly dry. A recess led out of the Emperor's bed-chamber, where he deposited the swords of officers under arrest.

The passages in the palace were so dark as to be lighted by lamps day and night, and so complicated that a stranger could hardly find his way. But Pahlen secured the aide-de-camp on duty, and he acted as guide. He also took upon himself to change the guard at the last moment, for he could not trust Paul's Gateschina regiment. A portion of Alexander's regiment surrounded the outside of the building on the evening of March 23rd, and a detachment of the Prebijansky guards under a conspirator was placed inside. The frowning palace, with its cannons, ditch, and garrison, at all times resembled a besieged fortress.

Pahlen collected about fifty conspirators, and on the night of the 23rd increased their number by releasing some officers from prison, arrested that morning (it is said at his own instigation), and he impressed on them that their only hope of life lay in the Emperor's deposition. He provided for every contingency, and secured both Alexander and Constantine by locking them up in their rooms, lest they should be moved at the important moment to go to the rescue of their father. All those connected with the plot met at eight o'clock at the house of General Talitzin, the colonel of the Prebijansky guard, where they dined, and, except Pahlen, the Zoubofs, and Benningsen, drank very freely. Pahlen showed the order he had received to imprison Alexander, and the Prince's written promise of security, and they all became very enthusiastic in his cause. Among them was Prince Tashwill, a major-general of artillery, the Princes Ouvarof, and Peter Volkonski, two of Alexander's aides-de-camp, Arkamof (who had succeeded Constantine as head of the police), Scariatin, and others of inferior rank. But on this last day of his life Paul was particularly tranquil. Kotzebue was employed in St. Michael's Palace, and met him on the principal staircase not twelve hours before his death. A few remarks passed between them about a statue of Cleopatra, just added to this part of the mansion, and Paul expressed his admiration of her "heroic end." He appeared at the morning parade, where he wrote a letter

to Bonaparte on the crown of his hat, and went to the school for military orphans, where 800 children were boarded and instructed at his cost. It was a favourite walk, and he returned to the palace to his wife's sitting-room at half-past five, when her younger children were with her, and her secretary, whom she had just summoned, waited in the ante-room till the Emperor retired. Paul had either forgotten his suspicions, or else doubted Pahlen, for he spoke to her tenderly, and brought her a piece of embroidery from the military school, where she was anxious the children should learn the German stitch. He took his two youngest sons on his knee, and remained with them some little time. As he was leaving the room Nicholas, who was four and a half years old, said to him, "Father, why are you called Paul the First?" for the child had been studying the Imperial monograms which were entwined with the figure 1 in several parts of the room. "Because no one of that name ruled before me," said the Emperor. "Oh, then," said the boy, "I shall be called Nicholas the First." "If you ever ascend the throne," his father answered, abruptly. He stood as if lost in thought, fixing his eyes on his son, and then kissed him passionately. He spent the evening with the Princess Gagarine, and more than one of the conspirators, including Nicholas Zoubof, had supper with them. He spoke to her of Alexander in such a threatening manner that when he left her she sent a message on a slip of paper to the Prince, begging him to escape. "Before many days," said Paul, "every one will be astonished by seeing heads fall that were once very dear to me."

The Emperor retired as usual between eight and nine o'clock, and a Scotch surgeon, Dr. Grieve, came into his room to give him a composing draught. The surgeon was much in his confidence, but thought that on this evening Paul entertained some suspicion of him, for while shaking the draught he walked to the other end of the room and fixing his eyes on him, said, "Mais à propos, mon cher, ne vous faites-vous pas une affaire de conscience de guérir l'ennemi de vos compatriotes?"* Dr. Grieve answered, "that men of his profession had no other object than to fulfil the duties of humanity."

* "Is it not against your conscience to cure the enemy of your country?"

Paul embraced him, saying, "I do not doubt you, and I have never doubted you." An hour afterwards the conspirators appeared. The drawbridge was pulled up for the night, but they crossed the frozen ditch, disconcerted for a moment by the crows in the lime-trees of the Summer Garden setting up a loud noise. Benningsen, Plato and Nicholas Zoubof, Tashwill, and several more, all masked, led the first detachment to penetrate into the Emperor's bedroom, while the rest waited below to follow if necessary. Officers were placed on duty instead of ordinary sentinels at the various points, but no artifice could induce the faithful hussar who stood at Paul's door to leave his post. As the Emperor's aide-de-camp was admitted to bring despatches at any time in the day or night, he led them without difficulty as far as the library, and told the hussar to open the bedroom door, for he brought important despatches for his Majesty. The man opened the door, but immediately suspecting something was wrong, shut it again, and called to the Emperor. The conspirators struck him down and disarmed him, but he escaped covered with blood to summon assistance, and was seized and detained by the second detachment, while the first forced their way into the room. Benningsen and Zoubof in full uniform, with their swords in their hands, advanced first. The bed was empty, and for an instant they thought the Emperor had fled, but in a moment he reappeared from behind the screen, bringing a sword from the recess. He was half dressed and seemed confused, so as hardly to recognise them, and the large room was only lighted with one night-lamp.

"Sire," said Benningsen, "you are a prisoner, in the name of the Emperor Alexander. Be composed and sign this paper, and your life will be safe;" and he handed to him the deed requiring his abdication. But as Paul read it his anger rose; he accused those who had drawn it up of ingratitude, and said he had loaded them with benefits. He declared he would rather die than abdicate in favour of his son, and he tore up the paper and threw it at his feet.

At this moment the second detachment was heard approaching, and Benningsen, who had locked the door, went to open it for them. Some state that Paul took the opportunity to reach the window, and severely cut his hand, being dragged down

again by Zoubof and Tashwill; others that the eut was given by Tashwill's sword, which he tried to wrench out of his hand by seizing hold of the blade; and that this nobleman, who had sworn to revenge his own dismissal from office, laid hold of the Czar directly he threw down the deed of abdication, compelled him to loose his weapon by breaking his arm with a blow, and assisted by the rest, beat him to force him to abdicate till he was so much injured they thought it better to put him to death. At any rate, when the second detachment entered it found Paul struggling violently with Tashwill and four others; the lamp was overturned, and until another was procured, after some delay, they fought in darkness. Paul was heard to ask what they had to complain of from him, and several answered that he had tyrannized over them for four years, and they ought to have settled matters with him long ago. Benningsen said that he implored the Emperor not to resist, for his life was at stake; but Savary declares he loaded his victim with insults and abuse, and used to boast of it when he commanded the Russian army in Germany. Paul resisted for a long time, and was struck by the butt-end of a pistol, which fractured his skull, and drew from him a shriek, when the leaders of the conspiracy, afraid of a rescue, closed in upon him and held him down while the rest compressed him round the waist with an officer's scarf, intended to tie his feet. They dared not strangle him round the neck, lest he should be much disfigured, as the body would lie in state; but when it was given over to the surgeons for embalming,* it presented the most unmistakable marks of violence. Besides a broken arm, and the wound on his hand and head, one eye had been put out, and he was bruised from head to foot. Benningsen kept his boot over the Emperor's mouth while Zoubof and Tashwill deliberately adjusted the scarf. Paul took the heel of the boot off with his teeth, which penetrated to the officer's skin, and caused him to raise it for an instant, when the Emperor, for the first time, asked their mercy. "Gentlemen," he said, "give me one moment to commend my soul to God!" but he was silenced almost before he had completed his sentence, and Tashwill and Zoubof, or others

* After the murder several memorials presented to the Emperor, but unopened, were found in Kutaissof's pocket, acquainting him with all the details of the conspiracy.

say Benningsen, pulled at each end of the scarf till he expired.

Though the walls of the palace are very thick, the confusion in the Emperor's bedchamber reached the other parts of the building. The English cook, in great alarm, escaped from the private kitchen, and rushed off to an English merchant's house in the city to report that the Czar was being murdered. Constantine, who was unacquainted with the conspiracy, tried to go to his father's aid, but found himself locked in his room. The Empress attempted to make her way through the folding doors separating her rooms from her husband's, and finding them locked, went the other way, but was intercepted in the library by a detachment with strict orders not to let her pass. Here she was joined by her daughters, Mary and Catherine, with their governess, who, aware that a movement was going on against the Emperor, tried to tranquillize her by assuring her the rest of the family would be safe. She persisted in trying to pass the soldiers, when Benningsen appeared from her husband's room, and she immediately appealed to him, and asked if she was a prisoner. He answered she was, and if he allowed her to proceed she would only risk her life needlessly. He added, "The Emperor Alexander——" "Alexander!" she interrupted. "Who has made him Emperor?" "The nation, madame," replied Benningsen. "All classes were concerned in it: military, civilians, and courtiers. The life of Paul is ended!" At these words she sank into a chair, and a soldier brought her a glass of water, which her daughter was afraid to offer her lest it was poisoned. The soldier drinking half of it, presented it to the Empress. "You may take it, madame," he said; "there is no poison in it." Benningsen left her to the care of her daughters, and accompanied Pahlen to join Alexander. The Count remained in the courtyard till the reappearance of those conspirators who had no office in the palace informed him that all was over, when he ascended the winding staircase and came into the Emperor's room. He turned pale for a moment at the sight of the disfigured corpse,* but quickly recovering, assisted in placing it on the bed. Then Benningsen ob-

* From the length of time—which all accounts agree was three-quarters of an hour—it looks as if the conspirators were bent upon securing the Emperor alive.

served it was time to offer their congratulations to the new Emperor.

Alexander had listened during the last hour to the sounds of the tumult over head, and was pacing his room in his morning-dress with agitated steps when Pahlen, Benningsen, and Valerian Zoubof made their appearance. He was a close prisoner, being locked in the innermost of two rooms, with the guard outside the entrance of the first, and it was nearly one in the morning when they came to give him his release. He asked if the Emperor had abdicated. Pahlen told him he had died of convulsions brought on by the agitation which the necessity to abdicate had produced in him. Alexander was exceedingly distressed, and he was soon acquainted with the whole truth by his brother, who entered his room indignant with the assassins. He refused to accept the crown from blood-stained hands, and declared that with such a beginning his reign could be only unfortunate. His scruples completely frustrated Pahlen's scheme for exacting an oligarchical constitution in return for the crown, for he now repelled the idea of succeeding to the Imperial dignity over the dead body of his father; and far from offering a price for his elevation, was anxious to hide himself from all eyes. Pahlen reasoned that to refuse the empire from motives of remorse would be the public avowal of a misfortune which was not his fault. The cause of his father's death should be concealed, but it was most essential to proclaim him at once, and take the oath from the household and the troops.

Already the Preebijansky guards in the palace had shown symptoms of insubordination, for when the wounded hussar gave the alarm their officer only kept them from hastening to the Emperor by threatening to shoot the first man who stirred. Alexander must show himself to them, or risk the safety of all the Imperial family. The discussion was still going on when the Empress-mother appeared and claimed the crown for herself in virtue of her coronation. Pahlen and Zoubof moved into the background, but her angry words to her son were easily heard where they stood. She would never take the oath to him, and unless she was permitted to reign she would appeal not only to the nation, but to Europe.* Pahlen knew there were

* Hitherto every Empress who had not succeeded her husband had retired into a convent to pray for his soul.

many who would consent to this arrangement, but in that case his own ruin was secured. He came forward and told Alexander somewhat peremptorily that unless he assumed the reins of government himself the nation would depose the House of Romanof and elect another dynasty.

At these words the Empress, greatly excited, accused her son without reserve of being a traitor to his Sovereign, and a parrieide. The confinement in his damp rooms, and the excitement of the night, had tried his nerves to their full extent, and this charge was now more than he could bear. He fell down utterly unconscious, and an hour passed before he showed any signs of recovery.* Pahlen led away the Empress, and compelled her to waive her pretensions and swear fealty to her son. He called in her physician, who persuaded her to be bled lest her distress should bring on apoplexy. She submitted to his regimen; and after the operation was twice repeated, grew calmer, being relieved by a flood of tears. In the mean time Alexander slowly revived (though it was months before his health was completely restored), and Pahlen again urged him to show himself to the troops. It was still not six in the morning, but crowds were collecting round the palace, for the news was evidently spreading outside. "It is not the hour," he said, "for childish scruples and woman's vanity. You have mourned enough for your father, you must now think of your empire." "What a page for the commencement of my history!" he answered. "Sire," said Pahlen, "the succeeding ones will make it forgotten." Alexander asked anxiously after his mother, and then accompanied his minister to a carriage which had waited ready for several hours to convey Paul to the fortress. It was used instead to bring Alexander across the Summer Gardens to the Winter Palace, where he was quickly mounted, and with his face deadly pale he rode slowly before the troops, who were mustering in front for their usual morning parade, while his accession was being proclaimed by torchlight through the streets. The soldiers of Paul's regiment were at first silent, and almost menacing; but the conspirators among the other detachments loudly shouted "Long live Alexander!"

* He had several similar attacks in the course of his life.

and the cry was taken up by the new Emperor's own regiment, and extended itself to all. Everything went off satisfactorily, and at eight the principal nobility assembled in the chapel to take the oath to the young monarch. Pahlen and those who agreed with him to demand a new constitution from Alexander were frustrated at the outset by his aides-de-camp Volkonski and Ouvarof, as well as Benningsen and Valerian Zoubof. These represented that their only hope of escaping punishment lay in preserving Alexander on the throne; and his character was a sufficient guarantee without any further constitution for a mild and reasonable government. The Empress-mother had the old-fashioned notions of Germany, and hated constitutional government—they would never obtain one from her; the torture and execution of the murderer of Gustavus III. in Sweden furnished her with a horrible precedent of which she would be likely to avail herself if she obtained the crown. It would be wiser to leave things as they now were than to run the risk of agitating Alexander any more and perhaps bringing on a fatal attack of illness, or an obstinate resolution not to reign. So Pahlen lost already one of the advantages he hoped to obtain from making Alexander an accessory to his father's dethronement. His treachery, though unpunished, received no reward; and his short term of ministerial power was soon closed, and followed by a long eclipse.

Alexander's surgeon, Dr. Wylie, embalmed the body of the deceased Emperor, and signed a certificate that he died from the effects of apoplexy.* The face was carefully painted, the corpse dressed in uniform, and the hands encased in gloves to conceal the marks of violence. It lay in state for a fortnight, in the hall of St. George in St. Michael's Palace, and according to the usual custom, the Imperial family assembled twice every day to hear the prayers offered up for the repose of his soul, when Alexander's eyes were always seen to be filled with tears. The corpse was afterwards removed with great state and ceremony to the church of St. Peter and St. Paul, the sons and son-in-law of the deceased following the coffin bareheaded and on foot, while carriages containing the Empress-mother,

* Dr. Wylie also thought that, allowing for the injuries caused by the mode of death, the state of his brain rendered it highly probable that he would soon have died of apoplexy.

her daughters, and daughters-in-law, and other ladies of the Court, accompanied the funeral procession, extending over more than a mile. The body was finally interred in its last resting-place, March 26th, o.s., among its ancestors and predecessors. On one side of the high altar of the church standing in the midst of the gloomy citadel, lie the remains of Peter the Great and his successors and descendants, except Peter II., down to Catherine II. and Peter III. On the other, rest the bodies of Paul and his family; opposite to a full-length painting of his patron saint, the great Apostle. An inscription on the Emperor's tomb states that he died "on the 11th or 12th of March, 1801" (23rd or 24th, n.s.), the murder having been committed between half-past eleven and a quarter-past twelve at midnight.

The Prussian ambassador wrote, that on the morning of Paul's death he sent for Pahlen, and said, "I suspect you are like the rest. I think there is some design against me. I do not like the intimacy between my sons and the Zoubofs." Pahlen answered, "My life is in your hands. You ought not to mistrust my fidelity," and stated that he had joined the conspiracy to obtain information and defend his master. Another foreign attaché,* writing home two months later, says: "I have been over the palace where the scene was acted, accompanied by Dr. Grieve, who was much in the confidence of the last Emperor. . . . For a long time, but particularly the last ten days, his mind was in a state of constant irritation. His naturally suspicious temper preyed upon himself, and conjured up to his fancy an enemy in every person he saw. He suspected some plot was going on, but could not fix on the author of it. It is more than probable that had he lived forty-eight hours longer, his sons would have been shut up in the fortress. The business took up nearly three-quarters of an hour: it is singular that a Hanoverian should have assisted in despatching him, and that his body should have been given to three Scotch surgeons for dissection, Drs. Green, Whaley (Wylie), and Guthrie. The next morning all was quiet. The people were seen embracing each other, and giving each other joy in the streets. The Empress-Dowager openly expresses

* Mr. Ross, who was attaché to the first British Embassy sent on Alexander's accession.

her detestation of all concerned in it. She has taken into her service the persons who were the principal sufferers by her husband's death. The Emperor pays her every attention."

The day after Paul's death, as Kotzebue waited with a crowd in the young Emperor's ante-chamber, there was a general rush to the window to look at a man walking undisturbed in an English hat. "Nothing was to be seen among the hundreds present but cheerful, laughing countenances." A few days later Plato Zoubof gave a dinner to a hundred of his friends and accomplices at the cost of twenty-five roubles a head, and exulted so much over the success of the conspiracy that he received an order to retire to Moscow. There he was waited upon by a deputation from the nobility to thank him for his services to the country, and they were followed by a deputation of merchants, bringing him a handsome present. Benningsen was made Governor of Lithuania, which took him away from St. Petersburg, but Prince Tashwill, the most virulent of the conspirators, was treated more severely, and banished to his estates. As soon as Madame Chevalier heard of the death of her Imperial patron she prepared to fly with her booty, amounting to nearly a million of roubles. A police officer was sent to inspect her property, and among many far more valuable articles found a diamond cross which had belonged to Peter the Great, and was much prized by the Imperial family. He took this from her, though she made a stout resistance; and with her husband and brother, and the rest of her property, Alexander allowed her to quit Russia, although the Empress-Dowager and the nobility clamoured for her punishment. Kutaissof* retired to Königsberg, and the inferior conspirators were gradually drafted off into regiments in distant parts of the country, where they fretted over what they considered as the ingratitude of the young Sovereign, and in many instances kept up an irritation against the measures of the new reign. The empire was accustomed to conspiracies, but the conspirators were accustomed to rich rewards; their deed was publicly esteemed a patriotic act, so that numbers professed to have been concerned

* Kutaissof was said to have been a relative of Napoleon's Mameluke Rustem, who was also once a Georgian slave.

in it who really are supposed to have had no share. In 1802 there were nearly 200 such officers left in St. Petersburg.

Volkonski and Ouvarof, Alexander's two aides-de-camp, retained their places. They excused themselves by declaring that when they saw the conspirators meant murder, and not imprisonment, they first remonstrated, and then endeavoured to leave the Emperor's bedroom, but Benningsen prevented them,* and Volkonski remained attached to Alexander throughout his life, and held a post in the Winter Palace under Nicholas till he died an octogenarian in 1852. Pahlen continued in office for two months, in spite of the enmity of the Dowager-Empress, who, while lamenting the death of her husband with ostentatious grief, could not pardon the Minister for opposing her succession to the throne. The widows of the only two married Sovereigns, except Paul, who reigned over Russia during the eighteenth century, succeeded their husbands, and she thought that the very brief period she had enjoyed the rank of Empress gave her an especial claim. Pahlen had also an enemy in Constantine, who was enraged that his father should have been led to suppose he was capable of assisting in his murder; for the unhappy Emperor, in the dim light of his room, mistook Ouvarof for his second son, and expressed his grief that even he should have turned against him. Alexander told Pahlen it would be wise to conciliate his brother instead of treating his indignation with contempt, and he added, "Remember, if anything happened to me, Constantine would be your absolute master." "Your Majesty may rest assured," said Pahlen, "that if anything were to happen to you, Constantine Paulovitz would not reign a single day over Russia."

At last Pahlen's fate was decided by the Empress placing a picture in the chapel of the Foundling Hospital, representing her husband on his knees before the Blessed Virgin, and underneath the inscription, "God will avenge the murder of Paul the First." The people crowded to look at it, and afraid it would create a reaction of the public feeling in favour of the deceased Emperor, he requested Alexander to ask her to let it be removed. She answered her son, "Take for yourself the just threats of Heaven and men against those who have

* See also De Maistre.

strangled my husband, their Emperor, and your father. You must choose between Pahlen and me." The picture remained, and Pahlen entreating Alexander to order it away nevertheless, he replied, "You forget she is my mother." On this Pahlen took the matter into his own hands, and removed it himself. The next morning he was commanded to retire to his post at Riga, the very town where he first attracted the favourable notice of the murdered Czar. He told the aide-de-camp who brought the message it was only what he expected, and his travelling-carriage was prepared. Within an hour he had resigned all his offices in St. Petersburg, and within two had started for Riga,* where he stayed for some months, but was finally requested to retire from public life. He passed the greater part of his remaining days in a hermit-like seclusion on his estates and in Moscow, but was always obliged to leave the city when it was visited by the Dowager-Empress.

The proclamation drawn up before Paul's death, and which Alexander signed early the next morning, stated that—

"On receiving the Imperial hereditary crown of all the Russias we receive the obligation to govern the people committed unto us by the Almighty according to the laws and the heart of her who rests with God, our most august grandmother, Sovereign, and Empress, Catherine the Great, whose memory will be dear for ever to us and the whole country. Following the steps of her wise intentions, we hope to arrive at the object of carrying Russia to the summit of glory, and to procure an uninterrupted happiness to all our faithful subjects, whom we invite to seal their fidelity to us by oath before the face of the all-

* In Sir R. Wilson's diary he alludes to Pahlen, whom he met at Baldone, a Russian watering-place near Riga, July 30th, 1830, and says he was treated with universal respect. "He is certainly a very sensible man, with a fine open countenance and manly figure." He died of apoplexy, February, 1826, brought on, it was thought, by the news of Alexander's death two months before, which placed him in some uncertainty as to his own fate, for, although eighty years old, he was in full health and vigour, not unfrequently referring to the deed of March 23rd, saying it was justified by peculiar circumstances, and that he had sacrificed his personal gratitude and his fame for the safety of his throne and country; yet his neighbours asserted that he was haunted by Paul's spectre. His four sons were all distinguished in the Russian service. One was ambassador in Paris in 1854.

seeing God, Whose assistance we implore to grant us power to support the weight now resting upon us.—ALEXANDER.

“ Given at St. Petersburg, 12th March (o.s.), 1801.”

Catherine used to say that her son would not long survive her, and her conduct to him was thought to be justified by his reign; yet though disastrous, it was not so destructive to the vital energies of the nation as hers, which was lauded by Voltaire, and laid down as the model by which it was hoped her grandson would frame his government. The venality and corruption long prevailing in Russia, as in most Eastern countries, had reached an unprecedented height, and the Empress was aware of it, and encouraged it, once observing of a lieutenant-colonel, whose nominal pay would scarcely furnish him with the necessaries of life, that it was his own fault if he was poor, for he had means of making money in his regiment.* “ The cause is decided when the judge has taken a present,” has long been a common proverb in Russia. Peter the Great once observed, that if in the church in the middle of prayer, one of his subjects found the moment to rob his neighbour he would do it in the face of the altar; and he refused to allow the Jews to settle in St. Petersburg on the payment of certain dues, because, he said, “ my nation only follows too much the fraudulent maxims of the Jews; if I admitted Jews into my States they would corrupt them still more.”† In Catherine’s time a Russian could have learned nothing from a Jew, for even at the post-office a letter was never given up to its owner without a bribe. The gambling and dissipation of her Court produced from Diderot the observation, then more applicable than at the present time, “ The Russians are rotten before they are ripe.” Her reign prepared the troubles which beset her grandson as much as the reign of Louis XIV. prepared that of Louis XVI., and it was probably only the very opposite characters of the two Sovereigns that prevented a similar result. She wielded the sceptre for a longer period than any Russian Sovereign during the three last centuries, except Peter the Great, but in spite of professing to be a republican in spirit, did absolutely nothing towards the develop-

* Napoleon made the same answer with regard to General Nansovty, who had commanded in Hanover.

† Prince A. Galitzin.

ment of more liberal institutions ; on the contrary, she transformed the free peasants of the Ukraine into serfs, and when alarmed by the French revolution, threw those into prison whom she suspected of an admiration for the new republic. The schools she founded were for the satisfaction of Europe, not for Russia, as she stated in a letter to the Governor of Moscow, for she did not suppose the education of the people was compatible with the maintenance of an autocratic government. There was as much oppression and as much violence in her reign as in Paul's, but it was more carefully concealed, and directed against those who endeavoured to reform an utterly corrupt system, and not against the agents of that system, who were the principal sufferers under her son ; for it may be safely asserted that there were few exiled to Siberia, or degraded to the ranks by his orders, who were not deserving of punishment for peculation or some other offence. Opinions differ as to his military innovations : some say he improved the army by introducing European discipline, others that he spoilt it by depriving it of its ancient ardour and *esprit de corps* in giving it a foreign uniform and drill. Suvorov's system required no educated sub-officers, for he did not possess them ; he never made reconnaissances, and trusted to the efficiency of prayer and the physical courage of his troops. Those under his immediate orders were well fed and clothed ; but the eye of a single general can extend over a very small portion of the extensive Muscovite Empire, and the condition of the greater part of the Empress Catherine's infantry of the line was most miserable. Howard's letters from Southern Russia in 1789* describe the waste of human life when the army was supplied with recruits :—" They were brought by forced marches hundred of miles over horrid roads, ill clothed and worse fed, so that thousands fell sick by the way, and were either left to die of starvation or transferred to wretched hospitals, where fever soon finished what famine and fatigue had so well begun. In the government calculations this loss of life was known and actually allowed for, while in a few places a kind of rude provision was made to meet it." Howard saw a hospital recently erected at Kremenschuk, on the Dnieper, which contained, he said, " 400 patients in its un-

* Life of John Howard the Philanthropist, by Hepworth Dixon.

wholesome wards. Reflect a moment on the condition of these poor destitute wretches, forced from their homes and all their dearest connections, and compare them with those one has seen cheerful, clean, and happy at a wedding, or village festival; let them be viewed quitting their birth-place with all their little wardrobe, and their pockets stored with roubles, the gifts of their relations, who never expect to see them more, now joining their corps in a long march of one or two thousand versts, their money gone to the officer who conducts them and deprives them of the government allowance, arriving fatigued and half naked in a distant dreary country, and exposed immediately to military hardships with harassed bodies and dejected spirits, and who can wonder that so many droop and die in a short time without any apparent illness? The devastations I have seen made by war among so many innocent people, and this in a country where there are such immense tracts of land unoccupied, are shocking to human nature."

It was those who had grown rich on the misfortunes of their countrymen who were chiefly deprived of office or driven into exile by Paul; and who can regret their fate? In his endeavour to reduce the expenses of the State by diminishing the superfluous government officials 20,000 were thrown out of employment, and swelled the number of malcontents. There were some independent patriots among the Russians who thought this state of confusion inevitable before any reform could be really effected, and had hoped to see an improved administration arise out of chaos. They thought no reign could prosper ushered in by violence, and feared lest a young man educated in Catherine's Court, and now surrounded by her favourites, would restore the old régime, which was all that the Senate and Council of the Empire required; and they would not lend their support to his government while any of these advisers remained. Such were Count Simon Voronzov, Rostopchine, General Svetchine, and the old Archbishop Plato; but the young nobility, educated by ignorant foreign tutors, and imitating the French émigrés in their thoughtlessness and vice, expected the Emperor's first proclamation would act like an enchanter's wand, and that everything would henceforward roll on smoothly, with an occasional foreign campaign to give

them an opportunity of displaying their military talents. Alexander took far the most accurate view of the difficulties and responsibilities before him, and the real requirements of his empire; but where was he to find the fit tools to carry out his work? Could upright, disinterested, practical reforming statesmen have been formed under Catherine's ministers? or educated politicians and officials in an empire which till Paul's reign possessed no school for the young noblemen, but selected tutors for its future ministers from French and German barbers and valets? This accounts for the preponderance of foreigners in Alexander's early councils, who were gradually replaced by Russians. A long course of painful experience somewhat modified his views as regarded the best form of government for Russia, but he always remained the consistent friend of liberty, though not of its abuse, which is merely the tyranny of the mob supplanting that of the despot. He wrote to the republican La Harpe soon after his accession: "I feel the load of responsibility I have taken upon myself, and how unequal I am in my inexperience to wield the sceptre of such an empire. All that I can hope is that I may be guided by the precepts you have taught me. I entreat if ever you find me departing from them to remind me of them. Do not wait for me to send for you (this I probably shall not do) when I act in opposition to them, but write to me, *come to me*, to recall me from my errors." He wrote another letter at the same time to Czartoriski, dated five days after his accession, to desire him to return to St. Petersburg:—

"17th *March* (o.s.), 1801.

"You have already learned that by the death of my father I am at the head of affairs. I reserve the details till I see you. I write to tell you to make over immediately all the business of your mission to the senior below you, and to come to St. Petersburg. I need not tell you with what impatience I am expecting you. Adieu, my dear friend, I cannot say more. I enclose a passport for you to show at the frontier."

The Prince returned to St. Petersburg about the middle of August, but for two years took no active part in public affairs. On the 26th of March, 1801, Alexander established the Privy

Council, for hitherto the only assembly at all resembling it was the temporary Court Council appointed by Paul to assist him in the war with France. Marshal Soltikof, Valerian Zoubof, Plato Zoubof, Prince Kurakin, Lamb, Belkleshef, Vassilief, Pahlen, Prince Gagarine, Count Kouehelof, and Troschinsky were the earliest members, though Pahlen and Plato Zoubof were soon obliged to resign. If age, rank, and experience were the chief qualifications for a councillor, it was decidedly the best that could have been formed under the circumstances. Kurakin was the tried friend of Paul, and the others had all held office, but they were men who would willingly return to the old régime, and by no means supported the reforming tendencies of the young Czar. Still, the abolition of the secret police gave satisfaction to all classes. On the 1st of April (o.s.) Alexander went to the Senate and read aloud the decree to announce this decision, drawn up and written out by his own hand. After referring to the reasons which caused it originally to be instituted, he declared it to be now abolished, and that in future all crimes should be left to the general laws for investigation and punishment. Pending cases were to be destroyed and prisoners in its hands to be released, and the Senate was ordered to determine how such cases should be dealt with in future.

CHAPTER V.

1801—1802.

ALEXANDER'S FIRST ACTS.

ÆTAT. 23.

THE news of Paul's death was received with mingled feelings in the different Courts of Europe. At Berlin it was first conveyed to Madame Seherobzov, the sister of the Zoubofs, who had gone there to aid her brothers in case the failure of the conspiracy compelled them to fly from Russia. She read the despatch in the midst of a Court ball, and proclaimed the murder with the greatest joy. Frederiek William III. ordered her to quit the country, and the Court put on mourning, sending messages of sympathy to the Imperial family.* At Stockholm Gustavus IV. refused to receive the ambassador sent to make the formal annoucement of Alexander's accession; but it produced an immediate peace with England, where a fleet was prepared under Sir Hyde Parker and Nelson, to advance against Cronstadt on the breaking up of the ice in the Baltic. The English vessels came as far as the coasts of Esthonia, but were soon recalled, and Alexander wrote an autograph letter to George III., expressing his desire to renew amicable relations between the two empires. He removed the prohibition to export corn, which was of great importance at that moment to the famine-stricken British isles, and also to his nobles, whose barns were overstocked by a more than usually abundant harvest. He restored to liberty the sailors arrested by Paul's order before the declaration of war, commanding that they should be carefully conducted to the several ports whence they were taken, and repaid the loss sustained by the British merchants in the burning of their ships, which amounted to 700,000 roubles. The English fleet had just bombarded the defenceless town of

* Prince Charles Alexander of Prussia, born June, 1801, was Alexander's godson.

Copenhagen, and Nelson was anxious to proceed at once to Cronstadt, and strike a blow against the Russian fleet before the impending peace should be finally arranged. As soon as he was left in sole charge of the English ships by the departure of Sir Hyde Parker to England, he sailed direct to Revel, and anchored there May 14th. The Russian fleet, sawing through the ice, escaped to Cronstadt, and hearing the young Emperor was in the fortress, he sent off a despatch to congratulate him on his accession and ask for an audience; but Alexander refused all intercourse, and expressed surprise at the appearance of the British admiral in the Russian waters.*

When Talleyrand carried the first report of Paul's death to Napoleon at Malmaison, the First Consul was excessively mortified at this counter-stroke to his policy, and expressed the greatest horror and disappointment. Talleyrand observed it was the Russian mode of changing an unpopular ministry; but Napoleon at once accused the English of being accessories, if not the promoters of the deed, and before he had received any despatch on the subject or any additional proof, announced it in the *Moniteur* in these words, "Paul I. died in the night of the 24th to the 25th of March. The English squadron passed the Sound on the 31st. History will unfold the connection which must exist between these two events."† He returned to this charge in his *Memoirs*, where he states "it has been thought the goodwill of Paul to France proved fatal to him. It might well have been the case, for there are Cabinets with whom nothing is sacred."

He wrote to his brother Joseph, April 11th, 1801:— "The Emperor of Russia died on the 24th of March of a stroke of apoplexy. I am so deeply afflicted by the death of a prince whom I so highly esteemed that I can enter into no more details. He is succeeded by his eldest son, who received the oaths of the army and the capital." Shortly afterwards he caused a pamphlet to be compiled, entitled "Notice on the Death of Paul I. Emperor of Russia," which had a large circulation in France. Of Rostopchine it spoke highly.

* Sir E. Cust's *Wars of the Nineteenth Century*.

† Lanfrey. According to the *Annual Register* for 1801, the plot to compel Paul to abdicate was known to several persons in London long before his death.

“Pahlen’s first care was to remove from Paul’s favour all whom he had not gained. To this effect he worked a long time, and succeeded at last in disgracing a man whose devotion to the person of the Emperor, and above all whose talents gave him umbrage; it was Rostopchine, Vice-Chancellor of Foreign Affairs,” &c. On this, as on other occasions, Napoleon expressed his indignation at such an Oriental mode of destroying a political alliance; and the Duchess of Abrantes says he held Paul in very high esteem. It would have been natural that the Empress Mary should have viewed at least with toleration the head of a powerful government, parvenu though he might be, who protested so boldly against the authors of the deed she deplored, yet she always entertained the utmost antipathy to Napoleon, which he attributed to a conversation he held with the Russian ambassador Markof. Speaking of the party among the nobles who supported her claims, he said she deserved her partizans, but that the time when women held the reins of government was too far from our manners and from our present enlightenment for them to be put into the hands of the Empress Mary, above all in a great country like Russia. “I know very well,” he added, “that the conduct of the Dowager Empress both as a wife and mother justifies her in every point for seeking to make them proclaim her Sovereign of Russia; but why has she not used her power over the multitude to prevent the expression of those wishes which prove to us that there exists a party for her?”

Benningsen made his peace with the Empress-Dowager, and was invited to her private parties at Paulovsky, where she treated him with special attention in consequence of two letters he produced from himself to a fellow conspirator before the murder, in the first of which he wrote: “If they wish to shut him (Paul) up for the safety of the State I consent to let myself be shut up with him for the rest of my days;” and in another that deposition and seclusion were indispensable, “yet death is a brutality.” But De Maistre, commenting on this distinction, observes that Benningsen was the most determined of the assassins. Panine succeeded Pahlen as Chancellor of the Empire, a post he had already held, for Rostopchine, to whom Alexander first offered it, refused

office, and always declared if he had remained in St. Petersburg the Emperor's murder should never have taken place ; but this appointment was equally distasteful to the Empress, who would not meet him, and even in 1824 he was obliged to leave Moscow when she visited it. At the time of all others that Russia required a firm, united government to resist the Republican torrent in Western Europe and counteract the aggressive Empire which was just springing into life in France, with England urging her to war on one side, Germany, Sardinia, and Naples appealing to Paul's guarantee of their territories on the other, and France concluding a triumphant treaty with Austria, which raised up a strong ally on her eastern frontier in the Confederation of the Rhine, the Empress-Dowager and her party were doing their best to aid Napoleon's schemes of ambition by keeping up a systematic opposition in Russia, as if with an inexperienced Sovereign, only twenty-three, the empire was not sufficiently imperilled without domestic enemies. The cool old politicians, whose years numbered more than double those of their Emperor, and who had seen two Russian revolutions, were compelled by turns to resign their posts to make room for young, inexperienced theorists without weight in their own country, and neither dreaded nor respected abroad. With Poland and the Crimea still only half subdued, the Caucasus in chronic agitation, no credit and an empty exchequer, party spirit should have been silent till all these difficulties were surmounted, instead of adding to the dangers which beset the throne ; but the English, Austrian, and French agents, who were most active during these years in St. Petersburg, each on behalf of his own government, were sure, when they opposed Panine and Pahlen, of securing the Empress-mother and her influential coterie for an ally ; or if they countenanced Benningsen and the Zoubofs, of exciting the animosity of Rostopchine and Aratchaief.

These two eminent men belonged to the old Russian party, which at that period were the upholders of Oriental despotism and serfdom, but accredited with more national spirit than the Europeanized statesmen of St. Petersburg. The first was an admirable landlord,* and he remained on his estates near

* He was born in 1765, a descendant of Zingis Khan.

Moscow after Paul's death, refusing to act in any of the numerous offices to which Alexander restored him, and even trying to deter his friends, like General Zizianof, from attending the Court. He was particularly incensed at the Emperor's murder having been perpetrated in consequence of the war with England, whose policy he did not approve, and to whose alliance he had always preferred that of France. Alexander desired to reward his father's two faithful adherents in his first agony of remorse, but Rostopchine resisted any compromise with the regicidal ministry. Aratehaief was more pliable. He arrived in St. Petersburg at the end of March, 1801, and had an interview with the young Emperor, when he spoke with much vehemence of his devotion to Paul, and cursed his own absence at the fatal moment, saying, like Rostopchine, that if he had been there the crime would never have been committed. Alexander was touched by the sincerity of his grief, and from that hour entertained a high opinion of him. He was reinstated in his post as Inspector-General of Artillery, and became Alexander's most devoted servant.

Nowhere had a man of humble origin more difficulties to contend with than in Russia, for in no country were the aristocracy more exclusive: children followed the trade or profession of their fathers without hope of elevation, and the separation of different classes was as strictly practised as between castes in India or Georgia.

Alexander wrote to the First Consul on his accession, expressing his wish to continue on peaceful terms with France; he remained perfectly consistent to his youthful admiration of the Revolution, and the spirit which had made him induce Paul to acknowledge the government of the Republic. He had seen by experience the evils of a hereditary despotism, but Napoleon having also seen by experience the evils of republicanism, and the superior power which a despot enjoyed to that of the president of a democracy dependent on the will of the people, could not believe that Alexander was sincere. Who had ever seen a really liberal autocrat or a sovereign willing to curtail his privileges for the benefit of mankind? Napoleon would not credit such an anomaly, or understand disinterestedness in a man born to the position which of all others he thought most desirable. But Alexander was no

ordinary prince, as even his detractors* acknowledged, and Thiers, though writing on the opposite side and accusing him of "singularity" and "hereditary infirmity," still admits that "there was a depth of understanding in his enlarged quick perception of things, which escaped the discrimination of the closest observers,"† and that "he was one of the noblest characters of modern times."

Napoleon had not ventured to unite Piedmont to France while Paul lived, and wrote to M. de St. Marsan that for friendship for Russia he was disposed to do something for the King of Sardinia (in fact he was bound to do so by their agreement), but as soon as he heard of his death he took possession of it, and ante-dated the decree. Alexander ordered the Russian Minister in Paris, M. Kalitschef, to complain of this breach of faith. He was answered that the First Consul was angry at the want of respect shown to him by the King of Sardinia, that he had lost patience, that nothing was decided;‡ and Napoleon immediately sent Duroc to St. Petersburg on a confidential mission to try and conciliate the Emperor, but ostensibly to congratulate him on his accession. The ambassador reported the substance of several conversations§ Alexander held with him alone. "I am at heart a friend of France," said the Emperor, "and have admired your new ruler for a long time. He has strengthened social order in Europe by establishing authority in your country. I willingly concede to him all that he has conquered, even Egypt, though this conquest brings France too near to Constantinople, and weakens the Ottoman Empire still necessary for the equilibrium of the world; but I should prefer Egypt to belong to France rather than to England. I renounce the island of Malta, and the superannuated idea of reconstituting under my protection an institution de ceased with the superstition which gave it birth." Here spoke the pupil of La Harpe, and the grandson of the friend and admirer of Voltaire. "I would even yield to him Piedmont without a dispute, provided that he indemnifies my old ally the King of Sardinia. As to England, I am as interested as

* Brougham's Introduction to Speech on the Holy Alliance.

† Histoire du Consulat et Congrès de Vienne. ‡ Lanfrey.

§ Lamartine. Histoire de la Russie, M. Thiers, vol. iii.

you are in not making over to her the liberty of the seas, the only guarantee of my immense commerce with her and with the maritime Powers. I would willingly come to an understanding with you to limit or check her. I interest myself very little in the great Powers of Germany, who deserted her own cause by her egotistical negotiations, like Prussia, and her want of energy on the field of battle, like Austria at Zurich. These Powers may feel the fatal consequences of their perfidy and their cowardice. I shall not make war for their glory. Treat with them as you choose, only tell the First Consul to regard appearances, to limit his conquests to the treaties he has made, and not to furnish Europe or my own ministers with ground for declaiming on his insatiable ambition, and for drawing me in spite of myself to oppose him in my quality as the born protector of the weak and the oppressed." On another occasion Alexander told Duroc that his removal of the embargo his father laid on English vessels was only strict justice. "But I have no intention," he added, "of becoming a satellite of England. It depends entirely upon the First Consul whether I shall continue to be his ally. I am bound to the Kings of Piedmont and Naples by treaties. I am conscious their conduct has not been straightforward; but how were they to act, hemmed in as they were and domineered over by England?" He went on to say, that the seizure of Piedmont and part of Naples was unworthy of the ambition of the First Consul, and tarnished his glory. It gave alarm to the minor princes of Europe, who were continually importuning Russia; but if these difficulties were removed France and Russia might in future keep up a good understanding. In fact, France must not take advantage of the weaker Powers, and their inability to resist her; for by the treaty of Teschen in 1779 Russia had guaranteed the independence of the smaller States of the German empire; but that Austria and Prussia ought to be able to defend their own interests. Consequently the French Government began secretly to purchase the allegiance of the smaller German States, so that without actually defying their protector Russia, it might procure their voluntary alliance, and make use of them as an outpost for the intimidation of Austria and Prussia.

Nothing could be more open and clear with regard to Napoleon than this language, and his most intimate friends long regretted his mistrust of a monarch whom they were wise enough to see was by position and inclination their only true ally in Europe. The smallest hereditary prince in Italy and Germany thought himself superior to Napoleon when Emperor, on account of his longer pedigree, and objected to ministers and chamberlains who were not of noble birth; whereas Alexander declared the doctrine of the divine right of kings* to be an exploded idea, and valued a man according to his personal qualities. He refused to allow his head to be impressed on the new coin, because he said it belonged as much to the people as to the Sovereign. He visited his subjects of all classes; and while Napoleon, when he assumed the Imperial crown, created Court functionaries, and attempted to graft on to a military despotism, almost destitute of the old French nobility, the Court and style of Louis XIV., Alexander curtailed all state ceremonies; and even deprived the Court chamberlains and other attendants of any rank or precedence merely in virtue of their office. He abolished the custom of kissing the Sovereign's hand, which is still never done in Russia, except to the Empress on New Year's Day. His whole career showed his liberal principles, which he tried to conform to his position as the autocrat of forty millions of people. Perhaps Napoleon never forgave his part in the conspiracy of 1801, which had so entirely upset his own schemes of ambition in the East; for he reserved it as his most poignant barb whenever Russia and France were involved in political disputes. Alexander answered other charges afterwards made against him by the French Government, with the assertion that they were impudent falsehoods; but on this subject he never attempted to justify himself. On the contrary, he carefully shielded his father's memory, and sought to carry out every reasonable measure he had designed, particularly his scheme for a bond of religious union between the Christian Powers, in the project afterwards called the Holy Alliance. The Western Cabinets imagined that the murder of the Russian Sovereign implied a total change of policy, and each Power in its own interests thought itself deceived. "The Emperor of

* See his conversation with Louis XVIII.

Russia never dies," wrote De Maistre. "What Paul has promised, Alexander must perform. Sardinia's only hope is in Russia." England expected Alexander at once to become her close ally, and was disappointed; for like his father he felt she had not treated Russia well. The notification of his accession, sent by Pahlen to Sir Hyde Parker, was carefully worded. It condemned the attack on Denmark, at the very time that the English envoy in Berlin was authorized to open a conference with the Russian minister in that city. It declared that if this attack and the arrival of a hostile fleet had not been made before the Emperor's proposal* could have reached London, "it would have entirely frustrated his wish for peace." It asserted that his Imperial Majesty was prepared to repel force with force, and could only conclude a peace "which should reconcile the duties of humanity with the honour of his crown, and the interests of his allies." Yet France chose to suspect him of connivance with the English Cabinet, because he offered restitution where Paul had clearly been unjust. Far from unravelling complications, Paul's death† in the end rather increased them, for a Nemesis seemed to work in the external affairs of Russia.

But if Napoleon was mistaken in Alexander, the Czar was equally mistaken in Napoleon. With the want of knowledge of the world of a young Russian who had never been out of Russia, he imagined that the faults he saw in his own people were peculiar to them, and not shared to some degree by mankind at large, and that beyond the Elbe and the Rhine lay the Utopia which the old French and German authors and his own foreign tutor loved to portray. He believed in the cleansing powers of the Revolution, and thought he saw in Napoleon the champion of liberty and the offspring of the French Republic, which had proclaimed freedom to the oppressed bondsmen, and cast from its borders the worthless nobility who were doing their best to corrupt his own people. The Inquisition was abolished in Northern Italy through Napoleon's victories, and Alexander regarded the Roman Catholic religion as the superannuated ally of tyranny, and looked upon its

* Alexander's letter to George III. was written before he heard of the bombardment of Copenhagen.

† "A shocking crime," said Napoleon, "of which my alliance has been the principal cause."

overthrow and the stability of the Greek Church as not only a blessing to mankind, but a national triumph. The doctrine that forty millions of men are worth more than one Sovereign, was the only ground on which he could excuse his own accession, and was a principle held by none of his brother monarchs; but he immediately adopted it as his motto, and rejected the notion that kingdoms were private estates vested in royal families. He maintained that a prince was himself but the servant of the State, and he who was most popular, and most capable of reigning, was the one who ought to be placed on the throne. As for himself, he hoped to obliterate the dark commencement of his authority by the benefits he would bestow on his own people and the world at large; and by the superiority of his government to that of his unfortunate father in some way atone for his early possession of it. He ascended the throne in the enjoyment of an almost unprecedented popularity. The filial respect and obedience he had long shown through much provocation, his invariable courtesy to those about him, his regular life, extensive information, and other qualities, added to his being regarded during Paul's reign as rather a victim—for his father's uneasy jealousy was widely known—gave him a particular interest in the eyes of his subjects; and he had grown up among them, and not in the seclusion of a half imprisonment like his predecessors. A witness* of his first appearance from the Winter Palace to receive the homage of his troops, said he might have been taken as the model Sovereign. "With a high stature, but slight and flexible, his delicate appearance added to the grace of his figure; the carriage of his head recalling the majesty of Catherine. He had a broad, high forehead, where study and a soldier's hat early made his hair rather scarce; very open blue eyes, limpid and profound, like a soul with nothing to conceal; a nose too short for the perfection of his Greek profile; a mouth closely shut when silent, soft in tone; a complexion of a death-like marble whiteness, often coloured with a blush; a self-possession without heaviness; a fine seat on horseback; a majestic, but never theatrical action." "Such was Alexander," adds Lamartine, "as we saw him ourselves some years later, when maturity still left him his attractions.

* M. Choiseul Gouffier.

Sir Robert Porter, in 1807, and Carr, in 1804, draw much the same portrait; and add that his deafness was very obvious, and obliged him to stoop when he wanted to hear. "In the discharge of his duties he displays great activity and acuteness, but without show or bustle; the leading features of his mind are sound discretion and humanity."

A picture of Alexander in 1801 represents a tall, straight, very slender youth, with thick, short, curly, chestnut hair, and the regulation military pigtail, which he soon abandoned; a very young face, rendered more boyish than usual at twenty-three by the soft complexion and total absence of moustache. His searching eyes showed his short sight, which obliged him to use a strong glass. He wondered why he was constantly losing it, but his aides-de-camp could have explained, as if he put one down for a moment it was appropriated and kept, or even sold, as a memento. "He has taken every step to show his respect for his father's memory," says a letter from St. Petersburg in the summer of 1801, "but a melancholy and uneasiness constantly hangs about him in spite of the wisdom and humanity of his government."* Even within a year or two of his accession he could hardly conceal the gloomy moods that came over him, and was seen to ride away from his aides-de-camp and wander miles alone over the country, and at St. Petersburg to plunge into the deserted streets at night, and walk backwards and forwards till daybreak. Yet this temperament, which was perhaps partly constitutional, and not altogether entirely the result of what Cæpefigue calls "a cruel accident in his life weighing upon him with the power of remorse," did not detract from the energy with which he undertook his duties, and he showed an almost feverish impatience in pushing forward his reforms.

On Monday, March 24th (N.S.), he left St. Michael's Palace with his wife to take up his residence in the Winter Palace, facing the Neva, and four days later published these ukazes:—

"All prisoners of State are to be set at liberty.

"All the late laws relative to contraband are abolished.

"The tariff of tolls and customs of 1782 is reintroduced.

"The English seamen are released from confinement.

* Annual Register for 1801.

“ All societies and clubs are permitted.

“ The Orders of St. Vladimir and St. George are to be restored. (Paul had suppressed them.)

“ Everybody may dress as he pleases, provided he does not violate common decorum.

“ The importation of books and literary productions of every sort is permitted.

“ The regiments are to bear their old names, and the former regiments of guards are to be reorganized.

“ Every person, whether native, foreign, or exile, shall freely enter or quit the Russian dominions without any molestation or difficulty on the frontiers.” (This brought hundreds from Siberia.)

The importation of china, earthen and glass wares, steel tools and instruments, hardwares, silks, cottons, and linens, lately forbidden, was permitted, “ because our manufactures have not yet attained the necessary perfection, nor are sufficient to supply the exigence of our empire, so that for the present year the tariff of 1797 be in force.” At the same time Alexander appointed Marshal Soltikof to be vicar or substitute of the office of Grand Master of the Order of St. John until an agreement had been concluded with the other Powers for the election of a Grand Master “ who is worthy to preside and capable of restoring to the Order its ancient constitution,” and no one in future was to dismount when the Emperor or Empress appeared in sight, or to make any further token of respect than the ordinary military salute.

Lord St. Helens, formerly ambassador at the Court of Catherine, was sent to St. Petersburg on the conclusion of a peace, which he signed in the Russian capital June 17th (N.S.), 1801. The formal treaty of peace, which had never yet been actually signed, between France and Russia, was concluded at Paris on October 8th, Count Markof, one of Catherine's old favourites, having succeeded Kalitchef as Alexander's representative in Paris. The articles not immediately published in connection with this treaty, but signed at the same time, related to the division of the indemnities provided by the treaty of Luneville for the princes dispossessed on the left bank of the Rhine. The second article

provided that the high contracting parties should amicably arrange the affairs of Italy and of the Holy See. The sixth stipulated that "the First Consul and the Emperor of Russia shall act in concert in relation to the King of Sardinia, and with all the regard possible to the actual state of affairs." The ninth guaranteed the independence of the Republic of the Seven Islands (under the protection of Russia), and the eleventh declared that "as soon as possible after the signature of the present treaty and these secret articles, the two contracting parties shall enter upon the consideration of the establishment of a general peace upon the following basis:— To restore a just equilibrium in the different parts of the world, and to insure the liberty of the seas, binding themselves to act in concert for the attainment of these objects by all measures, whether of conciliation or vigour, mutually agreed on between them for the good of humanity, the general repose, and the independence of governments." The treaty between France and the Turkish empire at the same time recognised the separation from Turkey of the Republic of the Seven Islands and Dalmatia, their independence to be guaranteed by Russia and France. Paul's alliance with Bonaparte had already obtained the restoration to liberty of several French prisoners who had lingered long in the dungeons of Constantinople, and Napoleon's anxiety to remain on a friendly footing with his son was further shown by sending one of his aides-de-camp, Colonel Caulaincourt, to Russia, to represent him at the coronation of the Emperor at Moscow, and also to observe minutely the forms and ceremonies used on the occasion, for the First Consul already contemplated his own elevation to the Imperial dignity. Caulaincourt was one of the very few members of the old French nobility attached to the cause of the Republic, but these were marked for distinction. More than 100,000 peasants came from the country to witness the coronation, although Paul's had been celebrated with unusual magnificence only four and a half years before, and Alexander was everywhere received with the warmest loyalty. A Russian Emperor places the crown on his own head, to signify that he receives it from God alone, and not, as Ivan the Terrible once expressed it, "from the seditious will of men." He becomes himself half an ecclesiastic, and may take the part of

a deacon in any office, receiving the Holy Communion, not as before with the laity, but with the priests and bishops. This was a privilege originally obtained for the Cæsars by Constantine the Great, and, with many other customs derived from Rome and Constantinople, was inherited by the Grand Dukes and Czars of Russia. The religion, the churches, the ceremonial offices in Moseow, all forcibly recall the Christian city of Constantinople; and the crown, orb, and sceptre still used were presented by a Greek emperor in 1113 A.D. to a former Russian Sovereign, the grandson of Constantine Monomachus.

An Englishman wrote from Moseow, October 1st, 1801: "The ceremony of the young Emperor's coronation was particularly grand; so much so that I feel recompensed for the very comfortless journey of 2000 miles I encountered to be present at it.

"The Emperor arrived at the palace of Petrovsky on the 22nd ult., where he resided till the 27th; during the interval he repeatedly visited the city in private. On the morning of Sunday he made his public entry (when he was saluted by seventy-one gun-shots), the procession was led by the heralds and Constantine's regiment of cavalry; to these succeeded a long line of empty carriages belonging to the nobility; a regiment of hussars, richly dressed, well mounted, and in all respects the finest corps I ever saw, followed; and then the nobility in their carriages of state, and all the superior officers of the government. The equipages were most magnificent; the carriages in general were drawn by six horses, and attended by eight servants in the richest liveries.

"The Empress-Dowager in her state carriage came next, then the present Empress (a most lovely woman), and then the sisters of the Emperor, followed by another regiment of hussars like the former. Next came the Emperor, mounted on a fine horse, with the Grand Duke Constantine riding on his right, and a vast body of guards closed the procession.

"The church ceremony began by the Archbishop Plato consecrating the crown, &c. At nine o'clock the Empress-mother entered the cathedral under a salute of cannon, and took her seat, which was prepared on the left hand of the throne, the Emperor and Empress followed, and then the nobility of both

sexes, who, superbly dressed, were seated on each side of the cathedral; the centre was occupied by those of the first class. The cathedral is small, but the ceremony was managed with singular precision.* The city was illuminated for three nights, and was very brilliant. The English and other strangers were presented to their Majesties on Tuesday, and in the evening there was a splendid ball at Court. To-day, October 18th, a fête is given to the populace; a large field is enclosed, and tables placed for the accommodation of 30,000. A profusion of wine and viands are prepared, with a variety of amusements. The weather continues most favourable."

The Emperor spends the night before the coronation in the church where his ancestors lie entombed; and on the morning previous to the ceremony observes a strict fast. The Sovereign went on foot to the cathedral under a canopy of gold and silver, supported by thirty-two generals, and followed by the courtiers and the chevalier guards. They were received at the entrance by the Metropolitan and assistant clergy, with the holy water and sacred relics. Bowing before them, they walked to the throne, where four noblemen bearing the regalia placed it at their feet, taking their stand on the lowest step, and the service began with the 101st Psalm. The Archbishop handed a book to the Emperor, who, kneeling down, read the Gospel for the day, after which he rose, and, taking the crown from the hands of the old prelate, placed it on his own head during this address:—"Very pious, very powerful, and very great Emperor of all the Russias, the visible and material ornament which adorns thy forehead is the image of the mysterious act by which Jesus Christ, the King of Glory, crowns thee in this moment; thou, the chief of the Russian people, by the means of His Holy Benediction, confirming thee in the unlimited and supreme power that thou exercisest over thy subjects," &c.

Two noblemen handed the sceptre and globe to the Archbishop, who gave them to the Emperor, with a similar address, after which the Sovereign seated himself on his throne, while the Empress kneeling down, he touched her head with his crown, and then replaced it, four ladies of the highest rank coming forward to adjust it. He also decorated her with the Mantle and Order of St. Andrew. His style and titles were

* There were seventeen English gentlemen present.

read out in a loud voice by a priest, and on his knees he read the confession of his faith in the Nicene belief. A hundred-and-one reports of artillery here interrupted the ceremony, and the Emperor, again kneeling, received a book from the Metropolitan, and recited a prayer to ask the Divine blessing and assistance in governing his people, to the glory of God, and their own happiness. It concluded with these words: "May I be in a condition to answer Thee without fear in the day of Thy dreaded Judgment, by the merits and the grace of Jesus Christ Thy Son, Whose Name is glorified for ever with Thine and with that of Thy Holy and Life-giving Spirit. Amen." At the end of this prayer the Emperor rose, and the Metropolitan and clergy, kneeling in their turn, repeated the same on behalf of the Sovereign. Then Plato, whose preaching had once drawn a compliment from Voltaire, gave the sermon :*—

"This crown, sire, on your head, a pledge to us of glory and renown, imposes upon you duties and labours ; this sceptre in your right hand, a guarantee to us of repose, demands of you watchfulness ; this emblem of empire in your left hand, a promise to us of security, exacts of you care ; this purple, a shield for us, challenges you to contests. Finally, all this Imperial attire, to us a source of consolation and confidence, is for you a burden ; yes, a burden and a labour. For see ! to your eyes there will appear an empire, the largest that ever the sun shone upon ; from your wisdom it looks for the harmonious connection of its parts, the regulation of the whole. . . . Thou wilt see flocking to thy throne widows, orphans, starving men, the victims of the abuse of power, of partiality, and corruption. Thou wilt hear their prayers. . . . But near the angels of light your eye will discover the spirits of darkness. Flattery, calumny, and cunning, with all their wretched brood, will surround your throne, and foolishly imagine that their hypoerisy will beguile you. Bribery and partiality will raise their glossy heads and labour to lower the scale of justice. Dissipation will in the laughing dance present the intoxicating draught of perilous joys, to lead astray from the path of virtue the pure spirit and engulf it in the slough of indolence and sensuality. Besieged by this riotous band, you will undoubtedly turn to truth, justice, wisdom, and

* Much curtailed here.

religion, and united with you they will raise their voice to God, that He may rise again in you and scatter your enemies.

“Monarch of Russia, this struggle awaits you. For this contest gird on thy sword. Draw it with valour, young hero. Fight, conquer, and govern. The Omnipotent arm of the Almighty will wonderfully protect thee. We say rightly, wonderfully: for here not to fall, here to conquer, here to maintain order and peace—truly for this more than human strength is required; and though the decree of the Eternal Being has appointed for you an exalted rank among men, you are nevertheless a man like any of us.”

The *Te Deum* followed the sermon, and then the Liturgy. The Metropolitan anointed the Czar with holy oil to another salute of artillery, after which he was admitted into the Holy of Holies (the chancel of a Greek church carefully screened off from the laity) during High Mass, having given his sword to his brother and his crown to four of his nobles, who restored it when the service was finished.

The procession returned in the same order, and the Sovereigns walked round the Kremlin, when it was observed that the Emperor looked very much fatigued. Gold and silver were thrown among the crowd, and the Imperial party proceeded to the banquet hall, where, after the old custom, the Emperor dined alone at a table elevated above all the rest, while the Imperial family and the nobility were seated according to their rank. The Emperor went into the Hall of Nobles to read aloud the list of promotions and Imperial favours. All officers up to colonels received as a gratuity one-fourth of their pay. For the remainder of the year no recruits were to be drawn; the taxes were reduced, and all still in arrears to the government were to be excused. The insolvent debtors to the Crown were to be released; and on September 23rd every kind of torture was prohibited, an *aide-de-camp* being sent to Kazan to make inquiries into a case said to have recently occurred there. Alexander transacted business regularly with his ministers during the six weeks he remained in Moscow, though also occupied with a succession of fêtes. Of those held by the nobility that of Prince Sheremetev was the most magnificent, when a distance of sixty-six English miles to his country palace was entirely lighted with lamps. A French female spy whom Napoleon

employed in Russia was detected and expelled, owing to an intercepted letter in which she made an oft-quoted remark: "I attended the new Emperor's coronation. It was a fine ceremony. I saw him set out from the Kremlin to the cathedral. Behind him walked the assassins of his grandfather, by his side those of his father, and behind him his own." As the conspirators of 1762, Alexis Orlof and the Princess Dashkov, formed part of the procession, this description was not much overdrawn. They were among the friends and guides of Alexander's childhood, and during Paul's reign he had regretted that the trusted confidants of his grandmother, criminal though they might have been, should be disgraced and exiled in their old age. The Princess Dashkov had applied to him to obtain permission for her to return to St. Petersburg, and he had vainly pleaded her cause; but directly he ascended the throne he wrote to appoint her the first lady in waiting to the young Empress. Her health was failing, and she had lost both her son and daughter, but she arrived by short stages at St. Petersburg, to show the world that she was no longer in disgrace, though after the Emperor's coronation she bade adieu to modern politics and retired once more to her mansion near Moscow. Her resignation was hastened by the changes the Emperor contemplated in the administration, which were most distasteful to her, as she was completely bigoted to Catherine's system of government. She forgot that Catherine's ministers were young when they entered on their office, and could believe in no official under forty years of age, a period only just attained by even the Dowager-Empress. "If I found great pleasure," she writes, "in seeing the Emperor, whom I had been accustomed to love during twelve years, I felt still more in admiring the beauty which was the least charm of his companion. However, I saw with pain that Alexander was only surrounded by young men too much disposed to ridicule or depreciate their elders, and that a certain timidity, produced perhaps by the feeling of his deafness, prevented him from keeping them in order. The four years of the reign of Paul, who would have made only corporals of his sons, had been lost by them for any purposes of information and study; the parades of the guards and the soldiers' uniforms were the objects on which their attention was principally fixed. I fore-

saw that the Emperor's goodness of soul, and the principles of justice and of humanity that other cares had inculcated in him, would not prevent him from giving blindly his confidence to those who immediately surrounded him. At the coronation the Emperor and his charming spouse conquered the hearts of all their subjects."

The young men of whom the old revolutionist thought so contemptuously were Prince Czartoriski, Victor Kotchoubey (whom Paul had created a Count in 1799), Prince Alexander Galitzin, Count Paul Strogonof, Nicolas Novossilzof, and the Princes Dolgoruki. The last were the same age as Alexander, and were not on such an intimate footing with their Sovereign as the rest, who were all his seniors by eight or nine years, and had made the grand tour of Europe, or already occupied important diplomatic posts. Kotchoubey was appointed Minister of the Interior, and his duties gave him an audience of his Sovereign every day. The liberal party in Europe regarded them as the hope of Russia, and they were almost the only noblemen in the empire not opposed to Alexander's reforms. He wrote to La Harpe, "If Providence would allow me to lead Russia to the first step of that pinnae of greatness on which I desire to see her placed, my first wish would be to lay down the burden of government and retire to some quiet and beautiful part of Europe, where I may peacefully enjoy the happiness secured for my country." He dismissed the Court Advocate-General (March 29th, 1801), a species of Vizier, interposing between the Sovereign and the other ministers. "Temperate, active, and indefatigable, he transacted the government through direct correspondence or personal superintendence, and familiar with the statistics, topography, and interests of the various nations inhabiting his extensive empire, he encouraged the general prosperity by a policy adapted to the wants of each and all."* He required detailed accounts of their proceedings from the great officers of State, and having examined them caused them to be published, a thing unheard of in Russia. He reduced the number of offences for which the criminal was liable to receive the knout, and abolished the horrible addition of slitting the nostrils or cutting out the tongue. On the 8th of April, 1801, he ordered

* Sir R. Wilson's Sketch of the Military Power of Russia.

the public gibbets to be taken down, which were erected in every town and inscribed with the names of convicts. On April 23rd he passed a law for the protection of criminal lunatics. On May 5th he confirmed the law passed by Peter III., that no corporal punishment should touch a nobleman; and May 22nd renewed the Act passed by Paul, but often broken, to exempt all degrees of the clergy from flogging by the knout. He declared that for the future no hereditary property should be liable to confiscation, an edict which has since proved an immense protection to the nobility, for even the families of the conspirators of 1825 were not entirely deprived of their estates, these being passed on to the next heirs, who in almost every instance restored them to those exiles who lived to profit by the amnesty of 1855. Alexander early strove to deal with the subject of universal speculation, which had proved too much for his father, and no other Russian Sovereign had yet attempted to remedy. He established pecuniary fines for magistrates convicted of evading or abusing their duties, and having seen by experience that it was one thing to make a law in Russia, and quite another to have it carried out in remote provinces, he took frequent journeys in an open sledge or the unpretending vehicle used for conveying messengers over the enormous distances of Russia, and attended only by his coachman and an aide-de-camp, entered suddenly into distant villages which had never seen a Sovereign, received petitions, and satisfied himself by personal supervision that his orders were being obeyed.

But in spite of the laws passed to protect them from the caprice of future autoerats, the nobility were soon alienated by the inclination the Emperor showed to ameliorate the position of the serfs. We have seen sixty years later the difficulties and even dangers which surrounded a Sovereign whose perseverance and courage have finally effected their emancipation; at a time when the institution of serfdom is viewed with general opprobrium and has long been blotted out from all the rest of Europe. In the early years of Alexander the First it had only recently been abolished in France through the violence of the revolution, and was still a recognised system in the greater part of Germany, Prussia, Hungary, and Denmark, and virtually in Sweden and Spain. The whole constitution

of Russia was formed upon it, and the feeling of the nobles respecting laws affecting their absolute power over their serfs was much what the feeling of the English landowner would be if deprived of or controlled in the management of the trees and game on his estates, and in the investments from which he derives his income—in short, it was considered an unwarrantable interference with private property. There were two species of peasants at that time—the slaves, often descendants of prisoners of war, and the serfs who were attached to the land, from which they had been forbidden to remove themselves without the permission of their seigneurs since 1598. Paul made the first step towards recognising them as human beings by ordering them to take the oath of allegiance. On April 14th, 1801, Alexander passed a law permitting a peasant to hold land of his own, and authorizing a nobleman to sell a portion of his estate to his serfs, and to free them. This was another step in advance, as it was the beginning of a class of free peasantry, such as existed in Russia before 1598, and the number of peasants who became free from 1803 to 1811 was 13,575 men, besides women and children.

In 1802 the enfranchisement of the serfs of Esthonia began and was completed in 1816, and that of the serfs of Courland in 1817. In both these provinces slavery was the more severe as the peasants possessed no land; the nobility were of Swedish, German, and Polish origin, and therefore of a different race from their serfs; and it was thought that with the seaport towns and the more dense population of those districts the labourers would be able to find employment and support themselves without the exclusive protection of the nobility, and without being liable to the fearful famines which have been the dread of the friends of emancipation in the internal provinces. But long habits of dependence on their superiors deprived them of all thrift or idea of providing against the winter seasons and old age. In a time of scarcity the nobles refused to supply the freed peasants from their own barns, or to keep their superannuated labourers from starvation, as heretofore. Many emigrated across the frontier into Prussia, and others (probably prompted by the reactionists) sent a deputation to St. Petersburg, to lay their cause before

the Empress-mother, who was known to be opposed to any schemes of emancipation, to ask her to entreat the Emperor to restore them once more to slavery. Owing to this distress another arrangement was made, by which the emancipation was not finally effected till 1816; but such a failure, though only temporary, gave support to its enemies, who were almost as numerous as were the nobles in the empire.

Since Peter the Great, the fortunes of the nobility had been made, not by industry or accumulation, but chiefly by enormous grants of lands and peasantry to those who had gained the ephemeral favour of the Sovereign. It was a great shock to the avaricious when it was announced that this source of income was gone for ever, for the Emperor had resolved to bestow no more peasants as gifts upon his subjects, and without peasants, land was at that time almost valueless in Russia. Paul had given away 2,000,000 of human beings, and Catherine nearly 5,000,000; but when a lady of rank applied to Alexander requesting a present of a peopled estate, he wrote to her, "The peasants of Russia are for the most part slaves. I need not expatiate upon the degradation or the misfortune of such a condition. Accordingly, I have made a vow not to augment the number, and to this end I have laid down the principle that I will not give away peasants as property."

The world is governed, more or less, by mercenary motives. "Every man has his price" is a saying reported of many statesmen well acquainted with human nature: the soldiers of the French Republic, and afterwards of the Empire, were urged on to victory with the hope of plunder and estates; glory (as the French understood the word) is nothing but personal distinction, which requires wealth to keep its place. The nobles of Russia were not dependent on their official incomes for a maintenance, and they had rank without striving for military titles. With no further hope of increasing their estates, they had no object in seeking employment under government; and in the first years of Alexander's reign there was a very great want of men of sufficient education to fill even the humblest civil departments in the State. The Emperor appealed to their patriotic feelings to assist him in maintaining the laws of the country, and was forced to fill up the gaps in public offices with foreign emigrants. The

government of Odessa, which had risen rapidly since its first foundation in 1793, was placed under the Duc de Richelieu, while the Marquis Paulucci, Count Xavier de Maistre, the Princes of Oldenburg, the Emperor's uncle, Prince Alexander of Würtemberg and others were gradually appointed to important posts in the empire: the native nobility still holding aloof, and preferring their own pleasures, being roused to occasional opposition to the Emperor's schemes when instigated by foreign enemies. "The Russians," says Golovin, himself a liberal writer, "thought that the governing power weakened itself when it gave up any of its habits of oppression; they had no regard for the laws, and always relied on the favour of the Czar for evading them." In 1803 Princess Galitzin appealed to Alexander to protect her husband from the just demands of his creditors, as "the Emperor was above the law." He answered, "I do not wish, madame, to place myself above the laws, even if I could, for in all the world I do not recognise that authority legitimate which does not flow from the laws; on the contrary, I feel more than anybody the obligation of watching their observance, and even in cases where others may be indulgent I can only be just."

The code of laws Catherine projected had never been brought into force, for though it obtained the approbation of the French savants of the day, it was fitted for a more equal community than for Russia, where society was formed of the two great classes of nobles and serfs; and a portion of the ancient laws of Yaroslaf (1054) still find place in the judicial system of Russia. Vladimir Monomachus (1113), Ivan III., Ivan IV., and Alexis (1645), all put forth legal codes well calculated for the time in which they were made, but not adequate to the requirements of the modern empire. The laws of Peter the Great and his successors were issued in ukazes of which one, by the fundamental rules of the country, was always binding till expressly annulled by another; but there was no regular arrangement of these systems, or of the innumerable ukazes which had appeared during centuries. Alexander very early appreciated the necessity of a clear definition of the authorized body of existing laws, and in the first year of his reign appointed a commission, with Count Zavodosky at its head, for the revisal of all former ukazes and

decrees, and the forming of a new code. "In the law alone," he wrote to the president, "I place the source and principle of national prosperity. The Codex of the Czar Alexis Michaelovitz was made for Muscovy, not for Russia." The secretary of the commission, and the only member really zealous in the matter, was Michael Speranski, born in 1771, the son of the priest of a village in the province of Vladimir. He was educated at the Theological School at the monastery of St. Alexander Nevskoi, in St. Petersburg; and as the office of a priest was hereditary, he only escaped this destiny through the influence of Prince Kurakin, who admitted him as a mathematical tutor in his family, and afterwards obtained for him a humble office in the civil service, where Alexander met him when employed himself as a clerk in the Foreign Department. As soon as he ascended the throne he made Speranski secretary to the new privy council, where he displayed great activity, and drew up several important official writings, especially the ministerial reports. Like Aratchaief, he owed his promotion entirely to his diligence, loyalty, and probity; but, like Aratchaief, his rapid rise procured him many enemies.

The difficulties a reforming Czar encountered from all sides can only be understood by a glance at the character of his people. The nobility saw no necessity for reform, except to secure their own privileges from the usurpation of a Sovereign like Paul, and the mercantile classes were too completely Asiatic in education and feeling to have the smallest comprehension of a representative government. If the Emperor stripped himself of his arbitrary power, the mantle which he cast aside would be taken up by the nobles, and instead of one despot they would have a thousand. Utter idleness and the payment of no taxes was the serf's idea of the enjoyments of emancipation. Alexander knew that real reforms, to be lasting, must proceed from the will of the nation, and he tried to interest all classes in his project of leading them on towards a constitution, but in vain. Rostopchine and others like him scoffed at the notion of a ministry or parliament sharing the government with a Sovereign, who could only be pardoned, in their opinion, when he divided his duties with a male or female favourite. At the Niemen, Europe seemed to merge into

Asia, and the Russian nobility, while adopting the external courtesy and refinement of the courtiers of Louis XIV., still refused to bind themselves with social restraints which their fathers had disdained. They were kind husbands and chivalrous, yet their domestic arrangements were most frequently of the Mahometan or Mormon type. "What riches must be required to support a double or even treble household, and several dozen servants to each! What short of the wealth of Peru could support this complicated system of extravagance? Hence the greater part of the nobility are verging fast to ruin," writes a German in 1805. One nobleman had 13,000 servants in constant attendance; many had 300. Theatres, private libraries, museums, and chapels with beautiful choirs were attached to private houses of any wealth; and England alone could vie with them in the comforts as well as magnificence they displayed. They kept open house, and drove at least six horses to their carriages, followed by as many attendants. Paul tried to reduce their idle retainers, and Alexander and his wife followed his example of using only four horses, even on State occasions, and a small number of servants. But the Russian nobility were as a rule more humane and civilized masters than the Esthonian and Livonian aristocracy, whose old serfs begged their bread at the towns thirty miles from their estates, and of whom instances of tyranny are recorded* perfectly shocking to humanity. In the reign of Alexander, who marked out and honoured philanthropists, their charities and endowments were munificent, and a splendid hospital, one of the finest in the world, was founded by Count Sheremetev out of gratitude to the Emperor for legalizing his marriage with a serf.

"Nowhere does the Government do more for the improvement of the provinces," writes Seume in 1805; "yet nowhere is so little effected as to justice. There is in Russia no middle class—only wealth and penury, magnificence and wretchedness. If Alexander succeeds in establishing solid boundaries of justice, for the obstacles are gigantic, he will have done more than Peter the First."†

* Seume's Travels in 1805. He was a German in the Russian service.

† "May his feelings never be deadened by the heavy cares of government," writes another German traveller in 1805; "may his strength be

Alexander abolished *caste* in a ukaz, and declared that parents might bring up their children to other trades or professions than their own; but a law alone will not alter the customs of centuries. He mixed with all ranks, and allowed the wives of merchants to be presented to him as well as the wives of the nobility. He administered the law alike to all, and January 21st, 1804, passed sentence on two successive governors of Tambov, convicted of abuses in the circle of their government. The injured parties were fairly compensated for their loss of time and money. A few months after his accession Tumanski, the commander of the police at Riga, sent him a memorial denouncing a number of the principal inhabitants and officers, including the governor, merely to revenge slights received from them, as for years he had been the scourge of the place. Alexander read this libel, said that Tumanski must be out of his senses, and at once dismissed him from his post. He confirmed the sentence of perpetual exile to Siberia passed on Baron Ungern Sternberg of Dago, though great efforts were made to procure his pardon. This son of the old friend of Peter III. became a wrecker on the island where he ruled as chief proprietor, and hung out false lights which deceived many a mariner. A memorial in his favour was signed by the most influential of the nobility, but the day it was to be brought to the Emperor the case of a young man came before him, condemned to the mines for forgery. Alexander observed it was a severe judgment, but as it was the law he "could not help the unfortunate man; but now," he added, "I am anxious to see what punishment is decreed for that villain of the Baltic." His secretary did not venture to present the memorial, but gave the original sentence, which he signed without comment. The Baron's name was struck off the list of nobility, but his children's title and inheritance remained untouched; and though he never returned from Siberia, he became one of the most upright magistrates in Russian Asia.

The first years of a mild government after a severe one allow evils to come to light that had previously existed, but

commensurate with the fatigue which his duties must cause, that he may prove the rescuer of his people, and gain renown which will be sacred in the estimation of posterity."

hidden from view with an iron hand. Hence those satisfied with the old régime are apt to complain that the social state of a country is retrograding, and lament after the rigour of a former day. The lower classes rejoiced at seeing their superiors as hardly dealt with as themselves by Paul, and when they heard that the nobility were again exempted from corporal punishment, they feared it would be of no more use to appeal for protection to the monarch. At Kovno, in 1805, General Zapolsky, a Polish officer, was notorious for his cruelty, yet the citizens dare not make a representation to the Emperor until they could do it in person, lest he should, after all, be left at his post. "Heaven is high, and the Emperor lives far off,"* is a Russian proverb; and the case of an innocent man, Sontag, whom a jealous superior tried to get rid of by a tissue of feeble and unconnected charges, and whose defence being carefully investigated was declared sufficient by the Senate and the Emperor, who repaid him for his loss of time, was considered another proof that Alexander was prone to pardon, and would be likely to let off a criminal. Certainly, a people who have been only ruled according to the caprice of their superiors must learn what law and justice mean before they can reap their benefits.† Yet many drew the brightest auguries from the new system, and the aged Klopstock hailed Alexander's accession with his "Ode to Humanity." "The endeavours of this prince," writes an English resident in 1802, "to diminish the taxes, to improve the condition of the peasantry, to unfetter commerce, and diffuse knowledge over his

* "The police," says Reinbeck, writing in 1805, "had sunk too low under Catherine; under Paul it was too terrible; but under Alexander it seems confined to its proper limits. It is their province to watch over the public safety, the peace and cleanliness of the streets, to superintend fire engines, prisons, &c."

† A German officer, writing the same year, is inclined to regret the loss of Paul's prompt judgments, which he thought were better than leaving a process to be carried on through the slow machinery of the law. "That misrepresented, unfortunate Prince," he says, speaking of his old master, "was a monarch who wished what was right, but physically and mentally an invalid. All the portraits of him, not one of which is devoid of interest, and not one quite unlike him, declare this. Even at the very idea of irregularity and injustice he was forcibly and even convulsively affected. When he could hear and decide upon a case perfect justice was sure to follow. The impartial perceive the good effects of his severity. It excited fear, and made some at least, through fear of him, keep within the bounds of moderation. It seems unfortunately as if the mildness of his son would again open a field to the insolence of petty despots."

empire, open a prospect of happiness hitherto unknown to his people." "He has justified what we predicted," writes Masson in 1801. "Uniting the gentleness and amiability which made Catherine and Elizabeth beloved to the eminent qualities that might be expected from a true descendant of Peter I., he appears destined to carry Russia to the highest degree of glory and prosperity."

One act of Paul's reign which excited hardly a comment in Europe* was the annexation of Georgia, declared to be united to Russia in a ukaz published February 7th, 1801 (o.s.). This country had steadily preserved the Christian religion, though hemmed in for ages between the Mahometans of Persia, Asia Minor, and Daghestan, and harassed by the heathen and barbarous nations of the Caucasus. From one or other it was subjected to constant invasion and pillage, and for some years had been conquered by Persia, who committed the most frightful atrocities among the Christian inhabitants. In 1678 Georgia placed herself under the dominion of Russia, but at that time the Muscovite power was too weak at this extremity of its empire to maintain any successful resistance against the hostility of the intervening mountain tribes, and in 1795 the Khan of Persia for the last time overran the country, burning Tiflis and carrying many of the people into captivity. The following year a Russian army under Valerian Zoubov entered the country and gained several victories over the Persians, but it was recalled on Paul's accession and Georgia left to its fate. A dispute between the heirs of the last Czar Heraclius, who died in 1798, added to her miseries, and his son bequeathed his possessions to Paul as the only hope of saving them from the Mahometans. Paul's ukaz briefly explained the reasons of the annexation:—"For many years past Gurgistan (or Georgia), tormented by neighbours of a different religion, and exhausted by a continually defensive posture, has felt the inevitable consequences of a war always unfavourable. The divisions in the royal family in the midst of that war added to the calamities of the State and threatened its ruin. The King Heraclius, seeing the end of his days approach, the principal persons of his Court, and even the people of Gurgistan, now implore our protection, and seeing no other means

* The British Government remonstrated several years afterwards.

to escape ruin and slavery, have sent envoys from Gurgistan to pray us to receive them into the dominion of the Imperial throne of all the Russians. Listening to this prayer with a natural sympathy for all of our religion, and with the interest we have always felt for whatever concerned the Georgian nation, we have determined to gratify the wish of Prince Heraclius and that of the people of Gurgistan. Therefore, as much to secure the internal peace of the State as to protect it against attacks from without, we have ordered our armies to occupy Georgia, and we give our Imperial word that immediately after its definitive union to the States of our dominion, not only all the rights, privileges, and property of all and every of our new subjects in Georgia and the provinces thereunto belonging shall be maintained and preserved, but, further, that from that æra the inhabitants of these new provinces shall enjoy all the rights, privileges, and advantages which the old Russian subjects enjoy, by the favour of our ancestors, by our own, and under our protection. Moreover, we expect from these new subjects and their posterity inviolable fidelity to us and our successors, and an unlimited devotion to the interests of our empire.—PAUL.”

Yet Georgia was considered so useless and inconvenient a possession, that Alexander's ministers seriously advised him to withdraw from his father's word, and abandon it to the merey of the Persians; but in a ukaz, dated Moscow, September 24th, 1801, he confirmed the degree of the previous February, adding that he decided upon its annexation, “not for the aggrandizement of our power, not with interested motives, but merely to establish justice and the security of persons and property. All the taxes paid by your country shall be employed for your own advantage, and in the re-establishment of your ruined towns and villages. Your happiness and welfare will be the most agreeable, and the only reward for us.”

General Zizianof, a relative of the Georgian royal family, was appointed Viceroy of the kingdom for the Emperor of Russia, with the support of a considerable army, and the Persians quickly made their retreat. The widow of the last Georgian Czar, with her seven children, continued at Tiflis; but owing to a family dispute she corresponded with the mountain tribes, and a conspiracy against the Russian authority was promptly checked by her removal from Georgia to St.

Petersburg.* She made some resistance, and stabbed a Russian officer, who died on the spot; but after a short residence in a convent, she was established in rooms in the Taurida Palace, and continued regularly to attend all the Imperial festivities until her death, at an advanced age, in 1844. Her sons and more distant relatives entered the service of Russia, as had not been unusual with the princes of Georgia for several centuries; a son of the Sovereign of that day having fought under Peter I. at Narva, and died a captive in the hands of the Swedes.

Before finally annexing Georgia, Alexander sent General Knoring to ascertain the real state of the country and, as far as he could, the wishes of the inhabitants; and it was after his report that the Russian boundary was extended beyond the Caucasus. No extensive change in a government can be effected without some loss of position to one or more of its late rulers; but there can be no question that Georgia has greatly benefited by the protection of Russia, and that it has not advanced still further in social progress is due to the long and expensive warfare maintained for fifty years by the Mahometan and heathen mountaineers. Like the Highlanders of old, they were accustomed to levy blackmail on the surrounding towns, and to look upon robbery and plunder as their regular means of support. Russia established herself as a bulwark between these wild tribes and Georgia, but at a fearful cost to herself of money and life, and it was not till the reign of Alexander II. that they were completely subdued. The union of Georgia brought Russia into contact with Persia, and produced future complications when she was afterwards engaged in a war with France; but as regarded the internal government of the country, Alexander directed that the old code of laws and ancient constitution should be as far as possible preserved; and an English traveller writes in 1822 that "the Russians are ruling their new possessions with so much justice and humanity, that the poor oppressed Christians of Armenia and other parts of Asia Minor look eagerly for the period when their homes may also be included within the limits of the Muscovite empire."

* Bishop James describes them in 1813 in the train of the Empress-Dowager.

CHAPTER VI.

1801—1804.

THE IMPERIAL FAMILY.

ÆTAT. 23—26.

ST. MICHAEL'S Palace was deserted by the Imperial family soon after Alexander came to the throne, and the works of art and treasures it contained were sent to Paulovsky and other public buildings. It remained for a long time a mere object of curiosity to the traveller, but towards the end of this reign it was turned into a college for military cadets, and the room sealed up in which Paul closed his days. The Empress Mary retired with her younger children to her old residence at Paulovsky, and for many years steadily refused to pass a night in St. Petersburg, except on the anniversary of her husband's death, when she repaired to the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul,* to join in the prayers offered up for the repose of his soul. A contemporary† accuses her of endeavouring to stir up a party in her cause for several months after the accession of her son, and of having had some success; and asserts that she went to the coronation at Moscow with the hope of exciting the popular sympathies on her behalf; "so quickly, and so completely," says Lamartine, "had the seduction of supreme power predominated over the feelings of the wife, and the tenderness of the mother in this widow's heart."‡ Alexander exercised the utmost kindness and forbearance towards her, and endeavoured to satisfy her love of power by placing the management of the various public institutions which he founded or enlarged in her hands, and the minute direction of their discipline and arrangements formed her chief amusement. She jealously asserted her right to the sole guardianship of her younger children, in accordance with her husband's will, and Alexander left her all the external

* Vie de Madame Svetchine (formerly her maid of honour).

† The Annual Register for 1801.

‡ Lamartine's *Histoire de la Russie*, vol. ii.

token of Imperial rank, parading his own as little as possible before her. His attendants were no more numerous than when he was Grand Duke, and the traditional state and etiquette was reserved for her Court, where he appeared like a submissive and respectful son, not one who had inherited the sceptre. In the course of years his consistent attention drew her towards him, and she professed admiration for his character. Yet it was not from her that he expected sympathy in his hours of depression or success. He neglected nothing likely to add to her happiness. She wished for a country house at Vassilli Ostrof, and he built one and presented it to her, furnished entirely by Russian manufacturers. His example was followed by all her children, five of whom preceded her to the grave.

Alexander's eldest sister died at Pesth, six days before her father, but the news did not reach St. Petersburg for more than a week. She had never recovered her early disappointment, and her disposition to melancholy rapidly increased after her marriage, when she took the most touching farewell of all her family, particularly her father, who was much attached to her. The second sister, Helena, came to St. Petersburg in December, 1800, and spent the next summer at Paulovsky. She returned to Germany after her brother's coronation, and died of consumption at Ludwigslust, October, 1803. Count Lavallette saw her at Berlin in the winter of 1801-2. He speaks of her as "a dazzling beauty, who already bore in her noble face all the traces of the illness of which she died a short time afterwards. Her look and the whole expression of her physiognomy was so deep a melancholy that she appeared in speaking to you to give you a last adieu."

Paul used to say that his daughters should be consulted as to their marriages, but he had talked of Charles Frederick of Saxe-Weimar, his first wife's nephew, as a possible son-in-law, and after his death his wish was law to his wife. The Grand Duchess Mary, at the age of seventeen, was therefore married to this German Prince, and quitted Russia in August, 1804. "We have taken leave of the charming Grand Duchess Mary," writes De Maistre,* the Sardinian ambassador. "You have seen

* De Maistre, *Mémoires Diplomatiques et Correspondance.*

nothing so sad. The poor little princess went out with her eyes enough to moisten those of every one else. The diplomatic corps were drawn up in a circle to wish her good-bye. She made a rapid tour, and offered her pretty hand to us all without having strength to proffer a syllable. Everybody was touched—above all when they saw the husband, who was also present. He is a little German corporal, as round as his boots, and with fewer subjects than his brother-in-law has grenadiers. It is he who carries away this beautiful angel. Every one cries out ‘What a bad marriage!’ The same evening she went to wish the public good-bye at the theatre, and was received with enthusiasm, while some, remembering the sad fate of her two elder sisters, were heard to exclaim, ‘May you be happy.’ The poor child began to weep.” Schiller saluted her with “*The Homage of the Fine Arts*,” in which he spoke of her beautiful soul in a beautiful form; and in later years Goethe said of her to Varnhagen, that she was made to rise above her peers in whatever condition she might have been placed, and excited admiration even in the highest position of life.* “At the theatre,” writes an Englishman resident in Weimar, March 2nd, 1805, “I saw the wonder of the North, and the object of every one’s idolatry here—the hereditary princess of Saxe-Weimar. A few months since our hereditary prince brought home his bride, the sister of the Emperor of Russia and a daughter of Paul. All tongues are lavish of her praise; and indeed she seems to be really an extraordinary person. She is young, and possesses a most cultivated mind and accomplished address,” but like her brother Alexander she suffered from deafness.

After the marriage of this sister, Catherine and Anna were the only two Grand Duchesses left in Russia. The elder was twelve years old when her brother came to the throne. Her extreme liveliness, literary tastes, and sparkling wit, though allied to rather a nervous temperament, were considered tokens of great promise by her parents. She inherited the brilliant dark eyes which were her father’s only beauty, and is described by contemporaries as a plain likeness of her brother Alexander. “Nothing,” writes De Maistre, “equals the goodness and

* Thackeray speaks of her ability in a letter to Lewes—*Life of Goethe*. The Emperor Nicholas, in his will, spoke of her most warmly.

good graces of Madame the Grand Duchess. If I was a painter I would send you one of her eyes." She was her mother's constant companion till her marriage in 1809, when she made the stipulation that her husband should remain in Russia. Anna more resembled her sister Mary in her pure Greek profile, fair complexion, and blue eyes, but as she was only six years old at the time of her father's death, her marriage was still far in the future, and she was the playfellow of her brothers Nicholas and Michael, under the superintendence of a distinguished German lady, Frau von Adlerberg, and Madame Lieven, a Livonian. Paul had appointed a military tutor for Nicholas; but the Empress-Dowager considering him too young to be subjected to entirely military discipline, restored him for a time to the charge of women, when she retired with her children to Paulovsky. They were excited and alarmed by their father's murder, and to stifle the recollection of it their attendants told them stories of equal horror, in the execution of Louis XVI. and the sufferings of his poor little son. The boys shed many tears over the fate of the orphan in the Temple, and it is not unlikely that Nicholas imbibed at this early date the consistent hatred of Jacobins and revolutions he always manifested in later life. At eight years old he was transferred, with his brother Michael, to the care of General Lambsdorf, a Courlander, and four other officers. Alexander was establishing a school for the sons of the nobility at Czarco-Selo, and wished his brothers to enter it as students to give them companionship and emulation, and also as a much needed example to the Russian nobility of enrolling their sons under regular discipline with other boys, instead of educating them privately with foreign tutors in a far too luxurious home. But the Empress-Dowager preferred to isolate her sons in the gloomy palace of Gateschina, though it was associated with the ravings of the insane favourite of Catherine II. and their father's melancholy seclusion. It was her wish that they should be kept under strict authority and apart from all the world, but neither over-excited nor over-taught. Yet though here they were certainly removed from the baneful atmosphere of a large capital or a Court, with no amusements or public spectacles to interrupt their studies, they lost more than they gained by the dullness and monotony

of their existence, and always declared that it rather injured than developed their faculties. Adelung and Storch also assisted in their tuition, but their minds ran almost exclusively on the wars in which Russia was engaged, and which could not be entirely concealed from them, even within the bounds of their scholastic prison, and their energies chiefly concentrated on their military exercises. They admired and revered their brother Alexander, from whom their banishment to Gateschina completely separated them for years, except when from time to time he paid a visit to their schoolroom, and presented them on their birthdays with a sword, or gave them a nominal rank in the regiment of cadets. They remained here till the year 1812, when they were brought to St. Petersburg on the French invading Russia; and Nicholas used to say he had reason to be grateful to Napoleon for being the cause of their release from banishment.

The Empress humoured and flattered Constantine when she wished to obtain him as a partisan in any political difference between herself and Alexander, but was otherwise not displeased with his evident unpopularity. His wild and reckless behaviour was conspicuous in his father's reign, but on a campaign in a subordinate capacity his conduct, though always singular, was more praiseworthy; and when he served in Italy in 1799 Suvorov wrote of him to Count Razoumovski at Vienna: "His Imperial Highness Constantine, notwithstanding his youth, acts in the service like a veteran. Always accompanying the soldiers, he lives in the camp and in the tent, and with wonderful firmness he supports the excessive heat of the climate. Such an example excites the admiration both of the Russian and the Austrian armies." But on his return to St. Petersburg his over-energy exhausted itself in tormenting his soldiers with incessant drill and playing foolish and mischievous practical jokes. "In speaking of the Imperial family," writes Seume in 1805, "the Russians give them all a character for humanity and goodness, with the exception of Constantine, who is here and there loudly censured. The companions and assistants in his youthful frolics are laying on themselves a heavy responsibility. They must lose his regard as soon as he arrives at serious reflection."

In 1802 the departure of his wife left Constantine, at the age

of twenty-one, to plunge unfettered into every gaiety in St. Petersburg, where a foreign contemporary asserts he was the best and liveliest dancer he ever saw. He invigorated his constitution with active exercises, often riding unbroken horses, and like his brothers, showed extraordinary endurance in bearing exertion and privation, heat or cold, hunger or thirst. He rose at four in the morning, dined at twelve, and was abstemious in his food and moderate in drinking. Indeed, several travellers at that period bear testimony to the abstinence of the higher classes in Russia—a striking contrast to the English and other northern nations of that date.* He had great powers of imitation and mimicry, and a very retentive memory, but though really possessing much information affected to despise and ridicule all professors of literature and science. His attachés knew his temper, and turned its alternate phases to their own advantage; but his wild humours and inconsiderate acts† kept Alexander in constant uneasiness, and he was several times called up before his Imperial brother and severely reproofed. This occurred more than once in the presence of the Emperor's aides-de-camp, and on one occasion Alexander seemed extremely angry with him, addressed him in the strongest language, and threatened him with a sharp visitation of his displeasure should he ever again be guilty of a similar offence. Yet Constantine was sincerely attached to Alexander; to an extent which astonished the foreign princes of the time, as brotherly affection is not common between a Sovereign and his heir. In the year 1802 he visited the Courts of Vienna and Berlin, and the Emperor Francis gave him the colonelcy of a regiment of hussars, but except the rank of a general of brigade, it was some years before he received the high command to which he aspired in Russia. Paul passed a law elevating all military titles above personal rank, except with regard to the direct heir to the throne; and as Constantine was only presumptive heir, the exception did not apply to him, and a general-in-chief took nominal precedence of him as long as he was merely the general of a brigade. He submitted to this arrangement, and set an ex-

* Webster, Cochrane, Lyell, Wilson, Reinbeck, Porter, &c.

† He delighted in tormenting cats, and on one occasion fired a quantity of rats out of a cannon to celebrate Alexander's birthday, for which he received a reproof.

ample of obedience to a superior officer ; so by enforcing his father's law, Alexander found a means of keeping his brother in check when at a distance from him as well as when he was under his own eye, for he conducted himself with the greatest decorum as long as Alexander was present. The French ambassador, Caulaincourt (1807-11), draws almost the only pleasing portrait of him. Constantine "is very ugly, but admirably well made. He has charming, unaffected manners ; he talks of everything, and above all, agreeably, and without any pretence. He joins to much perception (*finesse*) the naïveté of a child. I remember one day in the Emperor's drawing-room, we joked about his dandyism, the elegance of his figure, and a thousand other follies. 'What would you have?' said he, laughing. 'I redeem myself a little from the neck to the feet, and if Nicholas would give me his head (the Grand Duke Nicholas is good-looking) I would give him my rights of seniority.' 'Would you really do it, Constantine?' asked the Empress, in her gentle voice. 'I would lay down the contract at your Majesty's feet.' 'What a fool you would be,' said Alexander, who was standing by ; 'who would give a crown for a handsome face?' 'As handsome as mine,' answered Constantine ;" at which the Frenchman could not forbear a laugh. A page of the Court of France who saw him enter Paris in 1814, asserts that "his face was hardly human. He wore spectacles, and when he looked at anything contracted his eyes very disagreeably : his voice is rude, his manner brusque and military." He spent a large income on his regiment, and would embrace a private trooper if he thought him worthy of praise ; but he was most unpopular among the Russians of the higher classes, and particularly with ladies. "Look back," said Prince Czartoriski to the Prince de Ligne at Vienna, in 1814, "on your description of his father in one of your letters to Prince Kaunitz ; it applies to Constantine with a very few exceptions. His heart is sound, but the rectitude of his judgment is a matter of chance. He is amiable in society, intractable in business, and a passionate lover of justice, but his enthusiasm frequently prevents him distinguishing the truth. Woe to his friends, and to his enemies, and woe to his subjects should he ever have any. He is extremely changeable, seeming to be fixed in nothing but the

worship of his brother. Whether he loves or hates, it is always with violence.”*

Alexander knew his brother too well to advise him to accept a kingdom, and Constantine also preferred to remain a Russian subject. A party in Finland, headed by Sprengporten, offered him the throne of the Grand Duchy during the reign of Paul. The Diet of Sweden proposed later that he should be asked to assume the Swedish Crown, in the hope of obtaining the restoration of their lost province. As early as 1804 the Poles looked to the reunion of their divided country under this brother of the Czar, for the Russian government in Lithuania and the border provinces was not so distasteful as the Austrian rule in Galicia, and the Prussian in Posen and Warsaw. His oddities increased with years, and his fits of anger and melancholy were as uncontrolled as his other qualities. The Russians longed to see him supplanted as heir to the largest empire in the world; and the Empress knowing this, fretted continually because she had no son. A second daughter was born in 1802, but within six months was placed by the side of its little sister in the church of the monastery of Alexander Nevskoi, and its mother grieved over its death till it quite affected her health. In June, 1802, she wrote to the Princess Dashkov, alluding to it, and saying that without being seriously ill, she had been continually more or less indisposed for several months. The Emperor added his compliments at the end of the letter. In December, 1801, her father, the hereditary Prince of Baden, was killed by a fall from his carriage when travelling near Arboga, in Sweden; and her favourite sister's unhappy union with the weak Gustavus IV., who sometimes actually beat his wife, was an additional cause of distress. Her widowed mother, the Margravine of Baden, lived secluded at Bruchsal, where her third sister was married in 1802, to Duke Charles of Brunswick, afterwards killed at Waterloo; and the same year her fourth sister, Amelia, came to reside in Russia. The Margravine had such a vivid recollection of the trials and fatigues of the long journey to St. Petersburg when she went there in 1773, that she could never be induced to repeat the experiment, even to

* Letters of a nobleman at Vienna. Tytler, writing in 1814, says “he is remarkably like the Marquis of Queensbury.”

make acquaintance with her son-in-law, or visit her daughter, whom she had last seen as a mere child. The aged Landgravine of Darmstadt, Elizabeth's grandmother, was still living at Strelitz; and her grandfather, the Elector of Baden, was secured through the connection with Russia on his throne at Carlsruhe. She longed to see those relations once more, and the home from which they had all been expelled in her childhood, for her sympathies were entirely with the small German States. The Empress-Dowager sought to eclipse her by a more majestic demeanour, and at every State pageant occupied a place by the side of the Emperor. Even as late as 1816 she still cherished the hope that if anything happened to her son she might enforce her own pretensions to the succession, and regarded Elizabeth as her chief rival—a feeling she showed by some haughtiness towards her daughter-in-law, who, since her residence in the damp palace of St. Michael, suffered every winter from the Russian climate, and frequently lost her voice for several months—a misfortune the more trying from her husband's deafness, though at all times they had not much in common, for she possessed little information and no enlarged ideas. Though fearing and disliking her mother-in-law, she was led by her, and joined in opposing the emancipation of the serfs, or any liberal measure likely to hasten the revolution which Paul's widow constantly predicted for Russia. A cold and fretful beauty, she met her husband with reproaches instead of affectionate consolation when he returned wounded in spirit after the disastrous battles of Friedland and Austerlitz. Naturally jealous, she lent too ready a belief to the scandals circulated by even an interested enemy like Napoleon, and Alexander's sensitive temperament gave double force to the sarcastic remarks which she did not always restrain even in public. He believed them to arise from indifference to him or even dislike, so he was accustomed to receive them in silence, but began to avoid her society, and spent his evenings at work with his secretary. He had invited the Empress's sister to Russia, thinking she would be happier with a member of her own family for a companion, as his duties often took him to distant parts of the empire; but he had reason to regret it, for the Princess Amelia did not add to the peace of the Imperial family.

Nothing was more splendid than the Imperial fêtes, but they were only held on special occasions, and not almost every night as in Catherine's reign, and when these occasions took place no one ever made himself more agreeable to his guests of all ages than Alexander, of whom De Maistre's description in 1816, at the time when he had reached the highest pinnacle of earthly power, equally applied in the year 1802: "The Emperor invariably lays aside the Sovereign in these sort of fêtes, and has the tone, the ease, and the formulas of good society. He has *the honour* of being presented to a lady; he begs that they will *excuse* him, &c.; he says, 'will you permit?' as well as others. He is right, for he is a true gentleman, which is not quite so easy as some believe." His permission to his subjects to visit foreign countries transferred the gay world of the Russian capital to France during the short interval of peace, and in 1802 there were more Muscovites than natives in the drawing-rooms of Paris. Their enthusiasm for their Emperor was so great that it infected the French Republicans with Imperial predilections, which were soon put to the test. An Englishman writes from St. Petersburg, August, 1801: "Alexander is the idol of his subjects, especially the inhabitants of the two capitals. Every morning he works with his secretaries from six till ten, when he attends the daily parade, and holds a military levée till twelve. From that hour till two he walks about with the Empress; dinner is then served, and he generally rises from table at three, and despatches business till five. From five till eight in the evening concerts are given, in which he sometimes takes a part himself. Supper is served a little after eight, and as soon as the clock strikes ten the officers in waiting withdraw, and Alexander retires. He lately ordered a loan of 25,000 roubles, free of interest for thirty years, to be granted for the immediate relief of the inhabitants of the town of Bielew, of which 458 houses had been destroyed by fire; and he gave 130,000 roubles to the distressed town of Vilna."

In 1803 Count Joseph de Maistre was accredited to the Court of St. Petersburg by his adopted Sovereign the King of Sardinia, and he remained at the Russian capital till 1817. He was a staunch Legitimist and Ultramontane, with a strong predilection for France as it existed under the old régime; but

even with these opposite tendencies he found much to esteem in the liberal and philosophic Czar. He admired in Alexander "the rather sad gravity of his youth, his enthusiasm for high-mindedness and virtue, his gracious bashfulness, his sympathy for all *les noblesses de cœur et les puissances d'esprit*. His dream of universal peace was not born with Madame de Krudener; it was spontaneous, and of the same kind as that of the Abbé de St. Pierre and Henry IV. of France."* The Count was first presented to the Emperor and Empress May 13th, 1803. "There certainly does not exist," he writes, "so handsome a royal couple in Europe. The affability of these two great persons is beyond all expression. They please themselves in forgetting their grandeur and wearying no one." Before his reign the Sovereign of Russia dined at a table alone or with his family, but Alexander disliked even assuming a place above the courtiers and ambassadors, and when he entertained the diplomatic corps at dinner he sat among them. "The Emperor's two ideas," writes De Maistre, July 17th, 1803, "are peace and economy. His expenses are fixed at so much for a term of four months. I know that virtues pushed to excess become faults, but I assure you, M. le Comte, that I cannot help admiring this wisdom in a young Sovereign surrounded by all imaginary seductions. He has no suite. If he meets any one on the quay (the public walk in St. Petersburg) they need not dismount; it is enough to salute. He wears neither a ring nor a watch, nor any ornament. Unfortunately all this, which is good for Southern eyes who can read majesty across simplicity, does not appear to have the same effect on Russian organs, and the respect for him personally has diminished; but who can help admiring his love of mankind and of his duties? One must be young to live at St. Petersburg, where generals are only twenty-five." "The Emperor is a philosopher," he adds in 1805, "and if it is permitted to say so, he is too much of one. If the nation were ripe for a constitutional government he would ask nothing better than to give it."

Alexander began his reign by laying aside a million of roubles every year to enable him to effect the emancipation of the serfs, with the purchase for each of the small allotment of

* *Mémoires Diplomatiques du Comte de Maistre.*

land to which he was attached ; but, like many other excellent measures, it was checked by the French war. In 1803 he deprived the nobility of the privilege of sending their serfs to Siberia without a trial. He forbade the sale of serfs apart from the land, for hitherto they were advertised like cattle in the newspapers ; and he prohibited the custom of paying the debts of proprietors by hiring out serfs to the creditors. The permission to the nobility to free their own peasants in their lifetime, though not by will, led to innumerable legal disputes between the free serfs and the heirs-at-law ; and in many instances, when the serfs were freed without land, Alexander advanced them sums of money to purchase their homesteads. He continued his father's practice of receiving petitions, and for some time after he came to the throne he passed every morning through a triple row of applicants on his way from the palace to the parade ; so that he often sent his adjutants first to collect them, when they brought in as many as 300. Some were merely requests for money, for a woman even wrote to inform him she had lost a cow, and to beg another in its place. " I have been highly gratified," writes Seume, " at beholding this amiable, handsome young man pass to and from parade through an immense crowd of mingled classes and nations without its being necessary that any one should have a ticket of permission to be near him. The other day I was at the Empress's family theatre, on the eighth birthday of the Grand Duke Nicholas. Everything was devoid of constraint. The Emperor came, sat, and walked away without any guard. There was merely the usual number of police-officers at the door. This is a confidence which is sure to gain its end."

Alexander encouraged the French theatre at St. Petersburg, and admitted the chief performers to the musical entertainments in the palace, with the hope of substituting this amusement for gambling, which he discountenanced in every possible way. A ukaz at the time of his coronation prohibited artizans and servants from betting in private houses or taverns. Heads of families or innkeepers were liable to a fine of twenty-five florins for each offender. He forbade playing at cards for money in his own palace ; but the Empress-Dowager continued it at Paulovsky, and allowed her Court and attendants to follow her example. He had a great taste for drawing and archi-

ture, and drew plans for several public buildings which were erected during his reign; but besides music this was his only personal diversion, for he neither hunted, smoked, nor took snuff, and within a very few years, owing to his increased deafness, he ceased to find gratification in the sound of any instrument but a loud brass band. The long solitary walks in which he indulged were perhaps a source of enjoyment as well as necessary to his health. When the Empress did not accompany him he often walked out in plain clothes, without any attendant, three or four leagues into the country and back between twelve and two o'clock, the hours he allowed for exercise, and sometimes met with curious adventures. One day he had exceeded his usual distance, and could not get back by the exact hour he had named. He was a slave to punctuality, a virtue quite unknown in the empire before Paul's reign, so he mounted the first sledge he met, and desired the peasant who drove it to take him to the Imperial palace.* "Yes, my officer," said the man, "I will take you as near as I can. The guards will not let us go up to it." He drove to a little distance from it, near a row of other sledges waiting for hire, and stopped. The Emperor sprang out, and finding he had no money in his pocket, desired the man to wait and he would send him his fare. "Ah no, my officer," said the man; "I have driven many young nobles like you, and they have short memories, and if I once lose sight of them they always forget to pay me!" Alexander questioned him, and heard that the officers of the guards were less addicted than any others to paying their debts, however trifling. "Here is my cloak," he said. "It is worth more than twenty kopecks, though neither new nor handsome. Keep it, and restore it to the person whom I send out with the money."

Ten minutes afterwards a footman came out of the palace and asked which of the drivers had brought the Emperor. They were silent. He inquired which had a cloak to restore. The peasant came forward, and received in exchange for it a

* *Souvenirs de Caulaincourt, Duc de Vicence.* "He is so much an enemy to parade," writes an English traveller in 1804, "that he is frequently seen wrapped up in his regimental cloak, riding about the capital upon a little common drosky. In this manner he has been known to administer to the wants of the poor. It is his wish, if he should be recognised in this state of privacy, that no one should take off their hats."

hundred-rouble-note, which the Emperor had sent to pay for himself and those officers who were still in the driver's debt. The man had never seen so much money in his life. He took it, exclaiming, "Great St. Nicholas!" and drove off at his utmost speed amidst the shouts of his comrades. His grandson still possesses the note, which the driver would never change into silver, and it is probably the last of that value left in the empire. The next morning at his military levée on the parade, when the commanders of the various regiments clustered round him, the Emperor said, "Gentlemen, your regiments are splendidly well kept, but say from me to your officers that yesterday they gave me the humiliation of leaving my cloak as a pledge." All looked astonished. "It is true," he added. "A driver yesterday would not give me credit, 'because, my officer,' he said, 'your comrades often forget to pay me.'"

In 1802 Alexander visited Lithuania and the Polish provinces. He dismounted at a post-house, where his carriage was to change horses, not far from Novgorod, and told his attendants to follow him while he walked on first alone; when as he was proceeding by a river a man drawing a boat to land broke the cable he held, and no longer sustained by the resistance, fell violently to the earth, and was completely stunned. Alexander ran to him, loosened his belt, and supported him in his arms till his surgeon, Dr. Wylic, who travelled with him, came up with the other attendants and administered medical assistance. On a subsequent occasion he was the means of aiding in a more serious accident on a similar journey. It occurred in 1805, and is related in a letter from Mr. Grange to the President of the Royal Humane Society, dated March 24th, 1806: "The Emperor Alexander in one of his journeys through Poland solely by his own perseverance and personal exertions restored to life a peasant of that country who had been drowning a considerable time. This took place between Kovno and Vilna in Lithuania, on the banks of the little river Wilia. The Emperor had ridden on considerably in advance of his attendants, and perceived several persons assembled near the edge of the water, out of which they appeared to be dragging something. He instantly alighted, and approaching the spot, saw it was the body of a man apparently lifeless. Without any other assistance than the ignorant

boors, to whom he was unknown, though his dress indicated a Russian of superior rank, he had him laid on the side of a bank, and proceeded with his own hands to assist in taking off the wet clothes of the apparent corpse and to rub his temples, wrists, &c., which his Majesty continued for a considerable time, using every other means, though destitute of medical advice, likely to restore animation. In the midst of this occupation he was joined by the gentlemen of his suite, among whom were Prince Volkonski, Count Lieven, and Dr. Wylie, his Majesty's head surgeon, who always travels with him, and indeed never quits his Majesty at any time. Their exertions were immediately added to those of the Emperor, and on the doctor's attempt to bleed the patient his Majesty held and rubbed his arm and gave every other assistance in his power. (Dr. Wylie looked round for something to stop the bleeding with and tie up his arm, and the Emperor instantly took out his handkerchief, tore it in pieces, and with his own hands bound the poor fellow's arm with it.) However, that and all other means they could devise proved equally ineffectual, and after above three hours' fruitless attempts to recover him, the doctor declared, to the extreme chagrin of the Emperor, who was by this time becoming very anxious about it, that in his opinion life was quite gone, and it was useless proceeding any further. Fatigued as he was with such continued exertions, the Emperor entreated Dr. Wylie to persevere and make a fresh attempt to bleed him. Though the doctor, as he told me himself, had not the slightest hope of being successful, he proceeded nevertheless to obey, when the whole of them, even the noblemen, making a last effort in rubbing, the Emperor had at length the satisfaction of seeing the blood make its appearance, accompanied by a slight groan. The Emperor exclaimed, 'Thank God, this is the brightest day of my life!' and the tears sprang to his eyes. They remained with the man till they saw him conveyed to a place where he would have proper care, besides giving him a considerable present of money and having since provided for him and his family."

Always anxious to promote public benevolence, Alexander took notice of any one, either Russian or foreign, whom he found to be engaged in the welfare of the lower classes of his subjects. "I met the Emperor," writes an English merchant

of this type, "on the English quay in one of his daily walks, and observed (as I thought) the head of a man clinging to the edge of the ice in the river. The Emperor being short-sighted could not see it, but he instantly ordered two men going for water to hasten to his assistance with the pole they had in their hands for carrying the bucket. They found the man nearly exhausted. They drew him on the ice, and brought him safe to the spot whence the Emperor had sent the timely aid. He gave the two men 500 roubles" (20*l.*)* The English Royal Humane Society gave him a medal, afterwards making him an honorary member of their useful institution, something similar to which he established in Russia, as well as a Philanthropic Society in St. Petersburg.

On Alexander's visit to Russian Poland in 1802 he gratified the people by his ability to speak their language. At Mohilof Michael Oginski thanked him for having been restored to his country after eight years of exile. He returned by way of Memel, where for the first time in his life he crossed the borders of his native land to meet the King and Queen of Prussia, who were making a tour through their dominions. Frederick William III. had succeeded his father in 1797, and was nearly eight years older than Alexander, who was also about two years younger than the Queen. The royal couple were first cousins to each other, and each was individually first cousin to the Empress Elizabeth. They had heard much of Alexander from his sister Helena, one of the Queen's greatest friends, and were mutually anxious to become acquainted, and as Memel contained a large society of merchants, only rescued from impending ruin by the cessation of the continental war, Alexander, who was regarded as the chief author of the peace of Europe, received a most cordial welcome from the people. The streets were crammed with spectators, including many English and foreign sailors, all anxious to catch a sight of the Czar. The Sovereigns dined together in public,

* Memoirs of John Venning, a Russian Merchant. Russia and England were then at war.

On another occasion he promoted a Russian police officer, and presented him with a ring, at the same time cordially thanking him for having plunged into the Neva and rescued a man, who, regardless of the order not to cross till the ice was pronounced safe, had tried to walk over and fallen in.

and two days after their arrival attended a ball, which the Queen, who was extremely fond of dancing, opened with the Emperor. Six days afterwards they parted, Alexander returning to St. Petersburg; and to commemorate the meeting, the streets in which the Sovereigns had lodged were re-named Kaiser Strasse and Louisen Strasse.

It was most unlikely that two princes should have met at that time without discussing to some extent the critical state of Europe, but no political combination arose directly from this visit. Frederick William was a dry, taciturn, narrow-minded, and rather slow-witted man, only anxious to keep aloof from surrounding difficulties; he had resisted the overtures of Austria and Russia to join in the league against France in 1798, and quietly allowed French agents and surveyors to examine all his fortresses and map out his territories. "The King's chief happiness (say those who knew him well) consists in the absence of all trouble," writes the British minister at Berlin,* May 4th, 1803. "His disposition is slothful, he is guided by his fears, and distrusts his own powers." He had none of the high flights of imagination which characterized his Imperial friend. He was no reformer, but adhered with obstinacy to the ancient groove in the civil and military administration marked out by Frederick the Great. He was a more religious man than most of the higher classes of that day, but a bigoted Lutheran. His wife was a complete contrast—lively, highly educated, and one of the most beautiful princesses in Europe. She was benevolent and domestic, though she has been accused of frivolity and love of excitement. The Emperor greatly admired her, and she appears to have been much attracted by him, though not beyond the limits permitted with a relation and the brother of a most intimate friend.

On July 26th (o.s.), 1802, the first two Russian vessels intended to sail round the world, and commanded by Captain Krusenstern and Lieutenant Lizianski, left Cronstadt for the East of Asia, whence they took home three Japanese sailors, wrecked on the coast of Kamschatka, who had since resided at Irkutsk. Some presents were sent to the Tycoon of Japan, and two German naturalists accompanied the expedition, which

* Sir George Jackson.

was supported by a government grant of 250,000 roubles. A few islands were discovered in the Pacific Ocean, and named after the Emperor and other Russian celebrities, and a colony, since abandoned, was settled on the coast of California. At the same time a herring fishery was established on the White Sea, and the trade was greatly increased in the ports on the Euxine. The prosperity of the country was shown by the erection of 500 noblemen's houses in St. Petersburg alone during the year 1804. This city was then declared by all travellers to be the most beautiful in Europe, as Moscow was the largest and most picturesque. Paul planted the Nevskoi Prospekt (the principal street in St. Petersburg) with lime trees, a kind of decoration then quite unknown in the narrow streets of continental cities. London was almost the only town in the world with a smoothly paved foot-road for pedestrians along the side of each of its streets, and Paris consisted of a cluster of monasteries in the present Rue de Rivoli, and dark narrow alleys and thoroughfares, such as are now to be seen in the oldest part of the French capital. The revolutionists had destroyed the monuments of the Bourbons, not yet replaced by those of the Empire; and the Italian cities had suffered severely from the ravages of recent wars.

The Foundling Hospital in Moscow contained the largest school for children in the world, and Paul established another at St. Petersburg, and bought two noblemen's palaces for the purpose. The same Sovereign left two unfinished cathedrals; St. Isaac, begun by Catherine II., and the Church of Our Lady of Kazan, founded in 1799. Alexander paid for their completion, and set aside a special tax for the maintenance of the asylums and schools.

The means of secular education were at that time at the lowest ebb in Russia: there were schools attached to the monasteries for the clergy, but these were impoverished when Catherine seized the Church revenues, and were fast declining, and the military schools founded by Alexander's predecessors were not more than enough to supply officers for only the guards. The Sovereign took up the subject with a zeal which entirely ignored the danger of educating the lower classes, an idea commonly held at that day. He divided the whole empire in 1802 into six divisions, each of which was to

possess one university; and as at that time only three, those of Vilna, Moscow, and Kief, existed, four were successively opened at Dorpat, Kharkov, Kazan, and St. Petersburg. There had once been an old Swedish university at Dorpat, but all the students and professors retreated to Stockholm during the war between Peter and Charles XII. When Alexander restored it in 1802 he assigned to it a sufficient revenue to procure the services of learned foreigners as lecturers and professors, and also to found museums and travelling fellowships, and send out its members on scientific expeditions and discoveries.

According to the new organization dividing Russia into six districts, each of these districts was composed of several governments, and each government was divided into compartments. Every chief seat of a government was to have a gymnasium or college, and every chief town of a compartment a village school; while the principal villages were supplied with parochial schools, in which the teachers were often the village priests. Two thousand of these schools were founded at that time, and notwithstanding much opposition, an English writer in 1826* states that most of them continued to exist. The direction of all matters connected with public education was committed in each division to a board composed of professors of the university presided over by the rector, who was elected by the professors from among themselves; and in each government it was intrusted to a board formed of the masters of the different schools. At St. Petersburg a council was created for the general management of educational affairs, consisting of the curators of the universities, and this was under the control of the Minister of Public Instruction. To encourage the Russian youth to devote themselves to study, the different degrees of the learned hierarchy were entitled to certain privileges; that, for instance, of doctor of any of the faculties was assimilated to a rank which conferred hereditary nobility.

Count Romanzov, a son of the eminent field-marshal, and related to Peter the Great, was one of the few noblemen who supported Alexander's educational projects. As President of

* See the article on Russian Literature in the first volume of the Foreign Quarterly Review.

the Board of Commerce he also promoted improvements in the internal and foreign trade of Russia; but his views were always strongly biassed by a partiality for the French nation, though not for the Legitimists, to whom he was accredited at Coblenz; and in 1812 he was perhaps the most unpopular man in the empire. Under his protégé, the Duc de Richelieu, the new schools for both rich and poor in Odessa especially flourished, and there the Abbé Nicolle* was placed at the head of the Lyceum, or college for the nobility, and numbered among his pupils the distinguished names of Narishkin, Gagarine, Galitzin, Menzikof, and Orlof.

Alexander opened the Imperial Lyceum at Czarco-Selo in the year 1804, for the sons of the nobility, and he always took great personal interest in its prosperity, and frequently attended the annual ceremony, at which the pupils read aloud their prize compositions and received degrees of merit. The academy was lodged in a wing of the palace, and the education embraced every branch of literature and science commonly taught, and was intended to enable them to enter any profession or government office. Among its students in the founder's lifetime was the future poet Pushkin, and the eminent statesman Prince Gortchakof. "It was not possible," says a writer in 1826, "that such exertions could be made for any length of time without producing corresponding good effects, and we have seen that the sciences have of late flourished very much in Russia."† The university of Dorpat particularly has sent forth many scientific men, whose discoveries with regard to the mineral produce of the empire have been of much benefit to the State. Thirty years after its re-erection it supported forty professors, and contained 600 students, and one of its members, M. Parrot, accomplished the first recorded ascent of Mount Ararat.‡

There were many native prejudices and popular superstitions to overcome before medical science could make much way in Russia, and it is doubtful whether the importation of foreign

* He came to Russia with the children of M. Choiseul Gouffier, a French ambassador, released through Paul's influence from the prison of the Seven Towers in Constantinople.

† Russian Literature, in *Foreign Quarterly Review*, vol. i.

‡ Like other Russian universities, it temporarily suffered from the blighting policy of the Emperor Nicholas in 1848.

physicians did not produce more harm than good at that time, from the extreme lengths to which they carried bleeding and other lowering modes of cure. Low fevers, ague, and nervous disorders were very prevalent in Russia, yet in all these cases the foreign doctors applied leeches, the lancet, and cathartics without distinction, and without any fear that it was the proper mode of treatment. Peter the Great established at Moscow what Voltaire asserts was the best pharmaceutical establishment in Europe, yet in the reign of Catherine II. there was little or no provision for the wounded or sick soldier in a campaign: he generally died where he fell; and in the provinces a charm blessed by the priest was the only remedy sought for in illness. Foreign medical men were often attached to the houses of the nobility, and three Scotchmen, Sir Alexander Crichton, Dr. Leighton, and Sir James Wylie, afterwards became chiefs of the Civil, Naval, and Military Medical Departments. Paul established in every government a *uprava*, or medical staff, consisting of an inspector, an operator, and a surgeon exclusively for women; and Alexander placed a surgeon in every district in every government. "No Sovereign ever did so much for medicine as Alexander," says De Maistre. All the surgeons were subject to the *upravas*, and Dr. Lyell, by no means partial to Russia, asserts in 1824, that "though in many places there may still be a deficiency of medical men, this is not the fault of government, but is to be attributed to the widely spread population. Besides, all the army practitioners regularly exercise their talents in the vicinity of their stations, and often make considerable sums of money from this incidental practice."*

Wylie was the son of obscure Scotch parents, and educated at the university of Edinburgh. He came a mere boy to seek his fortune in Russia, and resided successively in the families of two Russian noblemen, and occasionally attended at the Court in Catherine's reign; but an accident brought him under the notice of Paul, whose valet, Kutaisof, he cured of an abscess in the throat, which threatened suffocation. The Emperor rewarded him with the post of physician to the heir-apparent; and four years later he was called upon to embalm Paul's body, after assisting at his murder. Though constantly with Alex-

* Lyell's Travels in Russia.

ander in the early part of his reign, he was often detached to serve in the army when Russia was at war, and to establish military hospitals on the field. He was a tall, powerful man, six feet two in height, and after a long residence in Russia, completely lost his mother tongue. De Maistre asserts that his mode of practice was very severe, and that "he would propose to cut off a man's head to cure a headache." He tells a story of his attendance on a young German officer who wounded himself mortally in attempting to commit suicide from some love affair or debt. "Dr. Wylie, his Majesty's surgeon, a man of great skill,* but hard as his tools, an anatomist, that is to say, *découpeur*, in all the force of the term. By the side of the dying man, who heard him, he said to some young officers: 'Gentlemen, when you wish to kill yourselves, remember and fire into the mouth. You will save me the trouble of coming to see you.'"[†]

Even in 1825 an English physician settled at Moscow for twenty-two years told Dr. Lee that the Russian nobility were mere spoiled children, persons full of absurd prejudices; and of the lower classes, that the physician should constantly be accompanied with the knout, otherwise his orders will receive no attention. This kind of ignorance, however, is by no means confined to Russia.[‡]

The so-called coterie of young wits who formed Alexander's most intimate society when he first came to the throne, brought his reforms into disrepute by the imprudence with which they talked in St. Petersburg, wounding the feelings of the older statesmen by calling the reigns of Catherine II. and Paul a "time of barbarism," and they soon became objects of calumny and suspicion. They constantly spent the evening with the Emperor and Empress, forming what they designated as "the circle," in which they discussed public affairs; but towards the end of the year 1804 the diplomatic gossip asserted that they, or at least Czartoriski, had more influence with the Empress than with Alexander. "Nothing is more fatal to empires or to republics," says Lamartine, speaking of Czartoriski, "than these ill-naturalized foreigners, either by conquest or by the favour of a nation introduced into the councils of

* Particularly in lithotomy. † De Maistre's Correspondance Diplomatique

‡ Dr. Lee's Journal kept in Russia.

princes. The policy of an emigrant is always a policy of chimeras. Good sense is forgotten in the dreams for their country." Czartoriski favoured alliances only with a view to Poland, and Baron Grimm affirms that he was the cause of Alexander's unpopularity in 1805.*

On the 5th of June, 1801, the Emperor desired the Senate to propose a scheme for its own reorganization, but it neglected to do so; and in September, 1802, he published two ukazes in which he defined its duties and rights. It was constituted the highest court of appeal in civil and military causes, but its chief function was to promote the observance of the laws in all parts of the empire. The number of senators was not limited, and the board was divided into eleven parts: six held their sittings in St. Petersburg, three in Moscow, and two in Vilna. The Emperor was also President of the Senate, and possessed the right of annulling any decision of either the Council of the Empire or of the Senate. The Holy Governing Synod, which regulated the ecclesiastical affairs of the empire, was equal with the Senate, and at its sittings the Emperor was represented by the first procurator, who is always a privy councillor. Till the reign of Paul the word minister was unknown in Russia, those answering to that term being styled the Chief or President of the College of Commerce, the Chief of the College for Foreign Affairs, &c., with beneath them an unlimited supply of secretaries and clerks. Paul established one minister, and on September 8th Alexander abolished the old colleges, which were generally receptacles of idleness and fraud, and nominated eight ministerial boards in their place. General Voronzov was made Minister of Foreign Affairs, and shortly afterwards Czartoriski was appointed as his coadjutor. The department of Justice was given to the poet Derjarvin. Kotchoubey, Alexander's earliest and wisest friend, who accompanied Catherine on her celebrated tour to the Crimea in 1786, was appointed the new Minister of the Interior, with Paul Strogonof as his assistant, and he selected Speranski for his secretary. Vassilief was made Minister of Finance, with Gourief as his assistant; Count Romanzov of Commerce, and Count Zavadovsky of Public Education, with Muravief as his

* Life of Alexander Federovna.

assistant; Admiral Mordvenof of Marine, but soon succeeded by Admiral Tchichegof; General Viasmatinof of War. It was some time before they all fitted into their new duties; and they were inclined to treat their offices as private estates, in which each was to act independently without any reference to his colleagues or to the Privy Council and the Senate. There was also a deficiency of upright statesmen to fill the newly created offices, as there was a deficiency of educated tutors to supply the newly established schools. The ministers had yet to learn that like those below them they were equally subject to the law, and could not break it with impunity. It was their mutual jealousies, and disposition to trample on the ordinances they were called upon to protect, which proved that a real constitutional government would be still premature in Russia. In a ukaz of August 20th, 1802, Alexander complains of the nobles and citizens avoiding all public employment. "We hear," he says, "that the first among the nobility and citizens avoid appearing at the elections (for municipal and local judges), and consequently estrange themselves from all public offices. From this it naturally results that the distribution of justice will fall into the hands of persons who offer no guarantee," &c. In fact, those who sought to fill these offices were the poorest and most ignorant, only anxious to maintain themselves by illicit profits.

Alexander had carefully studied the judicial system of England, and tried to establish an arrangement like that of the county justices of the peace. His penal code was certainly the mildest in Europe, for in England a man was still liable to be hanged for all cases of petty theft without violence; the pillory was not abolished; the rebels in Ireland were put to the torture—for it was nothing less when they were flogged while hanging by one wrist to a gallows, with a spike as the only support for their naked feet; and the horrible punishment for high treason in a commoner still remained on the statute books of Great Britain, while a man was condemned to lose his hand who raised it against another in the presence of the King. At Munster, in Prussia, a criminal was broken on the wheel so late as the year 1826. The climate of Siberia, of which the name used to cause a shudder throughout Europe, is far more healthy than British India, and criminals

sent there survived to extreme old age ; yet banishment to Siberia was the most dreaded Russian punishment. Twenty-five strokes with the knout (which was generally fatal) was the utmost given in cases of aggravated murder : the victim was permitted to stupefy himself with opium or spirits ; and was attended beforehand and accompanied to the place of execution by a priest, who supported his failing courage and repeated prayers for his soul. The penal code was considered too mild, and increased in severity under Nicholas ; but Alexander's leniency had a good effect on the provincial governors, who were proportionately more merciful, as under a cruel or capricious despot they are always inclined to be more hard. A few nobles responded to his wishes for the emancipation of the serfs. A nobleman in Voronesch in 1803 purchased an estate containing 10,000 serfs from Prince Trubczkoi, and promised to place it in their hands when they should repay the purchase-money. The grateful peasants addressed their thanks to the Emperor for passing the law which enabled them to be free.

But in the midst of his cares for the internal condition of the country, Alexander's attention was constantly turned to the threatening state of Europe. His brother-in-law of Sweden was the first who ventured to disturb his peace, by endeavouring to advance his frontier on the side of Finland, and openly declaring his intention to obtain the restoration of Russian-Finland, which included part of St. Petersburg, and had now long formed an integral portion of the empire. Alexander promptly despatched a regiment to that quarter, and the Swedes retired ; but in November, 1802, Gustavus caused his son to be christened Duke of Finland, to show he had not abandoned the idea. "Russia and Sweden," writes Lord Malmesbury, "are near a quarrel about a bridge on the river Vymene, on the frontier of Finland. It may end by Russia taking all the rest of that country from the Swedes." Again, September 25th, 1804, Sir George Jackson writes from Berlin : "The coolness between Russia and Sweden is a remnant of the animosity which the discussions respecting the frontiers in Finland gave rise to. The proceedings of the King were generally thought to be ill advised, and Count Voronzov conceived so much personal

enmity towards him, that but for the Emperor's forbearance and his consideration of the closeness of their family connection, the opportunity would have been seized of taking possession of Finland. The King's long absence from his dominions and his residence at Munich and Carlsruhe have been unfavourably looked upon at St. Petersburg. But the anxious wish of the King to take a conspicuous part against France has not met with the consideration to which he thinks it entitled; his overtures on the subject have been answered by a recommendation from the Emperor to return to Stockholm."

Gustavus was nearly the same age as Alexander, but too weak and vain to mix himself in the troubled sea of Europe. In the year 1803 he seemed anxious to form an alliance with France, and remained nearly two years from his own kingdom, amusing himself at the Courts of his wife's grandfather and brother-in-law,* both of whom had bowed to the dictates of the Republic. Without real military talent, or even common courage, his one idea was to follow in the footsteps of his ancestors, Charles XII. and Gustavus, and play a conspicuous part as an arbitrator in the affairs of the Continent, and to effect this end he was willing to take either side as an ally. Alexander had seen enough of him at St. Petersburg to place no confidence in his consistency, and had moreover been deeply offended by his conduct in former days; but Gustavus was utterly regardless of this circumstance, and continued to provoke his powerful relative. Among other puerile efforts to annoy him, a cast of the head of a well-known Swedish murderer was placed in the Museum at Stockholm, with the statement that it was the head of the Emperor Paul. But in 1802 Alexander was sincerely desirous to maintain peace, even at the price of a valuable acquisition of territory which he might have gained by a Swedish war. His army was below the usual standard for the sake of relieving the finances, and the economy of his government and the increase of the Russian commerce seemed likely to restore the national credit at no very distant date. He hoped by a union with the other Powers of Europe to establish the principles of universal peace

* The Elector of Bavaria, who married a sister of the Queen of Sweden and Empress of Russia.

to the end of time; and though this idea was derided by English politicians, there is little doubt he was perfectly justified in believing that if three of the great Powers honestly joined together and insisted upon peace, peace would be maintained. Napoleon at St. Helena acknowledged that his own policy had always been to separate the alliance between two of the great Powers, for that if they had acted cordially in concert and together, he must have been checked at the very outset. If the Prussians had waited till the Russians joined them before the battle of Jena, we have his own authority for asserting that it would have been a victory for the Allies. If Austria had not advanced in 1805 till the Russians were only within a few days' march, and had then not been more afraid of her ally than her enemy, the efforts of the two armies might have been crowned with signal success. At Marengo whole battalions of the Austrians threw down their arms before they had fired a shot because their favourite general was deprived of his command, and after Wagram, the Archduchess Anthony of Austria openly rejoiced in the public theatre, saying that the sooner the Austrians were defeated the sooner there would be peace. With such divided sentiments a general of inferior ability might have conquered a nation when he commanded the finest troops of France. But though in this instance Alexander showed more foresight than the oldest politicians in Europe, his proposals were received in England with something like disdain. In April, 1802, "Count Voronzov complains much," says the Malmesbury Correspondence, "of the inattention of the English Government at the Foreign Office. An offer he had made officially in the Emperor's name, and which he conveyed by sending Lord Hawkesbury a copy of the Emperor's letter, was left without any answer from March 27th," and Lord Hawkesbury had altogether behaved with great want of courtesy towards the ambassador. This nobleman, who was brother to the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, went to St. Petersburg in the course of the year with the intention of accepting an office in the Imperial Cabinet; but his personal dislike of the young ministers who surrounded the Emperor, as well as of the older political veterans who shared his confidence, induced him to return to his former diplomatic post,

and he continued to reside in London for the rest of his life.

In the summer of 1802 the King's nephew, Prince William of Gloucester, paid a visit to the Court of Russia. The Peace of Amiens was signed between France and England March 27th, 1802. Pitt is said by his intimate friends to have regarded it only as a truce, but England acknowledged the Consular Government, the independence of Malta, and the Republic of the Seven Isles, and required an adequate compensation for the House of Orange, displaced by the Dutch in favour of a republic like France, while she retained for herself the important acquisitions of the islands of Trinidad and Ceylon. Napoleon and the other heroes of the French Directory had no more enthusiastic admirers than the Liberal party in Great Britain, headed by the brilliant leader of the Opposition, Mr. Fox. This party was supported by the Prince of Wales, a man of forty, supposed to be fixed in his political creed, and not likely to change it when the time arrived for him to ascend the throne, and the infirmities and increasing childishness of the aged King seemed to render it highly probable that this time was not far distant. In view of such a contingency, England was not regarded by the other Powers as a very secure ally. While the Liberals in both Houses of Parliament urged upon the country the necessity and policy of a permanent peace with France, while the London mob showed the prevalent feeling of the Democrats by drawing the carriage of the French ambassador into Westminster under the belief that he was a brother of the First Consul, and the Liberal publications boasted of the French exploits as if they had been achieved by their own party, and cried down or affected to disbelieve any success on the part of the enemies of France—England might in vain attempt to form a general league to oppose Napoleon's aggressive policy, for it was supposed that a defeat of the Ministry, or the total imbecility of a Sovereign of sixty-two, might at any moment transfer the effective forces of Great Britain from the side of their allies to those of the common foe. Party spirit ran so high in England that a Tory was hardly on speaking terms with a Democrat or follower of Mr. Fox; and this divided state of feeling was not peculiar to Great Britain, but was quite as great in Italy, Germany, and

Prussia, and prevailed to some extent in Austria and even in Russia. In Austria the Emperor Francis was a dull, not unamiable character, whose chief amusement was catching butterflies and reading the letters stopped by the officials in the post-office. He was ruled by each of his four wives in succession, but had little real influence over the affairs of his empire, which had long been a bureaucratic government, for which the ministers were supplied from the noble families in his dominions. These, educated by French tutors, were biassed in favour of France, and comprised the landed interest of the country, which thought the aggrandizement of France less formidable in the future than the nearer approach of the frontiers of Russia. They looked upon the French Empire as a useful and almost necessary counterpoise to their gigantic neighbour; and if France had not opposed the Austrian interest in Italy, which to the aristocracy of Vienna was a sort of Promised Land, they would willingly have conceded much in her favour, and, as they repeatedly showed by their conduct, would have early formed an offensive and defensive alliance.

The mutual jealousies of the Continent never offered a more splendid scope for French ambition than in the beginning of the present century, and, as Napoleon said, 500 years might elapse before another such opportunity appeared. Even those in favour of aristocracy and legitimacy were inclined to hail his assumption of Imperial power as the deathblow to republicanism, which during many years had menaced the internal peace of the whole Continent. They saw in it a return to law and order in France, which they conjectured could only be kept in hand by a strong personal government; but this was exactly what Napoleon found himself unable to accomplish. He had risen as a military leader of the armies of the Republic, and the enormous force he maintained for the sake of keeping a hold on the young men of the country, the promoters of revolutions, required employment to retain it in subordination, and that employment was only obtained at the expense of Europe. He was probably led by circumstances rather than the author of them; and after fifteen years of excitement it would have required a more devoted and disinterested ruler to have induced the Democrats to live under a peaceful government, when they saw constantly before their eyes the spectacle

of men who had raised themselves by means of the Revolution to rank and importance, and considered that a second revolution might end by conferring the same honours upon them. An attempt on the life of the First Consul in 1801 furnished him with a pretext for putting eighteen of these unruly spirits to death and sending 200 to die on the pestilential shores of Cayenne. The following year he took an important step in the restoration of political order by concluding a Concordat with the Pope, and proclaiming that the Christian religion was re-established throughout the French territory. No measure that he passed was ever more opposed. A generation had grown up ignorant of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, which had been almost extirpated by the leaders of the Revolution, who affirmed there was no Deity, and tried to set up an idol in Notre Dame. The First Consul attended a grand religious ceremony in the old cathedral to celebrate the reconciliation with Religion, though his aides-de-camp could hardly be induced to look in at the door, for they identified all Church services with tyranny and a monarchy, and thought they saw in this measure a stepping-stone to both. Alexander and the King of Prussia publicly expressed their satisfaction when they heard that France had again asserted her claim to be called "the eldest son of the Church," and the Emperor of Austria styled it "a service truly rendered to all Europe."

The philosophical tenets of the eighteenth century, and the power which the Protestant and Greek Catholic sovereignties had acquired in Europe, had lowered the Papal dignity to a degree from which it has risen considerably during the last fifty years. "Nothing," writes an English diplomatist in 1768, "proves the vicissitudes of things more than to see the Pope's Nuncio wait an hour and a half in the Russian ambassador's antechamber (in Warsaw), and that merely to compliment him on the Empress's birthday. This actually happened December 5th, 1767." The Papal thunders had been launched innocuously on her recreant sons, and the Vatican had viewed with horror, without the power of interference, the long years of spiritual disorder which prevailed in France. Marriage had become a civil and not a religious contract, and was almost as easily set aside as in the Oriental atmosphere of Poland. The Roman Catholic religion has always been willing to smooth

obstacles and widen the road for a return to her communion, and in more than one Eastern branch of the Church she has conceded questions of discipline and even doctrine to facilitate the gathering of doubting sons into the fold. The Pope was not inclined to be strict, or to require any expiatory penance on the part of France, but received her, still stained with the blood of the Legitimists and ecclesiastics and enriched with the spoils of the churches and monasteries, with open arms. The first proof of filial reverence paid to him for years past had come from the most unexpected quarter. The prodigal son had thrown himself down at his father's feet, and though arriving rich instead of poor, renowned and feared instead of reduced to beg, had declared his repentance for his former sins and asked to be taken back and received once more in the paternal home. The strayed sheep which had been wandering in the wilderness had at last been found. It was not terror, but a real sense of approbation of the champion who had risen up in the cause of the persecuted Church, that induced the Pope in November, 1804, to take the journey from Italy to Fontainebleau to assist at the ceremony of coronation, for Napoleon the previous May had assumed the style and title of Emperor. The Republicans began to thirst for the regal pomp which has always been dear to the French heart, and their votes were almost unanimous on the subject of the hereditary succession of Napoleon's family, for they longed to display in the new Imperial Court the airs and rich costumes they had envied under the Bourbon dynasty.

The coronation was a curious mixture of the service used for the King of France at Rheims and that observed by Caulaincourt at the consecration of the Emperor of Russia; and from the last Napoleon borrowed the act of placing the crown upon his own head and afterwards crowning the Empress. The titles and etiquette under the new régime presented the same intermingling of the fashions of every country in Europe, and he took lessons in Imperial attitudes from his old friend the actor Talma, inhaled snuff in enormous quantities to resemble Frederick the Great, and, according to Madame de Staël, imitated even the Bourbon personal tricks. "Whoever," she says, "could suggest an additional piece of formality from the olden time, propose an additional reverence, a new mode of

knocking at the door of an antechamber, a more ceremonious method of presenting a petition or folding a letter, was received as if he had been the benefactor of the human race." "There was never seen elsewhere than at Napoleon's Court," says Madame de Genlis, "that confusion of etiquette which showed every foreigner some of the usages of his own country, for the royal customs and ceremonies of other Courts were adopted indiscriminately, though the language and manners of some of the great personages of this Court presented the most singular contrast with its dazzling magnificence." Napoleon's family were created Imperial Highnesses, and he delighted to speak of them by their titles, even in writing of one to another. His mother received that of Madame la Mère, but he inaugurated so stiff an etiquette that she was not allowed to sit down without permission in his presence. He had long complained of the council called the Tribunate, saying they wished to attack him like Louis XVI., and "were mere vermin only fit to be thrown into the Seine," because in 1802 they objected to the expression "subjects of France" in the treaty with Russia, as they were citizens, not subjects; and he took the first opportunity to suppress them. The Senate was permitted to continue its existence till the last days of the Empire, but it had little real power. The government was in fact a thorough despotism, conducted by Napoleon when he was in France, and by Maret, Due de Bassano, or Cambacères when he was engaged in a foreign war; for he did not attempt to unite the powers of a civil and military Sovereign, but returned to his legislative functions when the campaign was ended and he found himself again in Paris.

But long before his coronation (December 2nd, 1804) the short peace with England had come to an end, and the two great Western Powers of Europe were again at war. It was most wounding to the pride of the British nation that after such long and glorious efforts a treaty was concluded not entirely obtaining the original objects of the strife, and both sides betrayed a mistrust of the other, and a slowness in carrying out the measures to which both had agreed. Napoleon usually tried to overreach the other party in a transaction, and was apt to suspect every one else of doing the same; but this time he really seems to have desired to remain

at peace with England; and when Mr. Fox was presented at the Tuileries on a visit to France in 1802, he began to talk of the separation of Europe into two sections, and of the great Western family which was to give peace to the world. He also encouraged the return of the emigrant aristocracy with the offer of restoring their confiscated estates; but this measure was never fully carried out, either because he found he was unable to effect it on account of the lands having passed into other families, or was afraid to strengthen a party which still mourned for its legitimate monarchs.

The causes of the recommencement of hostilities were the English retaining their garrisons in Malta and Egypt, in consequence of a suspicious mission of General Sebastiani to Syria, and the free comments passed on Napoleon's conduct in the English newspapers, which he made the subject of a grave remonstrance, with the request that the British Government would curb the liberty of the press, and also banish the French refugees. The British Cabinet answered with great courtesy, but of course declined to concede his demand, and in two subsequent levées he assailed Lord Whitworth, the English ambassador, with the utmost rudeness. War was again declared by the British Government on the 16th, and by the French on the 24th of May, 1803, when, imitating the example of his ally Paul, and even going further, Napoleon seized on all the English travellers who were at that moment found in France, and most of them remained in captivity for eleven years. The attempt on his life seemed to have filled his head with ideas of conspiracy and assassination, and for a long time nothing could convince him that the English did not keep murderers in France in their pay. An imprisoned English officer, Captain Wright,* was put to the torture, and it is believed privately murdered, merely to make him confess the identity of these imaginary conspirators. It was a dread that came over Napoleon on several occasions in the course of his reign, and he thought all means justifiable to prevent his own assassination. Caulaincourt says he feared the fate of Paul, which at the time had made such a strong impression

* Secret History of Bonaparte, by Lewis Goldsmith.

upon him, and he never took more precautions than when in the company of Russians, or when he met the Emperor Alexander at Tilsit and at Erfurt (1807-8). His old companion in arms, General Moreau, who had been first offered the Dictatorship of France but declined it, being too honourable a man to trespass on the liberties of the Republic, was banished from France, and General Pichegru found dead* in prison, while many others of inferior rank were transported to Cayenne or put to death. Yet the French were so eager for a settled government, that after Joubert (killed at Novi) and Moreau had been proposed as Dictators, and the Prussian Prince Louis (killed at Jena) had actually been suggested by the Abbé Sièyes as a successor to the Bourbon throne, they gladly received the First Consul as their hereditary Emperor, and viewed with less than indifference the violent measures he took to maintain his crown and life. The Republicans saw in a strong and unopposed monarchy their newly-acquired possessions and rank secured to them, for they dreaded above all the return of a Bourbon to avenge perhaps the death of Louis XVI. and restore the ecclesiastical estates now distributed among the people to their old proprietors. The shopkeepers hoped for the lavish expenditure entailed by a Court; all classes needed excitement, and since the Concordat the clergy warmly embraced the cause of the new Empire. The French had long been unacquainted with royalty or aristocracy, except as caricatured on the boards of a stage, so that the charlatany of the Tuileries appeared to them both effective and grand. It was only the superior men among them who could see the incongruity of the coarse manners of a barrack joined to the high-sounding titles and regal sceptre of a country which had once thought itself the most refined in Europe. The immorality of Napoleon's Court was not less than that of Louis XIV., without the false polish and smooth exterior by which the faults of Versailles had been in some measure concealed from the public eye. Yet Napoleon yielded to none in conciliatory and flattering language when he thought it would be more likely to please, and when he came in contact with persons of a higher cultivation than himself,

* There is now no doubt that Pichegru was privately murdered.

though he had learned by experience that rough, and even brutal, words and deportment were the most likely to awe into submission the military mob who had assisted to raise him to the throne. To judge by the revelations of his most attached dependents, the frequenters of the Tuileries put up with as many insults and as much personal violence as had ever been offered to the courtiers of the Emperor Paul; but with the new French aristocracy an existence as the hangers-on of a court had the charm of novelty, and they prided themselves rather than otherwise on this base treatment.

A year before Napoleon was proclaimed Emperor, he sent an emissary to Warsaw (then part of Prussian Poland), where Louis XVIII. had resided since his expulsion from Mittau, and tried to purchase the surrender of the Bourbon claims. The King of Prussia, Napoleon's warm ally, despatched a rough message to his unfortunate visitor, urging the necessity of compliance, and desiring his commissioners to point out his probable sufferings and penury if he refused. Louis answered with much dignity, acknowledging Napoleon's services to France, but declining to relinquish his hopes of the throne. The residence of the Bourbons was consequently rendered most unpleasant, and even dangerous, in Prussia, for the police declined to interfere in an attempt to poison Louis through some French agents; and although he supported this insult without complaint, Frederick William, at Napoleon's request, ordered him to leave Prussia. When Alexander first came to the throne he offered to renew a portion of his father's pension to the Bourbons, and again placed the castle of Mittau at their disposal; but while they gladly accepted the money, they preferred to remain at Warsaw. Now, however, they were forced to ask for his protection, which was at once bestowed, and Louis left immediately for Mittau. The weather was so cold that his wife and niece passed the winter at Warsaw, and did not join him in Russia till April, 1805.

Alexander was too strong to fear offending France, but he was not the less anxious to preserve the peace of Europe; and he offered his mediation to adjust the new dispute between the Consulate and Great Britain in 1803. He could

hardly believe that so small an island as Malta was the real object of the contest ; and upon his interference being suggested, he said that for this reason it would be of no use, till he heard that Great Britain declined to accept Napoleon's offer to allow Malta to be given up to Russia, Prussia, or Austria, on the ground that Russia, the only power independent of France, had positively refused to be a party to any such arrangement. The communication to the British Government, signifying his willingness to act as mediator, was dated May 24th, and was not delivered by his Ambassador till all diplomatic relations between France and England had ceased by the declaration of war, May 16th. On his own part he addressed a note to Bonaparte with reference to the French scheme of separating Syria and Egypt from Turkey. "The long despatch," says Lord Malmesbury,* "written by Voronzov (the Russian Minister of Foreign affairs in January, 1803), was quite a political sermon, full of good advice, and even admonition, to Bonaparte, well written, strong and ingenious, and expressing in distinct terms, that if any attempt is made by France on the Turkish Empire, the Emperor will be obliged to intervene actively." Lord Malmesbury complains at the same time that the English are acting foolishly, and not in concert with Russia, either from want of communication or from carelessness and inability. Again he writes, May 18th, 1803, that "it is evident from what Voronzov (the Ambassador) says, his court is unfavourable to us, and gained over by France, through Czartoriski and the Empress."

On May 27th, 1803, Fox urged on the British Government to avail itself of the goodwill of the Emperor of Russia to conclude a peace. He observed that no Power in Europe had a greater right to prescribe peace. Lord Hawkesbury replied, the Government had always wished for peace, but the only method of effecting this was on a broad and liberal basis. ("Hear, hear," by Pitt.) He agreed that Russia was the only Power likely to arrest French ambition, but he opposed the principle, on the ground that it was calculated "to unhinge the public mind." The Czar proposed that Malta should be declared neutral in all future wars, its independence guaranteed by the Powers of Europe, the Grand Master reinstated,

* Malmesbury Correspondence (second series).

the Order to remain as it was before the war, and Malta to be under the immediate protection of Naples. He also protested, through his organ, the *Hamburg Correspondenten*, against the recent French occupation of Hanover, as a violation of the Treaty, and of the rights of the German Empire; and also, through Count Markof, against the French occupation of Naples. He therefore acted with strict impartiality between the two belligerents, but, like most neutrals, was suspected by each of a secret understanding with the other side. The Tory Ministers supposed that France was tempting both Russia and Austria with offers of a partition of Turkey. Addington, Lord Hawkesbury, and the other members of the Cabinet knew nothing, and cared less, about the internal reforms in Russia, or the need she had for repose and time to develop her resources, already greatly overtaxed. They only saw the extent she occupied on the map of Europe. They had Malta within their grasp, and were determined to keep it, even if its possession entailed another war. "I know nothing so revolting as the English policy," writes Rostopchine to General Zizianof. The British Cabinet was indignant at Russia not joining them at once against France, though the quarrels of the two Western Powers need not have affected her in any single interest. "Alexander means well, but is weak and philanthropical,"* writes one of its angry politicians. Was philanthropy so ordinary a virtue in a Russian autocrat, or, indeed, in any occupant of a European throne, that it was to be stigmatized as weakness? or was it a matter of such indifference to humanity that a philanthropist should rule over a seventh portion of the globe? Was it a reason for embroiling all Eastern Europe, that England might be permitted to annex a small island unopposed? Yet the Continent was called upon to drive France to death, no matter what more formidable people might rise upon her wreck. She must be hunted down, even if it brought ruin on her pursuers. But after appealing to Russia in this strain for years, the English ministers began to fear her more than the enemy, when she was England's most active ally, and followed a very dubious policy respecting her.† Napoleon only imitated the

* Malmesbury Correspondence.

† In the secret treaty between France, Austria, and Great Britain, at the Congress of Vienna, 1814.

example of Great Britain when, by inaugurating the continental system, he endeavoured to bring every country in Europe to contribute to her fall. At this time he thought the Czar was England's secret ally. He was greatly irritated by the debate in the Houses of Parliament on the question of accepting Alexander's mediation. He went up to Count Markof, at a levée at the Tuileries, June 5th, 1803, and said to him, "I know Count Voronzov is not favourable to the French; he loves the English, and has not done his best to prevent war. If the intentions of the Emperor are good, he is very ill served. There is something double in this, and if Count Voronzov had chosen, he might have controlled England. The Emperor's conduct is most vague with regard to France." The old courtier and favourite of Catherine II. would not brook such language from the First Consul of France without a reply. He sent a written answer through Talleyrand, declaring that, as to the first point, Voronzov had always acted impartially. As to the second, it is a most ungrounded reflection to suppose his Imperial Majesty's ministers ever acted contrary to his instructions. These were such as became him to give, and were based on a principle of justice and equity, as became a great Sovereign who had nothing to hope or fear. As to the third, it was an accusation requiring an explanation; for to insinuate that his Imperial Majesty's conduct was one of duplicity was a charge every act of his reign disproved; it had been invariably the same from the first moment, and would remain so. As to the fourth point, to call his Majesty's conduct vague towards France was equally groundless. The Emperor desires to cultivate and maintain friendship with the First Consul. To acquire this he has acted, and ever will act, frankly and equitably; but he is too great a Sovereign to solicit a favour. If he joined with France in the German politics, it was because he thought the general interests of Europe were benefited by what he did; and as to any separate interest, it never had made part of this system, nor would of any other. Markof ended his remonstrance by saying, he trusted he should have some explanation, and be told why subjects were brought into discussion in a public circle, which ought only to be treated in the calm of a cabinet. He intimated that he suspected some jealous stranger had been meddling

in the matter, and indirectly pointed out the Prussian Ambassador, Lucchesini.

On June 14th, 1803, the Malmesbury Correspondence states, "The Emperor of Russia is going into Livonia, taking Count Kotchubey with him, a right-thinking, honest man." Czartoriski is affirmed to be the favourite of the Empress.*

Lord Whitworth said Napoleon had two distinct phases of manner—one reserved for occasions of ceremony and state, and his ordinary deportment, which not unfrequently showed itself in public when thrown off his guard. Then his language was coarse and vulgar; he had an Italian accent, and wrote French in an uneducated style. He again spoke very rudely to Count Markof at a levée,† and turning to a general officer standing near, said, "Were you in the army of Massena when we beat the Russians at Zurich?" Markof shrugged his shoulders and withdrew.

In July, 1803, a Russian fleet sailed to protect the Sound, on the representation of Sir J. B. Warren that it was menaced by France, and an English fleet would otherwise be sent there. Bonaparte had obtained the most extraordinary influence over the King of Prussia, partly through the Prussian Minister Lombard, whom he had met in Holland, and it was even asserted by the same indirect means he had employed to work upon the wavering mind of the Emperor Paul.‡ A French actress was installed in the household of the old Duke of Brunswick, the Commander-in-Chief of the Prussian army; and Cobentzel, the Austrian Ambassador in Paris, was a Frenchman by education, and devoted to the interests of France. Kurakin, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs till September, 1802, is accused by an English publication§ of being a pensioner of the French Government. He had lived much in Paris, and preferred her alliance to that of England; but although constantly in difficulties in former years, he received such an enormous sum of money from Paul as an acknowledgment of old obligations, that it seems hardly credible he should have thought it worth his while to accept a bribe from a foreign Power. Bonaparte still continued to try to keep

* Diary and Correspondence of Lord Malmesbury.

† Goldsmith's Secret History of Bonaparte. He states that he was present at this interview.

‡ De Maistre.

§ Goldsmith.

Alexander in good humour. He wrote to Prussia in July, 1803, that he committed with confidence the interests of France to the wise and impartial judgment of the Emperor of Russia. "Yet," writes Sir George Jackson from Berlin, "his Imperial Majesty has so strongly urged the King not to be ensnared by the artifices of France, but to adopt more energetic measures, that military preparations have actually been set on foot."*

Napoleon was at this moment bent upon the conquest of England, and was making great naval preparations at Helvoetsluys and Boulogne. He sent Duroc a second time to St. Petersburg, to interest Alexander in the quarrel, and persuade him to declare war against England on account of Malta, whose independence under the protection of the great Powers was one of the articles of the Treaty between France and Russia; but Alexander replied by demanding the evacuation of Germany, and the promised indemnity for Naples and Sardinia. In the mean time he settled a pension of 50,000 crowns on the King of Sardinia, and helped to maintain the deposed House of Orange. De Maistre writes from St. Petersburg, August 5th, 1803, "The Emperor conceived the sublime project of advancing into Germany at the head of 50,000 men, to guarantee the German Federal union. But they (the Russian Cabinet) have prevented it, and these are the words used by a Minister: 'We wish to preserve him, for if he perishes, there is yet one more whom it would be necessary to sacrifice—the Grand Duke Constantine.' These are traits which show the country and the manners of the people."

This argument was used to Alexander himself, and as it was still not two years and a half after the murder of his father, it came with some force. Count Markof continued to make energetic representations to Bonaparte, and went so far as to say that behind the Czar there were Russians, meaning that the nation also possessed a voice, which had been more than once distinctly heard; though, as Czartoriski was now the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and thought to be strongly inclined to France, she had expected more compliance. The First Consul vented his ill-humour on Markof; and one Sunday, at a public audience, said to Lucchesini, in his presence,

* Diary of Sir G. Jackson.

“What think you, Marquis, Russia is striving even to protect the emigrants.” Count Markof interposed, “Sir, if his Majesty my august master wishes to extend protection to any one, I am sure he has both right and reason.” “It was not to you, Count, I spoke,” answered Bonaparte. “Sir,” said Markof, “if any one speaks in my presence of my sovereign, I always reply.” Having said this he turned his back upon the First Consul. Bonaparte ordered Talleyrand to send him forthwith back to Russia, but Markof refused to go. He would not stir till his master recalled him. Both despatched messengers to St. Petersburg with details of the affair; Bonaparte complaining that Markof mixed himself up frequently, and in a disagreeable way, in the affairs of the country, which gave him a right to ask the recall of this “*polisson*” (blackguard); but the courier who brought Alexander’s letter to Markof desiring him to return, also carried to him the insignia of a Russian order enriched with diamonds, and the grant of a pension. The *Chargé d’Affaires* who replaced him was instructed to renew a demand for the release of a French emigrant seized in Italy, on neutral territory, and Napoleon at last gave it.

The First Consul’s letter crossed a note from Alexander, detailing the concessions he thought likely to produce a reconciliation between France and Great Britain. But Napoleon now thought his own original conditions too small. He wrote to Talleyrand, he did not wish to treat with England on the affairs of the Continent. He was ready to evacuate Holland and Switzerland, but he would never stipulate that clause in an article.* As to the indemnities demanded by the King of Sardinia, he would only consent to them if England restored Ceylon to Holland (now virtually, though by its own act, annexed to France), or Trinidad to Spain. He went on to say, that he in no way menaced the neutrality of the small states; if he had marched his troops into them, it was only because England kept Malta, and violated the Germanic independence. This ended the Russian mediation; and Markof quitted France Nov. 28th, 1803, M. d’Oubril, his subordinate, being left in Paris as *Chargé d’Affaires*. He was followed as far as Carlsruhe by about twenty disguised

* Lanfrey’s *Histoire de Napoléon I^{er}*.

gendarmes, headed by Colonel Beauvoisin, with orders to rob him on the road if he travelled by night. He disconcerted their plans by arranging his journey so as to arrive at an inn every evening before it became dark; and the banditti, not thinking it prudent to remain longer on German territory, returned to Paris.* At Vienna, he dined tête-à-tête with the Emperor of Germany, being the first foreign subject ever admitted to that honour, in order to conciliate Russia; for a recent levy by the French army of 200,000 on the free towns of Hamburg, Lubeck, and Bremen, at a time of peace, had even roused the fear of the apathetic Austrian cabinet. It was a direct defiance of the pretensions of both Prussia and Austria to be the leading members and natural protectors of the German Confederation; yet England and Russia were the only powers who raised a voice in support of its independence. Baden, Bavaria, and Würtemberg, perhaps intimidated by the vicinity of the stronghold of Strasburg, were already in reality allies of France, though under the protection of Alexander; and Switzerland holding out her hand, as she thought, to a sister republic, agreed to furnish France with a perpetual contingent of 16,000 men. This was arbitrarily increased by the French Government to 25,000, forming a twentieth part of the male population.

On November 18th, Sir George Jackson, writing at Berlin, says, "The Emperor of Russia insists that the immediate evacuation of Hanover by France is indispensable to the safety of the north of Germany. Prussia," he said, "must be left entirely to herself if she persisted in seconding the views of France." Prussia, like Austria, had already committed herself to France, by seizing on several of the independent German Episcopal Electorates on her western frontier; and now, to escape the difficulty of resisting the Russian demands, Napoleon involved her still further in his policy, by offering to give her Hanover; a bribe she could not resist, though its hereditary sovereign was her ally. This conduct for a moment completely checkmated Alexander: it was of no further use to protest against a French encroachment on the German federation when the Germans were turning traitors to their own cause, and preying upon each other. And Prussia.

* Goldsmith.

was, moreover, bound to him by ties of near relationship, and an alliance of at least forty years. His minister Voronzov drew up a long paper, and laid it before him, detailing the whole selfish policy of Prussia for the last half-century, and concluded by recommending a permanent alliance with Austria.

So far, England and Russia were the only great Powers who had come out with untarnished honour from the wars succeeding the Revolution of 1789. England had acquired Ceylon from the Dutch and Trinidad from Spain; but the possession of Malta, though not according to the Treaty, was to counteract the continued intrigues of France in Egypt and the Turkish Empire, and was justified by Napoleon's declaration to Lord Whitworth, that Egypt would, sooner or later, belong to France. The British Cabinet feared that, in such an event, her Indian possessions would be imperilled, and retained Malta as a naval depôt, in case future operations were necessary to support her authority in the East. At this time Russia kept a garrison in Corfu and the Ionian Islands; but it was in accordance with its Treaty with France, who agreed to it lest they should be seized by the English fleet. She had not otherwise obtained one foot of territory by her wars on behalf of the independence of the Continent, while Austria, France, and Prussia were all gradually enriching themselves at the expense of the smaller States. Yet the heir to Catherine and the fickle Paul was viewed with distrust by the other great Powers, either of whom might at that moment have turned the balance, and, acting cordially with Russia, by diplomacy alone, would have stopped the French aggressions. Sir J. B. Warren, writing from St. Petersburg,* expressed great disappointment at the neglect with which the English Ministry treated the chance of a Russian alliance. He rarely received a single despatch from the British Foreign Office in exchange for the numerous letters he addressed to it on the subject. Yet the postal arrangements were more regular and secure between Russia and England than between St. Petersburg and either Vienna or Paris. A letter from Paris, July 16th, 1803, says that "a Russian courier, carrying despatches from St. Petersburg to Vienna, was lately murdered on the Austrian frontiers. It is now reported here that the assassin, a Po.

* Diary of Sir George Jackson.

lander, has been arrested, and confessed by whom he was paid to commit this crime, and that this political assassination has been traced to a French Secretary of Legation at one of the Northern Courts."

Napoleon had already, by means of Savary and Fouché, inaugurated the system of espionage which he carried on successfully throughout the Continent. He revealed its intricacies to his companions at St. Helena. In the reign of Louis XV., letters between foreign ambassadors were regularly opened in France; and some of the postal police of that day and their descendants were still alive to reorganize the system by which the French Government soon acquainted itself with even the most trivial affairs relating to its own subjects and to foreign Courts. The greater Powers employed special couriers to carry their despatches; but the smaller Governments, even Prussia, for economy, sent their letters through the ordinary post, and these often exposed the confidence of the Courts of London, Vienna, and St. Petersburg. The French actors employed in the theatres at St. Petersburg and Vienna were also in the First Consul's pay; and hardly a French tutor, valet, dressmaker, ladies' maid, or cook in either capital was not converted, sooner or later, into a Government spy. As the Russian nobility, and even the two Empresses, had a great predilection for French attendants, everything that occurred in the Imperial establishment was as well known to the First Consul as to the Russian Emperor. It was much the same at Vienna; and as, owing to the more dense population and more favourable climate of France, it takes far less time to collect an army and equip it there, than to gather together a Russian force across wide uncultivated steppes, and over roads often several feet deep in half-melted snow, it was not surprising that France should have known her plans and was prepared with an overwhelming force whenever Russia and the new Empire went to war. The abolition of the secret police in Russia, and Alexander's refusal to make use of spies, though doubtless an admirable measure in a period of ordinary tranquillity, deprived him of a most powerful weapon to counteract the French intrigues in diplomacy and arms. His wife's German relations were also the channels through which much information concerning the Russian Court reached Napoleon;

for her brother married Josephine's niece in 1806, and both the Empress Elizabeth and her sister Amelia corresponded very freely with their own family. If Alexander became suspicious and reserved, it was not till his confidence was repeatedly betrayed; those around him who were consistently open and straightforward never lost his regard.

CHAPTER VII.

1804—1806.

THE CAMPAIGN OF AUSTERLITZ.

ÆTAT. 26—28.

THE aspect of the Continent looked very threatening at the close of the year 1803; but the French and English war was only active in India and on the sea. It especially irritated Napoleon to be defied by an adversary whom he could not reach, and who would not put herself directly in his way; and it was only the fear of a declaration of war on the part of Russia that prevented him from concentrating his forces on the projected invasion of Great Britain. A medal still exists in the museum at Boulogne, which was struck to commemorate this intended invasion and its success. It bears the inscription—"Descente en Angleterre. Frappé à Londres, 1804."

Russia was still harassed by the desultory war with Persia and the Caucasus, which she had inherited with the possession of Georgia; nevertheless, the position assumed by Paul of protector of the smaller nationalities of Europe seemed likely to draw Alexander into a more important struggle, for to his repeated representation as to the indemnities, the First Consul only answered with unfulfilled promises or evasive replies. As already shown, Alexander was never a thorough legitimist, but looked to the people's happiness more than to the personal advantage of the monarch. He would not have interfered with the federal union of Holland and Switzerland with France, as it was to all appearance voluntary, if their confidence had not been grossly betrayed, and such heavy contributions exacted from them as to reduce the inhabitants to great distress. He was prepared for action at the beginning of 1804; but still hoped by a strong menace to ward it off, as from all appearance, if he undertook war, it might be against France and Prussia, without a single cordial ally. This year he refused to allow Prussia to refit her light cavalry in

Russia; on which Frederick William retaliated by annulling a long existing agreement for the exchange of deserters and criminals. The Queen of Prussia exerted her influence to allay the Czar's irritation; for their late meeting at Memel, and her near relationship to the Empress, gave her an opportunity of effecting this by letter, as well as through the Empress's sister, who had married Prince Charles William of Brunswick, an officer in the Prussian service, stationed at Berlin. The Landgravine of Hesse-Darmstadt, the grandmother of the Empress, the King, and the Queen, and a political intrigante of great ability in an earlier day, also endeavoured to keep peace between them; and the Empress-Dowager of Russia never forgot that she was a niece of Frederick the Great, and looked to the Sovereign enthroned at Berlin as to the head of her paternal House.

In the mean time, Bonaparte was seized with a panic, owing to a report that the Comte d'Artois had assassins in his pay in Paris. The Duc d'Enghien, the grandson of the Prince de Condé, was paying a visit at Ettenheim, within the territory of Baden, engaged in hunting, and courting a lady to whom he was attached. He had been an exile since 1789, living on a pension from Russia. He had never mixed himself up with politics, except so far as bearing arms in the Emigrant forces in 1793; but Napoleon believed him to have a covert motive in approaching the French frontier, and gave orders to Savary to take measures for his arrest. The Duke, warned by a foreign diplomatist that he was not safe, wished to join his grandfather at Warsaw, but he could not enter Austria without a special passport; and though he applied for it, the officials were so slow that it did not arrive till after his death. On the night of March 15th, 1804, he was seized in his bed by 300 French gendarmes, and conveyed across the Rhine to Strasburg, whence, by a special order from the First Consul, he was forwarded to Vincennes, in the vicinity of Paris, and without further trial shot. Napoleon seems at the time to have really believed he was residing at Ettenheim for a sinister purpose; but mere precaution could not excuse such proceedings, with no shadow of a proof; and the ignoble way in which he afterwards tried to lay the blame of a crime he felt to be such upon his minister, shows his conduct in the affair

in a still worse aspect. To destroy the character of his victim in the eyes of posterity, he also said the Duke had proposed to enter his service, and wrote a letter to him from Strasburg, which Talleyrand had kept back till two days after his death ; all of which, Bourrienne and others state was an entire fabrication. The Duke was thirty-two, and unmarried ; so with him expired the last hope of the family of the great Condé in France. His father, the Duke de Bourbon, died a suspicious death in 1831, and the vast family estates, which were restored in 1815, are now inherited by the Duke d'Aumale.

When the news of this murder reached St. Petersburg, where the Duke had been far the most popular of the French princes, the whole court was placed in mourning for a fortnight, and Alexander passed the French ambassador, General Hédouville, in the course of the morning parade without raising his eyes, or taking the slightest notice of him. The Empress-Dowager remembered the bright handsome boy of eleven, who had assisted in receiving her when she visited with her husband at Chantilly in 1782, and mourned over the melancholy fate of a family who, from regal opulence, were now reduced to be the pensioners of her son. A solemn funeral service for the repose of the Duke's soul was held in St. Petersburg, and attended by the Emperor and all the Court. But the other Powers of Europe looked on with an indifference assumed by fear. The Austrian minister Cobentzel said to the French ambassador at Vienna, that "his master knew the necessity of policy. It was a strong proof of his friendly sentiments towards the First Consul, and the interest he took in all that concerned him, that he had observed a perfect silence respecting the late events in the Electorate of Baden, events ending in a catastrophe occasioned no doubt by considerations of personal safety on the part of the First Consul, and that as to the violation of German territory, his Majesty attributed it to the overzeal of a few gendarmes acting without orders." The French ministers attached to various foreign Courts were instructed to enter into a spontaneous justification of the act ; and Prussia did not relax her intimate relations with France, for at this time, writes Sir G. Jackson, "no one objectionable to Bonaparte is safe in Berlin." The little Germanic Courts found it convenient to ignore the event ; and it has been

asserted that the Crown Prince of Baden was an accessory ; but Russia protested energetically before communicating with any other Power on the subject. Alexander desired his minister to represent to M. Talleyrand, that " the recent infraction of the neutral rights of the Elector of Baden, resulting in an act filling Europe with horror, was in his Imperial Majesty's estimation a proceeding irreconcilable with any principle of justice, or the generally received laws of nations ; and that if such acts of flagrant violation of neutral territory were permitted, there would be no security for the independence of other sovereign States. He considers it his duty, in his quality of guarantee of the German Empire, to notify to the Diet the manner in which he views it ; and to represent to it, and to the head of the Empire, the necessity of remonstrating with the French Government. A similar note was sent to the Russian resident at Ratisbon, and laid before the Diet ;* but intimidated or republican Germany did not choose to support her. It required a much shorter time for the French to arrive on her territory than for Russia to come from her remote frontier, and Austria declared she was ready to content herself with a simple promise of explanation. If Napoleon affirmed that his conduct was dictated by secret motives he could not yet unveil, she would be satisfied ; and the old Elector of Baden, the grandfather of the Empress of Russia, went further still, and said that he was already satisfied with the light thrown on the subject.

Bonaparte was extremely indignant when he received this message from Russia, and he sent instructions of a violent nature to General Hédouville ; but the cooler counsels of

* " The event which has taken place in the States of his Highness the Elector of Baden, the conclusion of which has been so melancholy, has occasioned the most poignant grief to the Emperor of Russia. He views with the greatest concern the violation committed on the tranquillity and integrity of the German territory. His Imperial Majesty is the more affected by this event, as he never could have expected that a Power which had undertaken, in common with himself, the office of a mediator, and was consequently bound to exert its care for the welfare and tranquillity of Germany, could have departed in such a manner from the sacred principles of the laws of nations, and the duties it had so lately taken upon itself. It would be unnecessary to call the attention of the Diet to the serious consequences to which the German Empire must be exposed if acts of violence, of which the first example has just been seen, should be passed over in silence."

Talleyrand prevailing, he despatched a second messenger, with orders to take a shorter route to overtake the first, and bring back the note. The two couriers arrived at the same time at Berlin, and the first instructions were recalled. The note which reached St. Petersburg was published in the *Moniteur*; "The complaint of Russia in this matter leads one to ask whether, when England meditated the assassination of Paul, and it was known that the proposed assassins were within a league of the frontier, the Russian government could have had any hesitation in seizing them? A war, conducive as any struggle between France and Russia must be to no other interest but those of England, will never be voluntarily undertaken by the First Consul; but commence it who will, he would prefer it to a state of things inconsistent in the highest degree with the equality subsisting between the great Powers. He claims no superiority over them, but he will submit to no degradation. He interferes with none of the measures of the Russian Cabinet, and he requires a corresponding forbearance on her part."

This unnecessary mention of Paul's murder was intended to wound Alexander in his tenderest point, and to allude to the impunity the conspirators enjoyed, which had caused much comment even in Russia. Yet it was a proof of his honourable character, and of his courage in submitting to wear in the eyes of the world what he felt to be an indelible stain, when, as the absolute master of such an empire, it would have been so easy to rid himself of these troublesome remembrances, or to have exonerated himself from the suspicion of being a participator in the deed, by bringing the direct authors of it to open punishment. He had the generosity to admire truth even in an enemy; and the more he abhorred himself for his share in the conspiracy the more he despised those who, believing him to be guilty, treated it as a light matter, or one of which he had rather cause to be proud than ashamed. He was more attracted than repelled by the men who, far from considering it a state necessity, regarded it as a horrible crime, and such Napoleon always declared it both in public and among his intimate friends. Yet the young Emperor was not the less hurt at the moment by such allusions, though, on reflection, he did not resent them; and Bonaparte followed

this up by causing a book to be compiled and circulated in Paris, entitled "L'Histoire de Russie réduite aux seuls faits," professing to give a biographical account of all the Sovereigns of Russia. "A more libellous production," says Goldsmith, writing in 1811, "was never put before the public. It directly accused the present Emperor, Alexander, of being the instigator of the murder of his father Paul." It was the second publication on this subject that Bonaparte had caused to be issued from the French press, and a third work of a similar description was composed in 1812, intended for distribution in Russia. "I do not wish for a war," were his words to Talleyrand, when he dictated to him the language he must hold with St. Petersburg, May, 1804, "but I do not fear it with anybody. . . . It is quite enough to swallow on the sea the outrages of England, without being obliged to submit to the insolence of Russia. All Europe renders me the justice to say that I do not mix in the internal affairs of any State, and I shall not suffer them to do the contrary in France." Alas for human foresight! within ten years from this time France was only suffered to exist as an entire nation through the moderation of England and Russia. Bonaparte seems to have forgotten when he talked of not mixing in the internal affairs of any State, his transactions with regard to Spain, Holland, Italy, and even England; and at that very moment he was compelling the Court of Rome, in contempt of all rights, to deliver up the emigrant Vernegues, a naturalized Russian, whom he wanted to implicate in the late plot; but perhaps not wishing to go too far with Russia he ultimately let him escape.* In spite of Austria and Prussia's apathy at the seizure of the Duc d'Enghien, Alexander would not leave the matter alone, but sent an answer to Napoleon's reply, and a declaration of Russia's claims on behalf of her allies. It stated again that no government could behold with indifference the blow given to the independence and security of nations by the recent arrest and execution of the Duc d'Enghien. Russia, by the peace of Teschen (in 1779), engaged to guarantee and act as mediator in the settlement of the German empire, and in that character was not only entitled but bound to interfere: desirous to extinguish the flames of war, she had pro-

* Lanfrey's *Vie de Napoléon I^{er}*.

posed to act as mediator between France and England, but was not accepted; since the renewal of the war the French Government had disregarded all the rights of neutral Powers by marching its troops to the coasts of the Adriatic, and levying contributions on, and taking military possession of the Hanse Towns, though these States had no connection whatever with the depending contest. Portugal and Spain were compelled to purchase their neutrality by enormous pecuniary sacrifices; Switzerland, Holland, and great part of Italy were mere French provinces; one part of the German empire was occupied by French troops, and in another arrests were committed by French detachments in open violation of the law of nations. Russia had no wish to interfere in the internal affairs of France, but she could not remain a passive spectator of the successive trampling under foot of all the weaker States of Europe by its armies. With regard to the allusion to Paul's murder, the memoir said, that "Russia could hardly have believed that to sustain an erroneous principle the Cabinet of St. Cloud should so completely set aside all customary rules and courtesy as to choose among the examples quoted one that was most inapplicable to the present, and to recall in an official paper the death of a father to his august son, while striving against all truth and credit to affix an atrocious accusation to a government (Great Britain) which France never ceases to calumniate merely because she is at war with it." The note ended by saying that M. d'Oubril could not prolong his stay in Paris unless those points of the treaty of October, 1801, were adjusted which referred to the French evacuation of Naples, and a joint settlement between France and Russia of the affairs of Italy, besides the indemnity for the King of Sardinia. "In virtue of the obligation implied in a common mediation and guarantee, the French Government must also evacuate the North of Germany, and undertake to respect the neutrality of the German Confederacy."

Talleyrand replied, July 29th, in a note which hardly supports his claim to be one of the first diplomatists of the age; but in this case he had no basis to rest upon, and could only excuse his government by counter-accusations, which for the most part were purely imaginary. "Was the mourning assumed by the Russian Court for a man whom the French

tribunals had condemned for having conspired against the safety of the First Consul (yet whom Napoleon at St. Helena asserted to be innocent) conformable to the letter or spirit of the third article of that treaty, which provides that the two contracting parties shall not suffer their respective subjects to maintain any correspondence direct or indirect with the enemies of the two States?—a wise provision, totally neglected by the Imperial ambassador, M. Markof, the true author of the disunion between the two Powers.” He accused Russia of violating the ninth article of the treaty by keeping a garrison in the Ionian Islands, and changing the government of the country (by giving it a constitution) without any concert with France. “Finally, France claims the execution of the eleventh article of the same treaty, which evidently requires, that instead of evincing a spirit so unduly partial to England, and rendering herself perhaps the first auxiliary of its ambition, Russia should unite with France to consolidate a general peace, and re-establish a just equilibrium in the different parts of the world to secure the liberty of the seas.”

Russia answered again, August 28th, by accusing the French Government of changing the whole organization of Italy without any concert with his Imperial Majesty. “If the Russians have a second time occupied the Ionian Isles, it is with the consent of the Ottoman Porte, at the request of the inhabitants, and in virtue of a previous concert with France. The Emperor only awaits the intelligence of his chargé d'affaires' departure from Paris to give notice to the French Mission to quit his capital. He sees with regret the necessity of suspending his relations with a government which refuses to perform its engagements, but he will remain in that suspensive position, which it lies with the French Government to convert, if it pleases, into one of open hostility.”

The following day D'Oubril received his passports, but Napoleon now seemed inclined to recede. He detained him on various pretences, and dictated a new note to Talleyrand, asserting his good intentions, and requesting that the past might be forgotten. “His private inclinations had always leaned towards ties of confidential esteem and friendship with the Emperor Alexander.” But the Czar paid no attention to

this long-delayed species of apology, and D'Oubril quitted Paris. Napoleon ordered him to be detained at Mayence till the French chargé d'affaires quitted Russian territory; on which Alexander directed the French chargé d'affaires to be detained at Riga till it was known D'Oubril had left Mayence. This suspension of relations prevented the Czar from acknowledging Napoleon's Imperial title, assumed about this time; but Austria and Prussia forwarded their congratulations to the new monarch on his coronation, and shortly afterwards the Emperor of Germany exchanged his elective title for the hereditary one of Austria, giving as a reason "the preservation of that degree of equality which should subsist between the great Powers, and the just rank of the House and State of Austria among the nations of Europe." The step was justified on "the precedent formerly afforded by the assumption of the Imperial crown by the Czars of Russia, and more recently by the ruling Sovereign of France."

On December 27th, 1804, Napoleon opened the legislative session in Paris with a speech, in which he said he wished for peace, and that the King of Prussia "showed himself the friend of France. . . . The spirit of Catherine the Great would watch over the counsels of Alexander, and he would remember the friendship of France is for him a necessary counterpoise in the balance of Europe; as placed far from her, he could neither reach her nor trouble her repose." Yet he felt evident anxiety lest Russia should enter into a stricter alliance with Great Britain, and tried to separate them by libellous pamphlets, professing to be translated from the English press. In the summer of 1804, Russia was as much abused as England in the *Moniteur*, the one being called the tyrant of the land, and the other of the seas. "The notes you have transmitted to me on the powerlessness of Russia," he wrote to Talleyrand, "are by a man of much ability; cause them to be printed in a newspaper as translated from an English journal: you must choose one of which the name is little known." Several printed effusions, supposed to be written by members of the English Opposition, which appeared at this time in England, entitled, "Why do we go to War?" and others, more than once with the name of a well-known English writer attached to them, were sent over from France to be translated and pub-

lished in London, to try and influence public opinion in favour of the Bonapartists.

Although Prussia obstinately refused to join Russia in her protest on the subject of the Duc d'Enghien, she entered into a secret but strictly defensive alliance with Alexander in May, 1804; and Austria signed a similar treaty, November 6th of the same year. Both these Powers wished to bury all past differences, and only arm in case of a new French invasion. Yet, as if to show that he did not choose to listen to the complaint of violating the rights of neutrals, Bonaparte ordered a body of gendarmes to carry off Sir George Rumbold, the British representative at Hamburg. He was dragged to Paris, and would have been executed had not Russia urged on Prussia, in virtue of this treaty, to make a lively remonstrance; on which Napoleon wrote an apologetic letter, protesting friendship, abusing England, and regretting what he called the ingratitude of Alexander; but he released Sir George Rumbold, though without his letters and personal effects, which were never restored. "The Emperor of Russia," writes Sir George Jackson from Berlin, "declares that the release of Sir George Rumbold is a totally inadequate satisfaction for the violation of German territory, but the King of Prussia positively declares he will not go to war for a box of papers." On November 5th Jackson writes, that the Grand Duchess Mary of Russia (the newly-married hereditary Princess of Saxe-Weimar) had arrived in Prussia, but refused an invitation to Potsdam. Her refusal appeared to give offence, and her father-in-law, the Duke, wished to change her resolution.

The King of Sweden was impatient to begin the war at once, and though the small possession, called Swedish Pomerania, which he still owned on the Continent lay completely at Prussia's mercy, he took the initiative; and while Russia was still negotiating, and hoping to keep Frederick William to his agreement of the previous May, Gustavus declared war between himself and Prussia. Alexander again advised him to return to Sweden, which was much discontented at his long absence, but sent another letter to the King of Prussia to induce him to join the Allies, and prevented him from seizing Swedish Pomerania, by ordering his own troops in Livonia and Esthonia to march for its protection. Napoleon also

wrote to the King in the most conciliatory manner, signing himself, "Good Brother, Friend, and Ally;" and in April, 1805, conferred the Legion of Honour on the King's great uncle, Prince Ferdinand, the only surviving brother of Frederick the Great; Prince Louis Ferdinand, the old Duke of Brunswick, who had formerly led the emigrant army against the French Republic; and three generals. Prince Ferdinand was great great uncle to Alexander through his mother, and had always been a warm admirer of the French Revolution. In exchange for these favours the King of Prussia gave the Black Eagle to Napoleon, Joseph, Murat, Cambacères, Talleyrand, and two of the French generals; an act which would have almost defied Russia, only that these Orders are distributed among so many hundreds of recipients that, when bestowed on persons of rank, they have long ceased to mean anything but the merest compliment.

Napoleon was incensed at Alexander giving a refuge to Louis XVIII. and the French emigrants, whom he then imagined, or pretended to imagine, were plotting against his life; and as in 1801* he had accused England of harbouring assassins, and for that reason among others refused to fulfil the conditions of the peace of Amiens, he now made the same charge against Russia. When he found she resisted his overtures after the murder of the Duc d'Enghien, so long as the articles of the Treaty of Paris were unfulfilled, he reversed his policy and tried to make peace with England, addressing a long letter to George III. Lord Mulgrave answered it to Talleyrand, speaking of Napoleon as the "Chief of the French Government," instead of by the Imperial title used in the note to the King. He said peace could only be made on a firm basis by arrangements which provided for the future tranquillity of Europe, and would prevent a renewal of the misfortunes by which it is now overwhelmed. "With these sentiments His Majesty feels that he cannot give a more specific answer to the overture he has

* Talleyrand, by Bonaparte's order, transmitted to Lord Hawkesbury a note, in which, after complaining of the slowness of the British Cabinet, he said: "That as to the small number of assassins who might act in the interval by the instigation of England, they were very little formidable, and the English Government must not form great hopes on their help." He went on to say, that the sentiments of Alexander I. and of his Cabinet were ill known in London if they believed that he would ever betray the cause of the continental Powers.

received until he has communicated with the continental Powers, to whom he is united in the most confidential manner, and particularly with the Emperor of Russia, who has given the strongest proofs of the wisdom and elevation of his sentiments and of the lively interest he takes in the security and independence of Europe." If Napoleon had succeeded in concluding a peace with England it would have been on condition that it joined him against Russia, and the alliance of 1853 might have been anticipated by half a century. "I am forced," he said on another occasion, "to combat and conquer in order to preserve. You must accomplish something new every three months to captivate the French people. With them, whoever ceases to advance is lost."

The Russian fleet consisted of forty-eight vessels, and of these a squadron of nine ships and several frigates were sent by the Straits of Gibraltar to assist the English on the coast of Naples in case of war. At the same time 7000 men were landed from Sevastopol on the Ionian Isles. Admiral Tchichagof engaged many Greeks and Ionians for the Russian service, and the army received new artillery, the old having been very inferior to that of the enemy in the last campaign.

In the year 1803 more than 200 families from Switzerland came to settle in Russia, where they received a gratuity and lands in the neighbourhood of Odessa. The Emperor decreed that emigrant nobles who chose to become naturalized in Russia should receive the same privileges as the Russian boyards. These privileges were not so inconsiderable as is often supposed. Some were confirmed by Alexander at the beginning of his reign, and others granted afresh when he reorganized the government of the empire. Every province had a right to form an assembly of its nobility, who were permitted to make representations to the Legislative Senate and to the Emperor by deputation. These assemblies might expel such members as had committed offences before they were tried by the civil courts. Every nobleman of age had the right of entry to these assemblies, but unless he was possessed of landed property, and had risen to the rank of an officer, he could not vote. The nobles were exempted from the poll-tax, though they were responsible for that of their serfs. They could only be judged by their peers; they could not be condemned till

tried, and were exempted from corporal punishment. On their own estates they might establish fairs, markets, or manufactories. The village magistrates or judges were elected by the peasants from among the local nobility, and one of these elections was generally the source of great local excitement. But the provincial nobility preferred to gamble and dance in St. Petersburg and Moscow, or in times of peace to loiter round the tables of Baden and Homburg, rather than trouble themselves about the affairs of their country. "All that is the Emperor's business, and not ours," was a remark very often heard. A constitutional form of government was especially unpopular, because it was supposed that the French constitution granted by Louis XVI. had hastened the Revolution, and as the Revolution had entailed the destruction of the nobility and the emancipation of the serfs in France, there was not a real Liberal to be found among the true Muscovites possessing wealth or land.

Alexander intended to visit the Crimea and Odessa in the autumn of 1805, and the provincial magistrates repaired the roads along which he was likely to pass, but war breaking out in the course of that year obliged him to put off this journey till a more propitious moment. He made another effort to obtain an amicable arrangement of the continental disputes, and sent Novossilzof with a note to London, Paris, and Berlin. This envoy was one of those "young" councillors whose presence in the Cabinet gave so much offence to the Princess Dashkov, though he is described by Sir George Jackson as being "nearly forty, but looking very young, with a frank and open manner, evidently very honest," and making the most favourable impression at Berlin, where he was received in the middle of July, 1805. He visited London in the first week of January, and laid Alexander's plan before Pitt, who closed his long premiership in little more than a twelvemonth later. With the foresight of Russian statesmanship, apt to lose its grasp of present advantage in too earnest a contemplation of the future, the Emperor wished not only to repress the encroachments of France, but to assure the happiness and security of the European sovereignties by a more equitable repartition of territory and the adoption of a strong code of public law to be sanctioned by all. The war of 1799, when Paul proposed some similar suggestions, opened

Alexander's eyes to the fact that it was as well that allies should agree on their basis, and not discover in the course of a campaign that they were fighting for opposite interests. But Pitt would hear of nothing but the discomfiture of the French. He listened to the note, and then told the envoy that, instead of troubling themselves about the welfare of the human race, they must keep at present to the possible, and that to make Napoleon's ambition recoil behind formidable barriers was sufficient for the moment. He thought every other object was secondary to this, and would only create difficulties. When this end was once attained they might have time to discuss Alexander's plan for a Utopia. He struck out all the innovations of the Russian note, and left little but the stipulations of the treaties of Luneville and Amiens.* Alexander's scheme, which he considered the production of a Quixote, was eventually carried out, and maintained peace between the continental nations during forty years.

Novossilzof returned to St. Petersburg, where he signed a treaty with England on April 11th, 1805, in conjunction with Lord Leveson-Gower, the new British ambassador to Russia. A special article stipulated that the two contracting Powers would not mix themselves in any way in the internal government of France; they would appropriate no conquests, and at the end of the war a general Congress should regulate the state of Europe. But as England still refused to promise the evacuation of Malta, Alexander would only sign this treaty conditionally, and adjourned the ratification, reserving to himself the power of making new overtures of mediation to Napoleon in

* According to M. Thiers, the annexation of Georgia had produced a note from Great Britain, in which the integrity of the *Ottoman* Empire was declared to be a principle of European policy. "This is not the course to follow when confidence is sought to be established between allies," Count Novossilzof said to Mr. Pitt. "Of all men living my master possesses the most exalted and generous character, and his probity may be justly trusted; but the endeavour to stop him by threats, or even by insinuations, would only offend him fruitlessly. He would be instigated rather than restrained by such means. . . . And, after all, what harm could accrue if Constantinople belonged to Russia instead of to a barbarous race like the Turks? Would not your trade in the Black Sea gain considerably? England would never find any reason to complain." Mr. Pitt answered, that for his part he saw no great peril in Constantinople falling into the hands of Russia, but that a strong prejudice prevailed in England against such an event, which he was obliged to regard," &c. M. Thiers quotes the above from Novossilzof's despatch to his government.

order to avoid the war. The British ministers misunderstood his moderation, but he felt that the co-operation of England alone, as she was without a continental army, would not be enough to enable him to make a salutary impression on France unless he secured at least the neutrality of the intervening German States, for Prussia had promised that if the Russian army crossed her frontier she would make it a cause for war with the Czar; and some ill-will had existed between Russia and Austria since 1799. He preferred, if possible, to solve by diplomacy the difficulties Pitt wished to meet by war, and again made use of Novossilzof, who was instructed to insist on the evacuation of Naples and Hanover and the independence of Switzerland and Holland, but was authorized to offer that in Italy things should remain much in their present state, the King of Sardinia receiving Parma and Placentia as an indemnity for Piedmont, and the kingdom of Italy being given to a prince of the Bonaparte family. Novossilzof set out for Berlin, where he had to ask for a French passport, as diplomatic relations were suspended, and in May, 1805, Napoleon received at Milan a letter from the King of Prussia, informing him of the mission of the ambassador, whom he did not meet till the middle of July, when he returned to France. In the interval he wrote to the King that he expected nothing from this mediation, and could hope nothing good from a general peace. He spoke slightly of Alexander, and added, "I wish for peace. I have no ambition. I owe no more account to Russia on the affairs of Italy than she owes to me on those of Turkey and Persia. Every peace with England to be certain ought to contain the clause of ceasing to give an asylum to the Bourbons and the emigrants, and to repress their miserable writers."

In January, 1805, Napoleon wrote to the Queen of Naples, desiring her to withdraw her ambassador from Russia, and telling her that the first war of which she would be the cause should drag her from her kingdom and send her children to beg throughout Europe. He now insulted the ambassador whom she sent to congratulate him on his new dignity of King of Italy, and took possession of the Republics of Genoa and Lucca, the last of which he gave to his eldest sister, Eliza Bonaparte. On this news reaching Russia, Novossilzof received orders to

return to St. Petersburg, and Austria, being nearly related to Naples, began to arm. Prussia still remained so friendly to France that the journals of Berlin dared not publish Alexander's last proposals to Napoleon, lest it should give offence, but they were inserted in the *Hamburg Gazette*. The Russians at once prepared for war, but Napoleon tried to conceal the fact as long as possible, and wrote to Fouché, telling him to print some letters in the French journals professing to come from St. Petersburg, and affirming that the French are very well treated there, that the Court and town feel the necessity of an alliance with France, that the English are in disrepute in Russia, and the plan of the coalition fallen through, and that in every case Russia will interfere in nothing.*

As Alexander's relatives reigned in Baden, Würtemberg, and Bavaria, and Russia had guaranteed the integrity of Germany, these States were considered under his especial protection since the Treaty of Mediation in 1802, and he felt secure of their attachment, but the efforts he made to preserve their independence were rewarded by their all joining France, and increasing her armies with 40,000 men. The Elector of Hesse-Darmstadt† also placed at Bonaparte's disposal 3000 infantry, some artillery, and 1000 horse; while Hesse-Cassel came forward with a similar contingent. The French cruelties and depredations, and their enormous exactions in the provinces through which they passed, forced the weaker Powers to court their friendship to obtain toleration, as the Christian nations in the East had formerly yielded from dread of torture and extermination to the Mahometans. But Prussia was supposed to be equal in a military point of view to the new Empire, only waiting to see from which side she could obtain the most valuable acquisition of territory, and coveting the Russian Baltic provinces. The Queen and Hardenberg felt this disgraceful situation, and the King's subjection to the agents of the French Government. With the advice of Duroc, he induced Alexander to suspend his orders to his troops by requesting an interview, leading him to suppose he might accede to his views and allow him to take them through Prussian Poland. When Alexander had agreed to meet him at Warsaw, he procured a further delay by pretending that he

* Lanfrey.

† He had a personal motive. See ante.

could not leave Berlin. "What have France and Russia to embroil them?" asked the *Moniteur*, July 18th, 1805. "If the Emperor of France exercises a great influence in Italy, the Czar exercises a still greater over Turkey and Persia. If the Cabinet of Russia pretends to have a right to affix limits to the power of France, without doubt it is equally disposed to allow Napoleon to prescribe the limits it is not to pass. Do you wish a general Congress in Europe? Let every Power begin by restoring the conquests it has made during the last fifty years. Let them re-establish Poland, restore Venice to its senate, Trinidad to Spain, Ceylon to Holland, the Crimea to the Porte, the Caucasus and Georgia to Persia, the kingdom of Mysore to the sons of Tippoo Saib, and the Mahratta States to their lawful owners, and then the other Powers may have some title to insist that France shall retire within her ancient limits." This argument convinced Frederick William that he was acting consistently with the policy of other nations as well as of his own by taking possession of Hanover, as England had repaid herself by her colonial conquests; but he was shaken out of his apathy by the French army crossing his territory at Anspach, in defiance of his neutrality, pillaging an estate of Hardenberg's, and committing various other acts of violence on unarmed Prussian subjects.

When Austria armed, Napoleon relinquished his plan of invading England, and assembled a larger army to overrun the Continent than modern Europe had ever beheld. The alliance of the smaller sovereignties of Germany was of the greatest use to him, as it kept a free communication between his vanguard and France. For almost the first time in her history Austria acted with too great haste, and sent one army into Italy and another to the Bavarian frontier, to open the campaign before the Russians could perform the long march necessary to unite with her, for the Russian guard, forming the most effective portion, had to travel 1000 miles, and this precipitation caused the ruin of the campaign, while a second time Prussia refused to take the opportunity of completely annihilating the power of France. The war was very unpopular, except in St. Petersburg and Riga, on account of its involving an alliance with Austria and no real Muscovite interests, and it began under unfavourable auspices, for the

aged Metropolitan of Moscow refused to draw up a form of prayer for the success of the Russian arms. "If," said he, "they are really contrite and penitent, let them shut up the places of public amusement for a month, and I will then celebrate public prayers." "He seems to contemplate the success of Bonaparte as an inevitable and not very alarming prospect," writes an English traveller. "He described the power of an Emperor of Russia, the dangers surrounding him, and the improbability of any rapid improvement. I suspect he does not wish particularly well to us in our war with France."* It was only five years since Austria proved faithless to Russia, and England and Prussia in the last Turkish war stepped forward to prevent infidels from being inclosed within the sanctuary of the Orthodox Church. These were the true enemies of Russia in the opinion of the ecclesiastics; and France, who had exalted herself above them, ought rather to be greeted as an ally. War was only justifiable for the defence of the country and the extension of the Christian faith; but the voice of the Church had no influence in the Russian Cabinet, though Alexander's personal opinions had undergone some change since he had imbibed Voltairian notions of religion from his tutor La Harpe. As the head of the Russian Greek Church he attended her public services in his official capacity, yet was still not sufficiently imbued with her spirit to care for the intercession of the priesthood on behalf of the Russian army; but the officer he selected as the general-in-chief had served under Suvorov, and well knew the influence it exercised over his men. Count Michael Kutuzov was at this time sixty years of age; he had been a favourite of the Emperor Paul, and since Alexander's accession Governor-General of St. Petersburg. He made the Polish campaign in 1765, and was Quarter-master-General during the Turkish war of 1771, but being deprived of this rank for disrespect to a superior, he became from that time the most finished courtier. At Schumla, in 1774, he was dangerously wounded by a ball entering his left temple and coming out at his right eye. He survived, merely sustaining the loss of one of his eyes, and after several months spent in Paris at the Empress's expense, to complete his cure, again joined

* Bishop Heber's MS. Journal.

the active army under Suvorov in 1776. At the storming of Oczakov he received a second ball through his head, from which he again recovered, and commanded one of the storming columns at the assault on Ismail, where the town was defended by 250 Turkish guns against forty on the side of the besiegers. Suvorov wrote in his report of the victory, "Kutuzov acted on the left wing, but he was my right hand." He was appointed ambassador extraordinary to Constantinople, and in 1798 to Berlin, being richly rewarded for his services; and Paul sent him to succeed General Hermann in Holland, but before he arrived at the Russian head-quarters the Duke of York had signed the armistice which gave such offence to the Czar.

At a time when Russia was without commanders who were experienced or even initiated into the military tactics of the West, Kutuzov was considered her best general. Paul had introduced among his younger officers and private soldiers the stiff manœuvres and formal drill then in vogue at Berlin, which were destined to ruin Prussia; but his older officers, accustomed to lead armies as Suvorov had led them, without tactics and trusting to the first shock and individual bravery, were completely at fault when set to move their troops according to the comparatively slow system observed during the last century in all the other armies of Europe. They took no trouble to inform themselves of the changes going on around. "The Russian armies had always beaten the Germans," said they; "then why copy them?" But a very different fashion of war was brought in by the French Republic. Her forces were not raised exclusively from the peasants, but drawn from all classes, and young students and professional men were forced to serve in the ranks. These, fired with the current ideas of liberty and equality, would not submit to the strict discipline and severe drill of Frederick the Great. Each man thought himself free to reason on all that he was called upon to undertake, and instead of mere uneducated machines their commanders led reflecting and cultivated men. The old notions were therefore cast aside, and they trusted to circumvent their enemies by rapid movements, a more complete system of spies and reconnoissance, and the concealment of their strength till they could suddenly bring an irresistible force to bear upon the enemy's weakest point. Napoleon did not practise a new

system of war: he had been brought up in that of the Republic, and followed it, but he commanded the resources of a country then more thickly populated compared with its extent, and more favourably situated than any in Europe, and expended more human life than would have been possible anywhere else, even in Russia. He never beat the Russians with an inferior force. When by defeating them he had taught his manœuvres to his enemies, they succeeded in turning them against himself, as Peter the Great had learned to conquer Charles XII. The old chivalrous feeling still lingered in the aristocracy of Europe, which prompted a military chief to seek open pitched battles, but the ancient code of honour was unknown to the young democrats of France, and they had the same advantage which a pugilist might at first gain over an adversary if he refused to abide by any of the received rules of the ring. They were also greatly aided by the faults and dissensions of their enemies, who never agreed in wishing for the humiliation of France, but, on the contrary, thought it to their interest to preserve her in strength, and only fought to restrain her from troubling the peace of Europe.*

* Rostopchine, writing from Voronovo to General Zizianof, laments over the prospect of a war between Russia and France, which could only end to the advantage of England. "War with France," he wrote, November, 1803, "will be a sacrifice made to Voronzov's love for the English. What profit can we draw from it? If Bonaparte, by invading Hanover, injured our Emperor, who had guaranteed the integrity of Germany, it is much more the duty of its chief to enter the lists than ourselves. In the mean while the English will not restore Malta. Prussia either will not move, or will deceive us. The Austrians will be beaten completely in a single campaign, and we should be fighting for what? for who?" Again, in September, 1804, he laughs at the French for turning a general of brigade into their Sovereign. After the years of revolution and crime they had undergone to secure a republic, "every crowned head seems to be amusing himself by getting his promotion. . . . We might save England; she cannot render us the same service. . . . Why go to the help of Germany when their chief himself is silent, and only thinks of fishing? . . . But all empires have had their time of glory. It seems to be past for us, and humiliation to have arrived. . . . I always return to my opinion that Russia, Prussia, and Austria could force France to return to her old borders, but England never, if they limit themselves to making war in Europe. To reach England we must share Turkey after my old plan—that is to say, take Moldavia and Roumelia, with Constantinople; give the rest to Prussia and to Austria, who would make an exchange of territory; turn Greece and the islands into a republic, and give Egypt to France. Then send 50,000 men, under thy command, across Persia into India, and completely destroy there all the English possessions." Again, on March 20th, 1805, he says: "According to Adam

The Russian infantry under Kutuzov was transported in waggons at the rate of six and eight German miles (about twenty-seven or thirty-five English) a day to the borders of Hungary, and the second army, composed of the Imperial Guard under Constantine, paused on the frontier for permission to enter Polish Prussia. Although the want of union between Austria and Prussia had led to a treaty between France and the German Princes, it seemed reasonable to hope that if Prussia, even at this eleventh hour, could be brought to join the Allies, every German patriot would rise in defence of the common Fatherland against its ancient enemy. Alexander was sanguine enough to take this view, and thought it worth the delay. He arrived on November 1st at Pulawy, near Warsaw, the magnificent seat of the elder Czartoriski, and sent a message to Frederick William, that hearing he could not leave his capital, he would himself visit Berlin, but particularly desired all ceremony to be omitted. The public records were searched to find a precedent in the etiquette for his reception, for no Russian Emperor had left his dominions since the time of Peter the First. He entered the city under the title of Comte du Nord, at two o'clock on November 13th, and was received by the whole of the Royal family in front of the palace, with great military display. An hour later he accompanied them to Potsdam, his suite comprising Prince Dolgoruki, Counts Tolstoi and Lieven, General Voronzov, Czartoriski, and two secretaries. After being entertained with the usual number of

(Czartoriski), in six months we shall know what concerns us on the subject of the Porte. We may suppose they are expecting a favourable moment for the partition of the Turkish porridge, but it is impossible that every government is so blind as not to see the ambitious designs of Bonaparte. Russia will again become the instrument of the English policy, and will make a useless war. . . . Cobenzel will take Moldavia and Wallachia. Would it not be better to share Turkey without a war by giving Egypt to France?"

On the 28th of August, 1805, Sir George Jackson writes from Berlin: "The Russian army entered Galicia at Brody on the 22nd. The vigour and resolution of the Emperor Alexander and the prospect of a continental war have caused great excitement in Berlin." . . . "September 29th: The march of the Russian army through the Prussian territory is suspended until after the Emperor's interview with the King, but under the supposition that this Court will yield to the views of Russia. The Lombard interest is, however, just now completely in the ascendant, besides which, military men are much piqued at the pretensions of Russia, and a feeling of resentment against her has sprung up amongst them, so that a contest with that Power would perhaps be popular."

reviews and fêtes he returned to Berlin, and gave private audiences to the ministers of the various friendly States. He was enthusiastically welcomed at the Opera, and completely turned the tide of popular favour towards Russia. He held long conferences with the King, his ministers, and the Duke of Brunswick, and devoted several hours every day to business. "The members of his own suite," writes an attaché, "have had no idle time on their hands. All have been constantly employed, and many couriers daily arriving from or departing to St. Petersburg and the different Russian armies."*

The Archduke Anthony of Austria also appeared, with the ostensible object of healing old rivalries between Austria and Prussia, and furthering the alliance, and Prince Eugene of Würtemberg,† Alexander's uncle, came, sent by Napoleon to dispose his nephew to peace; but Alexander refused to see him on such an errand, though Eugene succeeded in convincing Frederick William of the inexpediency of the war. The Archduke was also not personally averse to the French, yet the Queen and her party were very sanguine from the favourable impression Alexander was making on the King and his counsellors, in spite of the news of the French success at Ulm. "Nothing," writes Mr. Jackson, from Berlin, November 3rd, "can exceed the Emperor's affability and condescension but his good understanding. He determined yesterday to leave Potsdam to-day, but the business in hand did not allow of his doing so. He therefore will not set out till Tuesday, in compliance with a Russian custom of not beginning a journey on a Monday. During his stay here he has principally applied himself to gain over those individuals (as the Duke of Brunswick) who stood in the way of the object to which we owe his visit. His attention to their Majesties and every person belonging to their Court has been unremitting. He is a very fine, handsome young man, and the evident goodness and amiability of his character seem everywhere to have made their due impression."

A week passed before the Prussian Cabinet yielded so far as to sign a provisional alliance with Austria and Prussia,

* Sir G. Jackson's Diary, &c.

† The Empress-Dowager was constantly asked for money by her brothers, and expended large sums on them.

called the Treaty of Potsdam, and the French ambassador left Berlin with a handsome present from the King.* Alexander also quitted it early on the 5th, being assured that Count Haugwitz should start for Napoleon's head-quarters that very day, and carry him the substance of the treaty; but as soon as he was gone, the ministers, either from fear or a resolution not to adhere to the treaty, kept Haugwitz a week longer in Berlin. Czartoriski throughout urged Alexander to ally himself with Austria alone, and by declaring himself King of Poland to become at once the antagonist of Prussia; but he was influenced in political matters by his desire for Polish independence, and believed it would be more easy to satisfy Austria for the loss of Galicia by permitting her to take an equivalent from Italy or Turkey than to recompense the loss of Posen to Prussia, who was hemmed in by the allies of Russia or by France. The system of inspecting all diplomatic correspondence through Western Germany was now carried to perfection by the French, who were acquainted with the efforts of Russia to gain Prussia, Frederick William's hesitation, and the insufficient amount of the armaments of the allies. Every foreign letter posted at any town within their reach was conveyed to a special department of the French post-office and opened. Handwriting was closely imitated, and fac-similes of the various seals procured. They saw that speed was essential to begin the campaign before the Russians could join the Austrians, or Prussia decide to bring her armies into the field. The Austrians played into their hands by spreading their forces over the hostile territory of Bavaria, utterly regardless that the immense army collected at Boulogne for the descent on England was advancing against them, and they despatched their most distinguished general, the Archduke Charles, with 100,000 of their best troops into Italy, to increase their possessions in that quarter before providing for the safety of Vienna itself. Their minister, Cobentzel,† received false intelligence that Napoleon's army had embarked for England, and also trusted to the strong fortifications of

* Sir G. Jackson's Diary, &c.

† Cobentzel was unfriendly to Russia, having been summarily dismissed from the empire by Paul.

Ulm, the bulwark of the empire; but within less than three weeks after crossing the Rhine (September 26th) the French captured 20,000 Austrian prisoners, and compelled Schwartzenberg and the Archduke Ferdinand, the Austrian commanders, to retire to their head-quarters in Bohemia, and await the arrival of the Russian detachments.

As Baden and Würtemberg, though secretly allied to Napoleon, had never declared war against Russia or Austria, the ministers of the Allied Powers were left at Stuttgart and Carlsruhe. Napoleon ordered their hotels to be broken open, their papers seized, and themselves imprisoned as soon as he entered those capitals, but in Carlsruhe the Russian ambassador made his escape. At Stuttgart Ney even plundered the Elector's palace, and carried off the horses, and the peasants were treated with as little mercy as if their Sovereigns had openly armed against France. Yet their armies proved of considerable use to Napoleon throughout the campaign. There had been great dissensions in the Court of Stuttgart, where the Elector's mother, who was Alexander's grandmother, still lived, but was influenced entirely by the fickle politics of Prussia, while the Elector himself, a rude, coarse martinet, given up to the pleasures of the table, was inclined to favour the progress of France, for he had never forgiven being expelled from Russia in the reign of Catherine II., and his son, though on bad terms with him, entered Napoleon's service, and frequently bore arms against his relative and future brother-in-law, the Czar.

The old Austrian general, Maek, surrounded in the fortress of Ulm with 30,000 men, was quite unequal to the daily harass of a siege. He heard that all Germany was armed against Austria except Prussia and Saxony, and that they wavered between the two belligerents; and when Napoleon sent to inform him that if the garrison did not immediately capitulate, he should treat it as he had done the garrison at Jaffa, and put every man to the sword, for "it was the sad right of war," the old general completely lost his head. Ségur was sent to parley with him, and states that he was like a man troubled with delirium: he was easily made to believe that he could expect no relief from his allies, for Boulogne, where the French army had been first assembled, was nearer to

Ulm than Russia. On October 20th he gave up all his cannon and soldiers to the enemy—an act which had a most unfavourable influence on the Prussian Cabinet, and made the king draw back from his pledged word, and delay the order for the movement of his troops. As Napoleon watched the officers marching out of Ulm, he roughly addressed them, abusing the policy of their Government for betraying Europe by introducing into her disputes hordes of Asiatics. “Instead of attacking me,” he said, “the Aulic Council ought to have sought my alliance to drive back the Russians to the north. The union formed by your Cabinet is a compact of the dogs and shepherds with wolves against the sheep. It is fortunate for you that I have not been worsted.” In his bulletins he placed no limit to the terms in which he described Alexander and his troops: the Emperor was “a Cossack,” “a barbarian,” &c., and his army the terror of its allies. He wrote to his brother Joseph from Brennau, October 30th, 1805, “The Russian army looks down on the Austrians, who seem no longer to like fighting.” When the first Russian army of 40,000 men arrived in Moravia, exhausted by their long march, they found the Austrian force they had been ordered to join entirely dispersed, and Kutuzov only remained on the right shore of the Danube, instead of returning to wait for the Guards, at the request of the Emperor Francis; but one division under Bagration quickly repulsed Murat at Lambach, and another beat Mortier at Krems, capturing 1500 prisoners, five guns, and two standards. Napoleon was mortified at this first repulse in the campaign, and tried to separate the allies by accusing Russia of ambitious designs to Austria, who was very ready to believe therein. He proclaimed in the provinces he had occupied that maledictions were heaped upon the Russians wherever they passed, and that Austria was being sacrificed to England. “Peace ought not,” he said, “to depend on Alexander, whose interests are so different.” Many of the Austrian Cabinet, even those who had advocated war, began to take alarm, and as in Suvorov’s Italian campaign, lamented the Russian victories. Talleyrand suggested that Napoleon should gain Austria by offering her Moldavia and Wallachia, to embroil her with Russia, in exchange for Venice, and a secret corre-

spondence was carried on between the French and German Emperors, which Maek revealed in an imprudent confidence to Kutuzov. Napoleon wrote to Joseph from Schonbrunn, November 15th: "The Emperor of Germany writes beautiful letters to me, but he has allowed me to occupy his capital: he has not yet shaken off the influence of Russia." A letter from Napoleon to Francis fell into Kutuzov's hands, but courtesy to the Austrian officers present prevented him from breaking the seals. These underhand negotiations paralyzed the remains of the Austrian army, who allowed Napoleon to continue his advance, trusting to the arrival of the Archduke Charles in time to cover Vienna, and to the Russian resistance. "This war," he wrote to Francis, "is for Russia a war of fancy; it is for your Majesty and for me a war which absorbs all our means, all our sentiments, all our faculties." "Russia is the only nation," he said on another occasion, "which can afford to wage a fancy war." The Russians finding that they were drawing an army of 140,000 upon them, and being almost without provisions, at last retraced their steps to meet Alexander; and to protect Vienna burned one bridge communicating with her over the Danube, the other being in the charge of the Austrian general, Prince Auersperg. He was aware of the negotiation between Francis and Napoleon, and hourly expected peace, so that when Murat assured him on the *honour of a Prince** that an armistice was concluded, and that one of its articles stipulated for a French corps to be posted near Vienna as a security for Austria's goodwill, the French were quietly allowed to cross the bridge and enter the capital, when Prince Auersperg discovered that no armistice whatever had been signed, and that, though the son of the Gascon publican might be dignified with the title of Prince, he was utterly wanting in the honourable spirit formerly identified with that rank. Napoleon or any other Sovereign could turn ploughmen into noblemen, but he could not succeed in making a gentleman of this grandson of a French serf. Murat tried the same ruse with Kutuzov, but the wily Russian was not so easily deceived, and Prince Bagration's corps was posted to protect his march. Bagration held his ground at Amstetten and Grund with 8000 men

* Goldsmith's Secret History of Bonaparte (1810).

against the repeated attacks of Murat, Lannes, Oudinot, and Soult, who had received a message from Napoleon to "march, and destroy the Russian army." Midnight saw them still struggling, and the Russians greatly reduced, when Bagration, satisfied that Kutuzov was beyond their reach, cut his way with hardly 5000 men through 40,000 enemies, and joined the main army, which met the Guards under Constantine at Wischau in Moravia on the 19th; Alexander having also arrived there the previous night.

The capture of Vienna placed the cannon and commissariat stores* intended to supply the allies in the hands of the French, and instead of finding a strong Austrian army, as had been stipulated, they were met by Francis with only 14,000 fresh recruits under dispirited and rather doubtful officers. Francis longed for peace, but he dared not propose it to his allies after their fatigues and sacrifices, and he therefore advised a battle, as in one way or another it must decide the fate of the war. If the Russians were defeated it would enable him more easily to withdraw from the alliance, whereas if they were successful Alexander might insist upon prolonging the campaign till he had obtained the fulfilment of all the articles of his original treaty with France. The Austrian Emperor did not count upon Prussia, for whom he had an hereditary jealousy, and if she joined and was victorious where Austria had been defeated, her preponderance would be worse than the advanced frontier of France. He sent Count Giulay and Stadion to negotiate with Napoleon, but they were coolly received, for as the Czar had arrived, Bonaparte preferred to try and withdraw *him* from the alliance by a bribe of increased territory on the side of Turkey.

Alexander left Berlin at one o'clock in the morning of November 5th. According to the Russian custom he intended to visit a church before undertaking his journey, and the King and Queen conducted him at midnight into the garrison chapel at Potsdam, containing the remains of Frederick the Great and Frederick William the First. They accompanied their guest to see the tombs of their illustrious relatives† in the small

* The stores captured in Vienna were 2000 pieces of artillery, 100,000 muskets, 600,000 quintals of powder, 600,000 balls, and 160,000 bombs.

† The Empress-Dowager (Alexander's mother) was Frederick William's great granddaughter.

chamber in which they stand, and as time pressed, took leave of him in the vault, and he mounted his carriage at the church door to set off to Weimar. The French newspapers stated that the King and Alexander took an oath of alliance on Frederick's sword, but nothing was known of it in Berlin; and as the three Sovereigns were without any attendance, the French editors were not likely to be better informed on such a point than any of the Prussian ministers or the ambassadors residing in the Prussian capital. If such an oath were taken, the Prussian Sovereign broke it before a month had passed; but the story, though only invented to accustom the French to see an enemy and no longer an ally in Prussia, has been repeated and easily believed by the lovers of historical romance. That no trust can be placed in the French news of that day, or the official bulletins, is evident from the fact that the French post-office had special orders not to transmit any copies to the army, who would at once have detected their want of truth, and an official who sent a *Moniteur* to a general in active service was severely punished.

Alexander spent a day with his sister at Weimar, and pushed on through Saxony, where he narrowly escaped falling into the hands of a band of Napoleon's emissaries who, disguised as travellers, had been sent to entrap him. Being without escort, as usual on a journey, the Elector of Saxony made a few soldiers accompany him to the frontier. From Dresden he took the road to Prague, but before he had gone a German mile he heard that a French force of 6000 men was at Petsen, with orders to stop the communication between Prague and Vienna. He therefore changed his route, and travelled by Bautzen and Breslau, and met the Emperor of Austria at the strongly fortified position of Olmutz. According to private letters, which were not likely to understate them, before the battle the entire forces numbered 70,000 men, including the Austrian and Russian Guards. The irregular cavalry may have increased them to 75,000 or 80,000; but historians have generally given the number which originally left Russia, entirely forgetting the losses already sustained. Even the Russian official returns are by no means to be depended upon, from an old standing practice on the part of their officers, who increased their salaries by drawing rations and pay for de-

ceased or discharged soldiers.* Napoleon's bulletins are always inexact on the point of the numbers of either the French or the enemy. "Where there is no danger there is no glory," he wrote to Murat, and it encouraged his men to make them believe they had gained such successes with an inferior force. Nothing varied more than his reports of the relative strength of his own army and the enemy before and after an engagement.

On this occasion, everything combined to make it of the utmost importance that the Russians should gain time and avoid another battle till they had rested after their long march. One corps had been constantly engaged, and the reserves were considerably delayed from being obliged to avoid Prussian Poland, and the difficulty of provisioning a large army in the wild districts through which they passed. Haugwitz had at last left Berlin with the King's ultimatum to Napoleon, and the Prussian army amounted to 140,000 experienced men. The Archduke Charles was recruiting his forces in Hungary, though he was nominally the commander-in-chief of the two armies, and was expected to reach the head-quarters in two or three weeks, while the Archduke John with another corps was on his road; but the stores provided for the Russian commissariat were taken by the French at Vienna and Brunn, and Alexander's army was threatened with starvation. If Kutuzov had been left to follow his own judgment he would have delayed, for over-caution was his fault in war; but he was too good a courtier to raise his voice except to acquiesce in any measure proposed by his Emperor; and the jealousies which openly manifested themselves between the officers of the allied forces made each anxious for a battle in which the Austrians might repair their shattered credit, and the Russians display their superior prowess. The Emperor of Austria's health† inclined him always to consult his own comfort before other considerations, and he longed for the calm of his palace, now occupied by the French, and to bring the campaign to an end. The loss of Ulm greatly discouraged him, and he wished, by a peace between the two

* Muffling, Wilson, and Jomini assert that no army differs more widely on paper and in reality than the Russian, owing to this cause.

† He was subject to dyspepsia, and also, like the Archduke Charles, to epileptic fits.

nations, to stop the slanders concerning himself with which Napoleon filled the public press, not even sparing the Empress. When he saw the formidable warriors collected round his Imperial brother of Russia, he seems to have felt it might tend to the future safety of his own dominions if their bones were left to whiten on the German plains, instead of being allowed to return angry and dissatisfied with Austria to their native land. Constantine arrived at Olmutz with the corps of Guards in as fine order as if it had only left the parade ground at St. Petersburg the previous day; but the want of provisions made it impossible to maintain the rigorous discipline hitherto exacted to prevent depredations on the soil of Austria, and the Russians sent out foraging parties to obtain food and hay.* Alexander marched with a portion of his vanguard, which surprised a French detachment of cavalry and infantry at Wischau, penetrated into the village, and carried off more than a hundred prisoners. He conducted himself most gallantly during the conflict, but when it was over the sight of the killed and wounded made him faint and sick, as many a young officer had been before at the first aspect of a field of battle. On November 27th, Napoleon sent General Savary, his future Minister of Police, to Alexander's head-quarters with proposals of peace. He thought it useless to make a separate treaty with Austria while Russia was in the field, but as Mack assured him that Russia had induced Austria to go to war—upon which he answered, "Then you are but the servants of Russia"—he considered it better to go at once to the master, and desired his aide-de-camp to make arrangements for an interview between himself and the Czar.

Savary asserts that Napoleon really wished for peace at this moment, hardly supposing that the Russians would hazard a battle before they were joined by the Prussians or either of the reinforcements. Haugwitz waited at Vienna, and did not deliver his note on hearing that the Austrians were trying to conclude a separate peace, though Napoleon expecting it had already begun to assail the character of the Queen, and accuse her of an undue partiality for Alexander—a charge perhaps contributing to the unwillingness the King showed to enter into an alliance with the Czar.

* Major-General Stutterheim's Battle of Austerlitz.

Savary arrived at Olmutz, and was conducted through a street crowded with Russian soldiers to the house where Alexander lodged ; but though it was still early he was gone out, and the French aide-de-camp waited a considerable time in an ante-room, among a number of young officers whom he thought seemed very confident of victory. "At ten in the morning a bustle in the street announced the Emperor's approach. He stopped before the house where I was and alighted." . . . "He made a sign," continues Savary, "for all present to retire, and we were left alone. I could not help feeling timid. He awed me by the majesty and nobleness of his expression. Nature had done much for him, and it would have been difficult to find a model so perfect and so graceful. He was then twenty-six years old. I felt regret at seeing him engaged in so bad a business as that of Austria then was, but I was aware of the facilities possessed by intrigue to influence a mind that could not yet have sufficient experience to contend successfully with all the complications on the political horizon of Europe in the winter of 1805. I delivered to him my letter, saying that the Emperor my master, being informed of his arrival at the army, ordered me to carry to him this despatch, and to salute him in his name. Alexander was already somewhat hard of hearing with his left ear, and he turned the right to hear what was said to him. He spoke in broken sentences. He laid great stress upon his finals, so that his discourse was never long, and he spoke the French language in all its purity without a foreign accent, and always used its elegant academical expressions. As there was no affectation in his language, it was easy to see that this was one of the results of an excellent education. Taking the letter, he said to me, 'I duly appreciate this proceeding of your master. It is with regret that I have armed against him, and I shall seize with great pleasure the opportunity of giving him that assurance. I will go and read his letter, and bring an answer to it.'"

"Sire," Napoleon wrote, "I send my aide-de-camp, General Savary, to your Majesty, to offer you my compliments on your arrival at the head-quarters of your army. I have charged him to express the esteem I entertain for your Majesty, and the anxious desire I feel to cultivate your friendship. I indulge the hope that you will receive him with that condescension for

which you are so eminently distinguished, and will regard me as one of the men most desirous to be agreeable to you. I pray God to keep your Imperial Majesty in His holy keeping." Alexander replied, "I have received, sire, your letter with the gratitude it deserved, and hasten to return my best acknowledgments. I have no other desire but to see the peace of Europe established on safe and honourable conditions. I wish at the same time to seize every occasion of being personally agreeable to you. Receive the assurance of it, as well as of my high consideration."

The Emperor returned to the room where Savary was waiting, and brought this answer in his hand. "Tell your master," he said, "the sentiments expressed in his letter gave me great pleasure. I will do all I can to return them. He has long been the object of my admiration. I have no wish to be his enemy or that of France. He must recollect that in the time of the late Emperor Paul, while I was yet but Grand Duke, when the interests of France were thwarted and had to encounter opposition in most of the Cabinets of Europe, I interfered, and greatly contributed, by causing Russia to take the lead, to induce the other Powers of Europe to recognize the new order of things in your country. If now I am swayed by other sentiments, it is because France has adopted different principles, dangerous to the peace of Europe. I have been called on to concur in establishing a more suitable order of things which may satisfy all parties, and for that I have left my own country. Fortune has served you, I admit; but as a faithful ally I will not desert the Emperor of Germany when he is in a critical situation, not yet irremediable. I command brave men, and if your master compels me I shall order them to do their duty."

"Sire," replied Savary, "I shall not fail to remember the message. If your Majesty would deign to listen to me I could satisfy you on many points. The Emperor is more than inclined to peace. This very step proves it."

"Very possibly," said the Emperor; "but the proposals which preceded it ought to have agreed with the sentiments which dictated it. It does the greatest honour to his moderation; but does it argue a wish for peace to propose conditions so disastrous to a State as those offered to the Emperor of

Germany? To obtain a durable peace reasonable conditions should be proposed.”*

“Yes, sire,” said Savary, “but peace must not be made at his expense. Your Majesty must consider what the Emperor sacrifices by his departure from Boulogne; what an opportunity he loses for putting an end to the war with England; the time uselessly employed; and lastly, sire, the fleet which he has just lost in consequence of all this.” (The news of the defeat of the French fleet by the English at Trafalgar had arrived.) “What would the nation say were it not to see some compensation? Whatever peace the Emperor makes with Austria, the Allies alone will be gainers by it; the only advantage he can derive from it is the reduction of the enemy.”

“It is precisely this disposition to diminish the power of his enemies,” said Alexander, “and to increase his own that alarms everybody, and is continually exciting wars against him. You are already so strong by yourselves, from your position and the uniformity of your language, customs, and laws, that you must always be formidable to your neighbours. What need have you for continual aggrandizement? Since the peace of Luneville you have acquired first Genoa, and then virtually Italy.”

“Genoa has been acquired by us,” said Savary, “in spite of ourselves. Necessity compelled them to throw themselves into the arms of a foreign Power. As to Italy, it is altogether our conquest. If it began with republican institutions it was in order to be in harmony with its protecting Power. The changes that have since taken place in its government were intended to make it still follow the phases of our constitution. It must lean on some foreign Power, and has only France and Austria to choose between,” &c.

Alexander said, “If Napoleon is really peacefully disposed, he might add to his immense labours the greatest of all glories—that of putting an end to the calamities of the Continent—by sacrificing the advantages which he claims. I am persuaded that he will not be insensible to the gratitude felt for him when he wins by his moderation the glory and respect which he cannot wrest by force.”

* Alexander carried out this principle in Paris in 1814.

After a little more conversation Alexander gave the letter to Savary. "Here is my answer," he said. "The address does not express the title he has lately assumed. I attach no importance to such trifles, but it is a rule of etiquette, and I shall have great pleasure in changing it as soon as he furnishes me with the occasion to do so." It was addressed "To the Chief of the French Government."

When Napoleon received this letter he thought for a time, and then sent Savary again to Olmutz to propose a personal interview for himself with the Czar. Alexander declined it, "having an appointment with the Emperor of Germany," but sent his aide-de-camp, Prince Dolgoruki, a young officer of his own age, to the French camp. Savary took this opportunity to complete his observations on the strength and resources of the Allies, and obtained some information from the imprudent conversation of their officers. Napoleon took precautions that Dolgoruki should not have the same chance, and met him at the entrance to the French cantonments, encouraging him in the idea that they contained a very inferior force. He was annoyed that so young a man* should be sent on such an important mission. Dolgoruki only stated the old disputed points as the terms on which his master would gladly conclude a peace. "What do you wish of me?" said Napoleon. "Why does the Emperor Alexander make war against me? What does he want? Is he jealous of the growth of France? Ah well, let him extend his frontier at the expense of his neighbours on the side of Turkey, and all will be ended." Dolgoruki answered, that Russia did not care to increase herself, but to maintain the independence of Europe, to assure the evacuation of Holland, Switzerland, and the indemnity she had never ceased to claim for the King of Sardinia. Napoleon cried out he would yield nothing in Italy, not even if the Russians were encamped on the heights of Montmartre. "The Emperor will never desert his allies," said Dolgoruki. "Then he must fight," rejoined Napoleon. "I wash my hands of the consequences."

The two armies were for several days within a few leagues of each other; yet for want of spies and scientific officers among

* Dolgoruki was killed in the campaign of 1806, and his brother in that of Finland in 1808.

the Russians, Prince Bagration was ignorant of the situation occupied by the French advanced guard or the number of the enemy; and the Austrian staff, while it professed to know the country, made some fatal mistakes as to the battle-field and its facilities. A council of war was held November 27th, when Count Langeron, a French emigrant in the Russian service, counselled delay in giving battle, but was overruled by General Weyrother, an officer attached as Austrian aide-de-camp to Alexander, and the real commander at Hohenlinden, under the Archduke John. He was a theoretical more than a practised general, though his military system was that of Frederick the Great, which Alexander had learnt on the parade-ground at St. Petersburg; but at Austerlitz it proved its inferiority to the new system of the French Republic. Kutuzov wrote to the Emperor Francis to recommend delay, though he would not oppose Alexander; but he had irritated Francis by disregarding the orders of the Aulic Council when they would have ruined his army, and the Kaiser was therefore little inclined to act by his advice, if he had no other reason* for urging a speedy engagement.

The plan of attack was delivered to the Austrian and Russian general officers soon after midnight, on the morning of December 2nd, having been formed by the Austrian staff with Alexander's sanction; the old pupils of Suvorov sitting by inwardly disapproving, but without lifting a voice against it, and Kutuzov even fell asleep. It consisted in spreading out the Allies into one immense line after Frederick's system, and turning the enemy's right flank, to drive him into the Bohemian mountains, where the Archdukes might complete his ruin. This plan appears to have been communicated by treachery to Napoleon even before it was handed over to the Russian brigade officers. "No one doubts here," writes De Maistre, January 31st, "that the plan of the battle was sent to Bonaparte." Langeron did ask Weyrother, "What would be done if Napoleon attacked them at Pratzen before their movement was completed?"† and when the German replied, "he

* De Maistre.

† Napoleon told Las Casas at St. Helena that if he had attacked the Russians six hours earlier he would probably have been defeated. The assertion of M. Thiers, that the battle was fought without Napoleon's reserves, is now contradicted by all the best authorities.

would have done so already, if strong enough," Langeron said, "he felt sure the French were very numerous by the sounds from their camp." These were caused by the approach of the reserves under Bernadotte, which raised their army to more than 90,000 men. In his report that night, Napoleon admits that his troops amounted to 80,000 men; and these 80,000 all took a part in the contest. In his address to his soldiers the same evening, he informed them that the positions the French occupied were formidable; and "while the Russians are marching to turn my right, they will present their flank to your blows. I will myself direct all your battalions. I will keep myself at a distance from the fire if with your accustomed valour you carry disorder and confusion into the enemy's ranks, but should victory appear for a moment uncertain, your Emperor will expose himself to the first strokes." He directed that no soldier should leave the ranks on the pretence of helping the wounded, and that each was to remember he was opposing the pensioners of England, "who is animated by such a great hatred against our nation."

Even in the position of the Emperors we see the modern system of warfare opposed to that now long become obsolete; for Napoleon in this and nearly all his subsequent battles was beyond the range of the fire—a place obviously the best for a commander-in-chief, where he can coolly survey all points of the two armies, and give orders undisturbed, without subjecting his army to the confusion which a fatal shot fired in his direction would inevitably cause; while Alexander and Francis were in the hottest part of the battle, so that two horses Alexander successively rode were wounded, and Kutuzov, the nominal general-in-chief, was struck close by his side.

The Russian army, following its usual custom, kept a strict fast the day before the battle, and prayers were chanted in the camp. The French force was disposed to the number of 90,000 within the space of two leagues, in the villages between Brunn and Austerlitz, and all, except the advanced posts, slept till four in the morning of December 2nd, when Napoleon mounted his horse. But an hour earlier the Allies began to move from an elevated position called the Hill of Pratzen they occupied in front of the enemy, to execute

their manœuvre. A dense fog rising from a lake in the neighbourhood impeded their operations, and under cover of it Marshal Soult advanced on to the height and almost separated the two wings of their army before they were aware of the presence of his corps; but the sun rose in all its splendour over the French camp, as if Nature herself was arrayed on the side of the enemy.

The first Russian column was led by Doctorof and Buxhowden; the second, consisting of Russians and Austrians, by Langeron; the third by Przybyovsky; the fourth by Miloradovitz and Kollowrath; the fifth by Prince John of Lichtenstein, commanding Russians and Austrians; the advanced corps by Prince Bagration, with Constantine for his reserve; and the Elizabethpol Hussars by General Ouvarof, Alexander's aide-de-camp, a youthful general of twenty-six. Alexander and Francis, with Kutuzov, Czartoriski, and other aides-de-camp, were posted with the central column, which consisted of 12,000 men, and was attacked by double that force, Napoleon being extremely anxious to secure the persons of the two Sovereigns.

This battle was the last in which the Russians laid their knapsacks on the field before they began to fire. They formed a wide semicircle, while the French occupied an interior position, whence their columns started like rays from a centre. Buxhowden's column drove the French from the village of Telnitz, proceeding beyond the enemy's extreme right, when Davoust with his corps came forward to check them, as having carried the second village of Sokolnitz, they issued from it rather disordered. He received them with a tremendous shock, and the village was alternately twice carried by the Russians and French. At this crisis, Soult was thrown on to the Russian centre, just as the 3rd column had left the hill of Pratzen, and the 4th, under Miloradovitz and Kollowrath, were ascending it. Alexander saw the danger, and at once brought the 4th column into action, for according to the plan, its services would not have been required before eight o'clock. Kutuzov* seemed utterly indifferent, and remained motionless.

* Kutuzov asserted in the salons of St. Petersburg that he went in the middle of the night before the battle to Count Tolstoi, the Emperor's Grand Marshal, and said to him, "Count, you have his Majesty's ear; in mercy prevent him from giving battle; we shall certainly lose it." The

“Why do you not move forward?” the Emperor said to him. “I am waiting,” he replied, “till the others are gone,” alluding to the 4th column, originally ordered to pass over the hill before the centre advanced, but at Alexander’s direction now wheeled round in order of battle, and made every disposition to receive the enemy. The Emperor again urged the old general to advance. “It is not a sham fight,” he answered; “your Majesty may command.” He saw the battle was lost, and that an early retreat would be the wisest step. He also thought the head of a corps of 12,000 opposed by the chief strength of the French army was not the place where his Sovereign ought to be. He was slightly wounded in the check, and Alexander ordered Dr. Wylie to attend to him. “My wound is not dangerous,” he said; “the mortal wound is there,” and he pointed to the French divisions of St. Hilaire and Vandamme, which had just succeeded in ascending the heights. After a desperate fight of two hours’ duration, the heights of Pratzen were carried by the French, and six Russian battalions upon it were completely cut to pieces. “During this sanguinary conflict,” says the Austrian General Stutterheim, “Alexander remained with his infantry, and incessantly exposed his own person in trying to remedy the confusion. He ordered his battalions to advance, and try to take the enemy in flank,” &c. General Miloradovitz and Kamensky maintained their ground well, but their subordinate generals were wounded, and they had not enough officers left to lead them. Prince Volkonsky succeeded in rallying Kollowrath’s men, and for a moment turned the tide of the battle. On the Russian right wing, Bernadotte, Murat, and Lannes attacked with equal vigour, also under cover of the fog, and received repeated orders from Napoleon to prevent the Russian Guards and other troops forming that division of the army from forwarding any succour to the centre where the decisive blow was to be struck. Stutterheim says that Constantine,* in a

Grand Marshal repulsed him, and refused to have anything to do with it. “Neither of them,” says De Maistre, “opened the Emperor’s eyes—they were too good subjects for that.”

* Thiers says that Prince Lichtenstein did not come forward as early as he had been ordered, and that the Imperial Russian Guard came up to supply his place; but we can hardly expect the Austrian general to state this fact.

brilliant charge, attacked too soon, and with too much impetuosity; for although his corps formed the reserve of the right wing, it was one of the first divisions to find itself engaged; but he charged Kellerman and Murat successively with the Imperial Guard, trampling three battalions of French infantry under foot, and carrying off an eagle. The French Imperial Guard, under Marshals Bessières and Rapp, was brought up to oppose them, and they fought man to man, so closely interlaced that the Russian infantry stood by and dared not fire, for fear of wounding their own men. The French artillery were not so scrupulous, and added to the mutual carnage, so that the ground was soon strewed with the dead. But the Russian Guards maintained their place till hardly a man among them was left unwounded; and the remainder were captured, or forced back under the very walls of Austerlitz, "with a loss," wrote Napoleon, "which will cause tears of blood to be shed at St. Petersburg." Prince Repnin was taken prisoner, and Constantine received a wound; but his aide-de-camp seized his horse by the bridle and turned it round, and its speed probably saved his life.

Alexander and Francis saw the destruction of the Imperial Guard from a hill, where they had rallied Prince Lichtenstein's corps and the remnant of the shattered centre in order to make a fresh effort against the enemy on the heights of Pratzen; and the hussars, under Ouvarof, still kept up some communication between the centre and the right wing of the Allies. But the whole corps of Bernadotte, the guards and grenadiers of Oudinot, in all 25,000 fresh troops, were brought up to support Soult, and the Russians now fought for existence rather than victory. The survivors of Langeron's division, twice driven by Davoust out of the village of Sokolnitz, were the first to begin a retreat, flying for refuge into Buxhowden's column, which was unacquainted with the disasters of the centre. Buxhowden formed his troops into close column to join the remains of the army clustered round Austerlitz, by a road leading between the marshes of the Littawa and the high grounds adjoining them to the north. Here the fog again impeded them, and they were attacked in flank at different points, till, after a stout resistance, they were overwhelmed. The French bulletins stated that many trying

to cross the frozen lake of Satschan, Napoleon gave orders that the ice should be broken by the artillery; and further, that the Russians, finding themselves on an island of ice, fell on their knees,* while the batteries fired on them and on the ice, till the last man was killed or drowned; the number thus perishing being computed by different French authorities at 2000, 6000, and 10,000. But this story was denied by the Russian Gazette of February 2nd, 1806; and a military author states that the following summer the water of the lake was purposely drawn off and searched, when very few bodies were found in it.†

The battle continued between the right wing of the Russians and the French left five hours after it had become a hopeless contest; the last cheered on by the sight of their standards on the heights of Pratzen and the shouts of victory proceeding from their right. Kutuzov retired with a brigade very early from the field, as if by his absence to protest against the battle; but Alexander was the last Russian officer who turned his back on the enemy, after he had remained the whole day in the hottest fire, and displayed a coolness admired by the Emperor Francis. The Austrian cavalry under Prince Lichtenstein cleared the narrow defile to secure the Russian retreat. The Russian infantry, wearied out with thirteen hours of battle after a night of marching and prayer, "retired very slowly," says Stutterheim, "being plied with the enemy's artillery. The troops marched the whole night under a heavy fall of rain, which completely destroyed the roads, so that their remaining artillery sank in the sloughs and was abandoned, for the Russian horses, weak for want of forage, could not drag them out." "At Austerlitz," says Sir Robert Wilson, "the Russian cannon fell into the French hands from an error in the road, not as trophies gained on that day." The Russian army kept together, maintaining perfect order, and remained the next day nearly on the same ground they occupied before the battle, in the very teeth of the French. Some French officers taken by the Russians declared that "no one but Bonaparte could have kept them so long from giving way to the tremendous attack of the Russian Guards." On December 4th, Bagration

* Editor of Napoleon's Correspondence with Joseph.

† General Mitchell.

defeated some French cavalry in a trifling skirmish. The Emperor Francis went to Zeitsch, at no great distance from the French outposts, and sent word to his ally he should conclude peace with the French. Alexander desired he would not include the Russians in it, and on December 4th crossed the river Morava with his army, comparatively unmolested, and took up his quarters in the castle of Holitsch. He was extremely cast down by his defeat and impressed by the scenes of horror at which he had assisted, much more so than Francis, who took it with great composure, and made up for his fatiguing day by a long night's sleep.

"The enemy was caught in a false position while he was manœuvring," wrote Napoleon the day after the battle. He received Prince Repnin, the most distinguished prisoner, with great good nature. "Your regiment," he said, "nobly performed its duty." "The best reward for a soldier," answered the Prince, "is the approbation of a great captain." "And you have mine," replied Napoleon, who sent him with another proposal to Alexander for an interview wherever the Czar should choose. "What a strange idea that was," he said, "to scatter his army over such an immense space! But it is Alexander's first battle, and my fortieth."

The Emperor Francis met Napoleon two days after the battle at a windmill on the road side near Sarutchitz, at the most advanced post of the French camp. Napoleon's two secretaries, Meneval and Fleury, besides General Duroc, Savary, and Bertrand, and a dramatic author named Longchamps, Murat's secretary, were present on the occasion, and the French Emperor, addressing his future father-in-law as "Mon frère," said he was expecting him to sign an armistice at once. "If you do not consent," he said, "I shall send a courier to Vienna with an order to raze that town. I know that to-morrow Alexander intends to attack me, but it signifies little. Conqueror or conquered I am going to execute what I have just told you, not only in Vienna, but in all the towns in your States occupied by my troops."* This threat was unnecessary as far as Austria was concerned, for the Germans

* Goldsmith, in his *Secret History of Bonaparte*, published in 1810, gives this on the authority of one of those present, whom, from prudential motives, he does not specify.

were crying out for peace on account of the taxes and the enormous requisitions which the French made wherever they appeared ; but it had the effect of making Francis give his word of honour that Alexander would also accept the armistice, and that the Russians should evacuate Moravia and Hungary in fifteen days, and Galicia in a month. He also agreed to separate his cause from that of Russia, and sign a separate peace. Napoleon laid the blame of the whole war upon England, and in a bulletin describing this meeting said Francis entered into the same accusations against both England and Russia, and asserted he was forced into the war ; but this description is as little to be relied on as other conversations which Napoleon put into the mouths of both his enemies and allies. His early schoolfellow and aide-de-camp, Bourrienne, complained of his habit of inventing dying speeches for his officers killed on the field of battle, and, as is always the case, the habit of invention grew upon him with years, till probably in his last days at St. Helena his thoughts hardly framed themselves in accordance with strict truth.* The conference between Francis and Napoleon lasted two hours, when they embraced, and sent their respective generals Stutterheim and Savary to Alexander at Holitsch, to acquaint him with the result.

The Russian army was expected to retreat on Olmutz, and Davoust followed it in that direction ; but the French were not aware of its extreme weariness and destitution, and Bagration's gallant stand prevented them from continuing the pursuit. They were informed by a note from Alexander of the conference between Francis and Napoleon on the 4th, and gladly availed themselves of this excuse for a pause ; otherwise if they had felt sure of success, it would have been considered none at all. "After the loss of a battle," said Napoleon, "the physical difference in the conqueror and the conquered is little : the moral difference is enormous, as we see from the effect which two or three squadrons may produce on a beaten army." "It has been asserted on the faith of a bulletin of Napoleon's," says Lanfrey, "and a boast of Savary, that Alexander was in a desperate situation, and owed his safety

* Even his admirer Alison speaks of "his usual disregard of truth."—*Alison's History of Europe*, ch. xl.

only to the magnanimity of Napoleon ; but this magnanimity appears very doubtful, for Napoleon was then totally ignorant of the real position of the Russians, and thought it better than it was, since he had pursued them in an opposite direction to the one they had taken ; and Alexander's retreat was covered by an army which, notwithstanding its losses, was yet strong. Napoleon even contradicts his own bulletin in his correspondence, as he affirms to Talleyrand, December 4th, that Alexander had with difficulty drawn himself away." For probably the first time in his life, Alexander was three days without a change of linen, all the Russian baggage not left at Olmutz having fallen into the hands of the French, and he passed the night after the battle in a wretched hut, on a bed of straw. He reached Holitsch in a feverish, depressed state, and had shiverings and an attack of faintness, with other symptoms of ague. Dr. Wylie sent over to the head-quarters of the Emperor of Austria, to ask for a bottle of wine ; and received for answer, that as his Majesty was asleep, his aides-de-camp could not take upon themselves to dispose of his stores. The Russians were indignant when they ascertained that both before and after the battle the Austrians had a large reserve of provisions for their own army,* which distributed to their allies would have enabled them to keep their position at Olmutz. Savary accompanied Francis back to Zeitseh, and then proceeded with Stutterheim to Holitsch, where they arrived, Savary says, at four in the morning of December 5th, Stutterheim says at twelve on the night of the 4th ; but Stutterheim obtained immediate access to Alexander, and received his word of honour to conform to the conditions of the armistice. All his counsellors except Czar-toriski thought that he could not do otherwise without disowning and turning against his ally ; and as the treachery of the Austrian authorities was loudly discussed in the Russian camp, no one was in a mood to continue the war on their behalf, particularly as Francis requested him to release them both from their mutual engagements. A bulletin, subsequently published by Napoleon's orders in the *Moniteur*, dated December 5th, from Austerlitz, but not permitted to be circulated in the French camp, asserts that Savary had also had an interview with Alexander at four in the morning, that Alexander

* De Maistre.

said to Savary "his brother Napoleon was a great warrior, he could not think of comparing himself with him; that he, Alexander, never was witness of any battle; he was now serving as a private, and it would require a century to bring the Russian army to the degree of perfection which the French army had acquired," &c. Goldsmith* asserts that Savary was not allowed to penetrate further than the Russian advanced posts, it being supposed that he had again come to act as a spy. When Alexander saw this passage in the *Moniteur*, he stated, through the *Hamburg Correspondenten*, that the contents of that bulletin were a glaring, impudent falsehood, declaring on his Imperial word of honour that he had never seen Savary on that occasion, and appealed to Savary himself as to the fact of his having seen him, and to all the Russian officers whether he had not given positive orders that this general should not be allowed to penetrate beyond the Russian advanced posts.

"I can assure the Russian Emperor," says Goldsmith, who was then in France, "the contents of that bulletin did not surprise him more than it did Savary himself, when he read it in the *Moniteur*;" and although Napoleon contradicted some of Goldsmith's† statements, he did not attempt to refute this. An article appeared in the *Gazette of St. Petersburg*, dated Holitsch, December 5th: "The exhausted powers of the Court of Vienna, the misfortunes it has sustained, together with a want of provisions, have compelled the Roman Emperor, in spite of the strong and vigorous support he received from the Russian troops, to conclude a convention with France, to which a peace must soon succeed. His Imperial Majesty having come to his assistance as an ally, had no object in view than his defence, and averting those dangers which threatened his empire; and since his Majesty the Emperor, under the present circumstances, deems the presence of the

* Goldsmith's Secret History of Bonaparte. 1810.

† Savary has repeated the bulletin in his Memoirs, but the man whose very office obliged him to adopt a course of falsehood and intrigue, and who could even rob the Queen of Etruria of the jewels which she placed in his protection, is no more to be relied on than his master.

The thirty-fourth bulletin, dated Brunn, December 10th, says: "The first adjutant, Junot, despatched by his Majesty to the Emperors of Russia and Austria, saw the last at Holitsch, and was very graciously received, but he could not fulfil the object of his mission, as the Emperor of Russia and General Kutuzov were both on their way to St. Petersburg."

Russian troops unnecessary in Austria, his Majesty is pleased to order them to leave Austria and return to Russia." In a postscript it is added, that the Emperor Alexander took leave of his Imperial Majesty of Austria at ten on the morning of the 6th, and immediately proceeded to St. Petersburg. He was accompanied by Dr. Wylie and two or three officers in his rapid journey incognito over the Carpathian mountains, where, owing to a want of money, they met with some adventures, and the Emperor bought a new shirt from a Jew. Alexander has been often blamed for not remaining longer in the Austrian dominions, and disavowing any share in the armistice, for Kutuzov offered to renew the battle two days after the defeat, and Czartoriski wished the Russians to wait till the arrival of the Archduke Charles, and agree with him to continue the war. But he had no reason to suppose that the Archduke, who had only reluctantly consented to the war at all, would now disavow the preliminaries of peace signed by his brother Francis, and differ in opinion from the ministers, or from the Austrian people at large, who were crying loudly for peace, and suffered intensely from the unscrupulous depredations of the French. A sum of 100,000,000 francs had been demanded from Vienna and Upper Austria, besides the maintenance of all the French garrisons, who, if the armistice had been broken, would undoubtedly have carried out their master's threat, and laid the towns in ashes. On subsequent occasions Napoleon showed he was fully equal to it when influenced by revenge. To have come originally as the Emperor of Austria's ally, and then exposed him to such outrages, would have been perfectly unjustifiable, and Alexander was always true to his plighted word; a slave, as continental politicians considered it, to his personal honour. The provisioning of his army was another difficulty, for the Russians were subsisting on less than half rations, which must soon fail; the French were fast clearing the neighbourhood of forage, and a retreat having been decided upon, Alexander's presence was more required in St. Petersburg. Those about him hoped that a change of scene might remove the painful impression which the battle had left upon his mind: he had not slept for several nights, and was too accustomed to long and rapid journeys to feel them anything but a rest. He

openly regretted that Kutuzov had not insisted more on his own opinion, and fifteen years afterwards, December 2nd, 1820, he was transacting business with Miloradovitz, then governor of St. Petersburg, and said to him, "Do you remember that this is the anniversary of the unfortunate day?" "I do not see why your Imperial Majesty should call a day unfortunate," said the courtly soldier, "in which officers and men fought like lions."

"Yes, the soldiers did their duty well," said the Emperor; "but it is their duty to be massacred when the commanders take false steps. The divisions Langeron* and Przybyovsky were alone found wanting in valour, and both generals lost their command."

The Prussian negotiator, Haugwitz, had an interview with Napoleon at Brunn November 23rd, but had since waited at Vienna without presenting the King's ultimatum, and he now suppressed it altogether, congratulating him instead. On December 15th, 1805, he signed a treaty making over to France Anspach and Neufchatel in Switzerland (which then belonged to Prussia) in exchange for permission to keep Hanover, and also Swedish Pomerania; the Emperor Alexander having failed to effect a reconciliation between Sweden and Prussia during his last visit to Berlin. Alexander was still ignorant of Prussia's bad faith; and the day he left Holitsch he gave orders to his brother Constantine to proceed to Berlin and offer the assistance of his army to Prussia before it evacuated Poland; and he also despatched Strogonof to London, to carry assurances of Russia's non-acceptance of the peace with France. He travelled with the speed of a courier to St. Petersburg; and a letter announces, December 22nd, that "yesterday, at five in the morning, our beloved Sovereign returned in good health, to the great joy of this capital, where he was met by the glad acclamations of its inhabitants. A day of thanksgiving for his safety had been observed at St. Petersburg." An English traveller was much struck by the enthusiasm exhibited on his arrival, though coming, as was well known, after a defeat. The Russian army brought away 200 of its

* Langeron and Buxhowden quarrelled during the battle. Buxhowden said that Langeron saw the enemy everywhere, and Langeron accused Buxhowden of being drunk.

guns, and was refitted at Robryn, a small town in Prussian Poland, where a Prussian newspaper of the day states that all tailors and shoemakers were brought into requisition, and most liberally paid for the rapidity with which they supplied new boots and cloth uniforms. The St. Petersburg Gazette (February 2nd, 1806) contained a refutation of some of the French accounts of the battle, particularly their false estimate of the two armies, the Russians having been 15,000 or 20,000 less than the French. "The scarcity of provisions was so great that for nearly two days before the battle the Russians had nothing to eat; the horses were famished to such a degree that those belonging to the artillery could no longer draw, so it was of little use. The total failure of provisions and forage was alone sufficient to prevent our maintaining our post any longer at Olmutz. The Imperial Guard, stated to have lost all its colours, is still in possession of them, and has taken one pair from the enemy. If our loss were as great as the bulletin pretends, why were we not pursued, as that bulletin falsely asserts? The armistice was concluded only with the Emperor of Germany, at whose particular desire the Russians first began their retreat, which was effected in good order and without loss. The bulletin says that the French Guard, the reserve troops, took no part in the battle. It afterwards asserts that when the French battalions were broken by the Russian Guard, Bonaparte ordered Marshal Bessières to advance, and that the Imperial Guards on both sides immediately came into action," &c. As even the French returns gave 212,000 men encamped on the soil of Germany, with the command of the Austrian military stores and the resources of Italy and Hungary, they would have had an enormous preponderance in strength if the Russians had waited to give battle till the arrival of the two Archdukes; and the difficulty of bringing up recruits in the winter through Poland, which contained nothing worthy of a road, was shown in the French campaigns of 1807 and 1812. The delays Prussia interposed at Napoleon's instigation by forbidding the Russian troops to cross her territories completely ruined the campaign for that season, but it might have been retrieved if she had entered the lists at the stipulated time. Although since Catherine II. exerted some influence over the Emperor Joseph, Austria had

shown herself very jealous of Russian interference in European affairs, Alexander had involved himself in her quarrel from the expectation of having Prussia and all Germany for an ally, in which case a simple demonstration would probably have been enough to obtain their moderate demands from France. Yet even the provisions for his army in Austria, which he had agreed to purchase, were never supplied.

The Queen of Prussia and her husband's cousin, Prince Louis, though unable to influence the King, still headed a powerful party indignant at the contempt with which Prussia was treated by France; and she* herself wrote to Alexander to beg him to keep up the war. The higher officers of the Prussian army believed themselves as superior to the French as they were in the days of the great Frederick; but the ministers were supposed to be in the pay of France, and afraid to quarrel lest Bonaparte should reveal their intrigues. Haugwitz was known to be a dissipated man of fashion and loaded with debt; and the King's favourite minister, Lombard, was loudly accused of having sold his country's honour. In the year 1806, just before the battle of Jena, when impoverished and very ill, he declared to Gentz that when he saw Napoleon at Brussels in 1803, he was completely duped by him. "He gained me less," said Lombard,† "by his cajoleries than by the ideas that he inspired me with of the greatness and nobility of his character, by his philanthropic and peaceful language, by the hypocrisy with which he spoke of Prussia and of his particular attachment for her. Before the end of the year 1803 I was undeceived. But I could do nothing. Do you know the King? My complete justification is in that question."

Sir George Jackson writes of the battle of Austerlitz, from Berlin, December 11th, that Alexander exposed himself recklessly, but the Russian loss was not so great as the French assert, and such another victory would nearly ruin Bonaparte. A week later, he says, Constantine had been in Berlin for ten days, and being as fond of dancing as the Queen herself, several balls were held by the Court, with other gaieties which seemed rather unseasonable. The impression Alexander made on the Berlinee was extraordinary, and they

* De Maistre.

† He was the son of a French hairdresser.

grew enthusiastic in speaking of him. If the King had been in the battle of the 2nd they could hardly have shown more anxiety as to his fate.

The King of Prussia hoped to keep Hanover through the Czar's mediation with England, and he had promised Alexander not to accept it without her permission. But he felt himself driven to consent to its annexation by the French taking possession of Anspach and Neufchatel, according to the treaty signed by Haugwitz, ostensibly in exchange, though really to stop all further clamour about their violation of neutral territory in this province; and hoping to appease the Czar, he sent the Duke of Brunswick to St. Petersburg (March, 1806) to negotiate a marriage between his brother Prince Henry and the Grand Duchess Catherine Paulovna. To make the annexation more palatable he offered to form an establishment for the princess at Hanover, and to assign the whole revenue of the electorate for the support of her Court. The Duke was received with great distinction in Russia, but the suit was refused, and the English in Berlin saw Napoleon's influence prevail more than ever over Frederick William after the battle of Austerlitz, and Alexander made no effort to recover his, though he again prevented Prussia from seizing Swedish Pomerania. The ministers of the Italian potentates at St. Petersburg having looked forward to this campaign for the restoration of their princes, murmured loudly at the mode in which the war had been conducted. "It is a miracle," writes De Maistre, speaking of Alexander,* "how the wisest of princes, the least confident above all in his own lights—for that is the strangest point of all—how, I say, such a prince should have given battle against the advice of all his generals on the opinion of a few young courtiers. A few steps behind him there was an army coming to join him. . . . This young and valiant Emperor has on this occasion done not only all that he ought, but more than perhaps his high quality required. He threw himself two or three times into the middle of the Austrians, and neglected nothing to reanimate and unite them." De Maistre further asserts that the Austrians yielded with scarcely a struggle, asking

* *Mémoires et Correspondance Diplomatique.*

mercy of the French almost before they were struck. He says the Germans were crying out for peace at any price, and Francis urged Alexander to give battle; the Czar was too prudent and too much afraid of alienating the Austrians, so allowed their plan to be followed. He repeats that Alexander was greatly shocked by the sight of the wounded, and had since been much depressed. "He thinks himself useless to his country because he is not a great general: he might as well wish to be an astronomer. He has since Austerlitz occupied himself unceasingly in drilling his troops. This over-energy displeases the Russians, who hate order and minutiae, and the officers begin to send in their resignations—even the Guards want theirs. His heart is the most naturally good and honest one can imagine. Unfortunately his subjects like better to criticise him than to instruct him. Men like us would bear him to the clouds; here they amuse themselves with throwing him to earth. I assure you he is more really loved by the King of Sardinia's subjects than by his own. You do not know what precautions he takes not to be deceived, and not to espouse the passions of the men whom he employs. When I think that he has been brought up by a master who only taught him the philosophy of the 18th century, and by a father who only taught him the corps de garde, in thinking what he is," &c.

De Maistre adds that Bonaparte was anxious for an interview with Alexander, that he might publish it in Paris. "He certainly wanted for some reason to see him. He made a great effort to persuade him to have an interview. Savary said he had kept sight of him through the battle, and had observed him twice mount a fresh horse, twice white and once bay. They say here that to moderate Alexander he ought always to have a grey head near him."

The Emperor offered the King of Sardinia a residence at Odessa until he should be more successful in his attempts to restore him to his throne; and continued to pay the expenses of his embassy at St. Petersburg, and of the small Sardinian colony which resided there, till 1814, when by his efforts the kingdoms of the Italian peninsula were restored to independence. From the year 1799, when the King of Sardinia maintained a

regiment of sharpshooters at the cost of the Emperor Paul, the Court of Sardinia was supported by Russia till the peace of Paris, and we have seen how she repaid her protector in 1855.

The old Russian nobles, like Rostopchine, accused the Livonian and other non-Muscovite officers, and the ministers in authority, of the failure of the late campaign. "Aratchaief," writes Rostopchine to Zizianof, January 24th, 1806, "has spoilt the artillery, and it was not only unable to act at Austerlitz, but it has been taken. . . . Nevertheless he is always in great favour. Notwithstanding my love for my country, I have become calmer, for I see that God alone can save us. Everything is falling into ruins, and in the shock will crush unhappy Russia. In a time of peace last year there was a deficit in the budget of four millions. In the army there are neither generals nor officers, and even the spirit of the soldiers is not Russian. Salt is wanting in three governments, the peasants beat the governors, every body steals; and yet the Emperor only thinks of doing good, and would be incapable of doing harm, even to a fly. . . . If Bonaparte sees Prussia waver he will treat her like Austria, and will not give her allies time to come to her assistance. . . . I need not describe to you the consternation of all Russia: the defeat, the treason of the Germans, the uncertainty of the future, the recruiting, the bad harvest, all join to impress a seal of sadness on the nobility and the people. Every one is silent, except the ministers, who dispute and drink to obtain forgetfulness." To one of his sisters-in-law he observed of the late battle, "How could God protect the arms of a bad son?" a remark with which Alexander was made acquainted through one of Rostopchine's numerous enemies, and which struck him to the heart. It was believed that he never forgot it, for it was often said of him that he could forgive but could not forget.

Lord Castlereagh declared in the House of Commons, January 28th, 1806, that Austria had not kept to "her agreement with Russia, or to the military plan she had herself drawn out, but was guilty of an absolute breach of the understanding entered into with Alexander by her advance beyond the Inn and the consequent capitulation at Ulm. But Russia conformed most strictly to the plan. Her aid was limited in

the first military view of the operation to the first army of 56,000 men, which arrived two days sooner than was expected at Brannau, on the Inn." In the speech in which George III. opened Parliament, January 21st, he said: "It is a great consolation to his Majesty that, although the Emperor of Germany has felt himself compelled to withdraw from the contest, his Majesty continues to receive from his august ally, the Emperor of Russia, the strongest assurances of unshaken adherence to that generous and enlightened policy by which he has hitherto been actuated, and his Majesty has no doubt that you will be fully sensible of the important advantages to be derived from preserving at all times the closest and most intimate connection with that Sovereign."

As was only to be expected, the battle of Austerlitz did not heal the bitterness existing between the Russians and Austrians since the war of 1799—only six years before. The Russians remembered the cruel snare set for old Suvorov, because he laughed at the Aulic Council's plans, and how his allies attempted to draw his whole army into the jaws of the French; and they said that Francis and his councillors, being jealous at the checks Kutuzov opposed to their enemies, had played the same game, and secretly bought better terms for Austria by offering to lead Alexander and his forces to destruction. Napoleon had long been a terror to the Austrians, and a panic seemed to seize them as soon as they were face to face with the French.* But Czartoriski still held by Austria for the sake of Poland, and asked for the war to be sustained only against Prussia. He was thought to be influenced by the reigning Empress, who was jealous of the Queen, and he addressed a long letter to Alexander† (March 22nd, 1806), in which, after enlarging on the empire's peril, he asked for his own discharge, as he foresaw that the Poles might be implicated in coming events; and if the war approached their borders, he could not answer for them. He would not even answer for the Russians, who were now hardly able to bear their diminished national glory. "The various reports circulating in the two capitals make us very uneasy on this subject." He said that Alexander "took upon himself the sole responsi-

* Correspondance du Prince A. Czartoriski, par Mazade.

† Sir G. Jackson, De Maistre, and others.

bility of every measure, and of its execution in the smallest details, whereas the spirit of a bureaucracy ought to transfer it to the ministers;" that in the most important crises he decided matters involving the safety of the empire without consulting any one; that he had paid no attention to his (Czartoriski's) advice in his choice of envoys and diplomatists. "You have shown that you will not yield to importunate suggestions, so now my resignation would not be attributed to intrigues, which never influence your decisions, and it will please many." He enclosed a memoir dated twelve days later, intended only for the Emperor, as it is of his conduct he particularly speaks. Yet it was written out in another handwriting, a fact to which Alexander alludes in his reply. It complains that he had rejected, "in a manner which gave no hope that he would recur to any of them again, the plans constantly laid before him during the last two years; such as taking possession of Moldavia and Wallachia, making the Vistula his frontier, the reunion of the Slavonic and Greek people, &c.—in short, acquiring those provinces for Russia and securing commercial outlets. But events have shown the urgent need of extending and securing our influence, of increasing the limits and the means of the empire, either for maintaining Russia in the place she ought to occupy, or for establishing a durable peace. All would be based on the purest and most disinterested sentiments; but in the development of measures required for the general welfare and common defence circumstances would have led you in spite of yourself, and without having dreamed of it, to obtain considerable personal advantages. It was certainly the finest means, and perhaps the surest of success; and in two consecutive instances we have been so near to it that we had only to persevere to attain it."

Czartoriski adds, that he is perfectly aware no State measure could ever be carried out of which Alexander did not thoroughly approve, and that no system not based on patriotic and generous motives would gain his approbation: yet that he had evident misgivings as to their late policy, "and gave himself over to regrets painful for himself, and still more for his Cabinet." Czartoriski had pointed out they had gone too far to recede, but Alexander would certainly be reproached with

the over-caution his ministers had displayed, through fear of acting contrary to his wishes. "When the news of the Duc d'Enghien's death reached us, anxious as I was in my private capacity to express my horror and relieve the noble and energetic sentiments which guided my heart, I proposed no step such as those taken; the despatches I prepared contained very warm, but not public representations, and it was you who alone gave the impulse on that occasion. I own that, far from seeing this flight with regret, I rejoiced, and would not stop it by remonstrances, though knowing the consequences, and that the threatened war would now be inevitable." He was sure Alexander "hoped throughout to avoid active hostilities, thinking that Austria had not courage to begin, for he refused to call out a sufficient levy of recruits in 1804, in spite of repeated representations. His Majesty must also blame himself for two great faults: the first, not employing, as he had been advised, large forces in Georgia to put an end to the Caucasian war (though, as the result proved, it was not of a nature to be finished at once); and of not ordering his troops to march earlier *for* Austria, and *against* Prussia. Suvorov said, that one moment decides a battle, an hour the campaign, and a day the fate of empires; but Bonaparte is the only man in Europe who knows the value of time, and that is enough to give him constant success. He profits by the present moment without troubling himself about the consequences." England and Austria had both approved of using force with Prussia, and the plan had been arranged with that view. Yet Alexander told his ministers he only wished to join against France, on the great probability, and almost certainty, that the King would be his ally. Czartoriski entreats Alexander to believe that his freedom of speech is the result of his loyalty, for he attributes their disasters to the interview at Memel. "I regard that interview as one of the most unfortunate of events," both from its immediate consequences, those present, and those to come. "The warm friendship you contracted there with the King at the end of a few days, caused Prussia to be looked upon as a person who was dear to you and to whom you were indebted; not in the light of a political State. This personal tie with the Sovereign of a Power whose interests are chiefly opposed to Russia, tram-

melled your Cabinet, and prevented it from acting vigorously at the opening of the campaign. You would not permit any hostile plan against Prussia; you even reproached yourself for your middle course, instead of weighing the interests of a State against a State; the more so as the King has proved he is perfectly incapable of appreciating or responding to such sentiments." Alexander suspended the entrance of the troops into Prussia instead of making war with her, as his Cabinet proposed on receiving certain despatches from his envoy at Berlin, which after all were in error, and Russia had only exacted submission to her will: whereas, by Prussia's conduct towards Napoleon after the violation of her territory at Anspach, she showed that she might always be intimidated, and she would have wished to treat before the Russians had defeated her in one battle. "We should have hastened to reduce Prussia as Bonaparte reduced Austria, and it would have cost us less. I consider this counter-order and your departure for the army as the causes of the late calamities."

He then reminds the Emperor that he had used every argument to induce him not to join his army, lest Court and party intrigues should be removed to the camp. The generals would no longer pay the same attention to their business, and a sovereign ought never to run the risk of sharing in a defeat. The whole army longed to attack the Prussians, and then the Poles would have rallied round him; but every day's delay in the Russians entering Prussia was a day gained for France and lost for Europe. He complains that on the journey to Pulawy and Berlin, Alexander had given his ministers few opportunities of consulting with him, except at the post-houses on the way; that he had reproached himself for all that had been done, and visibly regretted it; that he had shown a predilection for the Prussians which in their eyes weakened the arguments of his ministers, and "made worse the stipulations of the unfortunate Treaty of Potsdam, to which I shall always regret that the concurrence of circumstances forced me to put my name."

"On your arrival at Olmutz two ruling opinions prevailed. Some wished to quit the neighbourhood without striking a blow; others to fight as soon as possible, and then leave it.

We heard of nothing but complaints of famine and the Austrians, . . . so that the two allied armies soon hated each other more than the French. As to the famine, the same want of food had been endured till then; the army had been more fatigued, yet you heard no complaints. The troops fought, supposing you wished to bring your enterprise to a fortunate end, cost what it might. As soon as you arrived you were overwhelmed with complaints, which ought to be severely repressed, as they only make hardships more poignant. Whatever privations the troops had to support they should have been endured patiently, rather than ruin Europe and the credit of the Russian armies.

“ It signified little, sire, that you showed personal courage in a battle. . . . Instead of constantly visiting the advanced posts, or later exposing yourself in front of the columns, you should have remained in the rear of the army, not accompanying any of its movements. . . . The prosperity of Russia and the fate of Europe were attached to your person, so that to let you incur danger was to place on a card the fate of the country which had put its safety in your hands, and of the millions of men to whom it belonged. It was to make them risk the same dangers, and to act culpably towards them. There was no sort of entreaty we did not offer, but without effect, and at last you did not even let us speak to you on the subject. Yet if you had taken this advice, and your reputation for personal courage had been compromised, you would have had time enough to re-establish it. If you had not been with the army, but approached it and shown yourself to the troops after the battle, the sight of you would have produced the same useful and touching effect which you saw with so much pleasure at Olmutz. But you have weakened that charm; your presence was no advantage at Austerlitz; and your departure from Holitz, which was only a consequence of your arrival—and, if I dare say so, ill-judged—increased the general discouragement. Before this last crisis the generals felt how much your person increased the difficulty of their operations, and insisted that you should not expose yourself to gratuitous dangers. You would not listen, and may reproach yourself with being influenced only by personal feelings, without respect to the welfare of Russia and all Europe.”

Czartoriski apologizes for the length of his memorial, which he is afraid the Emperor will find "at least fatiguing," but begs that he will hear him to the end. He draws an ideal picture of a sovereign, and warns Alexander against the fear of being influenced by those around him, and the desire to direct everything in person, so as not to leave himself time to attend to his own task, "which is the most essential and most difficult, and without which all the rest cannot move. A sovereign," he adds, "placed at the centre of reunion of so many different rays should only occupy himself with grand directions and general outlines. A man's time and faculties are limited; the same person cannot be at once officer, colonel, general, secretary, minister, &c., and sovereign." Czartoriski's Polish birth, his English education, and his residence in Austria had given him an oligarchical notion of government; but if he had looked back only fifteen years into the history of Russia, he would have seen how the system he advocated had been carried on under Catherine, and produced misery and mal-administration in the provinces distant from the seat of empire. An order emanated from the highest authorities, and was obeyed at a cost of life and treasure far out of all proportion to the object. To keep apart from the executive government—to leave all to the ministers—has ever been the advice of a powerful aristocracy to their rulers, whose greatest sin in the eyes of the nobles was interfering between the privileged classes and their serfs. Czartoriski possessed the old-fashioned views of a Polish magnate, and showed the same indifference to the sufferings of the common soldier, particularly when he was a Russian, who, though exhausted by fatigue and famine, must still be called upon to perform his task, which in this instance was no patriotic duty, but only that of protecting the Austrian empire, for which Czartoriski hoped to procure from her gratitude the liberation of Galicia. He was disappointed at the failure of his cherished scheme; and, as he had pressed for the alliance with Austria entirely in the Polish interest, he was now anxious to exonerate her.

The death of William Pitt, January 23rd, 1806, and the accession to power of the Liberal ministry, including Charles Fox, produced a considerable change in the aspect of the war, for the new British Cabinet protested against its continuance

before it entered office, and now seemed bent on obtaining an honourable peace. Alexander had no wish to begin another campaign without a single ally, and without the means of procuring the necessary funds except by imposing an additional tax upon his people; and at the instigation of the French minister at Constantinople, the Turks were defying their ancient enemy, so that with a war still dragging on with Persia, and the need of a strong force on the Danube, he had every reason to look favourably on Napoleon's overtures, and resolved to send an envoy to Paris. But a peace at this juncture would completely destroy Czartoriski's hope of wresting Posen by force or intimidation from Prussia, and bribing Austria to relinquish Galicia by offering to exchange it with Moldavia and Wallachia, or some other convenient province in the Turkish empire. It was Poland's interest to exhaust the Russian empire in men and money, by sustaining the war with France, that hereafter they might meet on an equality. While he complains that his sovereign would not listen to his counsels, but followed his own views, he still admits that the whole Russian army were disgusted with the Austrians, and anxious to conclude the campaign; and in a subsequent letter he complains of Alexander having carried out the unanimous wishes of the Russian ministry, but then it was a matter which affected the Poles, and decreed the confiscation of the property of those who had taken up arms under Napoleon against Russia. As regarded Alexander's presence with his army, this criticism seems to have had effect on later occasions, till dissensions in the Russian camp rendered it necessary to secure order; and it is acknowledged, both by his enemies and allies, that the campaigns of 1813-14 would never have been carried out successfully if he had not accompanied his own troops; yet even then his safety was thought too great a stake to be placed on any interest not immediately connected with the direct integrity of his empire. Czartoriski says that Alexander exhausted his time and strength in "employments of little use." These were a minute inspection of hospitals, prisons, schools, regiments, legal procedures, and other institutions still in their infancy. Poland was an awful warning of the danger, in a primitive country, of the lax exercise of the sovereign power. He adds, that if Alexander had not been

with the army, and the battle had been lost, the generals would have performed impossible feats to draw themselves out of the scrape. He refers to the confusion at Holitz, where the Russians accused the Austrians of treachery. "It was said you had done enough for others, and ought to think of Russia, as if your safety had nothing in common with the fall of Austria; and this is what you thought fit to reply when I spoke in favour of the King of Naples. I requested the Emperor Francis several times to explain himself to you, hoping it would obtain a favourable answer, but on setting out you told him he could no longer count on your army. This I heard after your departure." It therefore appears that Francis regretted, or pretended to regret, the hasty peace he had concluded; and having heard from his brothers, only wished the Russians to feign a retreat towards their own frontiers—a retreat he had engaged for them to complete within a month. But he could not expect Russia to follow the intricacies of his vacillating policy; and, except in the eyes of a biassed diplomatist like Czartoriski, her proper course was to fulfil the conditions he had accepted on her behalf. Haugwitz had already ignored the Treaty of Potsdam, and concluded another with the French, for the faction opposed to a Russian alliance still held office in Berlin, where Napoleon was secretly influencing the King.

Czartoriski says he took upon himself to write to Berlin in quite another sense, and displeased Alexander, though his despatches could have no effect on a Court like Prussia, and that the Czar was enough to prevent it, when on his return he told the Prussian minister he left her at liberty to make terms with France. He had also rejected his counsel to employ the Russian forces in the Mediterranean on behalf of the King of Naples; and when he had strongly advised him "neither to affront nor embitter Napoleon, but to be very circumspect with regard to him, even to coax him, and not to break off all communication with him," he had neglected a most favourable opportunity of "sounding his ideas, and ascertaining what offers that extraordinary man would be tempted to make to us." He complains that Alexander does not place confidence in his ministers or value their advice, which they do not care to offer if it is never adopted.* After events proved

*The letter and memorial extend over thirty-nine pages.

that Bonaparte had no system of policy except self-aggrandizement, and the advantage of a personal conference with the French ruler was shown a year later at Tilsit. Czartoriski advised Russia to adopt the very system Alexander condemned in Napoleon, and the chief cause of the war—the extension of his frontiers at the expense of his neighbours, and compelling them to acquiesce in his views by intimidation or force. Napoleon had undoubtedly increased his own power by disregarding all principles of justice or international law; but was Alexander to imitate his example when he had acted so disinterested a part, only appearing on the arena as the protector of the weak and the champion of national independence? Czartoriski urged upon him at Pulawy, in October, 1805, the need of at once proclaiming himself King of Poland; but he refused, on the ground that he should be acting falsely by Austria and Prussia, and throw them both into the arms of France. Czartoriski complained that, from that time, Alexander seemed to avoid him; but it was natural that the Emperor should not seek for repeated private interviews with a counsellor whose only remedy for existing evils was to remind him constantly of the promises of his youth, when, with the generous enthusiasm of seventeen, he had pledged himself to restore a national government and her severed limbs to Poland; while at this moment he felt himself unable to fulfil them with honour, as to proclaim himself King of Poland would have involved a demand from Austria and Prussia of the Polish provinces incorporated in their empires. His answer, written in pencil, and dated 1806, is commendable for its moderation, as Czartoriski, being well acquainted with his susceptible temperament—his habit of accusing himself or his evil destiny when anything went wrong, and the remorse he felt after Austerlitz at the fruitless sacrifice of human life—had contrived to inflict many severe wounds:—

“I have received the paper you thought fit to address to me. You desire an audience. I am ready to give it; but I must tell you that I believe it will be of no use, the bases from which we set out being so diametrically opposed.

“After commenting on the critical position of Russia and the evils that she has to fear, the only means that you propose are nearly reduced to these:—

“First, to declare myself King of Poland.

“Secondly, to change the individuals at the head of the departments of War and of the Exterior.

“It would be too long to discuss the first article; but I am ready to explain my views, and the reasons which guide my conduct. As to the second, I am satisfied with the services of the two ministers who are intrusted with the above-mentioned departments. Besides, I see no one who could replace them. Where is this consummate minister who would secure universal approval? Is it General Soutchelen? I decidedly do not consider him to possess the qualities required by a minister of War; and, between the two, I should not for a moment hesitate in giving the preference to General Viasnitinof” (then in office). “For the rest, I cannot even imagine who else you propose. At the same time I see no one for the department of Foreign Affairs. Is it Panine, or Markof? I must esteem those with whom I work, else I cannot give them my confidence. I trouble myself little about clamours; they are usually only the effect of party spirit. Are not you an example of it? and have not you been exposed to criticism, to the animosity of all the public? I have only one more observation to make, that I cannot pass over in silence. It would have been better that the comité* should not have made use of a strange hand to write a fair copy of a paper such as I am answering. Before reassembling we must first make the agreement that, notwithstanding all that may be said in this circle, our individual and mutual relations remain intact; taking for example the members of the English Parliament, who, after having said the strongest things at their meetings, carried away by the warmth that is inspired by public affairs, come away still continuing the best friends in the world.—Ever yours, &c.,

“ALEXANDER.”

Czartoriski was apparently rather hurt by this brief reply, for his answer elicited a second letter from the Emperor:—

“I was far,” writes Alexander, “from intending to give

* The comité, or circle, has been mentioned before as consisting of Strogonof, Novossilzof, Count Kotchoubey, Galitzin, and Czartoriski, and was so called when they first used to spend their evenings with Alexander in the time of Catherine II.

you pain. Speaking of such serious affairs, I must do so according to my conviction, and I so expressed myself. At the end of the memoir you offered to present me with a detailed and general plan of the measures to be taken in consequence of those that you proposed to me. If you wish you can assemble (I mean the select comité) to-morrow after dinner at six o'clock, and we will discuss this plan together.—Ever yours, with heart and soul,
“ALEXANDER.”

The refusal of Russia to include herself in the peace of Presburg (between France and Austria) undoubtedly caused Napoleon to grant comparatively easy terms to his humbled adversary, for he felt he might hereafter require her as an ally if Russia persisted in a hostile attitude. “I will have no alliance with a Power so changeable and so contemptible” (as Prussia), he wrote to Joseph from Wurzburg, October 3rd, 1806. “I want a continental alliance to support my maritime projects. Circumstances led me to one with Prussia; but she is now as she was in 1740, and always has been, without consistency and without honour. Of the three Powers—Russia, Prussia, and Austria, I want one for an ally. Prussia can never be trusted; there remains Russia and Austria. An Austrian alliance once enabled us to be strong at sea. An alliance based on the independence of Turkey guaranteed by us, and with a mutual understanding securing the peace of Europe, would enable me to turn my attention to my fleet. Austria has often hinted this to me.” It was evident to continental statesmen that the interests of Austria and Russia were too opposite for them to become firm allies; while the interests of Prussia and France were more likely to come into collision than those of France and Austria when the Emperor Francis consented to relinquish all claim to Northern Italy. It would have been the height of folly in Napoleon to have turned Austria into an irrevocable enemy, when she had been wavering throughout the war between her adversary and her friend. She was, nevertheless, compelled to pay its expenses, and contributed altogether 5,100,000*l.*, equal to twice the sum in England, to enrich her despoilers; and a portion of her territory was divided between Baden and Bavaria; but these sacrifices were small in comparison with what was afterwards

exacted from Prussia, though on various pretences the French army allowed far more than the stipulated three months to elapse before it restored her garrison towns.

One of the earliest consequences of the defeat of Austerlitz was the deposition of the Bourbon dynasty in Naples, which was replaced by Joseph, Napoleon's elder brother, February 15th, 1806. The kingdom of the Two Sicilies had been protected for some time by the united fleets of England and Russia—although the Queen, an Austrian Princess, had done little to merit Russian assistance, having more than once imperilled diplomatic negotiations by her treatment of Russian subjects. A French army of 50,000 men entered the country as soon as it was known they were no longer required in Germany, and the Court and Government officials fled to Palermo, escorted by the allied fleet; after which the Russian admiral, Siniavine, sailed to Corfu; and to strengthen his position in the Ionian Isles, at the request of the Montenegrins, but without Alexander's orders, took possession of the old Venetian fort of Castel Nuovo, at the mouth of the Cattaro, on the coast of Dalmatia, just as the Austrians had ceded it to the French, according to an article of the Treaty of Presburg. Lauriston, the French commander, seized on Ragusa, which was inhabited by Albanian Christians and belonged to Turkey; and he was soon closely besieged by the Russians and their Montenegrin allies. This caused some irritation in the Austrian Cabinet, as Napoleon threatened to hold her responsible; and on her sending representations to Russia, Alexander made it the ground for despatching a commissioner to Paris, M. d'Oubril, who was charged with effecting a settlement of the difficulties in Dalmatia, and also to listen to Napoleon's proposals for peace. England was engaged in negotiating a treaty with France; but after offering to accept the terms of the Peace of Amiens as a basis, the French diplomatists, finding that England was willing to go so far, thought they might press her still further, and demanded Sicily as a counterpoise to Malta; and this was the point upon which it was finally broken off. D'Oubril's instructions, signed by Alexander and Czartoriski, were to conclude a treaty with France, if possible, in concert with England; and it was only to be a separate one in case England ended her negotiations without con-

cluding a peace. He acted contrary to the spirit of his instructions by signing a provisional treaty of peace; while Lord Yarmouth, the English plenipotentiary, was still corresponding with his Government, and Charles Fox, the British minister for Foreign Affairs, was corresponding with St. Petersburg, relative to the fate of Sicily; so that Napoleon, emboldened by having gained Russia, was the more inclined to insist on the same demands from England, whom he thought would not willingly separate from her one active ally. "In the present circumstances of Europe," Fox wrote to Lord Yarmouth, "the last hope of averting these dangers (dangers that threatened Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, the Ottoman Porte, Spain, and Portugal) is to be found in the union of the only two Powers on whom France has made no impression—Great Britain and Russia."* The contents of this letter were made known to Napoleon through his post-office spies, and he hastened to induce D'Oubril to put his signature to a treaty containing the terms he had proposed, and to which he believed the Liberal Cabinet of Great Britain would accede if they were once accepted by Russia. D'Oubril afterwards declared, that before he signed the treaty Napoleon spent several hours with him, using every argument both of persuasion and menacc, till at last, to use his own phrase, "*il n'en pouvait plus,*" and he took up the pen declaring that he put his name with a halter about his neck to a treaty which he knew would never be ratified. "I go to lay the treaty and my head at the feet of my Imperial master," he said, as he quitted Paris. Yet common report in the French capital declared he was heavily bribed. The treaty stipulated that the mouths of the Cattaro should be surrendered to France, and that the French troops evacuate Germany within three months, the Empire remaining in statu quo. France and Russia were to guarantee the integrity of the Turkish empire, and the King of Naples was to relinquish Sicily, his son receiving the Balearic Islands in exchange for the paternal inheritance. England was to keep Hanover, Malta, and the colonies she had acquired during the war; and Sweden was to retain her Pomeranian possessions. An intimation was conveyed to Alexander that Napoleon would offer no

* A Mission to the Court of Austria in 1806, by Sir R. Adair.

opposition if he chose to separate Posen, the Duchy of Warsaw, and Galicia from Prussia and Austria, and, uniting them with the Russo-Polish provinces, place his brother Constantine at the head of an independent Poland. Such a proposal would have satisfied Czartoriski; but he resigned his office in the Russian ministry in June, 1806, and the treaty was not signed in Paris till the following July. Napoleon felt certain it would be accepted; he immediately wrote to announce it to his brother Joseph. "You may proclaim it," he said, "but must not appear too glad, as that would injure our reputation for power."

A letter from Alexander to Czartoriski, before his resignation, refers to the peace negotiations, Voronzov being still the Russian ambassador in London, though Count Strogonof was sent there on an extraordinary mission after Austerlitz.

" 1806.

"Here, my dear friend, are the papers that you sent me. Voronzov's despatch vexes me exceedingly. Is it right for a single individual* to put on one side the cause of humanity? Why could not Novossilzof acquit himself of his commission? When Voronzov is furnished with precise orders, he must fulfil them or quit his place. The note and the ostensible despatch are approved, as well as the despatch concerning Cobenzel. On this, which ought to serve as an explanation, I have some observations to make. First, you have spoilt me by your style, and that of M. ——— loses greatly in comparison. Then it appears to me that at the first N.B. we might add at the end of the condition *sine quâ non*, that we might consent to evacuate Corfu in reciprocity, only leaving there the corps" (composed of Ionians) "commanded by Nasimof. The second N.B. only concerns the person of Count Stakelberg. Do we know him enough to intrust him with a negotiation so important, and would it not be better to send some one more certain, like Budberg?"

"I cannot approve the composition of the third N.B.; it appears to me inappropriate. How do we find displeasure in what is the object of our wishes, and is it not saying in other words: 'Try to make the thing fail without it appearing like

* Probably he meant the King of Naples.

our fault?' These are the observations I have to make to this despatch, of which I otherwise approve. I seal my cover with Count Tolstoi's seal, not having mine with me.—Ever yours,
"ALEXANDER."

Before D'Oubril reached St. Petersburg with the new treaty, it was already broken by the dissolution of the German empire, long only a phantom, and now pierced to its centre by the States called the Confederation of the Rhine declaring themselves forever separated from the "Holy Roman Empire," and under the protection of the French Emperor. These were the kingdom of Bavaria, now as large and powerful as Prussia before the victories of Frederick the Great, the kingdom of Würtemberg, the Archbishop of Ratisbon, the Elector of Baden,* the Grand Duke of Berg, the Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt, the Princes of Nassau Weilberg, Nassau Usingen, Hohenzollern Hechingen, Salm-Salm, and various other German miniature sovereignties. They gave as a reason that, owing to the declining power of the Austrian monarchy, they were forced to seek another protector "from the growing strength of Russia, whom Austria had even summoned to her assistance," and they engaged to furnish France with a perpetual military contingent of 58,000 men. On March 15th Napoleon's brother-in-law, Murat, was invested with the duchies of Berg and Cleves, and towards the end of April the French troops took possession of the abbeys of Werden, Essen, and Elten, and united them to Murat's duchies, though they had been long considered as dependencies of Prussia. A little later the French generals burned every species of merchandise suspected of being English in the city of Bremen, and made a new requisition of 240,000*l.* from Hamburg and the free towns of North Germany. When D'Oubril arrived at St. Petersburg with his treaty, which was to set the seal of approval to those violent acts, Alexander repulsed it with scorn, and his new ministry, headed by Baron Budberg and composed of noblemen attached to England by feeling and interest, warmly supported him in his refusal to ratify it, though it was by no means contrary to the private advantage of Russia. "The

* Thiers says that the politics of Baden were directed in favour of France through the influence of themorganatic wife of the old Elector.

pretended deed of pacification," said the act of disavowal, "concluded by M. d'Oubril was submitted to a council speedily summoned, and compared with the instructions he had received here and those transmitted to him before his departure from Vienna, and they found that M. d'Oubril in signing that treaty has not only deviated from them, but acted directly contrary to the sense and spirit of the orders themselves." D'Oubril was banished to his estates; for there was an important difference between signing a separate treaty only in case England entirely broke off her negotiations, and in signing one before she had come to any decision on the subject; a difference which has not been perceived by those who have accused the Russian Cabinet of duplicity on this occasion. Her envoy had certainly shown himself unequal to deal with a minister so slippery and equivocating as Talleyrand; for as soon as D'Oubril had left Paris, the French minister told Lord Yarmouth that the Emperor having heard from his brother Joseph that he could not maintain Naples without Sicily, this island must not be left as proposed in the hands of England, or of her ally, but the ex-King of Naples should receive Dalmatia, Albania, and Ragusa as a substitute; offering him a part of the Turkish empire, which France had just engaged to maintain intact. Charles Fox died September 13th, having survived his distinguished rival Pitt scarcely eight months. During this time he owned to "having been weaned from the opinions he formerly held," and that it was impossible "in the actual state of affairs to be sanguine as to the conclusion of a safe and honourable peace;"* a declaration which, added to the negotiation in Paris being broken off under his auspices, directly contradicts Napoleon's statement at St. Helena, that if Fox had lived he would have concluded peace with France. In fact, with such a perfectly lawless and dishonourable government as that of Napoleon, it was impossible for an upright and independent nation to remain for any length of time on amicable terms. When events proved to him how the short sight and dishonesty of his foreign policy had completely deprived France of the benefit of his victories, he tried to justify himself by alleging that "he was never master of his own movements, but was always governed

* In the House of Commons, April 3rd, 1806.

by circumstances.”* This was probably true, and he was urged on to new encroachments by the rapacity of his brothers and generals, who seeing a comrade rise so far above them, clamoured for sovereignties or fortunes, and would not be suppressed. Murat’s officers told him it was shameful that the brother-in-law of the Emperor should only command a small duchy, and a part of the Prussian province of Westphalia was accordingly seized to add to his possessions. Then he wanted to be a king, and Napoleon thought of getting rid of him by making him Sovereign of Poland. As regarded Naples, no government could possibly be much worse than the one Joseph Bonaparte replaced, and the advantages of his administration were soon felt throughout the country. Holland, which received a king in Louis Bonaparte, June 5th, 1806, was differently situated. She had acquired riches and a naval fame, rivalling even that of England, under republican institutions, and it was a fellow feeling for democracy which induced her to hold out a friendly hand to France. During their alliance she had lost her most valuable colonies, the Cape of Good Hope, Ceylon, Surinam, Java, and Sumatra, which Napoleon could not prevent falling into the hands of the English; and now, stripped of all the sources of her wealth, she was compelled to accept an hereditary sovereign in the brother of the Emperor, who was by no means anxious to take on himself so ungrateful an office, and exchange the amusements of Paris for the fogs of the Hague. The new King of Holland was married to Hortense Beauharnais, the daughter of the Empress Josephine, who arranged their union in the hope of seeing her own descendants eventually occupy her husband’s throne. In default of direct heirs of Napoleon, the succession was arranged to devolve on the children of Louis, and a son born in 1803 was brought up at the Tuileries, and regarded by most people as the future sovereign of France. Thither Hortense soon resorted, weary of an indifferent husband, and sighing for the gaieties of the Imperial Court. Her brother Eugene, in 1806, was appointed Vice-King of Italy, and married to a princess of Bavaria, who was betrothed to the young Prince of Baden, the brother of the Empress of Russia. But Napoleon supplied

* Las Casas, vii. 124.

the disappointed suitor with another bride in Josephine's niece, Stephanie Beauharnais. Altogether the progress of the Bonaparte interests, their continual aggressive policy and the insolence and exactions of the Imperial lieutenants, was sufficient to give alarm to the other Powers of Europe, and these considerations, the manner in which it had been procured, and the pressure the British Cabinet was putting on the Russian ministers, induced Alexander to reject D'Oubril's treaty more than the actual terms which the treaty secured for Russia. Napoleon was much annoyed, as he had just irritated Prussia beyond further forbearance, and had no wish to enter upon a war with both the Northern Powers at the same time. He wrote immediately to his ambassador at Vienna: "I am resolved to be no longer the ally of so versatile and contemptible a power as Prussia. I shall keep at peace with her no doubt, because I have no right to shed the blood of my people on vain pretences. However, the want of turning my efforts to the side of my navy renders an alliance necessary to me on the Continent. I have esteemed the Emperor of Austria. I believe him constant and attached to his word. You must explain yourself in that sense without, however, putting a misplaced eagerness in it."

Both England and Austria were anxious above everything to prevent an alliance between Russia and France, which still seemed possible; for when Alexander refused to ratify D'Oubril's treaty, he professed his willingness to negotiate on the basis he had already forwarded to the Tuileries, the principal point being the immediate evacuation of Austria; but before any further adjustment had been proposed, Prussia was most unexpectedly crushed, and the Czar was constrained to step forward for her deliverance, and engage in a desperate struggle with her adversary over her almost lifeless form. Russia had exercised no pressure since Austerlitz to induce her at last to offer some resistance to the ceaseless breach of treaties on the part of France, and prove that she was still an independent Power. The King clung with the greatest tenacity to Hanover and his Polish provinces, and after Napoleon had given him the first Electorate, and he had further irritated the English by excluding their commerce from its ports, he discovered that Talleyrand had offered to restore it to

George III. France had engaged to Russia to prevent Prussia from indemnifying herself with the King of Sweden's German provinces, and at the same time offered them to Prussia as an exchange for Westphalia. She proposed to Alexander to restore Poland under his brother Constantine, and in 1806 organized a Polish legion to operate in Germany, and not as heretofore only in Italy, or in a virtual exile like San Domingo. The German property of the King's brother-in-law, the Prince of Orange, was made over to Bernadotte; and the Queen's brother-in-law was insulted by the French, and a bookseller of Nuremburg tried and executed in his domains because he had published a book by Arndt, entitled "The Humiliation of Germany." France offered to permit Prussia to form a league with the States in Northern Germany, but immediately afterwards claimed the Hansc towns for herself, and also specially excepted Saxony and the Elector of Hesse. The public indignation at Berlin was no longer to be resisted, and the hatred of France overcame the jealousy of Russia. The Prussian army had been reduced only four months before, and everything betokened peace in the North of Europe; but now Prince Louis and the war party openly boasted that Prussia, single-handed, was perfectly competent to strike down the conqueror who had levelled Austria to the dust, and without waiting for the co-operation of Russia, or endeavouring to reconcile herself with the sister German empire, still kept in control by French garrisons, she sent an envoy to London to compose her differences with England and Sweden, and prepared to fling down the gauntlet in the face of France. "The whole of the Prussian army is made mobile in consequence of Bonaparte having announced his intention of taking his Prussian Majesty's Westphalian possessions," writes Jackson, August 26th, 1806.* "The King, it seems, is really determined to resist. Alexander's refusal to ratify D'Oubril's treaty will infuse fresh life and vigour at Berlin, but I rather expect the present crisis will result in a peace."

"Frederick William III. of Prussia began by shedding tears, not for the loss of his father, but from the labour and trouble a crown brought with it, and this not from philosophy, but from an indolent, selfish, sleepy, torpid mind! He is

* Sir G. Jackson's Diary and Correspondence.

wilful and obstinate," writes Lord Malmesbury, "yet without a system or opinion; he thinks he governs, but is governed and betrayed by his ministers."* Yet no enemy could condemn the King more than he accused himself in his answer to Napoleon's information that the accumulation of French troops on his frontiers owed their existence entirely to the armaments of Prussia, and that he would disarm if Frederick William would begin by doing the same.

In a long letter covering four sheets of large paper the King, in the most open and straightforward manner, showed his conduct towards Bonaparte, and the ingratitude and even treachery with which he had been invariably treated by his professed ally. "How did you requite me," he wrote,† "for my recognition of your Imperial dignity, for the many concessions I made, for the marks of condescension I showed you? By the violation of a territory under my especial protection. Who stifled the cry of indignation raised throughout Europe at the murder of a prince who thought himself safe in a country of whose government I again was a member? Was it not I? Did not I undertake to convey your proposals to Louis XVIII., and when that unfortunate prince rejected them, did not I oblige him to seek an asylum in another country rather than give you any cause for mistrust by allowing him to remain in mine? Three times during the last three years have not I been on the point of entering into close alliance with you, and only prevented by the exorbitancy of your demands? To say nothing of Switzerland, Genoa, &c., when you chose to place the iron crown on your head, was not I the first to recognize the act at the risk almost of violating a treaty? When the Continental war broke out, I armed ostensibly to preserve my neutrality; but in fact, I was no longer neutral, for all my armaments were directed against your enemies" (this gives a further contradiction to the story of Alexander and Frederick having taken an oath of alliance over the tomb at Potsdam). "And when, in open defiance of your previous assurances, you dared to invade my own immediate territories, and I could no longer be wholly deaf to the indignant voice of my loyal people, yet I hesitated, adopting finally an armed mediation,

* Lord Malmesbury's Diary and Correspondence.

† Sir G. Jackson's Diary, &c.

and proposed on your own plan, 'les traités, tous les traités, rien que les traités.' At Vienna, again, with the hope of obtaining better terms for Austria, I consented to forego much on my own account; but afterwards, when taking your silence for consent to the representations I made to you at Munich, I put my forces on the peace establishment. No sooner had I done so than you took advantage of it to wrest fresh sacrifices from me, offering as an equivalent a country not your own, and which I had declared I could never take without the consent of England." The King next accused Bonaparte of intriguing with the German princes to prevent their entering the Northern Confederation, and particularly with the Elector of Hesse, who for his refusal was to be rewarded with the dominions of another prince, "and that prince," said the King, "my brother-in-law." He concluded his letter with these words: "By such conduct as this you have at last converted a sincere and even partial friend into a jealous sovereign, alarmed for the safety of his dominions, and even for his own existence."

This letter was revised by Frederick Gentz. Napoleon called it a wretched pamphlet, merely because it spoke the plain truth. "I am sorry for my brother," he said, "who does not understand the French language, and has certainly never read that rhapsody."

Once roused, the Government of Prussia lost no time in preparing for action: the navigation of the Elbe was reopened to English vessels, and the King sent Krusemarck to St. Petersburg to renew the alliance with Alexander on the terms of the Treaty of Potsdam. But the overture was rather coldly received. The Russian Cabinet had so little idea that any provocation would now cause a rupture between Prussia and France, that it believed it to be a plot originating in Paris, and the Emperor answered, he should like to see a proof of her sincere intention to oppose Napoleon before Russia took any active step in the matter, particularly while Haugwitz was in office. The Russian troops had returned to their peace quarters, or advanced towards the Danube; and a war for the benefit of Prussia, after her recent neutrality during the campaign of Austerlitz, would be most unpopular. However, Mr. Stuart, the British Secretary of Legation at St. Petersburg, wrote home, October 9th,

to his Government, that a Russian army under Benningsen had orders to march immediately to Silesia to support the Prussians and cover Bohemia, and the Emperor required Austria to maintain at least a neutrality, so as not to permit a French army by crossing her territories to menace the Russian left flank. But he insisted, as the price of his alliance, that Haugwitz should be dismissed from office, and to the great joy of the war party in Berlin the King complied.

The Prussian army had altered nothing in dress, discipline, or arms since the days of Frederick II., and for either health or freedom of limb their uniform was the most inconvenient they could have worn. Their generals had learned their duty under the same commander, and since his reign had seen very little active service; a short campaign in Poland, and a demonstration against the Republicans in France, in 1792, forming the extent of their military exploits. The Duke of Brunswick, the commander-in-chief, a man of seventy-two, obstinate and mistrustful, has gained an undeserved credit for barbarity by his proclamation on entering France, when he declared every Frenchman, either soldier or civilian, found with arms, would be treated as a rebel to his King; but there was not an instance in which he really carried this severe sentence into force, and his early defeat by Dumouriez gave him an almost exaggerated impression of the formidable character of French troops. Baron Muffling says that he heard more than once from his own lips that he only accepted the command in 1806 as a means of securing peace. He placed his faith in Lucchesini, the Prussian ambassador in Paris, who assured him that Napoleon would never become the aggressor; he had also a great predilection for the French nation, and he listened to no advice except that of Prince Louis and the Elector of Saxony, who prevailed on him to press forward his forces through Saxony into Saxe-Weimar to meet the enemy. But with the halo of glory left by the Seven Years' War, all Europe looked forward to a prolonged resistance on the part of Prussia, and Napoleon addressing his assembled officers at Mayence, said to them, "We shall have earth to move in this war." The over-drilled Prussian army fell into the same error as the Russians at Austerlitz, and spread out their

forces into one long column. The Saxons turned traitors to their German brothers, and were worse than useless, so that when the French occupied the ground they had quitted in the neighbourhood of Jena, they found the Prussians and Saxons had attacked and pillaged each other, and the field was strewed with broken chariots and arms as if they had already been defeated. The Prussian army, including these unfaithful allies, amounted to 150,000 men, and the French, increased by its Swiss, Belgian, Polish, Italian, and German contingents, numbered a still larger force. On October 15th the battles of Jena and Auerstadt, gained by the French under Napoleon and Davoust over the Prussians, completely annihilated the strength of Prussia. The aged Duke of Brunswick and Prince Louis fell mortally wounded,* and the King and his two brothers were also slightly struck in the engagement; on the 18th Erfurt capitulated to Murat, and the Queen and her children fled to Stettin, whence they were forced to retreat to Memel, for it surrendered with all its military stores to Marshal Ney November 8th. The Prussian garrisons vied with each other in their haste to capitulate to the enemy. Napoleon had long possessed himself of the plans of their fortresses; the generals, actuated by republican feeling and divided politics, which made many desire peace with the same terms as Austria, rather than owe success to Russia, laid down their arms in all directions, and the French army made its triumphal entry into Berlin October 27th, where the immense stores collected to supply the Prussians furnished the French with arms and clothing throughout the rest of the campaign. Potsdam was occupied by the enemy, and Napoleon even carried off Frederick's sword from the vault in the garrison church. A heavy contribution was exacted from the inhabitants of all the districts in the possession of the French, and the officers perpetrated the most wanton mischief in the private houses where they were billeted, imitating the conduct of their chief, who stripped the palaces of all objects of value or especial patriotic interest. With his usual want of chivalry, Napoleon filled not only his bulletins, but paragraphs in the Berlin newspapers with accusations of the unfortunate Queen, to whom

* Lord Malmesbury thought the duke had been assassinated.

he attributed the unexpected energy the King had shown in declaring war.

“It is singular,” he wrote, October 23rd, “that the Emperor Napoleon arrived at Potsdam, and entered the same apartment the same day,* and almost at the same hour, as the Emperor of Russia on the journey that this prince made last year, and which was so fatal to Prussia. From that moment the Queen left the care of her domestic affairs, and the serious occupations of the toilette, to mix herself up in State business to influence the King, and spread everywhere the fire which possessed her. The result of the celebrated oath made on the tomb of the great Frederick, November 4th, 1805, was the battle of Austerlitz and the evacuation of Germany by the Russian army. Forty-eight hours afterwards a picture appeared in all the shops, which even excited the laughter of the peasants. It represents *the handsome Emperor of Russia*, near him the *Queen*, and on the other side the King, who raises his hand over the great Frederick’s tomb; the Queen herself in a shawl, rather like the London pictures of Lady Hamilton, is putting her hand on her heart, and gazing at the Emperor. One can hardly imagine how the Berlin police could have allowed so pitiless a satire to be circulated.” He added, “The shade of Frederick must have been indignant at this scandalous scene.” Again, lest these insinuations should not be sufficiently clear, he published the following: “Every Prussian lays the misfortunes of Prussia to the journey of the Emperor Alexander. The change from that time worked in the mind of the Queen, who from a timid and modest woman has become turbulent and warlike, has been a sudden revolution. Everybody owns that she is the author of Prussia’s ills. One hears it said everywhere how much she has changed since that fatal interview with the Emperor Alexander. In the rooms the Queen inhabited at Potsdam we found the picture of the Emperor of Russia which this prince gave to her.” A little later it was announced as an extract from the *Telegraph* of Berlin: “The King of Prussia with his little Court continues his retreat towards the north. It is impossible the sojourn at Memel should not have made some impression on the mind of this

* This was not true.

prince's ministers and councillors. At Memel the first interview took place between the Emperor of Russia and the Prussian monarch. The journey to Berlin, the oath on the tomb of the great Frederick, the warlike frenzy, the ruin of the monarchy, all hangs on that deplorable interview. But happily for both, it is very doubtful if it is in the power of the Emperor Alexander to leave his capital." He compared the Queen to Helen of Troy, and said her beauty was equally fatal to her people. What could be more ungenerous or even brutal than to cast aspersions on a defenceless woman at the moment of her deepest distress, when she was being pursued by his armies from place to place; and to endeavour to rob her of the only consolation left to her in her husband's attachment? In an audience she gave to the Chevalier Gentz at Weimar, a few days before the battle of Jena, she spoke unaffectedly of the partiality for the Russians with which they reproached her. She said that she "rendered justice to the ardour, the devotion, the virtues of the Emperor Alexander, but far from regarding Russia as the principal instrument for the deliverance of Europe oppressed by a conqueror sent forth by France, she had never considered his efforts but as a last point of support for the rest, being persuaded that the great means of safety were to be found in the closest union of all who bore the name of Germans."

Napoleon's strictures on the Queen were not entirely dictated by mere malice, but in the hope of creating difficulties between the Prussians and Russians as well as between Frederick and Alexander, and inducing Prussia to make peace before the arrival of her northern allies; and though the terms required were so severe as to amount to the ruin of Prussia as an independent monarchy, and the King preferred to throw himself, as he expressed it, into the arms of the Emperor of Russia, yet these reports had undoubtedly a chilling effect on the efforts of the Prussian people. They lay, indeed, with a knife at their throat, for Napoleon exacted an oath of allegiance to himself from the inhabitants of all the occupied districts, and levied both the taxes and recruits, declaring he would reduce the Prussian nobility to beg their bread. The King of Saxony and the Elector of Hesse joined him immediately after Jena, and before the war had lasted a month Saxony was reduced to

a worse condition than after the Seven Years' War. The country houses were pillaged, women insulted, and Hardenberg's library wilfully destroyed by the special order of Davoust while he occupied the baron's mansion, and the barbarities exercised in the agricultural districts equalled anything ever seen in modern warfare. England still stood aloof, only rendering assistance by sending a commissioner—Lord Hutchinson—to the King's head-quarters. This nobleman was a particular friend of the Prince of Wales, otherwise he seems to have been selected most inappropriately, for he was Napoleon's warm admirer, and stated the French would reach St. Petersburg before the Russians could gain the Elbe. Fresh levies of French troops continued to pour across the Rhine, and Prussia's last hope of political existence lay in Russia. "The Emperor of Russia promised to aid me," said the King, "and he has the power to do it." "The powerful and magnanimous Alexander is about to take his place by the side of Prussia," he proclaimed to his people. "Our cause is the same; we will stand or fall together."

CHAPTER VIII.

1806—1807.

THE CAMPAIGN OF EYLAU AND FRIEDLAND.

ÆTAT. 28—29.

WHILE a peace negotiation was pending between Russia and France, and even before M. d'Oubril quitted Paris, Napoleon sought to compel Alexander to turn his whole attention to the East. According to the existing treaties between Russia and Turkey, the Hospodars or Viceroy's of Wallachia and Moldavia could only be elected and deposed in concert with the Czar; and General Sebastiani, the French minister at Constantinople, urged the Sultan—Selim III.—to depose them, for the sake of dragging the two nations into war. Selim was intimidated, and in June, 1806, he prevented Russian vessels carrying troops from passing the Bosphorus, and three months later sent an army into the Principalities, which turned out the Hospodars, and lived at free quarters on the inhabitants. Prince Alexander Ypsilanti, the Hospodar of Wallachia, was beheaded at Constantinople in March, 1807, though eighty-five years of age, but his son escaped to Russia. When the news arrived that D'Oubril's treaty was disavowed, Sebastiani prevailed on Selim to carry his measures still further, and forbid any Russian merchandise through the Dardanelles, stagnating the trade with Odessa; yet the terms Alexander required from Napoleon, before their regular diplomatic relations could be renewed, included the evacuation of the Turkish territory of Albania by the French, in addition to the clauses relating to the abandonment of Dalmatia and Sicily, and an indemnity for the King of Sardinia.

The Christian inhabitants of Moldavia and Wallachia were under the Czar's protection by a treaty, and he immediately ordered General Michelsen to occupy those provinces with 40,000 men. The British Resident at the Porte induced the

Sultan to reinstate the Hospodars, but the news did not reach St. Petersburg in time to stop the march of the Russians, and Selim, again yielding to the persuasions of the French ambassador, declared war with Russia, December 27th, 1806. Michelsen remained for some time on the defensive, not being strong enough for active operations; but he formed a junction with Czerny George, a rebel chief in Servia, who had defeated the Ottomans in several engagements, and before the end of the year they possessed the whole north of the Danube, and laid siege to Belgrade.

Nothing could be more inopportune than this campaign, which occupied Russia's best troops while hostilities were about to open on behalf of Prussia; and a selfish policy would have followed up these advantages and made a permanent impression on Turkey, leaving the neighbouring kingdom to her fate. But Alexander was the Don Quixote of Europe, and the misfortunes which overwhelmed Prussia only stimulated his zeal on her behalf. At the same time, he could not withdraw entirely from the Turkish war without endangering his southern provinces, still peopled by Mahometans, and only recently annexed to Russia. Retreat would have been regarded as weakness, and probably followed up by further aggressions on the part of the Turks. He could not also abandon the Christian population, which he professed to protect, to the wild fury of the Turks. So late as in the war of 1854, when in alliance with a Christian nation, the ravages of a Turkish army on their own territories were so fearful, that the villagers actually fled for protection into the Russian lines to escape from their fellow-countrymen. Then an Austrian (Omar Pasha) was in command of the Turks, and English officers accompanied them; but in 1806 there was no such check to their natural ferocity, and the war was carried on with all the stimulus of a now exploded fanaticism. Napoleon wrote to Selim, November 11th, saying, "Take confidence: the Fates pronounce the duration of your empire. I have the mission of saving it," &c. On December 1st he renewed these assurances, and guaranteed to the Porte the integrity of Moldavia, Wallachia, and Servia. He also engaged to make no peace with Russia except in concert with Turkey.*

* This engagement was broken by the Treaty of Tilsit.

And now came, like a thunderbolt, the news of the catastrophe at Jena. The King of Prussia, nearly two months before it took place, informed Alexander of his intention to increase his army to resist any further French aggression on his territories ; and his letter, a confidential one, reached St. Petersburg about August 21st. The answer, received before September 1st, held out hopes of aid if the end he was pursuing led to a war and Prussia was unable to keep her ground ; but it promised no immediate succour, and General Krusemarck was not sent to ask for a Russian army till September 30th, when he arrived at St. Petersburg with very inadequate instructions. Hanover was in reality the great difficulty, for Prussia was willing to lose the friendship of England rather than give it up, and she feared Alexander might positively require its restoration before he entered upon an offensive alliance. She also imagined that France would be willing to withdraw her pretensions in face of this hostile attitude without risking a war. The King, in October, applied to Austria, but she observed the same course as Prussia during the Austerlitz campaign. First, she must have time to recruit her finances, but would send 70,000 men into Bohemia to cause her neutrality to be respected. Then Francis declared, if he was compelled to take up arms, he would put himself at the head of his subjects, and perish rather than submit to further insults ; but Bonaparte assumed a conciliatory attitude towards him, and after the battle of Jena he thought no more of joining the allies. The Austrians were jealous of the Prussians, and still more of Russia ; and though they answered with fair promises when Alexander sent Count Pozzi di Borgo to plead the cause of the distressed King, they broke up their army in Bohemia as soon as they heard of the partial successes of the Russian army in Poland, although for weeks they had objected to an alliance with Russia and Prussia, on the ground that Alexander had sent too small an army to oppose the French ; and if he was driven out of Poland, they must lose all hold on Galicia. Their wavering policy was a serious disadvantage to the Russians, who dared not leave their own frontiers unprotected lest Austria should at last form a junction with France ; but a statement made by Count Haugwitz, that Alexander meant to exercise pressure on the Court of Vienna,

is denied by Sir Robert Adair, the British Resident at that Court, who affirms that it would have been the most impolitic measure he could have pursued.

Alexander's exertions to recruit and reorganize his army since the battle of Austerlitz were so successful that by the beginning of November he had 70,000 troops in the principalities and stationed on the borders of Austria, and 64,000 men under Benningsen, on their road to Silesia. A letter from Vilna, March, 1806, states that the peasantry in some districts pressed in such numbers for enrolment, that the amount required would not admit of a hundredth part of them being received. "This is to be accounted for," says the writer, "by the enthusiasm the Emperor's conduct created among his people, and by the Russian law emancipating all persons on their becoming soldiers, and admitting them at the end of their military service to all the advantages of citizens." The means of transporting recruits to the *dépôts* of their regiments were now so much better arranged, that the fearful loss of life which used to occur among those drawn to serve in Catherine's armies was reduced to merely the ordinary number of casualties; but the military hospitals and commissariat, though improving, were still far from sufficient, and the want of officers was greatly felt, it being considered highly unfashionable to serve in anything but the Guards. The habits of the Russian upper classes were not suited to military life. They took their siesta after dinner; they hardly ever went on foot through St. Petersburg; and a journey of fifty miles on horseback "would be an expedition," says Sir R. Wilson, "for the city's talk."* The Emperor expressed his approbation of an English officer who was constantly seen walking about the town instead of using a carriage.

In 1806 he was unpopular with the nobles on account of his measures towards the emancipation of the serfs; for he organized a committee to consult upon the best means of effecting it, and this was sitting, often presided over by himself, through the year 1807. It is hardly surprising that it should not have met with approval in Russia, since the far more rigorous slavery of the negroes in the West Indies found advocates in the British Parliament in 1830; and most

* Wilson's War of 1806-7.

foreigners visiting Russia at that period considered it would be very premature.*

When—after a levy of recruits had been raised in September, 1806, in case of a war on behalf of Prussia—the militia were ordered in December to hold themselves in readiness throughout the country for the war with Turkey, and possible hostilities with Austria, there was much discontent among the provincial nobility, who took no interest in German affairs, except so far as to be glad if they could have revenged Austerlitz on the fields of Prussia. They murmured at the troops not being concentrated on Turkey, and ascribed the difficulties with France to foreign influence in the Russian Cabinet.

Czartoriski now held only the post of a senator and the Curatorship of the University of Vilna ; but there were many natives of the Baltic provinces holding a high position in the army, and these were looked upon most unfavourably by the officers of pure Muscovite descent.† The idea of Benningesen, a German, and the murderer of his sovereign, being placed as second in command, was naturally reprobated by the old adherents of the Emperor Paul, among whom was Rostopchine. Yet he was supported by the Empress-Dowager. Alexander did not like him, but the want of good generals was greatly felt, and he believed him to be one of the best he had. Rostopchine seems at this time to have begun to weary of his political inaction after four years of feverish excitement in the reign of Paul. He feared Alexander's liberal tendencies, and was not sparing or reserved in his strictures ; but the fact of a committee being actually summoned to deliberate on the best means of emancipating the serfs induced the ex-minister to address him in a letter of warning and remonstrance (December 29th, 1806).‡ His oath, he says, is a guarantee of his loyalty, but it

* Wilson's War of 1806-7. Wilson also relates that Alexander heard of a noble lady, who lived at a distance from Moscow, leaving her old and sick peasantry in a state bordering on starvation. He sent his own surgeon, Dr. Wylie, to examine into the condition of these peasants, and to remedy the evil if it were true. Accordingly, after inspecting them, Dr. Wylie sent for flour, meat, and wine to the distance of 200 versts, and obliged the lady to incur heavy expenses, which cured her of her cruel economy.

† Even at this time there were great impediments placed in the way of officers of foreign birth taking service in the Russian army.

‡ This letter was published in the *Moniteur*, November 1st, 1812, having been found among Rostopchine's papers in Moscow.

is his duty to expose to his Imperial Majesty the means necessary in present circumstances to preserve the nobility, who his Majesty himself had said were the true and only support of the throne. "The nobility are proud of the name of Russian, and, animated by the spirit of Minine and Pojarski,* would sacrifice everything for their country. The militia just raised among them could offer a barrier to the world, but all these armaments, unheard of till now, will at once vanish if the desire of acquiring pretended liberty raises the people to overthrow the nobles, the sole object of the mob in all revolutions. This class of men will more easily give themselves up to excesses, as they have the recent example of the French, and you are preparing them for it by these fatal rights, which must lead to the destruction of the laws and of the sovereign. The measures taken to send foreigners from the empire only produce evil, for hardly one person out of forty would quit a country where every foreigner finds consideration and fortune. The French in Russia prefer to take the oath of naturalization from fear and avarice; in reality it does not change their views, which would destroy Russia, as is shown by their insinuations to those bodies of men who are expecting Napoleon, as they imagine, to bring them freedom. Sire, purify Russia, and only keeping the priests (of foreign worship), order a crowd of wretches to be despatched beyond the frontier, whose fatal influence corrupts the soul and spirit of your mistaken subjects. I fulfil a sacred task in exposing the truth to your eyes at a time when your heart renders justice to my sincere attachment. I implore you then, sire, to think of the past and present, of the treason of Stephanof, of the philosophers, of the Martinists, and of the election of a chief of the militia of Moscow. Appear for some days in this capital, and let your presence restore to their hearts that love which has been almost extinguished by dissensions, forgetfulness of laws, and contempt of the ministry," &c.

Rostopchine founded an agricultural school at Voronovo, thirteen leagues from Moscow. Although disliking foreigners, he shared Paul's partiality for Scotchmen, and placed over the establishment two emigrants of that nation, Paterson and Hume, but reserved to himself the direction of it, and provided

* Two ancient Russian patriots, who expelled the Poles from Moscow in 1612.

for the expense. He invited other proprietors to send pupils there for eight months on a very small payment from their lords, in return for which they carried away agricultural implements and a variety of seeds, by which means an improved and extended system of husbandry was gradually spread over the country. He sent for his farming instruments from Holland, Scotland, and Germany, and cattle and plants even from Georgia. This establishment was destroyed during the French invasion in 1812. In March, 1807, he published a pamphlet in the Russian language at Moscow. It is a vehement satire on France and the French, and reproaches the Russians with their predilection for them. He paid a tribute to the Russian generals who fought a month before at the battle of Eylau, but left out all mention of Benningsen, the commander-in-chief. 700,000 copies were sold, and it was answered, and also parodied, besides many copies being circulated, with a eulogium interpolated on Benningsen, from an unknown hand, a proof of the liberality of the censorship at that period. Alexander received Rostopchine's letter very graciously, and visited Moscow before he joined his armies in Prussia. He was greeted with an almost tumultuous welcome, and in a speech explained the cause of the war. A more impassioned address by the Archbishop of Moscow was read in all the Russian churches, and exhorted the people, as they hoped for salvation, to place a barrier to the advance of the destroyer of peace, who in Egypt preached the Koran of Mahomet, and in France showed his contempt for Christianity by convoking Jewish synagogues.

On November 27th, 1806, the Empress gave birth to her third and last child, who was again a daughter. Her delicate health detained her husband at St. Petersburg during the early part of the winter; and perhaps mindful of Czartoriski's reproaches, and the unfortunate campaign of Austerlitz, he left the movements of the Russian armies to the sole guidance of the commander, a veteran of seventy-two, who had served with great distinction under Suvorov, and was an old Muscovite, of the type which was more dear to the Russian people than the half-Germanized natives of the Baltic provinces, the polished courtiers of St. Petersburg, or the French emigrants and Polish magnates who fluttered round the Imperial throne. It was

supposed that his subordinates, Benningsen and Buxhowden, would supply the energy naturally wanting in a septuagenarian, though Benningsen was himself sixty-five, and all three were equally deficient in science; but the disorders at the headquarters rendered the Emperor's presence necessary, as a superior authority to whom all would bow; and Kamenski displayed obvious symptoms of insanity.

As the Russian Government was in sore need of the real sinews of war, and the contest with all Western Europe seemed likely to fall entirely upon her, Alexander applied to the British Government for a loan of six millions sterling, one of which was to be paid down immediately for the expenses indispensable to the opening of the campaign. It refused the request, but proposed that a loan should be contracted for Russia in England, and that for the security of the creditors, the duties on English merchandise at present levied in the Russian harbours should be repealed, and the same duties levied at once in the British harbours, and applied to the payment of the interest of the loan to the British capitalists. This proposal, amounting to a declaration of want of confidence both in the integrity of the Russian Government and the solvency of the Russian finances, was of course rejected, and the result was that no assistance, either in men or money, was afforded by England to her gallant ally in this vital struggle—an instance of parsimony and blindness beyond all example calamitous and discreditable, when it is considered that Russia was at that moment bearing the whole weight of France on the Vistula, and that England had at her disposal twenty millions in subsidies, and 100,000 of the best soldiers in Europe.* It was the more unexpected, as the English Cabinet was at this very time assisting Austria with money to do nothing, and had forwarded strong representations to St. Petersburg when D'Oubril signed his treaty in Paris, before it was known that Alexander had rejected it, and since then the British Resident at the Russian Court had never ceased to urge the Emperor to renew the war. "A Russian army," writes Mr. Adair, from Vienna, October 25th, "is by this time not far from the borders of Silesia; but the Emperor must send three times that number if he

* Alison's History of Europe. Parliament had voted that sum for subsidies.

wishes to save Poland." Mr. Stuart writes from St. Petersburg, November 26th, that, on his "urging the necessity of reducing the means employed by Russia in the South, for the purpose of directing the great mass of her disposable force towards the Vistula, the army in Moldavia was diminished to 40,000, and the remainder of Michelson's corps has orders to march to the Prussian frontiers." Again, Mr. Adair, writing to Mr. Stuart, December 6th, says: "By all I can learn, there are of Russian troops at General Benningsen's head-quarters at Pultusk, little more than 15,000 men; at Praga there are no more than 6000. At Grodno, indeed, we hear of 70,000; but putting all these together, and with the remains of the Prussian army, what is it in comparison with the immense force collected, and still collecting, from all parts of Germany as well as France, to oppose them? It is really dreadful to think of this. Depend upon it, my dear sir, that unless Russia puts forward the whole forces of her empire immediately, and without the loss of an hour, she is gone as a European Power. Next spring she will be attacked by 400,000 men. . . . For God's sake, let me request you, again and again, to press these points upon those in his Imperial Majesty's counsels, who may not yet be thoroughly aware of its extent, or of the celerity with which it is advancing upon them," &c. In a previous letter Mr. Adair announces that, pressed by France, Austria is compelled to attack the fort of Cattaro, still in the hands of the Russians, but he hopes it may not create further coldness between the two Imperial Courts; and writing home to Lord Howick, December 6th, he says: "I have again written in the strongest manner to Mr. Stuart, at St. Petersburg, telling him that all I may be able to effect here will depend upon Russia. There is not that confidence between the Austrian and Russian Governments which can alone save them both from perdition." Lord Malmesbury writes in November, that "Bonaparte's progress in Germany and Poland caused great alarm, but ministers took no measures to assist Russia, except in sending Lord Hutchinson to the Prussian army, and the Marquis of Douglas to St. Petersburg. Lord Hutchinson took a staff with him, and it was easy to see, from the cast of his temper and his general turn to admire Bonaparte, that he will effect no good purpose. Luckily a

right spirit seems to prevail in Russia, and the Russian army under Benningsen is the first that has checked the French." "The entry of the Russian troops into Moldavia," writes Mr. Adair from Vienna, December 14th, "has given great uneasiness here. I learn likewise that the order for their entering that province was the cause of a remonstrance on the part of this Court, extremely ill pleased, to say no more of it. No exertion, indeed, ought to be omitted in order to induce the Emperor of Russia to make his principal, indeed, his utmost efforts on the side of Poland."

"A courier," writes Napoleon to Marmont in Dalmatia,* "has arrived from Constantinople, announcing that war against Russia is declared. Send immediately five engineer officers and as many of artillery to Constantinople. Aid the pashas in every possible way with counsel, provision, and ammunition. It is not unlikely that I may send you with 25,000 men to Widdin, and there you will enter into connection with the Grand Army, of which you would form the extreme right. 25,000 French, supported by 60,000 Turks, would soon force the Russians not to leave 30,000 men on the Danube, but to forward twice that number to defend their own frontiers. Send twenty or thirty officers to the pashas if they demand so many. . . . Be not sparing in your supplies of all sorts to them. An ambassador from Persia as well as Turkey has just been at Warsaw. . . . We may look forward shortly to transporting 40,000 men to the gates of Ispahan, and from thence to the shores of the Indus. . . . Send your officers over all the Turkish provinces. . . . I am the sincere friend of Turkey, and wish to do it all the good in my power. I consider the Turkish declaration of war against Russia as the most fortunate circumstance that could possibly have occurred in my present situation." In a special message to the French Senate Napoleon informed them that "the *Emperor* of Persia had resolved to march upon the Caucasus to defend his dominions, being animated by the same sentiments as the Turks." The Ottoman army, reinforced by French officers, and spurred on by Sebastiani, crossed the Danube with 80,000 men, and the Russian army in Wallachia, diminished by the regiments sent to Poland, was, in May, 1807, compelled to retire from Bel-

* Jomini, ii. 347-349.

grade, captured the previous January by the Servians with a Russian battalion, and take up a defensive position in Moldavia. Stimulated by French promises, the Government of Constantinople refused a proposal of peace on the part of Russia, and even caused all British property to be confiscated, and all British subjects to be made prisoners throughout the Turkish empire. The Sultan sent a promise to Napoleon that he would conclude no peace with Russia till he had obtained the restoration of the Crimea.

Under these most unfavourable auspices Russia began a second campaign against France, and it required the courage and self-confidence of a young sovereign of twenty-eight to override all the difficulties which presented themselves, and embark in an enterprise when from the very first every advantage was on the side of his opponent. His reserves had to march from the interior of Russia, during a winter exceeding in severity the celebrated year of 1812. Poland was revolutionized by the French, and the Russians, therefore, fought on hostile territory. The Prussian *dépôts* and magazines were all in the hands of the French, and the Russians supplied themselves from their own country, across marshy tracks several feet deep in snow, so that their army was more than once for several days without bread. The largest force they ever assembled there was 80,000 men,* while the French brought 330,000 men into Germany, and in Poland alone numbered 175,000,† besides Murat's cavalry. There is no greater misnomer than the term "European coalition" as applied to Napoleon's enemies in this campaign, or in the campaign of Austerlitz, and on this occasion the *coalition* was decidedly on his side and against Russia. England stood aloof, Austria professed neutrality, but inclined to the side of the French. Prussia was powerless, while in addition to the French already named, Napoleon commanded the armies of Bavaria, Saxony, Baden, Darmstadt, Nassau, and Würtemberg, and a contingent from Spain. Good roads and a temperate climate lay between Napoleon and France. He recruited his armies from Holland, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, and even Prussia, and he disposed of the granaries and wine cellars of the valley of the Rhine. A million pounds sterling was

* Jomini; Wilson.

† Lanfrey; Jackson.

levied on Westphalia, and 800,000*l.* on Stettin, which only contained 32,000 inhabitants. "The great stores of wine its cellars contain," wrote Napoleon, of this city, "would be of inestimable importance. It is wine which in winter can alone give the victory." Prussia was fined 6,800,000*l.* after the battle of Jena, and, collected by dishonest officials, a far larger amount was wrung from the wretched people; while Hamburg and Lubeek were robbed of 700,000*l.*, under pretence that they had traded with the English. Napoleon's army was partly clothed from the manufactories of Yorkshire; for he ordered a larger number of coats for his troops than Bourrienne, who was charged with the commission, could possibly find, so he employed smugglers to obtain cloth from England, as a recent French decree closed all the ports of the Continent against her traffic.

On November 21st, 1806, Napoleon published what is called the continental system from Berlin, with the especial object of shutting out English merchandize, or the products of British manufactories or colonies from any seaport in Germany, France, and the Mediterranean. No foreign vessel direct from England was admitted into any of these ports, and any native of England found in the countries occupied by the French troops or their allies was made a prisoner of war. He hoped to ruin England; but Bourrienne, then posted at Hamburg, asserts that he acted by the advice of short-sighted advisers, and it was ridiculous to declare the British Isles in a state of siege when he had no fleet to enforce it. An English squadron did actually blockade every port in France; but "the continental system was a system of speculation, injustice, and pillage. It is so far from the truth* that such a system had for its only aim to prevent England from disposing of her merchandize, that licences were sold at a high rate to those who had influence sufficient to procure them, and gold alone gave that influence. The traffic of licences was carried to a scandalous extent, only to enrich some flatterer. At Hamburg, for instance, a poor father of a family was shot for introducing into the department of the Elbe a small loaf of sugar for the needs of his family, while at the very moment, perhaps, Napoleon was placing his signature to a licence for the introduction of a

* Bourrienne's Life of Napoleon.

million of loaves. Smuggling on a small scale was punished with death, because government had undertaken the trade in the gross. The same cause filled the coffers of the French treasury with gold and the prisons of the Continent with victims. Enormous quantities of English merchandize and colonial produce were perpetually smuggled in. The Emperor Napoleon at last admitted all colonial products into Germany at a duty of 33 per cent., and grumbled when other nations did the same. He lavished his licences," &c.

On November 7th the French were within three miles of Stralsund, but they retreated towards Stettin and Frankfort on hearing that the Russians were advancing on Posen. "If the King of Prussia does carry on the war," writes Jackson from the fortress of Graudenz, November 18th, "it will be only because of Bonaparte's indisposition to a peace of any sort; for I know General Zastrow had authority to agree to any terms, provided they did not affect the relations existing between the King and the Emperor of Russia. Zastrow was about to put his signature to a treaty, by which all the Prussian territory on the left of the Elbe would have been ceded to France, and the payment guaranteed of an immense sum of money, when intelligence was received of Prince Hohenlohe's defeat and the surrender of Custrin and Stettin. Bonaparte then declined to make peace on these terms, and Zastrow despatched Major Rauch to the King. The Major's instructions, as I was positively assured, authorized Zastrow to sign any terms, however disadvantageous, that Bonaparte would grant, and the answer is now waited for. The ignorance of the Prussian Government of what is passing in the country is astonishing. It only heard accidentally of the capture of Custrin" (one of the strongest forts on the Oder, given up by the Prussian governor to less than forty French Chasseurs). "The King is as apathetic and as irresolute as ever.* He is accessible only to the French party, Kochritz, Beym, and others of the same stamp, while persons whose counsels at this critical moment might counteract the baneful influence of the clique surrounding him are received with coldness and reserve."

The Russian ambassador, Baron Krudener, followed the

* The King, after Jena, retired to the North, leaving his generals entirely without orders.

King from Berlin to his new head-quarters at Ertelsburg, where on November 30th the sovereigns were so ill lodged that they had only one room to serve as a bedroom and sitting-room, in a cottage more like an English barn in the dirtiest of villages. "The King," writes Sir G. Jackson, "takes a morning walk while their room is arranged for breakfast. The Queen is obliged to be very cautious both in her words and actions, for the King is of an excessive ill-humour, and turns a deaf ear to all she says. She does not allow herself to be disheartened, and loses no opportunity of endeavouring to counteract the counsels of Kochritz and his associates."

On November 30th he reports "a repulse of seven squadrons of the French by three squadrons of the Russian advanced guard. At Plock twenty Cossacks swam across the Vistula and attacked a picket of French dragoons, killed fourteen men and made an officer and a sergeant prisoner."

On December 10th: "Krudener has been sounded as to what place the Emperor Alexander would wish the Prussian Royal family to retire to in case of necessity, and he has consequently sent off a messenger to St. Petersburg." He adds that the Emperor was detained in Russia by the health of the Empress.

December 10th: "The torpor that reigns here, owing to the inertia of the King, is inconceivable. It is a subject of regret and indignation with every officer one meets." There were serious quarrels among the Prussian officers. General Pfuhl went over to Russia; several more to Bonaparte.

The young princes and princesses of Prussia, among whom was the future wife of the Emperor Nicholas, then a girl of eight years old, were sent in all haste to Stettin from Berlin, before the capital was occupied by the French. From Stettin they fled to Königsberg, where the Queen joined them in the middle of December, while her husband remained at the head-quarters of the remnant of his forces. At Königsberg she fell seriously ill with a nervous fever, but revived on hearing of the battle of Pultusk, gained by the Russians over the French. The King refused Hardenberg's services because he said, that "with him as minister every hope of a peace with France was lost;" and, December, 1806, he again despatched Krusemarek to St. Petersburg to sound the Russian Cabinet as to its

disposition to peace. "An armistice, concluded on November 16th by the Prussians, which continued even after the Russians were actively engaged with the enemy, gave Bonaparte the very time he wanted to bring up detachments from all parts of Germany and France, and to arrange his plans. Lord Hutchinson wrote from Memel, January 26th, 1807, to Mr. Adair at Vienna: "A negotiation for peace is on foot. Krusemarck having brought the consent of the Emperor from Russia, Zastrow has written a letter to Talleyrand, inclosing one from General Budberg to himself, which states that Russia has no objection to enter into a joint negotiation with Prussia and England, and names Lublin in Galicia where the intended Congress is to meet. I thought it right to mention to Zastrow that I had that moment received a despatch from Petersburg, dated January 19th, stating that the Emperor of Russia never would have agreed to a negotiation had he not been influenced by the absolute refusal of Austria to enter into the war. I said, as I knew from you, the disposition of the latter Court was changed, and that Austria might be induced to co-operate with the Allies I did hope that the negotiation which had been entered into from mistaking the views of that Power might not be persevered in. In answer, he read me the despatch of Count Finkenstein, which is at least as strong as yours, and states as forcibly the determination of Austria to come forward in the spring." In the same letter Lord Hutchinson relates that when he told Baron Krudener he meant to send his brother and Sir R. Wilson to the Russian army, he objected in the strongest manner. "I asked for an explanation. He told me that the greatest disorder had prevailed in that army, which was represented to the Emperor by General Tolstoi, and that he knew it would be very disagreeable to General Benningsen and the chiefs of the Russian army, that English officers should see them in their present state. I told him that as probably we were to pay them, we must see them; that we came to act as soldiers not as spies, and . . . I should make the strongest complaint to my Government," &c. Unfortunately the British Commissioner was entirely mistaken on every point; the Austrian Cabinet, swayed by the Arch-Duke Charles, entirely declined to join the war, and only advised both Russia and Prussia to

make the best terms they could with the enemy. No money or other assistance from Great Britain reached Russia, and one of the two officers acted very like a spy.

The disorders in the Russian army were increased, and perhaps originated from old Marshal Kamenski's insanity,* and Benningsen and Buxhowden commanded their different corps without any further reference to him. On hearing of the advance of the French headed by Napoleon to Warsaw, December 18th, he ordered a retreat to Grodno; but as hitherto the desultory warfare had been to the advantage of the Russians, who from the 17th to the 26th of December had fought a battle every day,† his subordinates refused to obey him; but not before he had done much harm by sending letters to stop the supplies, and desiring the artillery to be left behind, as it impeded their retreat. At Pultusk he rushed out into the street in nothing but his shirt, on a freezing December day; and both there and at Grodno performed various other eccentricities which caused him to be speedily recalled. Benningsen having formed a plan for reaching Königsberg, by leaving the French army in the rear, took up his station at Pultusk to give rest to his battalion of 50,000 men, who were exhausted with marching backwards and forwards through bogs and plains of snow. On December 26th Marshal Lannes attempted to dislodge him, but was repulsed with great loss; and though the Cossacks scoured the country for eight miles the next morning they could find no trace of the French, so precipitate was their retreat. The same day, Davoust, Augereau, and Murat were defeated at Golymin, thirty miles distant from Pultusk, by the Russians, under Prince Galitzin and Doctorof, who, though smaller in force, were superior in artillery. Wilson states that at Pultusk the French lost 8000 men and the Russians 5000; but because Benningsen left his quarters the next day to form a junction with Galitzin, according to his preconceived plan, some French writers have chosen to claim it as a victory. "During the whole Polish Campaign‡ attacks

* Wilson says no sane man could doubt of it. See also Prince Eugene of Würtemberg.

† Sir Robert Adair.

‡ Wilson's War of 1806-7. Bernadotte's papers, says Alison, are still in the possession of Benningsen's family.

of cavalry by the French were announced that never occurred, and encounters disgraceful to the French were represented as victorious; but Murat was a candidate for the Kingdom of Poland, and it was necessary to blazon his reputation and warlike achievements." At Mohrungen Bernadotte's baggage was seized by the Russians, "and comprised curious proofs of the arrangements for stage effect and false intelligence made by all the officers of the French army, from the Emperor downwards. An order was there found giving the most minute directions for the reception of Napoleon at Warsaw, with all the stations and crossings where "Vive l'Empereur" was to be shouted; and official despatches of all the actions of the campaign in which Bernadotte had been engaged, for publication, and private despatches, giving the facts as they really occurred, for the Emperor's secret perusal." Both armies suffered considerably from the cold, and the men from a northern latitude seemed less able to bear up against it than those from Italy, France, and even Spain, who had supplied a corps of infantry. The artillery sunk into the morasses, and the troops bivouacked not unfrequently in a sea of mud. The arrangements for the comfort of the Russian army, only accustomed to summer campaigns, were most primitive, and the deaths from mere fatigue and exhaustion were greater in proportion than those of the enemy. Wilson says that they carried no tents, and their arms were coarse and heavy; the Cossacks, who formed a useful light infantry, and exercised all the functions of foragers and spies, were armed with lances, and the Bashkir regiments from Asiatic Russia with bows and arrows. "The officers seemed very kind to their men, who were not fretted with over-drill; and the soldiers, of a naturally humane disposition, when almost starving, offered a portion of their miserable pittance to the Polish peasants." The Polish contingents of Napoleon's army gave no quarter, and the Cossacks followed the same practice till Alexander offered a ducat for every wounded Frenchman or prisoner who was brought alive to the Russian camp. The Viceroy of Italy said the last were more useful than formidable to their enemies, by making them aware of the neighbourhood of their allies; but with indefatigable activity they seized on the French convoys and intercepted

stores ; and their wild appearance and savage shouts were certainly much dreaded. Even Napoleon* admitted that they are brave, active, dexterous and high-minded soldiers. They were led by their Hetman, Matuci Platof, then fifty-six years of age, who had passed his life on the field of battle.† In Paul's reign he was accused of conspiring with the Circassians to rise against Russia, and brought a prisoner to St. Petersburg, but the Emperor finding the charge was groundless, released and well rewarded him. In 1801 Alexander gave him the post of Hetman. He arrived in Hungary too late to assist in the campaign of Austerlitz ; though, if the Russian army had been accompanied by these valuable pioneers, it would not have suffered from its ignorance of the roads, and would have been also better supplied. In 1807 the Cossacks of the Don took prisoners nine staff-officers, 130 superior officers, and 4196 of the lower ranks. There was only one surgeon in the whole corps, and when Alexander offered it another, Platof refused, saying that potions were more fatal to his soldiers than bullets. Although the Bashkirs rivalled any rider at Astley's or Franconi's in their feats of horsemanship, and the arrows brought down every bird on the wing with unerring aim, they were never known to hit a Frenchman ; so that after this campaign Alexander ordered them to be furnished with muskets, and their bows were henceforward kept for sport. Both Cossacks and Bashkirs stripped the bodies of Frenchmen, and loaded themselves with clothes and foreign arms. "The Cossacks are now so rich," writes Wilson, February 17th, "that many valuable articles are to be bought for a trifle, and crosses of the Legion of Honour are to be had for nothing. Horses have no purchasers ; but those taken from the French are worth very little ; out of a batch of 500 only forty could serve the Russian army."

* In his official collection of bulletins.

† Frederick the Great has said of the Russians, that they could be killed but not beaten ; and he relates that in the Seven Years' War, although the Russians only fought four battles, they lost 120,000 men, while Prussia lost only 180,000 in sixteen engagements, and the Austrians, in two sieges and ten battles, did not count more than 140,000 as the number of their dead. The same enormous proportion of killed and wounded was shown in all the battles between the Russians and French compared with those fought between the French and any other nation.

The battle of Pultusk checked Napoleon's plan of marching straight on to Königsberg; and he began to place his army in winter quarters round Warsaw. "Return slowly," wrote Berthier, at his dictation, to Ney, who had advanced towards the old Prussian capital; "it is the first time that the Emperor has made a retrograde march." (18th January, 1807.) But Benningsen was resolved to keep the French employed, to allow the Prussians time to provision Königsberg. He came up with Ney at Heilsberg, January 22nd, and the same day an action took place at Seeberg, whence the French cavalry were driven in the direction of Allenstein. If the Russians had known the scattered condition of Ney's troops, the French military historians agree they might easily have made them all prisoners; but Benningsen's army was too much exhausted with cold, hunger, and fatigue to attack with the necessary rapidity. He contented himself with one or two trifling engagements; and instead of waiting for reinforcements, which were within a few leagues, he led 15,000 men against Bernadotte, who was strongly posted at Mohrungen; and after a desperate encounter, where the 9th French regiment lost an eagle, General Makov, who led the Russian advanced guard, was repulsed, both sides losing 2000 men. The arrival of a corps under Prince Michael Dolgoruki turned the tide of victory, and the French were in their turn driven back, with the loss of several hundred prisoners, and Bernadotte's private baggage, containing silver plate bearing the arms of almost all the States in Germany, 10,000 ducats recently levied on Elbing for his own private use, and 2500 for his staff.* He retreated rapidly to Osterade and towards Thorn, severely pressed by the Cossacks, who almost totally destroyed his rearguard, and made many hundreds of prisoners; and Benningsen established himself at Mohrungen, and remained there till February 2nd, while his subordinate Lestocq compelled the French to raise the blockade of Graudenz, and threw in supplies of ammunition and provisions, which enabled it to hold out till the end of the war.

Although the French bulletins styled every battle a victory, the truth began to be partially known,† and caused great un-

* Alison.

† Adair's Correspondence in 1806.

easiness in Warsaw, where Napoleon had promised to pursue the Russians across the Niemen, and had talked of marching upon St. Petersburg.

Adair writes from Vienna that this Court and the Archduke Charles were a little shaken in their resolution of not assisting Russia, and that the Austrian army consisted of 220,000 men. After the battle of Jena, it was expressed to him in the strongest terms that the minister deserved death who persuaded the Emperor of Austria to draw his sword. Since then he had offered, on the part of the British Government, to guarantee the integrity of the Turkish empire while Russia was in alliance with England; and obtained from the Russian minister, Pozzo di Borgo, a distinct disavowal of any ulterior designs on the part of Russia with regard to Turkey, other than counteracting the plans of France, and, if possible, form a junction with their isolated forces in Dalmatia. Russia also warned Austria (December, 1806) that she could not sustain the war with France alone; and after the battle of Pultusk, the Austrian Prime Minister requested Adair to oppose any peace negotiations which did not include the general interests of Europe. He added, that the Austrian army could act in two months; and yet after the battle of Eylau, in February, Austria reduced her army, and refused to make any demonstration on behalf of the Allies, merely advising them to conclude the best peace they could. Adair also writes, that Benningsen had succeeded, by the 31st of January, in driving Ney and Bernadotte from their positions. "These operations obliged Bonaparte, to the great dissatisfaction of his army, to break up his cantonments, and put his army in march from Warsaw, January 28th. He followed it himself on the 31st, and arrived on the 3rd inst. at Possenheim, where he was on the 5th. General Essen, on February 2nd, attacked the French under General Lannes at Ciechanew on the Bog, defeated him, and took his magazines and some prisoners at Brock. On the 3rd a more serious engagement took place at Wyskrow, in which General Essen obtained a great advantage, took 1600 prisoners and some cannon, and drove the French beyond the Narew." Wilson, riding from Königsberg to Landsberg, saw the bodies of 1500 French soldiers lying strewn

along the side of the road at Mohrungeu, and heard from a French colonel that the chief topic of conversation in the French army was, that Benningsen was the only man in Europe who had yet repulsed their Emperor.

But if Benningsen could gain a battle, the want of enterprise and infirmities* common to his age prevented him from following it up with sufficient activity. His generals of divisions, Barclay de Tolly, Osterman, Tolstoi, Galitzin, Doctorof, Buxhowden, Bagration, and Platof, were making almost their first essay in European warfare; while Bonaparte's subordinates during the last fifteen years had commanded armies and gained victories in Austria, Germany, Italy, India, and on their native soil of France; and the French regimental officers were also selected from the finest armies of the West. The Russian army was continually impeded by its want of magazines; and having constantly slept out on the snow without tents, the soldiers' great-coats were now masses of rags. They were marching through a country as denuded of forage or provisions as the Sahara desert, and the men were reduced to dig up the potatoes which the Polish peasants buried when they fled from their huts. In pursuance of his plan, to leave the mass of the French army in his rear and reach the more fertile provinces of West Prussia, Benningsen pushed on towards Königsberg, drawing the French army after him, and daily sustaining sharp conflicts, till he formed a junction with Lestocq, and united all his forces at Preussich Eylau. Napoleon at the same time began to concentrate his army; and the Russians, weary of long marches and starvation, pressed their commander to offer him battle. The village of Eylau contained nothing that could be turned into a position except the cemetery, and the ground was covered with snow, which fell thickly during the engagement; nevertheless, the combat was sustained for three days between the Russians and French; and when at length the French retired, nearly 50,000 were counted among the wounded and dead. The snow was blown straight into the faces of the Russian soldiers, who thought the elements always took the side of the French. "I have seen the

* He was suffering from a painful disorder.

Russians at Eylau," said Napoleon,* "perform prodigies of valour. They were so many heroes." "If I had been told," writes Wilson before the battle, "that men could live as the Russians have been doing for six weeks, I could not have believed it. Black bread, snow for water, and snow only to lie on, is tremendous suffering. However, officers have not been at their ease. We literally had no food all day yesterday. I wonder General Benningsen, with the oppression of responsibility, can bear the fatigue. In some respects this army resembles the Turkish army; but in the charge of their close columns, their determined bearing of the bayonet, and their order for close action, they are equalled only by the British.† He wrote, February 4th, to Lord Hutchinson, "How much I wish you could see this army! Report has done them wrong. Even the Cossacks are more respectable than you believe. Instead of inhabitants flying, we have seen poultry of all kinds confidently strutting on the dunghills."‡

"Had anything been wanting," says Bourrienne, "to confirm the unsuccessful result of the battle of Eylau,§ it would have been supplied by the anxiety Napoleon showed that his version should be first dispersed throughout Germany. The Russian account, commonly prevailing, might produce troublesome results." "Our loss," says Madame Junot, "at Eylau was enormous. Why conceal the truth? Napoleon avowing the truth at Eylau would have appeared to me more truly great than putting forth an official falsehood no child could believe." Savary, who commanded the 5th corps, admits that the victory belonged to Russia; and after stating officially that the French loss was 7000, Napoleon owned at St. Helena that it amounted to 18,000, which is believed still to fall far short of the real number. The Russians acknowledged at least 12,000|| as missing from their

* O'Meara's Voice from St. Helena. See also Wilson's War in 1807.

† Wilson's War in Poland, 1806-7.

‡ Letter to Lord Hutchinson, February, 1807.

§ Wilson states that the French army never gained the advantage during the whole course of the battle in which he took part. At St. Helena Napoleon half admitted that Eylau was a defeat, and the falsehood respecting it was abandoned on his tomb in the Invalides, where it is *not* recorded among his victories.

|| Wilson and Benningsen.

own ranks, besides seven generals and 800 officers ; and their artillery told with astonishing effect upon their enemies : Augereau's division being completely annihilated, and the 24th regiment destroyed to a man. Colonel Benkendorf carried twelve captured French flags with their eagles to St. Petersburg, where they can still be seen, besides seven standards taken by the Cossacks, from which the eagles, being of silver, had been unscrewed. Yet Napoleon wrote that only one of his regiments had lost its eagle. The Russians left twelve damaged guns on the field when they abandoned it the next day, and lost ten during the engagement, but carried away 200 French cannon. Their forces consisted at the most of 75,000 men, which included 10,000 Russians and Prussians under Lestocq ; while the French, according to the returns of their own officers before the combat, had 90,000 posted at Eylau,* and, allowing for stragglers and other deficiencies, at the critical moment must have reached at least 80,000. The town of Eylau was taken and retaken ; but at length, occupied by the division of the younger Kamenski, resisted all Ney's efforts to drive him out. Napoleon was posted behind the church, February 6th, and the divisions of his army were commanded by Bessières, Augereau, Davoust, Soult, Savary, Ney, and Murat, Bernadotte's corps not having arrived till two days afterwards. At ten o'clock at night he gave orders for his heavy artillery and baggage to quit the field and defile towards Landsberg, and ordered Davoust to draw back to their position of three days before. It was the more humiliating, as previous to the battle he had made sure of reaching Königsberg the following morning. He had told his soldiers that "in two days the enemy will cease to exist, and your fatigues will be compensated by a luxurious and honourable

* Dumas, xviii. 592. Sir R. Wilson.

In two letters written on the same day to Cambacérès and Daru, March 11th, Napoleon values his losses respectively at 1500 dead and 3000 wounded, and at 7000 or 8000 wounded. The systematic pillage which the French had exercised since they had occupied Prussia was partly shown by the amount of money which the Russians found in the pockets of the dead Frenchmen, even of the private soldiers.

Wilson says that Napoleon "would have been a hopeless fugitive if Benningsen had yielded to the entreaties of every general in the field, and pursued the defeated French army."—War in 1806-7.

repose," and he had dictated a letter to Berthier for Josephine, which was intercepted by the Cossacks. "The Russians have fled to Gumbinnen, on the road to Russia. To-morrow Königsberg will receive the Emperor." Yet at eleven o'clock that night the French had retreated, and the roar of the cannon entirely ceased, while the Russian generals held a council of war on horseback on the field as to the next step to pursue. Generals Tolstoi and Knorring both strongly advised that Napoleon should not be allowed any pretext for asserting he had gained the victory, and that however unsafe and inconvenient the position might be, they should still remain on the field, and not continue their march, but if possible renew the engagement the next day. But a general of sixty-five, who has been thirty-six hours on horseback without tasting food, on a bitter winter's night, and whose exertions had been excessive during the last two months, may naturally prefer the path of safety to that of valour, and first look for the shelter of a roof to protect him from the blinding snow. There was a chance, he declared, that fresh troops might reinforce the French army; for Bernadotte's corps was close behind, and he was not sufficiently informed to feel secure that another contingent of 90,000 might not be near at hand. He had passed the whole day under the hottest fire; but his courage was more tried by the severity of the cold. Disregarding the remonstrances of all his younger generals, he ordered his army to march by Mulhausen towards Königsberg, hoping to find both food and covered quarters on the road;* and ordered Lestocq's division to remain on the field to assist those of the wounded whom they had not carried away. He, with his staff, obtained a few hours' repose in a house filled with several thousands of the dead and dying; and the next day established their forces at Wottenberg—

* The Russian army was entirely unprovisioned, even for the next day, and during the battle foraging parties had dug the ground in quest of food. "At Eylau," says Wilson (see Narrative of 1812), "being without bread or water, ate the snow. Benningsen and his staff had but one bowl of small potatoes for food from midday of the preceding day till midnight after the battle, when nothing would induce Benningsen to take more than one potato, there being only enough to give one to each individual. This sufficed him till he reached Königsberg the next morning, after a long night's march. There were about a hundred soldiers having legs and arms cut off in the room where the potatoes were distributed, there being no other tenement on the Russian field of battle."

nine miles in front of Königsberg, and half-way between that city and the blood-stained field. He nobly refused to avail himself of more comfortable accommodation than could be given to his army, and was chiefly anxious to spread out his divisions lest the immense number of sick and wounded should produce a pestilence. The aspect of the battle site, which Lestocq soon abandoned, was said to exceed everything in horror that had been witnessed in modern times. Prussians had been forced to fight against the cause of Prussia, and lay intermingled with their sovereign's allies, while the Italian, Spaniard, German, Frenchman, Pole, and Cossack were heaped together with every variety of hideous wound. The Russians had taken 1500 prisoners and 200 ambulance carriages, and their light infantry brought in numerous captures for several succeeding days, while their army was refitted from Königsberg, and in its new position obtained a welcome rest; but this movement enabled Napoleon to proclaim loudly that he had won the victory. The French officers were well fed, but the men were almost as destitute as the Russians had been before the battle, and there was much discontent and misery in their camp. Napoleon had retired with his army to a distance of three miles, but as soon as Lestocq's division left the field, he rode over the plain of Eylau with his generals, and in his bulletin observes it was "a spectacle fitted to inspire princes with the love of peace and a horror of war." He wrote to Duroc, February 9th, that "it is possible, in order to have quiet winter quarters, I may go to the left bank of the Vistula;" and in his address to his soldiers he gave the same reason for returning to their former positions. He now thought of making a separate peace and even an alliance with Prussia, and sent General Bertrand to the headquarters of the Russian commander, February 13th, to propose an armistice, but on Benningsen refusing to grant one he ordered a retreat. In the ten days succeeding the battle the desultory warfare with the Cossacks cost the French a thousand dead and as many prisoners, but the only offensive manœuvre they attempted was a cavalry attack, led by Murat, on the rear-guard of the Russian position before Königsberg, when he was driven back by 1600 Cossacks, with the loss of 400 killed and 300 prisoners. On February 17th,

the whole French army retired to Osterode, leaving their stores and ammunition, besides most of their wounded, to the mercy of the Russians, who immediately overran the country they evacuated, and found the dead of both armies still lying unburied on the field.

In a house lately occupied by the enemy, 650 Frenchmen and 150 Russian prisoners had been abandoned without provisions, with their wounds undressed, and with dead bodies intermingled in almost every room; some of the Russian wounded crawled into ditches or other places of concealment, and, when recovered, either turned marauders or gradually joined their ranks.

On February 22nd, several Prussians and twenty-six Russian prisoners were massacred by the French during their retreat, because their wounds prevented them from marching; but a fortnight before a detachment of 500 Russian prisoners and 800 Prussians, being conveyed to Warsaw, were followed by the Cossacks, their escort destroyed, and themselves set free. The battle of Eylau enabling Benningsen to complete his long march to Königsberg, had effectually saved the city from falling into the hands of the French. Napoleon's scheme for annihilating the Russians before they could reach its protection had entirely failed, and their wounded, many of whom were found to have been struck with stones, double-headed bullets, and pewter, were being tended in its hospitals, while most of the disabled of his own army were left to perish from cold, or were dependent on the charity of their enemies. Yet he felt that his position in France could not sustain an acknowledged defeat, and in his address to his soldiers he had the assurance to inform them that they had killed and captured 40,000 men, and taken sixty pieces of cannon and sixteen standards.* The standards, he pretended, had been already sent to France, and the cannon, which he could not produce, were melted up, he said, to make a statue to General Hautpoil, killed in the battle. He talked of having completely foiled the Russian commander's plans, though he owed to General Bertrand that Benningsen's retrograde

* Wilson says the Russians lost none. Benningsen places the French loss at 30,000, but his proclamation to his soldiers was modest and truthful.

movement was most ably conducted, and full of instruction. The bulletins he despatched to France were in a still more exaggerated strain, and announced a complete victory; but the Parisians had learnt to distrust official proclamations, and there was hardly a household who had not lost a relative in the war. The depression was so general that the Bonapartes began to consider their private interests, and Caroline Murat tried to secure the popular favour for her husband, while Josephine supported the pretensions of her son Eugene as a suitable successor to the throne of France. The citizens were aware that during four months Napoleon had made no real progress. He had talked of driving the Russians across the Niemen, and wintering in St. Petersburg, and now he spoke of retiring himself to the German side of the Vistula. He had never touched the frontier of Russia, but announced that he must forestall the conscription, not due till 1808, and demanded from the French Senate a reinforcement of 80,000 men. It was the third levy made since the Prussian war began, and 240,000 recruits had been required in seven months. He said afterwards that the junction of Austria with the Allies might at this time have proved his ruin. "I trembled lest 150,000 of those mediators had appeared on the Elbe, which would have plunged me into the greatest difficulties. More than once I regretted having suffered myself to be drawn on into those inhospitable countries. The cabinet of Vienna had a safer and more honourable opportunity of re-establishing its preponderance than that which it chose in 1813, but it had not resolution enough to profit by it, and my firm countenance proved my salvation."*

Alexander settled on Benningsen a pension of 12,000 roubles, and sent half a year's extra pay and allowance to every soldier who had served in the battle, but the insubordination which the general was unable to repress in the Russian army made him ask for his discharge. His hospitality was unbounded towards the foreign officers who accompanied his troops; but his left-handed connection with the Empress Catherine through his first wife† being well known, he was looked upon almost in the light of a fratricide by his soldiers,

* Jomini, ii. 369.

† He was at this time lately married to his fourth wife.

and not spared in the sarcastic songs which both the Russians and Cossacks have a talent for improvising, and which, like the English caricaturists, respected no one. He was not a favourite even with his own countrymen in the Russian service, and was absolutely hated by the thorough Muscovites. He was challenged by his former colleague, General Buxhowden, who thought he had misrepresented him to the Emperor, and all joined in condemning his inaction after Eylau. Alexander directed him to continue in the command till he arrived at the head-quarters of the army, and sent the minister Novossilzof to inquire into the cause of the disorders. He was already on his way to Prussia, and visiting Moscow and Vilna, with the other provinces of Russian Poland, to counteract the effect of the French revolutionary proclamations in Posen and Warsaw, and the influence Napoleon's flattery had exercised during his residence within the limits of the dismembered kingdom.

The cause of Poland and the Poles was a right arm to Bonaparte, and never were a people more completely cajoled and deceived with fairer promises, or requited with more contempt. Their enthusiasm was turned into a course useful to France, but most injurious to their own interests, and they shed their blood like water, first on the side of the republic, and then, as the republic merged into a despotism, they found themselves revenging, as they thought, their own partition by assisting to partition other nations. Was the man who divided Italy, and tried to place a French sovereign on the throne of Spain, who suppressed the Dutch republic, and compelled German conscripts to fight against Germany, likely to feel any real indignation against the sovereigns who acted by Poland as he longed to act by all Europe? Their horsemen formed his finest but fiercest cavalry, and had opposed Suvorov, though unsuccessfully, at Novi and the Trebbia, had overrun Italy, and assisted to place the crown of Naples on the head of Joseph Bonaparte. In the campaign in Italy, and in those with Austria and Prussia, they deserted by hundreds from the allied ranks. Their contingent was rewarded for these services by exile to San Domingo in 1803, but in 1805, for the sake of attracting their countrymen, they were again summoned to the standard of France, and

the subsequent year a Polish division was formed, and Napoleon requested the veteran Kosciusko to put himself at its head. He refused on account of his health, and having been a republican all his life, he could not consistently serve under a monarchical government. On this Napoleon put Kosciusko's name to a proclamation he spread in Poland.* The patriot was made to declare that he should shortly appear among them, calling upon the people to arm for their deliverers, the French. Dombrowski and Wybicki lent their aid to this forgery, and in December, 1806, all Posen was in open insurrection, the Prussian arms were torn down throughout the province, and the Duchy of Warsaw received the conquerors of Prussia with open arms. The French officers were fascinated by the charms of the Polish ladies, and Napoleon, who is said to have found his Capua on the Vistula, was so completely captivated by a titled dame as to make Josephine very uneasy, and request to come to the Polish capital. "All capacity and energy in Poland," the French commissioner of Louis XV. wrote home to his master in 1770, "have passed from the men to the women, who are occupied in action while the men are leading the life of women." Misfortune seems to have restored energy to the Polish men, but the women still retain their superiority over their husbands, and on their side are governed by the priests of the Roman Catholic Church. Napoleon had the support of the Pope, and the Pope had in reality more power in Poland than in any other part of Europe. At this time Napoleon does not seem to have valued the Poles as soldiers, for he wrote to Joseph, July 30th, 1806, that "with bad troops like the Poles failure is not surprising." "I like them," he said to Rapp on another occasion, "their ardour pleases me. I could wish to render them an independent people, but it is no easy undertaking. Too many nations are interested in their spoils, Austria, Russia, and Prussia. If the match is once lighted, there is no saying where it would stop. My first duty is towards France, and it is no part of it to sacrifice its interests to Poland." Later he spoke more strongly against even the policy of their independence, fearing that "their lawless example would excite revolutions in France."

* This proclamation is given in Hardenberg's *Memoirs*.—Goldsmith.

But the words he used to them, "that the bright days of Poland have returned," were naturally interpreted by a people whose sole aim was the restoration of their kingdom in its fullest extent, to mean their emancipation from foreign control, and they long imagined that their country would be restored to independence (and anarchy!) through the medium of Napoleon, and as a reward for their services to France.*

The foppish Murat, attracted by the Oriental costume and gaudy colours of the Polish national dress, entreated his brother-in-law to make him King of Poland, and his cavalry achievements were boasted of with true Gascon exaggeration, in the hope of making him acceptable to an equestrian people, but the peace of Tilsit prevented their scheme from being carried out. The hope of securing the Polish crown as an hereditary possession brought over Saxony, in the winter of 1806, entirely to the cause of France, though she had never been anything more than Prussia's half-hearted ally; but Napoleon's transactions with regard to the other members of the northern confederation showed he had no wish to alienate Alexander beyond forgiveness. The Duke of Brunswick was the brother-in-law of George III., and the father of the Princess of Wales; and when dying of his wounds after the battle of Jena was chased from his palace, and not allowed to draw his last breath in his ancestral home; while his dominions were seized by the French, and his family, though nearly connected with the Elector of Baden, Napoleon's ally, were compelled to take refuge with their relatives in Prussia, Sweden, and Denmark. The Duchy of Saxe-Coburg was occupied by the French, but not annexed till the beginning of 1807, and then it was gently dealt with, and the ruling family allowed to remain in the palace; for Coburg had not at that time formed any alliance with Great Britain, and one of its princesses, still residing with her parents, was married to the brother of Alexander. The Duke of Saxe-Weimar commanded a division in the battle of Jena, and his capital was overrun immediately afterwards, and his palace occupied by Napoleon, who called him a *mauvais sujet* to his own wife;

* Napoleon reserved estates for himself in the Duchy of Warsaw to the value of twenty millions of francs.

but his daughter-in-law was the sister of Alexander, and though she was then in a place of safety, this relationship, far more than the courage of the Duchess,* saved his territory from annexation and pillage. Mecklenburg-Schwerin was similarly exempted, as its hereditary prince were the widower of Alexander's second sister, Helena. It was not surprising that an alliance with the Imperial House of Russia became an object of ambition to the unmarried princes of Europe.

Before the battle of Eylau, the arrangements for the wounded and the medical staff in the French army were better organized than any other in the world, with the exception of Great Britain. Baron Larrey had introduced flying ambulances, which conveyed the sufferers in comfortable vehicles over a wide area, and prevented the miseries inevitable when they are too closely packed, and he dressed their wounds under the hottest fire of the enemy; but at Eylau the whole of the sick, wounded, and dead of both forces were ultimately left to the Russians either to bury or to cure, and from this period Napoleon displayed the most culpable indifference to the safety of his disabled soldiers, a negligence which was soon communicated to his subordinates. He never allowed his movements to be impeded by them, though every general engaged in a hot campaign has to take into consideration this burden, and interest and humanity should prompt him to furnish them with shelter and proper care. But Napoleon, unlike most generals, having the command of the sources from which he drew his troops, thought it the most economical measure in the end to let them perish of their wounds or of starvation at the side of the roads or in the fields where they fell, as it cost him more to cure them than to bring up fresh conscripts. It doubtless enabled him to surprise his enemies by his rapid movements, but it was not the less unjustifiable, and his reckless expenditure of human life has affected the population of France to the present day.

The Russian arrangements for the wounded had been hitherto inefficient, and their surgeons, both civil and military, very scarce, for the medical improvements ordered by

* Thiers is mistaken in saying it was Alexander's sister who confronted Napoleon. It was her mother-in-law.

the Emperor Paul had not shown much effect; and in the learned professions, above everything else, the want of a middle class is most severely felt. "The best cure for a man desperately wounded is a cannon-ball," was a remark often heard from even humane Russians; but the amelioration of their condition was a favourite subject with Alexander, and at Friedland, during this campaign, for the first time in their history the wounded were conveyed off the field before the end of the battle, and their wounds dressed while still under fire, instead of being overrun by the cavalry and artillery, as in previous engagements.

On the evening of February 13th, five days after the battle of Eylau, Napoleon's aide-de-camp, General Bertrand, arrived at the Russian camp outside Königsberg with a flag of truce, and demanded a safe conduct to the King at Memel. Benningsen wrote at the same time to Frederick William: "I will presume to observe, Sire, it is not a moment to listen to an armistice, and the proposal alone serving as a proof of the state of weakness to which the enemy's army is reduced, is a sufficient reason to decline it."* A few days later the French general of the advanced guard asked Benningsen for an armistice, but it was refused. The Russian army moved its quarters the same day with the French, and occupied Eylau, Barstein, and the country round; while the greatest alarm began to prevail in Warsaw, where the Poles felt they had compromised themselves with Prussia, and all persons of note prepared to join the French head-quarters at Berlin.

General Bertrand's mission was first to propose a separate peace with Russia, which Benningsen told him could not be thought of except in concert with their allies, and then he carried the same overtures to the King. He particularly requested to see the Queen, humbly representing that Napoleon had charged him to assure her of his regret for his calumnious publications, when he was most completely deceived as to her conduct. He further said, no one was now more ready to do justice to her many virtues; and he hoped shortly, at Berlin, to have an opportunity of gaining her

* As Bertrand returned from Memel he asked Benningsen to propose something which should give the belligerents a little repose, and Wilson says that the French soldiers asked the Cossacks for bread, which they swallowed with painful avidity.

esteem.* "I send to your majesty," Napoleon wrote to Frederick William, February 13th, "General Bertrand, my confidential aide-de-camp. He will say things which I hope will be agreeable, that you may believe this moment is the finest of my life. I flatter myself it will be the epoch of a durable friendship between us." This was to offer the restoration of all his dominions, according to Wilson and some other authorities; but only as far as the Elbe, according to Lanfrey; though either concession was distinctly refused more than once a few months before. Bertrand represented to the King that his alliance with Russia was only a disgraceful vassalage; the sufferings of his people did not allow of his waiting for the consent of England; Napoleon only wished to have the glory of reorganizing the Prussian nation, whose power was necessary to all Europe; and that as to Poland, since he knew her he no longer attached a price to her. At the same time, fearing the report of the French losses might have reached Paris, Napoleon wrote to Fouché: "Spread the report, first in the salons, then in the journals, that the Russians are so much weakened some regiments are reduced to 150 men. There remain no more troops in Russia. The Russian army demands peace. She accuses some great nobles of selling the Russians' blood for the English," &c.†

On February 14th, the battle of Ostrolenka was gained by the Russians, under General Essen, over Savary and Oudinot, each side losing about 1500 men. Both claimed the victory, but even Lanfrey asserts that it belonged to Essen, whose troops chiefly consisted of a corps lately arrived from Moldavia. He withdrew nearer the frontier of Russia, not wishing to leave it quite uncovered, but much to Benningsen's displeasure, as he had expected him to join the head-quarters, and shortly afterwards General Knorring threw up his command, on account of Benningsen having refused to encamp on the field of Eylau after the battle.

Frederick William and many of his councillors would gladly have accepted these terms, but were deterred by the remonstrances of Hardenberg and the Queen, and delayed a positive answer till Alexander's arrival. The King was now literally without an army, for the corps of 10,000

* Wilson; Sir G. Jackson.

† Lanfrey's *Vie de Napoléon I^{er}*.

dispirited Prussians left to him after Jena were nearly all dispersed, and their feeble efforts in the field made them objects of contempt to both their enemies and allies. They grudged the Russians their victories, and would never willingly give them any aid. They were much in the position of the Spaniards during the Peninsular campaign, or of the Tartars in the Crimea during the Anglo-French and Russian war, as even Lestocq's contingent was almost entirely composed of Russians. The King of Sweden kept to Stralsund, and in spite of his invectives against the French, took no part in the struggle except to conclude an armistice at the most critical moment; but the English officers at the head-quarters of Benningsen, and the King of Prussia, kept up their hopes of an eventual assistance on the side of Great Britain, and after the battle of Eylau both the cabinets of St. Petersburg and Berlin applied for a British force to co-operate with the Allies in the Baltic, on the shores of Pomcrania, or in Holland. But the English were taking advantage of Napoleon being occupied elsewhere to strengthen and increase their colonial possessions, and secure their influence in Egypt and Buenos Ayres. Having first summoned the Continent to arm on defence of national rights, they now seemed only bent on turning the war to their private profit. Lord Howick (afterwards Lord Grey), the very minister who, after Jena, had entreated Russia to come to the assistance of Prussia, returned for answer: "The approach of spring is doubtless the most favourable period for military operations, but in the present juncture the Allies must not look for any considerable aid from the land force of Great Britain."

In the mean while stores and reinforcements of all kinds were being forwarded from Russia to the head-quarters of her army in West Prussia, and the Imperial Guard began its march from St. Petersburg under Constantine's command as soon as the severity of the winter had relaxed. When Kamenski was appointed chief of the active army, he accepted it only on condition that the Grand Duke should not serve under him, nor any of the wealthy young nobles in the regiments in the capital. There was great jealousy, he said, between the army and the Court, which would be the source of constant intrigues; and he also tried to obtain Count

Pahlen's services, but the unfortunate end to his period of authority caused an entire change, and when fresh battalions were required after Eylau the Guards were ordered to the seat of war. The Emperor addressed his general strongly on the subject of maintaining good discipline among the soldiers with regard to the property of the inhabitants of the districts where they were quartered in Prussia, and said he should hold him responsible for all future irregularities. This order was unfortunate, as Benningsen was already too much disposed to inaction, and it resulted in his restraining the Cossack attacks on the French outposts, which had caused so much harass to the enemy as to impel it to retreat, and enable the overtaxed Russian army to obtain a little repose.

On the 9th of March General Bertrand was sent again with a flag of truce to the Russian outposts to propose an armistice ; but though it was refused, Benningsen would not undertake any further operation till the arrival of the Emperor, as he confidently expected either a junction with Austria or peace. It was not then known that the Russian success had decided Austria to become in reality the ally of France, for she permitted Napoleon to send reinforcements through her territory to operate against the Russians in Dalmatia. Wilson reports that there was great impatience among the Russian generals at sustaining the conflict single-handed ; though, "in the field no military can show more daring, the greater part of the generals now wish to retire with honour." Yet all this time the British envoys at the Courts of Memel and St. Petersburg had particular instructions to urge Russia to keep up the war. Alexander passed a few hours at Mittau on his way to Prussia, and went through the hospitals crowded with the sick and wounded from both armies. He paid a visit to Louis XVIII. and his family, and thanked the Duchess d'Angoulême for her attention to the wounded, which was, however, particularly directed to the French prisoners, among whom typhus fever extensively prevailed, and from which, a month later, the celebrated Abbé Edgeworth lost his life. The snow was still unusually deep on the roads between Moscow and Vilna, and St. Petersburg and Mittau, and the Emperor, travelling in an open sledge, with one outrider, nearly perished in a storm, and was compelled

to pass the night in a peasant's hut. Fatal accidents are most common in that climate, if a snowstorm is encountered on a journey, or the thermometer marks seventeen degrees of frost; but the railways, fast intersecting Russia, will soon make such expeditions a thing of the past. At Memel he was met by the Sovereigns of Prussia, and the haggard, worn face of the Queen would have touched a much harder heart. "Dear cousin," was all she could find words to say; but he reassured her, and the same afternoon was closeted for three hours with the King on the subject of Napoleon's proposal for a peace, which had been renewed. "I desire peace with Russia," said the French Emperor in his letter, and "I desire to put a period to the misfortunes of your family, and organize as speedily as possible the Prussian monarchy, whose intermediate power is necessary for the tranquillity of Europe." This language, so different from the declaration after Jena, that "the Prussian nobility should be reduced to beg their bread," and the "House of Brandenburg must resign half its dominions," would certainly have been heeded if the English ambassadors had not held out hopes of some species of succour and Austria's alliance been expected. The Emperor of Russia also doubted if Bonaparte would really resign the fortresses he still held in Prussia until pushed to greater extremity, and thought he only wished to gain time. He insisted upon Hardenberg being recalled to the chief place in the King's councils, and, Sir G. Jackson says, turned the scale in favour of rejecting the offer of peace. His friend and minister, Strogonof, arrived at Memel the day before, Novosilzof, who had already paid one visit to the army, came with the Emperor, the prime minister, Budberg, eight days afterwards, and Czartoriski, though no longer in office, within a fortnight. "During the Emperor's short stay at Memel," writes Jackson, "everything was arranged, and the basis laid for a very different line of conduct from any we have lately seen pursued by the Prussian Government. We may now fairly hope that the Beyer and Lombard system is fairly banished from the councils of their betrayed country."

The arrival of the Emperor and of the Imperial Guard was delayed by the state of the ice on the river Memel, but Alexander reached Barstenstein, the head-quarters of his army,

April 13th, having reviewed several corps on his road, and Constantine followed with his division on the 17th. "After overturning the Prussian monarchy," wrote Napoleon to Joseph on March 1st, "we are fighting against the Russians, the Cossacks, the Calmucks, and those hordes of the north who of old overwhelmed the Roman Empire. We are engaged in war in all its might and horrors. In the midst of these terrible fatigues every one has been more or less invalided. As for myself, I never felt stronger, and have even got fatter." The King accompanied his Imperial ally, and from time to time corresponded with Napoleon without Alexander's knowledge, but the two allied sovereigns signed a treaty at Barsteinstein, April 26th, binding themselves to make common cause, and neither party to entertain separate terms of peace. They also engaged to make no conquest on their own account while the war lasted. Lord Hutchinson refused to accede to it on the part of England, and when it was forwarded to Austria she followed the same course. It was sent to Bonaparte, who at once saw that he had now no need to fear the active opposition of either England or Austria; and there were certainly many traitors in the Prussian camp, for plans of attack and the most private information found their way from the royal councils to the French generals. The Emperor suspected Beym, who was on particularly intimate terms with the lady-in-waiting, and persistently counteracted Hardenberg's influence, having great power over the King; and he again endeavoured to remove him, but Frederick William intimated that any further application for that purpose would be offensive, and the Emperor desisted. The King's conduct was certainly quite unaccountable. He was of too cold a disposition to make warm friends, but he can hardly be exonerated of treachery towards his ally. "If left to themselves," writes Sir G. Jackson, "I am persuaded the Prussians would make peace to-morrow with Bonaparte, and join the confederation of the Rhine." He complains much of his colleague, Lord Hutchinson, who loudly depreciated the allied resources, and extolled those of Bonaparte. "Hardenberg, and even the King and Queen, are anxious to get rid of him, for he tried to delay active operations, and keeps up the same offensive strain of mingled despair and contempt."

“Every moment that we are in society with the Emperor,” says Wilson, “the impression is more favourable.* His manner at the same time is so frank that the most sceptical misanthrope must allow that he has all the characteristics of an honest mind in the exterior.” The Guards arrived April 23rd, and “a more noble and martial body of men could not be seen. They moved with as much firmness and yet ease as if they were on the parade at St. Petersburg.† The Grand Duke [Constantine] I had only previously seen at table once, so that I had no opportunity of forming any opinion of his talents, but a conversation of an hour and a half now afforded me the means of appreciating them. I can truly affirm that I never heard a princee tell so many serious truths, argue with more political judgment, and show so much comprehension of the character of the different nations of Europe. I do not believe the King of Prussia would have remained in the room till the conclusion, so powerfully and with such accurate direction were the thunderbolts launched against him.”

The Poles raised a body of 30,000 men to assist the French, and their leaders received military titles and decorations, or a grade in the rank of nobility, as a recompense for their services; but after the battle of Eylau, when it was known that Napoleon offered to restore Warsaw to the King of Prussia, they began to desert to both the Russians and Prussians; and the Prussian conscripts, forced to enrol themselves under the French standard, returned by hundreds to join Lestocq during the month of April. But large reinforcements were arriving from France and West Germany, while the unfavourable spring and the want of arms kept the new militia levies in Russia. On the 10th of May the Neva was still frozen, and the protracted thaw in the central districts of the empire rendered the rivers impassable for weeks. Famine and fever raged in the Prussian towns abandoned by the

* Sir G. Jackson's Diary and Correspondence.

† Life of General Sir Robert Wilson, vol. ii. “Of Wilson,” Jackson says, “he rattles away with the Emperor at a great rate, as if laughing and joking with a fellow comrade. It cannot be denied that he is one of the most harum-scarum fellows that ever existed, yet there is an immense deal of good in him,” &c. He says, however, that he was too fond of intrigue, and did much mischief.

French ; and in the neighbourhood of Eylau and Heilsberg the Russian army fed the inhabitants. Benningsen and Platof were both taken ill at a most inopportune moment, and the leaders of the Russian army strongly deprecated any further offensive movements till they were reinforced. Alexander lost no opportunity of encouraging and rewarding his soldiers. He marched with the Imperial Guards when they moved on towards Heilsberg, and at seven in the morning attended the exercises of various battalions, and presented each man with an extra rouble when particularly satisfied with their manœuvres. Wilson gives them high praise, and declares them to have been better instructed than English troops. "In the conversation the Emperor held with various individuals who had distinguished themselves, the manly replies of the soldiers were admirable. Many were decorated with the newly established Order of St. George. It might be advantageously introduced in the English service if those who bore it were exempted from corporal punishment, as among the Russians ; but, indeed, corporal punishment is so little frequent among them that there are regiments which for years have not been stripped." As the Emperor, in the midst of pouring rain, was reviewing the Tartar regiments and Leib Cossacks in their national costume, a red vest and large loose light blue trousers fastening under the boot, important despatches arrived from England for Lord Hutchinson. There had been a change of ministry, and Mr. Canning was appointed minister. Wilson told the Emperor and the King he would answer with his head for the new ministers sending, with the news of their appointment, evidence of their disposition to support the common cause ; but nothing of the sort appeared, and the session of Parliament, announced as prorogued, seemed to have been devoted to the discussion of the laws affecting Roman Catholics.* "I could shed tears," Wilson wrote, "and I lament as a source of unceasing affliction that I ever came among the Russians. I might otherwise have heard how they were wronged and betrayed with merely sentiments of regret for the honour of my country."

* The Russians could not believe in the discussion with regard to the Roman Catholics being anything more than an excuse, as they have always been Liberals on religious differences.

English vessels arrived at Memel bringing ballast, but neither men, victuals, nor arms, yet 20,000 English soldiers, and they were all ready, would have given a complete victory to the Allies. In May Bonaparte told Blueher, then a prisoner in the hands of the French, that he wanted no war with Russia, "and if she chooses I am ready at once to ratify the treaty of last July. But with England it is not possible to come to any terms; a war *à outrance* is all I can hope for or expect from her duplicity."

The French had besieged Dantzic for the last two months, and the younger General Kamenski made an attempt to relieve it, but failed, with a heavy loss, May 15th. Jackson writes "that his troops, including Prussians, consisted of 7000, and the enemy, by the statement of the prisoners, 17,000 or 20,000. It was intended to be a surprise, but the French had got the whole plan, and even the explanation of the telegraph signals. The weather was unfavourable for the co-operation of the ships. The news caused the greatest depression, both here and at head-quarters. Surrender is inevitable. When the Emperor read the despatch he was quite overcome by his feelings:—Great scarcity of provisions; the Russian army so distressed that the men actually pass whole days without bread. Just now, as an amazing effort, the contractors have promised provisions for three days."

The Russians were incensed by Kalkreuth, one of the advocates for an alliance with France, blaming them for Dantzic being forced to surrender when, during Kamenski's attack, a corps of 2600 Prussians, moving up from Pillau, allowed themselves to be routed without losing a single officer, and left two ships of provisions and three guns with the enemy. This general and the King were both at this time negotiating for a peace with Napoleon unknown to Alexander, and Kalkreuth undertook to bring over Constantine and Benningsen to their view.

"The Emperor," writes Wilson, May 21st, "is gone to Tilsit, to expedite reinforcements to his army. There is something truly noble in his zeal. The war is not properly his own. He might make for himself a most advantageous peace to-morrow, and so might Prussia, and I feel surprised they do not, since England has behaved so shamefully to-

wards Russia. I also give Alexander more praise for his present conduct, as he sacrifices his pride and military feelings to public utility. His magnanimity is superior to personal consideration, and he disdains the influence of a mischievous vanity that might be injurious to the glory and welfare of his army." This remark refers to his not leading his army in person, though he incurred what were considered unnecessary risks by visiting the advanced outposts.

Early in May Ney's division was defeated at Guttstadt, and pursued to Deppen, where Napoleon came up to his rescue, and Benningsen retired; but the Cossacks continued to skirmish in the face of the French army, which thereby lost several thousand men. Dantzic fell at the end of May, and Alexander proceeded from Tilsit towards Vilna to ascertain the cause of the delay in the arrival of stores and troops. During his absence the Russian commanders attempted to end the campaign by an engagement at Heilsberg, on June 10th. Benningsen, Constantine, Gortchakof, Bagration, Osterman, Rosen, Ouvarof, and Chaplitz commanded the Russians, and Napoleon, Ney, Oudinot, Soult, and Davoust led the French. Jackson says the French owed to a loss of 20,000; Wilson estimates it at 12,000, and the Russian loss about 7000. The Russians kept the ground and had the charge of the wounded. They repulsed the enemy at four points, took two standards, and again saved Königsberg from a meditated attack; but they lost two generals and many valuable officers, and hearing that Napoleon was about to be reinforced by 20,000 men, they crossed the Aller and took up their station at Friedland, where their advanced cavalry drove out a French detachment. On June 13th, Benningsen, having received mistaken information from some prisoners that Oudinot's shattered division was alone in his front, determined to attack it in spite of the extreme fatigue of his own army, and for this purpose threw three pontoon bridges across the Aller. "The will of Providence for his destruction," says General Wilson, "could alone infatuate General Benningsen* so far as to cause him to act in this manner. The position he was about to occupy was actually untenable; and he had reason, moreover, to expect an attack from Schippenheil on the right bank of the

* Benningsen was in great physical suffering throughout this battle.

Aller. He must be forced to fight on both sides, while on neither could he act with vigour or defend himself on any military principles." Fifteen thousand men were detached on other service, and 2000 cavalry had not arrived from the cantonments where they had been sent to refresh. Forty thousand men, therefore, had to defend the two sides of the river, exhausted with fatigue, unfed for twenty-four past hours, and during the long battle afterwards without any sustenance."* According to Thiers, the French army amounted to 80,000, without the divisions commanded by Murat, Davoust, and Sault, which consisted of 65,000 more.† As usual, the French reports greatly exaggerated the number of Russians engaged, and in the 82nd bulletin Napoleon stated their *loss* at 60,000, being 20,000 more than were actually present. In fact, the inferior force which the Russians possessed was notorious for months, and justified the anxiety they felt for the completion of the thaw and the arrival of their militia; but the snow that year remained on the ground as far south as the latitude of Moscow till the middle of June, which was almost unprecedented. Wilson declares no troops could have fought better on this occasion than the Russians, who for sixteen hours were under fire, and at first gained a slight success over the corps of Marshal Ney; it was no credit to Bonaparte when, with a superiority of 40,000, he gained the day. Benningsen seemed physically, as well as morally, imbecile, and discovered too late that he was opposed to the whole French army; and when at last a retreat was sounded, and the Russians evacuated the burning town and halted a mile distant to rest there for the night, he seemed resolved to kill the survivors with fatigue, and after only two hours of repose dragged them on to Polpitten—a distance of twenty miles. The next day the French attacked Kamenski and Lestocq in front of Königsberg; and though Sault, the French commander, called this a victory, he could not prevent the Russians from entering the city, where they repulsed three subsequent assaults with great loss to the French. On the 18th they received orders from Benningsen to leave Königsberg to its fate and join the remainder of the Russian army. This movement was effected with great skill; all the baggage and

* Life of General Sir R. Wilson.

† Thiers, vii. 606-8.

magazines of any importance were saved and transported with the troops across the Niemen by the bridge at Tilsit, which was burned as soon as the last had passed; while during the passage, which occupied two days, only a few shots were exchanged between the rear-guard of the Russians and the vanguard of the French. The magistrates of Königsberg at once sent the keys of the city to Marshal Soult; but 3000 Russian wounded, too ill to be moved, were left to the care of the inhabitants.

Golovin asserts that Friedland was a voluntary defeat, for even the soldiers saw they were completely led into a trap, and were heard to say, "Where is this German taking us? If the Prussians do not know how to fight, why should we do their work for them?" "Scores of soldiers," he says, "when the battle began would carry away one wounded." The Simonovski Guards left the field without orders. "Where are you going?" said Constantine to its commander. "I have got the cramp," he answered, continuing his unauthorized retreat.* The regiments reported to have lost 1000 men were rejoined by 700 before they reached the Russian frontier. On the other hand, Jackson says that everything valour and bravery could effect was achieved by the Russians at Friedland, but they were worn out by hard marches and want of food, and greatly over-matched. "The Russian officers are unanimous in their reprobation of Benningsen, who has betrayed them, they say, if not by downright treachery, at least by the grossest ignorance and want of energy." He seemed even anxious to magnify his losses, though he sent word to the Emperor that, when reinforced, he could still fight another battle, and would be much stronger than before. Nearly 17,000 Russians were reported to be missing; and Berthier told a British officer that the French lost at least 8000. The Russians left no standards in their hands, and only seventeen guns, nearly all worn-out; while, on their side, they captured two eagles and 400 prisoners. But the portion of the town of Friedland where the Russian wounded were deposited during the battle was fired by French shells, and many perished. This fire first compelled the

* History of Alexander I. The same story is told in *Memoirs of a Russian Priest*.

Russians to begin their retreat, which was conducted with the greatest order across a ford and over the bridge. Lord Hutehinson was present, and said in his despatch that he wanted "words sufficiently strong to describe their valour;" and "whatever may be the event, the officers and men of the Russian army have done their duty in the noblest manner." It is evident they made a serious impression on the French, to have been left to retire unpursued; and immediately afterwards Napoleon's advisers began to press him to renew his former proposals for peace.*

Alexander met a few battalions of Bashkirs armed with bows and arrows on his road to Vilna, and hearing from a confidential agent that no better weapons could at present be supplied to his new levies, who had to learn the use of them, before they could serve with much effect against the French, he returned quickly towards Tilsit, and received a despatch containing the news of the battle of Friedland at a country house within the Russian frontier belonging to Prince Plato Zoubof, where he had summoned the King of Prussia, Hardenberg, and the foreign ministers for a council of war. He was also told of the great discontent in Livonia, and the feverish restlessness exhibiting itself throughout Russian Poland. The want and misery produced by the unusual length of the winter were very great in Russia, and now all supplies for the army must be brought from his own country, already threatened with famine. The retreat of Benningsen

* Before Napoleon could possibly have received intelligence that his troops had entered Königsberg he dated a bulletin the same day from Wehlau, thirty miles distant, asserting that they had found there 100,000 quintals of wheat, 160,000 muskets and other military stores sent out by England, and 20,000 wounded. This utter fabrication was partly contradicted by a subsequent bulletin, dated Tilsit, June 19th, where the prisoners dwindle down to four or five thousand, and the guns are not mentioned; in fact, the guns had never yet arrived, which was so well known to the Russians, Prussians, and English commissioners that they thought the falsehood hardly worth contradiction, and they were afterwards landed at a Swedish port; yet many of the biographers of Napoleon have taken such little pains to sift his statements that they have given the substance of his first bulletin, ignoring the correction in the second. The great scarcity of provisions both in the Russian army and in Prussia for weeks before this event is sufficient to show that no wheat was likely to be left in Königsberg, or any other kind of provision, but the French people were beginning to complain, and Napoleon thought it necessary to show some result of this long campaign.

caused the royal family to pack up their effects to be ready for flight, and the Queen of Prussia wrote to her father, June 17th, to prepare him for her departure to Riga.

It was the political theory of the last century that the existence of Prussia was indispensable to the balance of power, yet without further assistance its complete subjection to Napoleon ought to have been foreseen for some weeks by the British Government. An English diplomatist writing from London in May, says "the Prussian commissioner does not offer a very hopeful prospect. I see that his King is as usual null, and the Emperor the only person in his Court or army on whom we can rely. His Imperial Majesty's intentions are excellent, and it is certainly no reproach to him if he is unable fully to execute them for want of proper support from his ministers and generals. Bonaparte would not be where he is if it had not been for the advice and aid of Talleyrand and his marshals, Berthier, Augereau, &c." Von Schladen, one of Hardenberg's only supporters in favour of the war being prolonged, writes on June 7th, "People here (at Tilsit) remark a surprising alteration in the opinions of the Russian authorities, and it is obvious that they wish for a peace. It is a question whether his Imperial Majesty can stand alone in the midst of such a circle as that by which he is surrounded." "Even Hardenberg," writes Jackson on the 20th, "now begins to waver, for at the same time that he expresses his conviction that the Emperor will listen to no terms he admits that the door of conciliation should *not be quite shut.*"

On the 18th of June Benningsen, on his own authority, suggested an armistice, after having constantly refused it when it was demanded by the French, for as a general congress had been proposed it might prevent useless effusion of blood. Napoleon immediately acceded to it, and sent the younger Talleyrand to the Russian head-quarters to recommend its extension on certain conditions for two months. Benningsen could not sign it for more than three days without Alexander's authority, and then Duroc appeared to say it would be easier and better to treat for peace at once with the Czar, instead of merely for an extension of the armistice. His master wished to make a separate peace with Russia, but this was positively

rejected, and then Napoleon requested an interview with Alexander, who refused it. He however signed an armistice for two months, and stipulated that four weeks' notice should be given on either side before hostilities were renewed; and having ascertained that the Prussians were determined to make peace,* he agreed that each power should negotiate for herself with regard to the conditions. But a conspiracy, headed by Constantine, Kalkreuth, and Benningsen, resolved to compel him to make peace.† "A cabal in fact," says Jackson, "such as it would be difficult to conceive in any country but Russia or Turkey. A perfect tempest was raised up against him." Hardenberg told Wilson that immediately after Friedland he came to the Emperor, and assured him his brother was at the head of a party which meant to force him to make peace. The Emperor was very

* Lord Hutchinson had just been superseded at the urgent request of the Prussian ambassador in London, but was ordered to remain as commissioner to the Russian army. "When war was proposed," says Jackson, "he told them they were unequal to it, and advised negotiations; when his advice was followed, and this unfortunate armistice was the result of it, he hesitated to believe it; said that Bonaparte would never consent to it."

† "The French were afterwards assured that the proposal of an interview came from Alexander, but it is now established that it came from Napoleon through Duroc," says Lanfrey. It was Napoleon's well-known practice to concoct or falsify historical documents. After writing three varying and false accounts of the battle of Marengo, he caused all the original documents to be destroyed. He melted up cannon which he captured to assist in making bronze columns and statues that they might not remain as evidence of the wide difference between the number really taken and the number set forth in his reports. His earlier biographers (including M. Thiers), who wrote before the publication of his correspondence, based many of their historical incidents entirely on these false statements, for which M. Thiers rather excuses himself by alleging exaggerations on the part of the Russians, but their superior veracity in the course of this campaign and succeeding one in 1812 is now confirmed by both German and English eye-witnesses, and even by the French themselves, particularly on the point of the meeting at Tilsit, in which, though the Russians asked for an armistice, the French proposed a lengthened one, and then a peace; and Napoleon also proposed the interview. M. Thiers says that "all Europe has rung with controverted statements relative to this subject, and not only have chimerical conversations been invented, but there have been published a quantity of treaties under the designation of secret articles of Tilsit, which are absolute forgeries. The English in particular have put forth a great many secret articles of Tilsit, as they are called, some really communicated at the time to the Cabinet of London by diplomatic spies, who on this occasion ill earned the money that was lavished on them." M. Thiers gives a series of conversations, chiefly derived from Alexander's subsequent conversations with Savary at St. Petersburg, and fills them up from his own imagination, in which

angry with Hardenberg, and said he wished to sow dissension between them, on which the Prussian minister left him, determined never to visit him again. Three hours afterwards Alexander sent for Hardenberg, and said to him, "I did you wrong, but who could suspect that my brother was so unnatural? He has been with me, and had even the audacity to remind me of my father's fate, but I shall find the means of removing him from my presence."* As a conversation with Alexander generally necessitated loud talking, a considerable part of their discussion reached the ears of the Russian officer stationed outside his master's door, and a fierce altercation seemed to be going on. Both Hardenberg and the aide-de-camp were not a little surprised when the next day they appeared perfectly good friends, and Alexander consented to follow Constantine's advice, and accept Bonaparte's renewed invitation to meet him half-way between their head-quarters, which were on opposite sides of the Niemen at Polpitten and Tilsit. As Czartoriski formerly blamed Alexander for refusing to see Bonaparte after Austerlitz, he probably now pressed a similar counsel on his sovereign; and after sharing in the same battle, and corresponding extensively for the greater part of seven years, they met for the first time (June 25th) on a raft in the middle of the river, while their military escorts formed an imposing line along the opposite banks.

This meeting has been frequently described both by those on the French side who were present, and those who were not, and in many instances imagination has formed the chief source of their information. Napoleon thought it the greatest epoch in his life. He had always taken remarkable interest in the Russian Imperial family, and adopted several of their customs in his own Court; he had given his mother, like the Empress-Dowager, the title of directress of all the charitable establishments in France; with her more an honorary office than with the mother of Alexander. He had crowned himself after the fashion of the Russian Czars. He had even begun to contemplate the possibility of obtaining a

he a little differs from Napoleon's own statements, but he adds with truth, "It is certain that Alexander attached himself for some time, not to the person of Napoleon, but to his policy."—Thiers, vol. vii.

* Wilson; Sir G. Jackson.

Russian Grand Duchess for a wife ; and, a parvenu himself, he felt the greatest respect for the position of an hereditary monarch. It was the feeling that, in spite of his superior power, he was looked down upon as an adventurer by legitimate sovereigns, which prompted much of the insolence he exhibited towards those kings who had put themselves into his hands. But with Russia the Imperial authority was no mere pretension ; it was a fact. Alexander exercised an autocratic sway over more than half of Europe, such as Napoleon never could hope to exercise over the other half ; for while Alexander was at liberty to make peace or war entirely irrespective of the wishes or will of his subjects, and was at this period more sparing of his bounties than any of his predecessors, Napoleon felt that to keep his throne he must for ever overawe, conciliate, flatter, or reward his people. "I was never really my own master," he said at St. Helena ; however anxious he felt for a continued peace, it involved a reckoning with his subjects which throughout his career he was not prepared to show. The marshals, the officials, every one who served him, must be bribed to do so, and to effect this he must possess himself of the spoil of other States, for orders at last became too common to be of much value ; while the lower classes and civilians must be bribed with glory, with a perpetual succession of real or invented triumphs. Within six years of the French Revolution and its sanguinary results, Alexander could still unfetter the Russian press, and attempt to lead his subjects to liberal aspirations, and the ignorant, almost barbarous, serfs towards emancipation ; but Napoleon was forced to gag his people, and independent writers and talkers like Madame de Staël, he could not venture to leave in Paris. To him, essays on liberty seemed as dangerous as to the Emperor Paul ; and whatever his own reason dictated, his system was one consistent suppression of freedom in France. When Alexander trifled with the prejudices of his people, he only endangered his own life, but Napoleon risked his dynasty and the very existence of his empire. No one ever thought of refusing the Imperial title to the Czar, while Great Britain and even the Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin denied it to Napoleon ; and to the end of his life this was the sorest point of all. Nowhere did

men of long pedigrees receive greater attention when they chose to come there than in Paris. Narbonne, he asserted, was his only real ambassador, on account of his noble birth, because an envoy of plebeian origin was never admitted on an equality into the aristocratic saloons of the European Courts.* At the present day the strong feeling which then prevailed against parvenus can hardly be understood. The present generation smiles at the reason Napoleon gave for his satisfaction at some of his private papers being published when they were found in his carriage taken at Waterloo, "because," he said, "it will show many people that the contents are not the property of a man who slept. They will compare me to the legitimate sovereigns. I shall not lose by it." He was aware of the admiration which Alexander when a youth had felt for him, and how from the midst of Catherine's sumptuous Court he had listened eagerly to the narrative of the exploits of the hero of the French Republic. He was resolved to renew that impression; and it is generally admitted that when he exerted himself to his utmost powers to obtain the favour of his visitors, he seldom failed to have a complete success. Want of polish or a rough exterior was no barrier to Alexander's goodwill; some of those he most esteemed were deficient in this respect; plain-speaking, even bluntness and straightforwardness, always commended itself to him, and he enjoyed nothing more than a conversation with a good talker or a well-informed companion. Napoleon took so much trouble to be agreeable to him, that he even deprived himself of the use of his snuffbox when in his company, because he heard that he disliked the practice of taking snuff, or the odour of tobacco in any form. But Alexander resorted to their first place of meeting with a very heavy heart. He who had begun his reign resolved to give repose to Russia, to develop her resources, and bring glory and freedom to her people, had already cost her more in blood and treasure than his predecessor, without the brilliant successes of Suvorov's Italian campaigns. He who had hoped to be the benefactor of not only Russia, but all Europe, was now told by his councillors that he was her scourge, and that unless he changed his policy they must

* Las Cases.

change it for him in a manner already familiar to his Empire. The war just concluded was a drawn campaign. The Russians began it under every disadvantage, and the weather was more unfavourable to their operations than had been known for years, only enabling them to bring up provisions or recruits from Russia at a fearful risk. Instead of the power of resistance, or the magazines and stores they expected to find left in Prussia, their allies surrendered the fortresses, and Berlin with its vast supplies, with a speed which could only be explained by collusion with the enemy; yet for six months Alexander's army had arrested Napoleon's progress, preserved his own frontier, and forced him several times to demand peace. The Russian victories had been more frequent than their defeats; for eight months they had saved the old capital of Prussia from capture, and had brought down the tone of Bonaparte's proclamations from the boast that he would plant his eagles on the towers of St. Petersburg, and carry his army as far as India, to restore Pondicherry to France, to a justification of his desire for repose, and false statements of the amount of injury he had inflicted on the enemy in default of real trophies of success. What had he to show for the thousands and thousands he had lost on the plains of Poland? It was so obvious to the French, that at the rate they were proceeding both nations might fight to the last man without any advantage being gained by it, that when the Russian officer went to Tilsit to carry Alexander's acceptance of the proposed interview, they thronged round him, shouting, "Vive la paix;" and an officer coming up said, "Let us have no more war; if our Emperors will fight, let them fight together and kill each other."

On the other hand, the Russians never had any direct interest in the war. Alexander would not proclaim himself King of Poland in 1805, as he then expected Prussia to join the Allies; and again in 1806, when it was proposed by some of the Polish magnates; and in the winter of 1807, he refused the same offer, first as it would entirely alienate Austria, whom he hoped to gain as their active ally; and, secondly, he felt he could not aid in despoiling Prussia when he had come to help her, for she clung most tenaciously to her Polish territories. Benningsen was on the eve of proclaiming him

King of Poland at Barstenstein, just after Eylau, when Bonaparte had proposed terms of peace to Frederick William, and said that he attached no longer any price to the Polish kingdom; but he was prevented by the arrival of Alexander, who knew that such a step would at once turn the Prussians into the allies of France. Wilson says that "if the King of Prussia had, long before the peace of Tilsit, surrendered all his Polish provinces where his government was most unpopular to Russia, he would then have given the Russian Empire an interest in the war which it never felt, and which was most injurious to Alexander." The Russian Cabinet saw that so long as the struggle continued, it injured their progress in Turkey, and was extremely detrimental to their real interests. And for whom or for what had Russia impoverished herself, and crippled her influence for years to come? First, for the smaller German States on the Rhine, who all joined Napoleon, giving as a reason that they feared the progress of Russia, in reality attracted by the titles and orders he bestowed among them, and the protection he afforded the German princes from the republican proclivities of their own subjects. Next, Russia had wasted her resources in assisting Austria, who rewarded her by trying to deliver her army up to France; and after Eylau, when her co-operation would have crushed Napoleon for ever, had preferred to remain his vassal, rather than assist in Russia's triumph. Thirdly, she had expended nearly 100,000 men out of her spare population, in striving to restore the Prussian monarchy, while a large faction in Prussia openly advocated an alliance and dependence on France rather than an alliance with Russia, and evidently dreaded the success of their allies more than that of the enemy. The King chose to employ counsellors who negotiated a peace unknown to the Czar, who tried to tamper with his officers, and endeavoured to draw his army to its destruction, by giving up the plans of his generals to the French. In many parts of Prussia the Russians were worse treated than the enemy. "Never," says Wilson, "was a prince more loyal, more devoted to the common cause, or struggled with greater difficulties than Alexander;" and Hardenberg allowed that no one more regretted the result.

And the most provoking circumstance was, that the English commissioners sent to represent the British Government* prevented the conclusion of peace at a most favourable moment, and also early in the war, when, by a cessation of hostilities, thousands of lives might have been spared to the public service. The British Government first stirred up the Emperor Paul from a perfectly safe position, to mix himself in the affairs of the Continent. It afterwards worked on the fears of the Russian ministers, and induced them to demand war, by trying to make them believe that their country was endangered by Napoleon's success; it had besought Alexander to fly to Prussia's assistance after Jena; and when affairs were at such a crisis that 20,000 British troops who were all ready to embark, a few cargoes of guns or provisions, or even a loan, would have at once decided the contest, it refused to make the smallest effort to assist the Allies. It also induced her to prolong the struggle, at an immense cost of men and treasure, by holding out delusive hopes of such co-operation as would enable her to demand all the points at issue for the whole Continent, at the edge of the sword; but it had drawn back when, for a moment, the unassisted bravery of the Russian troops caused Napoleon to retreat. Since the be-

* Another British diplomatist states: "On the 10th or 11th of June Lord Pembroke had an interview with Alexander, who expressed undoubtedly much dissatisfaction at that time, and with considerable vehemence of manner with respect to a supposed want of activity on the part of England in producing a diversion in the north of Germany, but that he had no thoughts of entering into negotiations with France. Eight days after these assurances, without the occurrence of any new event, except the trifling disadvantage of the battle of Friedland, where the Russians scarcely lost 8000 men." Yet Savary, who was present, gives an appalling account of the battle, but makes a curious mistake in speaking as if Alexander and Frederick William were also there. "The two fugitive monarchs," he says, "were already on their way to Tilsit on the 16th, Napoleon, with his army, pressing hard on their track. His light cavalry reached Tilsit on the 19th, whilst the bridge by which Alexander and Frederick William had passed to the right bank of the Niemen was still burning. As the French army approached the last barrier which separated it from the dominions of Alexander, the impatience of Napoleon became uncontrollable," &c. On the contrary, the only road on which the Russian retreat was either opposed or pressed was the way to Königsberg, and Alexander was in Russia at Tauroggen, a few miles beyond Tilsit, at the time of the battle, and as soon as the news reached him he returned to his head-quarters at Polpitten, on the opposite bank to Tilsit. Savary probably wished to enhance the glory of the victory by depicting the two monarchs as having been forced to fly.

ginning of the war, in 1798, Russia had not gained a rouble, or an acre of land in Europe, but, for the sake of furthering the public welfare, had missed many opportunities of consolidating her own power by rectifying her frontiers and enriching herself at very small expense; while France and England extended themselves, the one on the Continent of Europe, the other in India and in the French and Dutch colonial possessions in the East, besides acquiring incalculable wealth in the prizes they both captured on land and sea. Yet Alexander now saw that Russia was looked upon as an aggressive power, merely seeking to enslave instead of to liberate her allies. England feared her power in Asia, and the Prussian and Austrian statesmen thought her weakness was of itself their strength. Was it strange if he felt no longer called upon to sacrifice Russia for such fickle or faithless allies, who first made use of him, and then turned against him as soon as it suited their purpose? Was he to be blamed if, on being offered another ally, he should have been induced to change his policy and his colleagues, which had brought nothing but disaster to Russia? His councillors, who had shared in Catherine's victories, mourned over the departure of military glory from her Empire. Napoleon had never forced a war on Russia; their interests did not clash, and she had only taken offence for the sake of those who preferred to be slaves. A treaty with France while she held Germany in her grasp would enable Russia to maintain peace for the future, as what other power was likely to disturb her? and would also prevent a revolution in Russian Poland and its restoration to independence. Prince Kurakin and Constantine had long maintained that the Germans were not worth fighting for, while no greater admirer of Napoleon could be found than the representative of the British Government at Alexander's camp, and he advised peace. Was a young man of twenty-nine to hold out against all the experienced politicians who surrounded him, and persist in a course of action which it was their deliberate opinion was bringing Russia to ruin? Czartoriski's correspondence shows that Alexander was inclined to follow his own views instead of the advice of his ministers, and he had the character of being very obstinate among those who knew him intimately.

But his brother represented the enormous loss of life and the sufferings of the wounded, many of whom were still in the hands of the French, where they received no attention, as the enemy was already encumbered with its own; and Alexander humbled his pride, and consented to accept a peace, the first which Russia had concluded for a century and a half, except after a victory.

Yet it was a moral more than a physical triumph on the part of France, and such Napoleon seems to have felt it. On the right bank of the Niemen, the Russian army, still compact and in good discipline, maintained its position, and could probably defy any attempt of the weakened French army to advance beyond it. Both forces needed rest. At the end of the two months' armistice, the Russian militia would be equipped and trained, and if England by that time was brought to her senses, a still more desperate warfare would follow, which might change the whole face of the Continent. General Tolstoi, by the terms of the armistice, kept his ground on the Narew. The French army was weary and clamorous for peace, for there was no money or pillage to be obtained from the Russians. They dreaded another winter campaign in Poland, and though the officers enjoyed their reception in the private houses of Warsaw, the men were wretchedly accommodated, from the extreme poverty and dirt of the peasants and Jews with whom they lodged. The streets were unpaved, and often a foot deep in mud, for the nobles always rode, and cared nothing for the comfort of the pedestrian serfs. There was consequently no attraction to these regions, and they had never elsewhere encountered such formidable enemies. Compared with this campaign, their wars in Italy and Germany were the merest child's play. Napoleon looked upon the struggle as one to determine whether Russia or France was to rule central Europe, for the German powers in the present circumstances showed themselves unable to stand alone. The old Muscovite party in Russia objected to her government troubling itself about foreign States. They advocated an isolated policy, such as Alexander II. adopted in 1856. If Napoleon could induce the Czar to change his ministry, and form a cabinet of such men as Rostopchine, Pahlen, or Romanzov, all he required would at once be accomplished,

and France left to exercise her will unhindered in the rest of Europe.

The boats conveying Alexander and Napoleon from the opposite shores of the Niemen to their place of meeting arrived at the raft at the same moment,* says the 83rd bulletin, in which the event is described, and Napoleon instantly stepped forward with his hat off, bowing low to meet the Emperor, who disembarked more deliberately, leaving Constantine, Benningsen, Prince Labanof, Count Lieven, and Ouvarof in the boat; while Napoleon did the same with his escort, which consisted of Murat, Berthier, Bessières, Caulaincourt, and Duroc. The King of Prussia rode up and down on the shore. Napoleon took Alexander's arm, and they retired to a corner of the raft till a heavy shower of rain made them move under a tent, surmounted by the eagles of Russia and France. Here they talked for an hour, and on coming out their officers were summoned and introduced, when Napoleon was profuse in compliments. He asked Benningsen who had commanded the cavalry in Friedland; and when Ouvarof, an elegant young man, advanced briskly to claim that distinction, the French Emperor told him he knew admirably well how to fight.† "Sire," he said to Alexander, taking one of his hands, "your army is valiant and devoted. Your troops have performed prodigies of valour." He said he had lost 12,000 men at Heilsberg, and was very angry with his cavalry that day, as they not only refused to charge, but executed every order ill; and he expressed surprise at the Russian resistance, which he owned he had not expected. He was astonished to find the Russian army was not all at Friedland, since he should have supposed it must have been by the prolonged obstinacy of the fight.‡ "That power of fascination," says the partial Caulaincourt, "that he exercised over his soldiers, impressed others to the same degree. The Emperor Alexander was imposing from the splendour of his origin, his noble head, his tall figure, which surpassed by a foot that of Napoleon; the whole was a fabulous scene. The Emperors embraced on parting, when applauses crossed the river, loud huzzas from the two banks lined with troops."

* Also Sir George Jackson.

† Souvenirs de Caulaincourt.

‡ Wilson.

“My friend,” he wrote the same evening to Josephine, “I have just seen the Emperor Alexander. I have been very much pleased with him. He is a very handsome, good, and young Emperor. He has more ability (*esprit*) than one commonly imagines.”

The French Emperor, some years afterwards, gave this description of the interview :*—“On coming on board the raft, Alexander told me he had as many complaints against England as I had. In that case, I answered, peace is made; and we gave each other the hand as a sign of reconciliation. We had several other interviews at Tilsit. His exterior was noble, gracious, and imposing; he appeared to me to have great quickness of comprehension. He seized at a glance the gravest questions; altogether, rather resembling Francis I. and Louis XIV. One might say also of him, that he was a *roi chevalier*. He was able to enter into my policy, to put it before me otherwise than I had seen it; but it is certain that his conduct in 1812 and 1813 was superior to what I should have expected from him, though he prejudiced me in his favour. I recognized ability, but I believed him to have some weakness. In short, it was not only on that point that I deceived myself in the character of this prince. Even La Bruyère might have been embarrassed to define him exactly.” And further, after the interviews at Erfurt :—“I meant to throw powder in the eyes of my rival in glory and power; the end proves that he was as skilful as me.”

“My suspicions of Kalkreuth,” writes Jackson from Memel, “have proved to be but too well founded. He and the Grand Duke, aided by Benningsen, have been so far successful in their object, that an interview took place yesterday between the Emperor of Russia and the upstart Corsican. Lord Hutchinson is exultant. Bonaparte declared to his Imperial Majesty that he could refuse him nothing that he asked, but, after conceding some points, he suggested that, for fear of wronging himself, recourse should be had to plenipotentiaries.† Prince Labanof and Kurakin are therefore appointed to treat for the Emperor, Kalkreuth and Goltz for Prussia. Many of the troops of the allied armies are almost perishing for want. No flattery, no art is left untried, to

* Jomini.

† Also Caulaincourt.

win over the Emperor and his subjects. Sweden is evidently to be included in the negotiation, if the King will consent. As to the general question of peace, there certainly is but one voice. Even Czartoriski and his party insist on its necessity. Letters from the interior of Russia describe the misery and want that reign there as beyond all conception. But Russia's principal ground of apprehension must be looked for on the side of Russian Poland. Budberg in his letter to the governor of Livonia, announcing the armistice, desires him to give 'all publicity to the news, in order to quiet *les esprits*, who have been made uneasy by the late events.' He says further, that he has the greatest pleasure in giving him this intelligence, as they hope it will be followed by a solid and honourable peace."

On June 26th the two Emperors met again on the Niemen, and this time with the King of Prussia. Tilsit was declared neutral, and garrisoned by three battalions of Russian, Prussian, and French Guards, but the bridge was not rebuilt, so that while Bonaparte had the whole of his army within immediate call, no troops could pass from the Russian side of the stream. On the 27th Alexander took up his residence in an old castle, now destroyed, not far from the house in which Napoleon established himself, and the King came the following day, with his ministers. The Queen remained at the Russian head-quarters till July 4th, when she joined her husband on Napoleon's pressing invitation, but left her children at Memel. Alexander sent a formal notice of his intention to negotiate a peace to Lord Leveson-Gower, the British ambassador then at Memel, and the same day, June 29th, forwarded an autograph letter to George III.

"If the Queen of Prussia,"* said Napoleon, "had come at the beginning of the negotiations, she might have had much in-

* M. Thiers is contradicted by Napoleon's own statements when he intimates that Alexander only wished to see Prussia restored just enough to save his honour, having been convinced by Napoleon's arguments that Prussia and Germany were the most formidable and jealous of Russia's enemies. Napoleon could enlighten him considerably as to the feeling of all Europe towards Russia, and doubtless did so, and is believed not to have lost the opportunity of pointing out to him that Russia's misfortunes dated not only from the commencement of his reign, but from the peace with England, forced upon him by the regicides who had seated him on the throne, and whom Napoleon always asserted were bribed with English gold.

fluence. It was thought the King had prevented it from jealousy of a great personage. She had been very beautiful, but was beginning to fade. She received me, demanding crying justice. 'Prussia,' she said, 'was blind with regard to her power; she dared to fight a hero, to oppose herself to the destinies of France, to despise her happy friendship. She has been well punished. Magdeburg above all was the object of her wishes.' Happily, the husband came in. The Queen with an expressive look reproved this contretemps, and showed temper. In fact the King tried to interfere, spoilt the whole affair, and I was delivered."

Napoleon asked the Queen to dinner. "She displayed all her intellect, she had much; all her coquetry, she was not without charms. It required much watch over myself to make no species of engagement, so much the more as I was carefully observed by Alexander. She sat at table between the two Emperors, who paid her great attention. She was placed near Alexander's good ear; he can hardly hear at all with the other." The evening came, and the Queen retired. Napoleon had been often so hard pushed that he resolved to conclude it, and advanced the treaty by a week, telling the Queen that all he did for her was only for Alexander's sake.* "One of the high contracting parties told her she ought to have come at first or not at all. He observed to her that for his part he had done all in his power to arrange that she should come immediately, but the husband opposed it. Almost every day at Tilsit the two Emperors and the King rode out together, but the last was always awkward and unlucky. Napoleon rode between the two Sovereigns; the King could hardly follow, or even knocked against and incommoded Napoleon. As we returned, the two Emperors sprang at once to the ground, but they had to wait till the King came up, and as it often rained the two Emperors were soaked on account of the King. This awkwardness was the more striking as Alexander is very graceful, and on a level with the best society in the drawing-rooms of Paris. We broke up early after dinner, but Alexander and I soon met again to take tea, either in his rooms or mine, and talked together till midnight or beyond that."

* Madame Junot.

Yet it was observed by Alexander's attendants, and did not escape his notice, that on more than one occasion when he handed a cup of tea to Napoleon, the Emperor set it down without a drop passing his lips, and that he never touched any food in Tilsit which was not given to him by his own servants. The strong escort by which he was accompanied when he called on Alexander, formed a striking contrast to the confiding carelessness of his ally. In fact, the fatalistic notions which Napoleon professed to hold were more affected than real, and did not prevent him from taking all precautions against the risk of assassination or poison. He loved to boast of his courage in this respect, as he boasted of other virtues, but by impressing his people with the idea that men are not free agents, he taught them that it was useless to struggle against fate or attempt his overthrow, and he imitated Zingis Khan, Timur, and the great conquerors of the East, the true seat, he declared, of fame and romance. Catherine II. also talked about her star, one of many points of resemblance with her grandson's adversary. Writing to Joseph, May 31st, 1806, on his first establishment as King in Naples, Napoleon says: "You place too much confidence in the Neapolitans. I say this lest you should be poisoned or assassinated. I make a point that you keep your French cook, that your household is so arranged that you may always be guarded by Frenchmen. You have not been sufficiently acquainted with my private life to know how much, even in France, I have always kept myself under the guard of my most trusty and oldest soldiers. Take care that your valets de chambre, your cooks, the guards who sleep in your apartments are French. No one should enter your room during the night on any pretext." He goes on to advise other modes of safety. "These precautions are important, they may really save your life," &c. "The Neapolitan character has been notorious in every age," &c. At St. Helena* he laughed at his proclamation to the Egyptians, in which he gave himself out as inspired and a divine instrument, and called it charlatanism, saying it highly diverted his Frenchmen, but "their disposition to mock at all religion was such

* According to Las Cases he also expressed his disbelief in fatalism at St. Helena. He never lost the habit of crossing himself.

he was obliged to speak of it very lightly himself, placing the Jews by the side of Christians, and rabbis by the side of bishops." He had been brought up a strict Romanist, and although when in company with Goethe and Wieland he put forth most sceptical opinions to show his advanced *intellect*, apparently throughout his career he retained more religious impressions than he ever ventured to display.

At Tilsit the three Sovereigns adjourned to the raft on the Niemen every morning, and held a conference for at least two hours, and couriers arrived several times a day from the Russian head-quarters, for Alexander's time when alone was busily employed. Napoleon lost no opportunity of insulting the King of Prussia, and this prince's want of faith to his ally had placed him entirely in the power of his enemy, who asserted at St. Helena that Prussia never really meant to join Russia before the battle of Austerlitz; if that battle had been deferred, she would have evaded the treaty of Potsdam, as events indeed afterwards proved; and if the Allies had gained Austerlitz,* jealousy would have caused her to join France. Count Bernstorff, one of the first statesmen of the day, told Mr. Jackson that "the King of Prussia deserved his fate, because he kept up to the last secret communications with Bonaparte, and that the disgust of the Emperor Alexander, when he discovered the perfidy of the King, made him precipitate his own negotiations for peace."† Napoleon had no scruple now in revealing all these intrigues to Alexander, who showed either an extremely forgiving disposition, or a political discernment superior to personal resentment, when he strove to preserve any portion of his kingdom to the man who, under the guise of a friend, was the real cause of two campaigns which might otherwise have been most glorious ending in disaster and loss. "I know he is your protégé," Napoleon said, "but you can hardly say he has the attitude of a king." At St. Helena he spoke of him as "an ignoramus without talent or information. Not so his wife; she was a very clever fine woman, but very unfortunate." He had not seen the King more than five minutes, when looking at his gaiters fastened

* O'Meara.

† Sir G. Jackson's Diary, &c. Bernstorff had his information from Hardenberg, who had just arrived in Denmark.

with numerous buttons, he said: "Are you, Sire, obliged to button all these every day? Do you begin at the top or the bottom?" Dress and the pattern of military uniforms was the King of Prussia's hobby. Alexander once said of him, that "Nature had spoiled a good military tailor in making him a sovereign," but as, according to Czartoriski, in conversation he always "served up the meats which he thought would be preferred," his discourse with the King often turned on this subject at Tilsit, rather to Napoleon's amusement. "Bonaparte's language to the Emperor," says Sir G. Jackson, "as I know from excellent authority, was: 'A few hours will suffice to settle our business. You wish for Moldavia and Wallachia; why then treat with gentleness a power that has acted treacherously by us both? Beyond that we have no point of contest. Lay down our arms, and we are at peace. As regards Prussia, *c'est un vilain roi, une vilaine nation, une vilaine armée.* A power which has deceived everybody, and which does not deserve to exist. All that she keeps, she owes to you. This is what I want,' and he pointed out on a map the provinces that he wished to form into the kingdom of Westphalia, and those with which he desired to reward Saxony. 'The rest is yours, you have only to dispose of it. I shall do all for friendship for you. I shall do nothing for the beautiful eyes of the Queen.'"

On more than one occasion such high words passed between Napoleon and Frederick William, that Alexander was obliged to interpose,* but all was not entire concord between the Emperors.† "Our Minister for Foreign Affairs," says Savary, "told me at Tilsit that Napoleon would only obtain what had been previously agreed upon, as Russia was obstinately bent on adhering to those bases. He said no more. I think this observation could only relate to certain proposals of fresh arrangements, of which Prussia and Silesia in particular were the objects. . . . It was certainly owing to the Emperor of Russia that Prussia was preserved at all." Talleyrand wished to erase her altogether from the map of Europe;

* De Maistre.

† The King of Prussia, who lived till 1840, was very indignant at the French exaggeration of this friendship, and nothing was more like the ordinary meetings of two potentates than even the French official reports.

and Napoleon thought of enriching Saxony with Silesia, and placing one of his generals over another kingdom formed out of the northern districts; but although Alexander always owned to having been very much impressed by him, and induced to believe that he was really more actuated by a desire for the public good than by mere vulgar ambition, he maintained throughout that Russia could only make peace on condition that Prussia received as much of her territory as would have been restored the previous January; and Napoleon was forced to yield on this ground, rather than from being touched by the feeling Alexander showed for him as he pretended at St. Helena. There was a faction in the French army inclined to continue the war, particularly Murat, but Talleyrand thinking the French resources were too much exhausted, said to Napoleon, "You, Sire, make war, but you must allow us to make peace."*

Napoleon offered all Prussian Poland, and afterwards Pomerania, to Alexander if Saxony might have Silesia; and told him the Vistula was his natural frontier, and some day he was sure to reach it. He would not profit so far by the misfortunes of his ally, and refused both, but Russia had not made a peace for 140 years without obtaining some advantage, and she consented to receive the circle of Bialystock, which gave her a more secure frontier, when she found that Napoleon otherwise intended to annex this Polish province to Warsaw, which would make it virtually a French district. Wilson says, that in the King of Prussia's weakened condition the

* Napoleon asserted at St. Helena, that before the war preceding the treaty of Tilsit, it had been his intention to proclaim the King of Prussia King of Poland, "letting Russia retain what she might have insisted on retaining, and indemnities would have been granted to Austria." He would, however, have certainly demanded from Prussia an equivalent in well-affected prosperous German provinces, for poverty-stricken districts peopled with discontented Poles, so she would have lost rather than gained if she had accepted such an offer. "At Tilsit," he continues, "the moment was favourable for the re-establishment of Poland, though it would have been the work of violence and force. The war must have been prolonged; the French army was suffering from cold and want, and Russia had armies on foot. The Emperor Napoleon was touched "by the generous sentiments which the Emperor Alexander manifested towards him; he experienced obstacles on the part of Austria, and he suffered his policy to be overruled by the desire of signing a peace, which he hoped to have rendered lasting if, through the influence of Russia and Austria, England had been prevailed on to consent to a general reconciliation."

loss of a most disaffected circle of 200,000 inhabitants was a gain rather than the reverse; and Jackson writes, that the people of Memel were in great hopes that Alexander would be induced to annex them to his empire, as they would be safer in his possession than left in the hands of their native ruler. Except Bialystock, all that part of Poland, including Warsaw, which Prussia had annexed since 1772, was formed into a Grand Duchy, and made over to Saxony; but Davoust was sent there to organize its government, which he did in a style befitting the future brutal robber of Hamburg, and the Poles soon found they had not much to choose between the late administration of the King of Prussia and that of their French tyrant.

The presence of the English commissioners at Memel and the English vessels in the roads helped to irritate Napoleon against Prussia, as he thought, unless completely crippled, she would immediately throw herself into the arms of Great Britain. He said to the King, "While you are expecting your country from my hands, the Queen goes on board an English frigate (the *Astrea*), and amuses herself with the English. Then make them aid you. I will give you nothing. The Emperor of Russia may do what he pleases with what is restored of Prussia. . . . You do not know your own country. I took from it one hundred millions of crowns in hard money, and twice as much in contributions. You may yet find something." He also told the King that if Alexander chose he could indemnify him with the dominions of his relatives, the Princes of Oldenburg, Coburg, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and Saxe-Weimar, and with the King of Sweden's Pomeranian territory, and Stralsund, which Gustavus only used to interfere in the affairs of the Continent. "He induced you to continue the war after Eylau," he added; "if he likes to give them to you, I shall make no objection."

On July 8th, the last day of the Tilsit meeting, Wilson, disguised as a Cossack, entered the town in the hope of finding out the result of the deliberations. He contradicts the French assertion, that the Russians fraternized with them, for not the slightest symptoms of cordiality appeared. "Of the Grand Duke, who has been the cause of all this, their language is such as I will not write. About 7.30, after a very long con-

ference, the Sovereigns appeared on horseback, Bonaparte was in the middle, the Emperor of Russia on the left. Bonaparte was grossly corpulent. The Emperor of Russia was majesty itself, he presented a nobility of air and mien which astonished me, and I heard all the French express their admiration. . . . Murat was dressed exactly like a May-day chimney sweeper. . . . I hardly saw one gentleman among all the French and their troops.* . . . Had Alexander but been master of the heart of one noble friend, he would have preferred, from his own notions of honour and of his own heart's goodness, to meet the steel of the demi-barbarian who menaced death," &c. But it was no dread of death that induced Alexander to make peace, though he believed himself doomed to a violent end. "I have it from an eye-witness," says Savary, "that M. de Novossilzof, who was much attached to the Emperor Alexander,† and though he had been one of the advocates for peace, wished it to be merely a withdrawal from the scene of action, and not an alliance with France, said to that prince at Tilsit, 'Sire, I must remind you of your father's fate.' The Emperor replied, 'I know it; I see it; but how can I avoid my destiny?'"

Prince Czartoriski afterwards made the same representation, and ventured to observe of the war then on the eve of being declared between England and Russia, "that it would make him as unpopular as his father, and might lead to the same result." "I know it," replied the Emperor, without any emotion; "I believe it to be my destiny. I cannot avert it. I am prepared, and submit."

* Sir R. Wilson's great objection to Napoleon seems to have been that he was of plebeian origin. He became his admirer during the year 1814. See *Diary and Correspondence of Sir R. Wilson*, vol. ii.

† Soult told Lord Holland, that "when at Tilsit he was apprized of a very extensive conspiracy against Alexander, in which Benningsen, the assassin of his father and the commander of his army, was concerned. Soult, before he had consulted his own Government on the matter, disclosed the whole in a private letter to Alexander, and mentioned the names of the conspirators. "He showed me," says Lord Holland, "Alexander's answer in his own handwriting. He thanks Soult in it very warmly for the information, for he says it will be of great use to him, though he did not believe that the matter was quite so important as the Marshal supposes." The same story is told by Madame Choiseul Gouffier, only of the year 1818 (*Foreign Recollections*).

On the 1st of July the news arrived that the Sultan Sélim was deposed by the Janissaries and thrown into prison (where, on May 29th, he was strangled), and his nephew Mustapha placed on the throne. Mustapha announced his intention of maintaining the French alliance, and continuing the war with Russia. "A thunderbolt from heaven," said Napoleon to Alexander when he heard of it, "has disengaged me from the Porte. My ally and friend Selim is cast from his throne, and in irons. I thought we could have made something of the Turks ;* but I see I was mistaken. We must finish with their empire, and take care that its spoils do not go to augment the power of England. Let us understand each other. Why do you not take Finland to repay the expenses of the war. The King of Sweden's relationship is only a reason why he should conform to your policy ; and Sweden is geographically your enemy. The lovely women of St. Petersburg ought not again to hear the sound of Swedish cannon. If the Turks resist we must divide their dominions. You can take Moldavia, Wallachia, Bessarabia, and Bulgaria ; and France Albania, Thessaly, the Morca, and Candia." Alexander suggested that something must be given to Austria, to soothe her vanity rather than satisfy her ambition. "I thought," said Napoleon at St. Helena, "it would benefit the world to drive these brutes, the Turks, out of Europe. But when I reflected what power it would give to Russia, from the number of Greeks in the Turkish dominions who may be considered Russians, I refused to consent to it, especially as Alexander wanted Constantinople, which would have destroyed the equilibrium of power in Europe. France would gain Egypt, Syria, and the islands ; but those were nothing to what Russia would have obtained."

This coincides with Savary's statement, that Alexander told him Napoleon said he was under no engagements to the new Sultan, and that changes in the world inevitably changed the relations of states to one another ; and again, Alexander said that in their conversations at Tilsit, Napoleon often told him he did not require the evacuation of Moldavia and Wallachia ;

* Napoleon had offered Moldavia and Wallachia to Austria as an inducement to her to come forward on his side as early as March, 1807, while his ally Selim still reigned.

he would place things in a train to dispense with it, and it was not possible to suffer longer the presence of the Turks in Europe. "He even left me," said Alexander, "to entertain the project of driving them back into Asia. It is only since that he has returned to the idea of leaving Constantinople to them, and some surrounding provinces." One day, when Napoleon was talking to Alexander, he asked his secretary, M. Meneval, for the map of Turkey, opened it, then renewed the conversation; and placing his finger on Constantinople said several times to the secretary, though not loud enough to be heard by Alexander, "Constantinople, Constantinople, never. It is the capital of the world!"

The capture of Anapa—the most important Turkish fortress on the Caucasian coast—with a hundred cannon, early in May, revived Alexander's hopes on the side of the Turkish Empire; and the French intrigues in Constantinople and in the principalities on the Danube, proved to him that his possessions were insecure on that frontier; and that Turkey was virtually a mere English or French province while so weak a Government as the Sultan's existed in the Ottoman Empire.

In his later days, when he was really master of Europe, it is believed that he did not consider the conquest of the Ottoman Empire a sufficient recompense for the inevitable loss of life and expense.* It is very evident in their conversations, that Napoleon agreed to his possessing himself of the Turkish Empire up to the Balkan, if not beyond; though Bignon denies that any plan for the actual partition of Turkey was embodied in the treaty of Tilsit. Hardenberg, not always well informed, asserts that it was. Savary says, he could not believe that Napoleon would have abandoned the Turks without a compensation in some other quarter; and he felt certain Alexander had agreed in return to Napoleon's project for the conquest of Spain, "which the Emperor had very much at heart."

It was no mere ambition of conquest that made Constantinople a great object with the Russian diplomatists. The

* Duke of Wellington's Supplementary Despatches, &c. Thiers says, the text of the treaty ran to protect the provinces of Europe from the vexations of the Porte, &c.

Dardanelles commanded the entrance to the only ports in the Russian Empire open for more than eight months in the year; and while controlled by the English or French minister, it was liable any day to be closed against merchant vessels: a power which naturally had a serious effect upon Russian commerce. "A man should have the keys of his house in his pocket," said Alexander. "He coveted it," said Napoleon; "but it was the marsh which prevented my flank from being turned. As to Greece, that is another affair." In fact, Napoleon wished to secure Constantinople to France; and finding that Alexander would not agree to this, he preferred leaving it in the hands of the Turks. But when the engagements he had entered into with Constantinople are remembered, not a year before, at the time that he first urged her to break the peace with Russia, no policy was ever more fickle, or a diplomatic proceeding more false, on the part of France. He saw his mistake; and shortly after the meeting at Tilsit tried to withdraw from those promises, saying that Alexander ought to evacuate* Moldavia and Wallachia while the arrangement was being concluded, &c. But both by his own showing, and the memorials of his ministers, these promises were given at the time Moldavia and Wallachia were made over by the treaty to Russia, and no agreement was entered into with regard to their evacuation during the mediation, and in return Alexander relinquished the mouths of the Cattaro and Castel Nuovo to France, as well as the Seven Islands, on condition that these should be bestowed, with Candia, as compensation to the ex-King of Naples.

As far as regarded his own country, Alexander would therefore have gained the most by the treaty of Tilsit if Napoleon had kept his part of it; but as, to use Napoleon's own words, he was "weary of his treaty with Prussia at Vienna in 1805" within four months, there was no reason why he should be more faithful to the provisions of that of Tilsit. But here it was his personal influence which misled his companion; and by the most plausible arguments on the benefits they could both bestow on Europe convinced him that the new system was in reality for the advantage of mankind,

* M. Lanfrey is mistaken in saying that this formed part of the original agreement.

and the only means of securing that universal peace and more equitable distribution of power which had been a dream of the Emperor Paul's, and the foundation of Alexander's whole line of policy since he came to the throne. A brotherhood of monarchs was to be established, which England and all the other Powers were to be invited to join: a scheme which Pitt had rejected, and which Napoleon assured his companion the solely commercial policy of England, and the rivalry and selfishness of Austria and Prussia, had rendered impossible so long as those Governments occupied the position of first-class States. Napoleon enlarged on the iniquities of the old Italian administrations, and the advantages which had accrued to those foreign States who had accepted the French constitution, and he spoke of the weak and intolerant Government of Spain, where the horrors of the Inquisition were still in force.

At a time when, after a hot debate, the English Parliament refused equal national privileges to Roman Catholics and Jews, and other dissenters in England also laboured under legal disabilities, Alexander exercised the most perfect tolerance of all creeds in his empire, and had little sympathy with a nation like Spain, who tortured heretics, and even refused the rites of Christian burial to a Protestant, and had moreover broken a treaty which bound her to assist Russia by making a diversion in the south of France. Alexander advocated the abolition of serfdom; and Napoleon proved that under the old prejudiced dynasties of Europe such an abolition was impossible. It would only be effected by revolutions or the establishment of new dynasties, such as his own. The most staunch legitimist could have little to say in defence of the Governments of Naples and Madrid, except that the princes who ruled those countries were among the weakest and most ill-educated of men. There was small difficulty in persuading Alexander to recognize Joseph as King of Naples, as he was formerly willing to recognize Louis as King of Holland, or to give his consent to the exercise of French influence in Spain, where the royal family was, moreover, not a native dynasty, when assured that a strong party in the Peninsula appealed to the French Government for protection, and that the whole country was on the eve of insurrection. Napoleon asserted this could be accomplished without bloodshed; but

even if it had necessitated a war on the part of France, the employment of her forces so far from Russia would certainly have been to Alexander's advantage. The French army was to evacuate the Prussian States by the following October; but no indemnity was mentioned beyond the heavy contributions already exacted; and the minor arrangements were to be made in a negotiation between Kalkreuth and Talleyrand. Alexander flattered himself that he had placed his ally in a better position than she would have occupied if she had concluded peace after Jena without the aid of Russia. It required no duplicity to appear highly pleased with his entertainer, who, though he had lost nearly 200,000 men within nine months* from the resistance of Russia and Prussia, and for the first time in his career had encountered defeats, yet received Alexander with a respect and even homage he had shown to no sovereign before, either as an enemy or ally. He lost no opportunity of flattering him, and to such an extent as occasionally to provoke a good-natured but impatient retort, and was willing to conclude a treaty which French politicians allow was quite opposed to the real interests of France; even pressing upon him the advantage of extending his frontiers instead of attempting to place a limit to them. Napoleon also engaged to do nothing to augment the power of the new Grand Duchy of Warsaw, or which might lead to the re-establishment of the Polish monarchy.

Many French writers try to excuse Napoleon for concluding this treaty, by saying he was "duped" by Alexander; and from the manner in which he spoke of these transactions at St. Helena, he (Napoleon) might have been the simplest and most guileless of men. But it is evident, from his correspondence, that peace was as urgent a necessity with France as it was with Russia, although France had made war at other countries' expense; and if he was a dupe, he was the dupe of his own greediness and deceit. The refusal of England to accept Alexander's mediation completely marred its advantages to Russia, and turned what was intended to be a long friend-

* In the French official reports 421,819 sick and wounded soldiers were received into the military hospitals during those nine months, of whom not 40,000 at the very most were allied troops. The number of French wounded, as given in these reports, was at least nine times the number given in the bulletins.

ship between the great Eastern and Western Empires into nothing but a five years' truce.

One of the articles of the treaty of Tilsit required Alexander to break off all diplomatic intercourse with England, and join the continental system if she would not accept the mediation he offered between her Government and France within a month. Napoleon bound himself by the same agreement as regarded Turkey; and both appear to have sincerely thought a general peace would be the result. Alexander had every reason to suppose the policy of Pitt had died with him, and that England no longer cared to keep up a war on the Continent. The Prince of Wales was known to be in favour of peace; and Lord Hutchinson, his particular friend, was sent purposely, it seemed, to the allied camps to show them the prevailing feeling in England. On the other hand, the English press had for some time held a more insulting tone towards Russia than towards France. Few Englishmen but diplomatists and merchants visited St. Petersburg, and there was little information about the great Northern Empire. In 1806 a book of travels was published, containing an account of Dr. Clarke's visit to that country six years before, when Paul had introduced most vexatious regulations with regard to Englishmen, and the severity of his Government had spread great irritation throughout the country. Dr. Clarke suffered many discomforts and much alarm during his journey, in common with almost every one else at that particular moment; though he was very hospitably entertained by the Russians in Moscow. But his book was one long tirade against the whole people. He repeated the most improbable stories as authentic facts; and from a very limited opportunity of making observations during a few weeks' tour, he draws an exaggerated and inconsistent description of the whole empire. Many of his statements have since been denied by Englishmen then living in the country, who say that as it was found he believed everything he was told, people amused themselves with inventing absurd anecdotes for his benefit. But as, when the book came out, owing to the war, some interest was excited in England on the subject of Russia, it was eagerly read and commented upon by reviews, and had a very unfortunate effect. Even while Russia was still England's ally, the press fulminated

pamphlets against her, which were forwarded to Russia by the ambassador, who had special orders to send the Emperor copies of all such publications; and they assisted in making him suppose that England was weary of the alliance. At the beginning of 1807, English newspaper articles confidently consigned Russia to the tomb, and more than once reported that Napoleon had reached St. Petersburg. Alexander was accused of apathy, of being too domestic, and, "although most amiable in private life, without heroism, and wrapped up in the amusements suitable to his age and station." They scoffed at the idea of his efforts being directed towards the internal improvement of his country (as if they supposed none were required in Russia), and said that reforms and peace were only phrases signifying pleasure and courtly indolence. His people were styled barbarians, and he a mere Asiatic chief.

The correspondence of Eugene Beauharnais* also shows that, perhaps for the same reason, it was fully expected in Paris that the mediation would produce a peace with England; and the short limit allowed was not blamed, because hitherto, when such negotiations had dragged on to a great length, something always occurred to put an end to them; and France was feeling the inconvenience of the deprivation of colonial produce. But an English officer had been on most intimate terms with the Russian ministers and generals then in Prussia, and obtained a good deal of their confidence; for he had lived in the Cossack camp and at the Russian headquarters for months, and was looked upon as quite one of themselves. He penetrated in disguise into Tilsit, and many of the Russian generals, who were forbidden to enter the town without orders, had done the same; and by some means or other he had ascertained that the Imperial conversations partly turned upon the contingency of a war with England, and obtained the substance of the treaty, besides lending faith to mere gossip and conjectures. He carried the news at once to the British Government that there were dark designs, and inspired it with distrust of Russia: the new ministry were also resolved to continue the war.† Turkey, on her

* "The peace with Russia," he wrote to Marmont, "has given infinite pleasure in Paris, and we are counting much on one with England."

† The Russian Government seldom condescends to make an explanation or defence.

side, at once accepted Napoleon's mediation with Russia, and placed him in serious difficulties as to how he should reconcile the stipulations of the treaty with the ties by which he had formerly bound himself to the Ottoman Porte.

Alexander presented several of the chiefs of his Bashkir regiments to Napoleon, who was much struck by the appearance and discipline of the Russian Guards. He offered the star of the Legion of Honour to Benningsen, who refused it, as well as an invitation to dinner. This seemed inexplicable, as the day after the first meeting of the Emperors he said publicly, "the two Emperors have shaken hands—Europe has cause to tremble;" unless he thought his own desire for peace would be less suspected in Russia if he were unadorned and not courted by the French Sovereign; or could not forgive the epithets applied to him in the French bulletins after Eylau, where he was styled "a drunkard, a gambler, and a barbarian." Napoleon took a most unworthy revenge. Benningsen's mother was still alive, at the age of nearly ninety, and resided at Zell, in Hanover. He ordered her to be arrested and conveyed to Paris, and gendarmes were placed in her house; but the alarm and excitement caused her death before she could be removed. Her property was all seized, and Benningsen could never obtain it. His difference with Napoleon was explained at St. Helena in another way. "Alexander observed to me that I paid a great deal of attention to Benningsen, and begged to know my reasons for it. I answered, because he is your general. But, said Alexander, he is *un vilain coquin*. It was he who assassinated my father; and policy alone has obliged me to employ him, although I wish him dead, and in a short time will send him about his business. To pay a compliment to Alexander, I intended to have asked Benningsen to dinner. This displeased Alexander, although he asked Benningsen to his own table."*

Napoleon offered the Legion of Honour to Platof, who refused it, saying he only served and accepted rewards from Alexander. The Czar acted as interpreter between them, and

* This account, however, is not wholly irreconcilable with the other, and it is certain that Alexander never personally liked Benningsen. Napoleon's description of the meeting at Tilsit to Las Cases does not correspond entirely with his bulletins, and his account of the delay in the King taking leave was quite false.

at Napoleon's request the Hetman exhibited his skill with the bow.

Napoleon wrote to Joseph, July 9th: "At the last interview the Emperor Alexander appeared in the Order of the Legion of Honour, and I in that of St. Andrew. I have given the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour to the Grand Duke Constantine, to the Princes Kurakin and Labanof, and to Count Budberg. The Emperor of Russia has conferred his Order upon the King of Westphalia, the Grand Duke of Berg, and the Princes of Neufchatel and Benevento."*

Alexander and his suite left Tilsit July 11th, and crossed the river to Polpitten. Napoleon accompanied him to the water's edge, dismounted while he embarked, and did not leave the shore till he had watched him land on the opposite bank. The Czar went to take leave of the King of Prussia (who as soon as he had departed returned to Tilsit), and then travelled with great speed, accompanied by Budberg, to St. Petersburg, resting a day on his road at Tauroggen to see Plato Zoubof, and at Mittau. His army moved its quarters at the same time, and encamped in White Russia, where the scarcity of provisions was not so great as in the northern part of the empire.

Bonaparte insisted on the King of Prussia dismissing Hardenberg, not only from his service but from the country; and that patriotic minister set off at once to Riga, in order to embark for Denmark. "I love revenge," said his conqueror. "I would rather make war forty years than allow that Englishman to remain." He made an attempt to induce Alexander to dismiss Budberg, who was a Livonian, and had been one of Catherine's confidential ministers. "He is not a Russian," said Napoleon; "I do not like foreigners for ministers." He probably intended this as a preliminary to a request for the banishment of the Corsican, Pozzo di Borgo, who had been his rival and enemy from childhood, and was now in the employment of Russia; but Alexander took no notice of the remark, and Budberg's† resignation the following autumn was voluntary, and from real ill-health. But though

* Many of Napoleon's officers were ashamed of all the titles with which he loaded them, and more than once he reproved the owners for not using them.

† Sir Robert Adair calls Budberg a strictly honest man.

the King of Prussia could no longer employ Hardenberg, who in September went from Denmark to St. Petersburg, he need not have chosen Kalkrèuth for his negotiator—a man who had always been at heart a republican, and was believed to have delivered up Dantzic for a bribe. It was contrary to Alexander's advice, and Talleyrand twisted him round his finger. Goltz was a patriot, but weak, and allowed Napoleon to interpret the stipulations as he pleased, so that the terms of peace were made infinitely harder after the Czar was gone. Goltz did hesitate to sign, as he said, "the disgrace and ruin of his country;" but Napoleon took him by the ear, shook it, and pulled his head to the paper, saying, "You will sign it;" and he accordingly subscribed.*

And now when the Russian army had retired, and the King of Prussia was left entirely to the mercy of his conqueror, Napoleon showed his ignoble nature in its true light. Instead of being satisfied with the maintenance of his army during its occupation, as he had led her to suppose, and that he would require no further indemnity from Prussia than the heavy contributions already levied, he at once demanded eight million pounds without those contributions, to be paid before his army withdrew in October; and his soldiers and the fortresses left in his hands were to be kept up at the Prussian expense. The King was six months in arrear with his own army, but was permitted to draw no revenue till all the French demands were paid; and by one pretext or another the indemnity was increased, and the military occupation extended till 24,590,000*l.* were squeezed out of the inhabitants. This sum would be equal to at least 50,000,000*l.* of the present value of money in Great Britain, and was taken from a country whose yearly revenue was only 6,000,000*l.*, and which contained not ten millions of people, of whom she now lost four and a quarter millions in the provinces ceded to Saxony, her ally, at the beginning of the war. In addition, the French marshals received estates from the Crown lands and the King's personal property to the value of 600,000*l.*; and with disgraceful rapacity they carried off 127 paintings, most of them by first-rate masters, and 238 marbles or statues, besides all the manuscripts, curiosities, and antiquities they could lay

* Sir George Jackson; Sir Robert Wilson.

hands on. When all this was paid, the French generals continued to levy contributions on their own account, and, contrary to the stipulations of the treaty, remained in possession of the country till the war of 1812 broke out, and the Prussian army was dragged to perish in the snows of Russia.

When the King and Napoleon met at Königsberg to conclude the Prussian treaty, after the departure of the Russian army, and the King again asked to retain Magdeburg, Bonaparte replied, "I wish to humble Prussia, and to keep Magdeburg to enter when I like into Berlin. I only know two sentiments, vengeance and hatred. For the future, Prussia must hate the French, but I will put her out of a condition to hurt us."*

"The King, from the time the Emperor left him to Bonaparte, and he became entirely at his mercy, has shown a degree of constancy and honourable resignation," writes Jackson, "worthy of a better fate. It is to be hoped he will not again sink into that fatal lethargic state of mind which has been the chief cause of his ruin."

"By the treaty with the Emperor, the Seven Islands are to be offered to the King of Sicily, as an indemnity for the loss of Naples, and the Morea and Egypt to Bonaparte; the Emperor to have Moldavia and Wallachia. Bonaparte wished to have these acquisitions guaranteed to him by Russia as a *sine quâ non* of the peace, and for a long time he pertinaciously insisted upon it. But the Emperor would not yield to him on that point, and Bonaparte at length contented himself with a stipulation that Russia should remain neutral, and not interfere in any measure he might find it expedient to take for securing the possession of these countries. . . . The Prussian ministers were silenced by Bonaparte with—'You are not here to dictate, but to receive the law. Be satisfied then with what the Emperor deigns to give you.'"* They blamed Alexander, but had in reality no one to blame but themselves. The preliminary treaty, which was all that they signed before he left, deprived Prussia only of that part the King and his councillors were willing to yield many times during the war. They also gave up Memel, which Russia

* Sir G. Jackson's Diary, &c.

afterwards claimed from Napoleon, to preserve it from the French territory of Dantzic; and Alexander at once restored it to Prussia, contrary to the wishes of its inhabitants. The Prussian ministers fell into the snare Napoleon laid for them, and delayed the final settlement of their affairs till Alexander had left, though he had been above a fortnight at Tilsit. The King at that moment, to his own misfortune, seems to have mistrusted the ally who had maintained the district between the Memel and the Vistula for nine months against Europe, and to have hoped to obtain better terms when he was gone; but he soon found out his mistake, and that he was so completely entrapped by the French that he could only sign whatever they chose. If the patriotic feeling brought to life by French oppression, which displayed itself in 1814, had existed in 1806, Prussia, with the aid which Russia gave her, might well have resisted her enemies. In the King's announcement to his subjects (November, 1806), that Russia was coming to their assistance, he said that a second Prussian army was in course of formation to support their allies. But that second army never appeared; recruits would not come forward, and money was not produced; the commanders gave up their fortresses without an effort, and a republican feeling and French gold had so long pervaded the country that they seemed to prefer to be the vassals of France. Of 100,000 Prussian prisoners, all but 8000 remained in the French service in 1808. The provinces wrested from her were those she had seized with equal injustice from Poland, from Austria, and by means of her first alliance with Napoleon. Alexander had permitted her to lose nothing more. But the half-barbaric tribes of Asia who followed the Russian army acted with more gentleness in Prussia, for they were under stricter discipline than the French; and as Napoleon had broken every other treaty he concluded, he quickly began to break that of Tilsit, seizing upon New Silesia, and adding it to the Duchy of Warsaw in 1808. In a letter to the King of Sweden, Frederick William complained of the Czar having made a separate peace,* but this was to excuse himself for having

* The idea of separate negotiations for peace was originally proposed by Kalkreuth, who thought that Napoleon would grant better terms to Prussia if she separated her cause from Russia, to whom she believed him to be most inimical.

signed such terms to an impetuous neighbour, who was in a position to do him considerable mischief. As if to prove more entirely Prussia's prostrate condition to its unhappy King, the remnant of his dominions was only restored, in the words of the treaty, "as a mark of Napoleon's regard for the Emperor of Russia." And was that regard misplaced? Had not Alexander performed most faithfully all his part of the agreement, in his alliances with Austria and Prussia, and had firmly adhered to their cause, even after he had been cruelly deceived? Had he not acted in the most disinterested manner, and fought from the first for the liberties of Europe, which was too weak or too blind to follow truthfully and firmly the path of safety pointed out to her by both Russia and England, when the last was ruled by William Pitt? He had warned Napoleon, at the very beginning of his career, that he must sooner or later oppose him if he continued an aggressor. All between them on his side had been open and straightforward, and even Napoleon could not help acknowledging that in Alexander and the Russians he had found worthy adversaries.

In reply to a remonstrance from Lord Leveson-Gower on the peace negotiation, Baron Budberg wrote from Tilsit, June 30th, 1807, that "his Majesty's firm defence of the common cause for eight months was a proof of the loyalty and purity of his principles, and he would never have deviated from that system if he had been supported by his allies. But the separation of Austria and England left him to combat with his own means the immense military forces France had at her disposal, till it seemed possible that in sacrificing himself for others he might compromise his own empire. The conduct of the British Government has lately been of a kind completely to justify his Majesty's resolution. Her long promised diversion on the Continent has not to this day taken place, and even if, as the latest advices from London show, the British Government has at length resolved on sending 10,000 men to Pomierania, that succour is in no proportion either to the hopes we were authorized to entertain or the importance of the object. Pecuniary succours might in some degree have compensated the want of English troops, but not only did the British Government decline to facilitate the loan the Imperial

Court intended to negotiate in London, but when it did at length resolve upon making some advances, the sum it destined for this purpose, so far from meeting the exigences, of the Allies, would not even have covered the indispensable expenses of Prussia. Instead of co-operating in the common cause, the British Government during this period used its forces in South America and Egypt, the last of which was not even communicated to the Imperial Cabinet, and was entirely at variance with its interests, when by giving them a different destination the necessity of maintaining a Russian army on the Danube might have been prevented, and the disposable force on the Vistula proportionally increased. The Emperor of Russia was therefore virtually released from his engagements, and had no course left but to attend to the safety of his own dominions."

Mr. Ross wrote to Lord Malmesbury, July 23rd, 1807: "After the battle of the 18th, Bonaparte twice made proposals for an armistice, and was as often refused. At length the evil genius of Europe, in the person of the Grand Duke Constantine (and a more appropriate representative he could not have), supplicated the Emperor Alexander to agree to it, founding his entreaties on the waste of human blood and the sufferings of thousands of his wounded soldiers. . . . Bonaparte wished Alexander to take the country as far as the Vistula, telling him it was the natural boundary of his empire, but it was refused," &c. Alexander insisted on the domains of his relatives and connections, the Duchies of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Strelitz, Oldenburg, Saxe-Weimar, and Coburg, being restored to their owners; and several of their princes went to St. Petersburg to thank him for his interference. An official publication in the *St. Petersburg Gazette* stated, "The peace of Tilsit was concluded to save the Prussian monarchy."

The peace of Tilsit put a limit to the progress of the French empire in the east of Europe, and she never established her influence over a foot beyond. Napoleon had declared himself resolved to reduce the power of Russia, but with all the Continent to back him he could not cross her frontier, and signed a treaty on her borders actually augmenting her power. Cambacères announced its terms to the French Senate: "Out of esteem for the Emperor of all the Russias, the Emperor

Napolcon wishes that all the countries, towns, and territories conquered from the King of Prussia should be restored; Pomerania, the middle and new mark of Brandenburg, &c. Lastly, the kingdom of Prussia as it was on January 1st, 1772; those provinces taken from Poland, to be given over to the King of Saxony, and to be called the Duchy of Warsaw; the Russian frontier to be rectified so far as to make the Russian territory extend to the Bog. The Dukes of Saxe-Coburg, Oldenburg, and Mecklenburg to be restored, but the ports in the Duchies of Oldenburg and Mecklenburg to remain in possession of French garrisons till the definitive treaty shall be signed between France and England. France accepts the mediation within a month of the receipt of the treaty. The Emperor of Russia cedes the Lordship of Jever to Holland,* and acknowledges the Confederation of the Rhine, the kingdoms of Naples, Holland, and Westphalia. All hostilities cease between the Porte and Russia. The Emperor of the French and the Emperor of Russia guarantee each other's possessions. Prisoners to be restored *en masse*. The ceremony between the two Courts of the Tuileries and Petersburg shall be placed on the footing of complete equality and reciprocity. Done at Tilsit, July 7th, 1807." The Vistula free of all tolls.†

* The Lordship of Jever, in Holland, was little more than nominal, and was inherited from Catherine II., being her sole patrimony.

† Wilson, though most indignant at the time of the treaty of Tilsit, admits that "Russia was warranted, after the glorious and sanguinary resistance she has alone opposed to Bonaparte, with all his means; in sheathing an undishonoured sword, if her situation and immediate interests required some repose. She had engaged in the campaign as an ally of Prussia. She had prepared only as an auxiliary, and to support a sovereign who could bring into the field above 200,000 soldiers of high military character, whose country was covered with strong fortresses, and who had the means of abundantly providing every supply. By the loss of a battle and a series of unparalleled treason and misfortunes Prussia was in a few days annihilated. The Russian forces, reinforced by only 10,000 dispirited Prussians, instead of the victorious multitude that they had expected to join on the banks of the Rhine, not only resisted his progress, but preserved the Russian territory from the foot of an invader, and finally maintained an attitude," &c.—Wilson's War in 1806-7.