

The Demand for Free Government.

ST. PETERSBURG, it appears, had been disquieted for several days by industrial strikes, when on Thursday of last week, during a religious ceremony on the frozen Neva, the discharge of an artillery salute from a neighboring battery was followed by a rain of grape shot around the Czar and the imperial party, killing a policeman and wounding several others. According to the official version, this was an accident. Next day the strikers began to surge through the streets of the city, forcing their way into factories and compelling the workmen to join them, and on Saturday, under the leadership of a priest named Gopon, they announced that on Sunday they would appear at the Winter Palace, unarmed with their wives and children, to present a petition to the Emperor. A large number of them, it was further announced, had sworn to protect the Czar with their own lives if necessary. The Czar, however, withdrew to the Tsarskoe-Selo palace, outside the city, and when the petitioners began their march to the Winter Palace, led by Father Gopon, they were met by cordons of troops, and upon their refusal to disperse, were shot down by hundreds. In the petition which it was their purpose to present to the Czar, the following paragraphs occur:

"Sire: We, workmen, inhabitants of St. Petersburg, of all classes, our wives, children and indigent parents, come to you, our sovereign asking for protection.

"We are poor, persecuted, burdened with labor beyond our strength. We are insulted treated not as men, but as slaves who ought to bear their cruel fate in si-

lence. We have suffered but we are being plunged deeper in the mire and deprived of our rights.

"Uninstructed, stifled by destitution and injustice, we are perishing. We have no strength left.

"Sire, we have arrived at the extreme limits of endurance; we have reached the terrible moment when death is to be preferred to a continuation of our intolerable sufferings. We have left our work, and informed our employers that we will not resume until our demands are conceded. We have not asked much; we have asked but for means of livelihood, without which life is a burden and labor continual torture.

"Our first request is that our masters should investigate our case. They have refused. The right to put forward our claim has been denied to us; it being held that such right is not recognized by law. . . .

"Any of us who dared raise his voice in the interests of the people of the working classes has been thrown into prison or transported. Kindness and good feeling have been treated as a crime.

"The bureaucracy has brought the country to the verge of ruin by a shameful war. It is luring it to its downfall. We have no voice in the heavy burdens imposed; we do not know for whom or why this money is wrung from an impoverished people, and we do not know how it is expended.

"This state of things, contrary to divine laws, renders life impossible. It were better that we should all perish, we workers and all Russia. Then, good luck to