

Europe.

THE PRESENT EMPEROR, NICHOLAS.

On the illustrious individual now at the head of the Russian nation—on his personal character and political principles—the entire faith and reliance of the European cabinets repose at this moment for a continuation of that system of universal peace amongst them which have been purchased at the price of so many recent sacrifices. Towards him the eyes of all Europe are at present turned. A young and powerful sovereign—full of health and energy—beloved by his subjects, to whom he is attached in return—esteemed and looked up to as their natural leader, by one of the finest and most numerous armies in the world—surrounded by a galaxy of generals, whose names have been entwined with the laurels of the last memorable war—Nicholas the First quits the luxuries of the gorgeous palaces I have described, and stands even now on the threshold of that empire, between which and Russia there are fearful accounts to settle. On his assurances, therefore, that there are no ambitious views connected with his present actions; on his disclaiming all desire of conquest and aggrandizement, must for a short time depend the chance of undisturbed peace or of inevitable war, among those friendly nations that have agreed to remain tranquil spectators of the events which are about to take place beyond the Balkansky Chain or Bulgarian Alps. Fortunately those assurances have been given, as it is generally understood, and by a monarch whose political life, brief as it has been, has never belied any of those strict principles which in private life have by general acknowledgment been known to guide his conduct.

***** Nicholas the First was 32 years of age on the 7th of July last. He was born in the same year in which Catharine the Second closed her long and glorious reign, and did not, therefore, like his more fortunate brethren and Constantine, experience the influence of that great mind in the care of his early education. Nature, however, had provided him with a mother who stood in less need than any reigning Princess of the counsels and assistance of others to lead her child in the path of virtue. At an early age he was placed under the guidance of General Count Larmsdorff, an officer of distinguished merit, who had served his sovereign with great reputation; both in the field and as Governor of Courland. The Count had previously enjoyed a high degree of well merited confidence at Court as *Cavalier de service* with the Grand Duke Constantine during a period of ten years, and likewise as Director of the Corps of Cadets. He enjoyed the patronage of the present Empress Mother, then reigning Empress, and it was under her direction that he conducted the education of the Grand Duke Nicholas, and that of his brother the Grand Duke Michael, from the time of the former of these two princes completing the fourth year of his age. No choice could have been more fortunate: the qualities of the Governor's heart were precisely such as parents would wish to see appreciated by their children, and those of his mind were strictly of that cast which were to direct the studies of his illustrious pupils under the instructions of proper masters. The Count is no more; he terminated his long and honourable career, at the age of 83, on the 4th of April last, and from his character, as portrayed in the Court Gazette, it is fair to conclude that the principles, which he doubtless endeavoured to instil into the bosom of his imperial pupil, must have been consonant with those which marked his own conduct through life.

***** Nicholas grew in years; preceptors for the higher branches of learning were selected from amongst the most eminent men of the country; and it is but justice to make particular mention of one of them, Monsieur Balaniansky, who had the honour of instructing the Grand Duke in the principles of the art of government and of practical science, and the continuation of whose services Nicholas has since secured to himself as Emperor, by placing him in his private *Chancellerie* in the situation of State Secretary.

In the year 1816, travelling in foreign countries was deemed expedient by the Grand Duke, with a view to acquire more enlarged notions respecting those nations which were acting the most conspicuous parts in Europe. Amongst these, Great Britain was selected as the country which offered a wide

field of observation to a Prince desirous of information. The Grand Duke, therefore, visited England in November of that year; he landed at Dover, where he was received by the Ambassador and Col. Ford, who commanded the Engineers stationed in that town, and who accompanied the Prince round the fortifications of the castle, on the heights, and through the subterraneous passages of the fortress. His first step on British ground was marked by a proof of liberal disposition. The noise of the cannon which had been firing to celebrate his arrival, according to form, had frightened a horse that was standing in a cart at a short distance from the shore. The animal ran the length of some streets, dragging its heavy load after it, when it fell down and expired. The Grand Duke was passing at the time, and learning on inquiry the nature of the accident which had deprived an industrious man of a useful animal, insisted on compensating him with a sum of money far above his loss, "of which," observed the Prince, "I am myself the innocent cause."

***** In the following year he married the present Empress Alexandra Foedorowna, then Princess Charlotte of Prussia, daughter of Frederick William the Third and of the late Queen, whose name is highly revered in her own country, and wherever virtue and an elevated mind are justly valued. With the hallowed reputation of her lamented mother, which preceded her to the country of her husband, the present Empress carried thither her own name, already associated by the public voice with very noble quality that can embellish the fair sex, and more particularly one in so exalted a station. Nature, too, had been so lavish of her favours on the person of the Empress, that it is impossible to imagine a more striking appearance, or one which with the handsome countenance of the late Queen of Prussia, and somewhat of that melancholy expression which marks the upper part of the face of her royal father, unites to a stately majestic carriage so much grace and dignity.

He is frequently seen abroad with her, without any of that attendant pomp and splendour which are perhaps necessary pageants with less popular sovereigns, and both are known to devote much parental care to the education of the numerous children with which their union has been blessed. Of these five survive.

The Emperor's application to business is most regular. The affairs of the State alone seem to engross his attention, and it is said that he seldom gives an hour to pleasure, which might have been better devoted to the welfare of his subjects. He rises early, and spends sometime in transacting military matters. Part of this consists in receiving, as I have before stated, Count Diebitch, the chief of the *Etat Major*, who daily waits on his Majesty from seven o'clock till nine, and reports the state of the army during the preceding day, and receives his Majesty's commands. After breakfast he either attends the Council, or receives his Ministers daily, each of whom has his appointed days and hours for waiting on the emperor. He has on some occasions attended the Senate, and it was reported while we were at St. Petersburg, that having heard that the senators had been in the habit of assembling very late, a practice which caused considerable delay in public business, his Majesty called early one day at the House of the Senate, and finding none of its members assembled, simply desired it to be made known to them that the emperor had attended to transact business at such an hour.—From that time the senators took care to be at their post with greater punctuality. At one o'clock he generally attends the parade. In the winter this takes place under cover, unless the weather be both fine and mild, in which case, as well as in the summer months, it is held in the great square in front of the Winter Palace, or in the *Champ de Mars*.—When it is under shelter that the parade is to take place, the exercise house belonging to the Chateau St. Michael is the building selected. The troops are collected within it, and the general officers of the garrison of St. Petersburg, or holding situations in the capital, make a point of attending.

***** After the parade his Majesty generally returns home; if there are to be any private presentations to him, it is before his dinner that they take place, otherwise he either walks or rides out, alone, or accompanied by the empress. He is very fond of riding on horseback; he also frequently goes out with his consort in a French ca-

biolet, which he drives himself. I have likewise seen him walking up and down that magnificent quay on the Neva, called the English Line, either alone or accompanied by some minister or general officer; and I understand that in fair weather, and when the empress is in good health, her Majesty often accompanies him on these excursions. On such occasions it is the etiquette on the part of persons who meet them, to stand still until they have passed, when the emperor invariably returns the salutation *a la militaire*, by putting the back of the hand up to his hat. With all persons who are known to him, he will occasionally stop and converse with great affability, and without reserve.

The dinner hour is between three and four o'clock, after which his Majesty spends part of the day with his family and children.

The evening brings its own labours and occupations; Ministers are received, or the Emperor attends to business in his private cabinet with his own secretary; but on fixed days, at eight o'clock, he orders a particular Minister to bring his *porte feuille* and will remain with him till ten, going methodically through and despatching an infinite variety of business, so as to clear away every sort of arrear, and make himself master of the different subjects of each department. The strict observance of engagements, which his Majesty is known to expect on every occasion, tends materially to facilitate every operation, and serves as a lesson to his subjects, that without punctuality in all the affairs and transactions of life, talent, rank, nay even a high character, are rendered useless to society.

The Imperial family retires early to rest. I have known some distinguished persons who have had the honour of being invited to the presence of the emperor and empress in the evening, come away at ten o'clock, the hour at which it was understood that their Majesties retired for the night. How else could any human frame support for any length of time the toils, cares, and anxieties, which commence with these exalted persons at sunrise, and continues all day without intermission?

Not satisfied with the ordinary routine of affairs, Nicholas, who seems to be the most indefatigable and active sovereign now reigning, and whose occupations are generally of a serious nature, having the good and happiness of his people in view, has traced out to himself other tasks and other duties. One of the additional burdens which he has voluntarily imposed upon himself is, that of looking over the reports and returns of every arrest and imprisonment that takes place in his empire, as well as of the state of the prisons, according to a formula which he has himself prescribed, and ordered to be filled up and regularly forwarded to him in a direct manner. In these returns the name of each prisoner or individual arrested, the nature of the crime, and the length of time during which he has been imprisoned, either before or after trial, must be accurately entered. Judging from this information, his Majesty has frequently given orders for bringing persons to a speedy trial who had been long in prison, and others to be released who appeared to have suffered long, or to have been too severely punished.

THE PRESENT SULTAN, MAHOMED.

Mahomed is a man a little past the prime, but still in the vigour of life. He succeeded his imbecile brother, Mustapha, in the year 1803. When he mounted the throne the Russians were at war with the Turks; and it was at the moment when the latter were retreating from the positions they held at our last advices. The new Sultan began at once to display the energy of his character. He set up the standard of the prophet at a large plain two miles from Constantinople, and issued a *Hatti Sherif*, that all Musselmans should rally round it.—He thus assembled a large army, but after some severe conflicts with the Russians, both parties were induced to come to an accommodation in 1812, the Turks being obliged to relinquish considerable territory.

The Sultan resembles Peter the Great in many points of character; the same determination in undertaking, the same energy in pursuing, and the same relentless rigour in executing any purpose; like Peter, he found the domineering of his praetorian guards no longer tolerable; and as Peter rid himself of his *Strélitzes*, so Mahomed determined to dispose of the *Janissaries*. Finding they revolted at his attempt to introduce the European discipline, he caused them, to the number of twenty thousand,