

RUSSIA AND THE CZAR

The following article, which cannot fail to be
 with much interest at the present moment,
 was contributed by a foreigner of historical
 city:—

Our society—that is to say, aristocratic socie-
 ties—surface resembles the society of other
 European countries, but on the whole it differs from
 it in two centres—St. Petersburg and Mos-
 cow.

In St. Petersburg it is the court, or rather
 the aristocracy, who combine society according
 to desire. It seems as if given to the stamp
 of order and to the officers, and to the
 officials of the state. Dance, music, music,
 ballet, occupy the attention; politics and

are excluded from fashionable life. Times changed since the epoch of Catherine, who to be praised by Voltaire and the French aristocrats as a protectress of literature; they were also from the epoch of Alexander, who died in the mystical dreams and sentimental anthropology of Madame Krudener. Both Sovereigns strove to achieve some liberty; and Byron the poet, and Karamzin the historian, could, in the full approbation of the court, publish compositions as now might be visited by punishment to the Caucasus. It is true, towards the end of their reign, both Catherine and Alexander became more cautious, and drew the fetters of

ship tighter; yet their reign, as compared with that of Nicholas, was a reign of liberty. In eyes of the present Czar, science and literature too dangerous tools for despotism in a two-edged sword, which he does not like to wield, though he then becomes furious that the attacks on Russia must be met by the official Russian authors in a suitable shape. Jealous of his power, he hates to fear any of his subjects whose name becomes known without the previous permission of his

ment. The fame of his generals throws an additional splendour on the Czar, who has selected one for the command of his armies. He can make, by putting them into some obscure corner of his empire. But an author may become popular without the emperor's leave; and though he sends him to Siberia, as he did with Bestucheff, to the Caucasus, as happened to Lermontoff, his thoughts cannot be banished, their exile does not enhance the excitement of the public, and the

pire to read their productions. The Czar, with his unlimited power, cannot create talents, nor can he destroy their results. Still, Nicholas attempts to put down the spirit of independent Russian authors, by withholding from literature the general approbation; it is not fashionable in St. Petersburg to become an author. Nicholas is surrounded by mediocrity; by generals whose greatest ambition is to be severe disciplinarians; by pliant German functionaries from the Baltic

provinces; by servile conservative Russians, enemies of all progress; himself cold, obstinate, distrustful, without compassion, without elevation of soul, as mediocre as the persons around him.

In the time of Alexander, during the war with France, when so many Germans and French entered the Russian service, from hatred of Napoleon, and in the hope of finding in Russia the lever for raising European liberty and independence from French oppression, the army was surrounded by a

...of universal respect, as the refuge of military liberty. The officers were the soul of Russian aristocratic society: they represented not only the gallantry, but likewise all that was liberal in the empire. But from the time of the accession of Nicholas to the throne, and of the military conspiracy of 1826, the army has been purged of all the elements of independence. The Czar gives a marked preference to the officers over the civilians; but he has introduced a course tone into the army—

James A. Agnew.

drilling seemed to be its only aim. "After Alexander, the troops were machines; but the officers felt themselves patriots, and were proud to be the most enlightened and progressive part of society. Now, they have become lifeless machines, servile ministers of the Czar, without any sentiment of their own dignity. During a reign of 27 years, the jealousy of Nicholas has, in St. Petersburg, killed every feeling of independence; his government officials are his clerks, his officers of the

Moscow presents in every respect a different picture. Functionalism could not get ascendancy in the society of the old heart of the empire. The dress-code prevails here over the regimentals; still the civilian government officer is only exceptionally admitted to society. Moscow is the seat of the old aristocracy of the empire, and society here consists principally of independent rich landowners, who do not covet government offices, but combine their power with the administration of their

occupy themselves with the management of their estates, and with science and literature, without requiring anything from the Czar, save to be left alone. It is entirely the reverse of the nobility of St. Petersburg, which is attached to the court and to public service, devoured by servile ambition, expecting all from government only, and living upon it. Not to demand anything, to remain independent, and avoid public office, is in despotic countries a sign of opposition: and the Czar is aware with those idlers who spend their winter in

Moscow, and remain for the remainder of the year on their estates, reading all that is published in Western Europe. To possess a library, belongs now to the necessities of the Russian country gentleman; and to have a secret cabinet filled with prohibited books, is the pitch of fashion.

Thus St. Petersburg and Moscow are the two opposite poles of Russian society, representing the Court and the Opposition; yet in such a despotic country as Russia, the personal tastes and inclinations

tion of the monarch have so great an influence, that even the life of Moscow is in a great degree controlled by his supreme will. The rich Moscovite prince may dare to despise government offices, after he has in his youth served for a few years in the army or in the bureaux, one or other of which is necessary to maintain his nobility; he may live far from the court, retired upon his estates, enjoying in secret the forbidden books he gets by the clandestine way he cannot but he sometimes reminds

ded, that he lives under the sway of the despotic Czar, who does not forget those silent opponents of his authority. Not that he would banish them; such punishment is reserved for those who talk of politics, not for those who look apathetically on the doings of government; but he sends them word that he expects them to do something for the progress of the country; to build a cotton-mill, and to employ their serfs in manufactories; or to raise ridges on the hills of the Crimea, and on the banks

of the Don; or to have mine in the Ural worked. The Czar does not expect that they should make money by such speculations; on the contrary, he is well aware that the mill and the vineyard will remain heavy incumbrances on the income of the persons to whose patriotism he has appealed, and that the gold dug out in the Ural may perhaps cost twenty-five shillings the sovereign. But the glory of the country is to be raised in such ways; and the Manchester manufacturer, who finds a

wing of the baronial castle turned into a workshop is delighted to see the mighty aristocracy of Russia paying tribute to industry. And, in fact, it is the tribute which the aristocracy residing around Moscow willingly pays to the whim of the Czar in order to be allowed to remain undisturbed. However, the immense power of the Czar, which changes the aspect of society in every new reign, has largely affected the mind of the Russian. Peter I. was the first poet of kharish to the original

barbarism of Russian aristocracy; he drilled them into soldiers, shipwrights, sailors, courtiers, chamberlains. They had to accept German and French manners, but he did not educate them. Gluttony and luxury of every kind remained the inherent vices of the people. Under his successors—nearly all of them females, for most of the male soon died the natural death of the Czesars—the scandalous conduct of the Court demoralized the nation, although Glukhinski and Potemkin found ways to

ty, though Christian and Russian, was
adopted, and rigorously enforced. Russia was
again, under Catherine II., ruled by an im-
mortal mind: like Peter, she aimed continually at
