

soon gave Russia a navy. The Arts were naturalized,—Schools were founded,—Science was fostered, and a spirit of progress breathed into the sluggish Slavonians of the Sarmatian plains, which threw off the chilling incubus of innumerable ages.

In the year 1762, Catherine II ascended the Russian throne, and though a much worse woman than the Tudor Elizabeth, she was as able a sovereign as the English Lioness. During the thirty-four years of Catherine's reign, the boundaries of the Russian Empire were immensely expanded; and its population, which at her accession was 25,000,000, at her death, amounted to 36,000,000. The rule of Alexander, the great admirer and then the great antagonist of Napoleon, still further enriched the Muscovite territory. The share which Russia had in the overthrow of the French Colossus, gave to the northern giant a preponderating influence in European councils and policy. Successful war against Turkey in 1828 and 1829, in which the Russian forces swept through the mountain passes of the Balkan, the natural bulwark of the Golden Horn, threw the enfeebled Turk at the feet of the mighty Autocrat of the North. Since 1815 especially, Russia has assumed an attitude of inextinguishable hostility to national freedom and constitutional liberty, wherever her brutal armies could overwhelm, her perfidious diplomacy distract, or her Ural gold corrupt.

The vast territory over which Nicholas now holds iron rule, extends from the Islands of the Baltic to the north-western coasts of America, and from the Arctic Sea to the mouths of the Danube, and the valleys of Georgia—at least one-tenth part of the habitable earth. At this moment the population of this great space cannot be less than 65,000,000. And though immense portions of the Russian dominions may be forever irreclaimable to