

mine, I went to pay him a visit one evening, long after the death of Peter the Great; when he told me, that such and such officers, naming them, had dined with him that day, and that the principal subject of their conversation turned on the actions of their old father (as he termed him, by way of eminence) Peter the Great. He told me further, that though his majesty seemed to be severe, on certain occasions, yet not one of them all could produce or recollect one single instance of his having punished an honest man; or, that he had caused any person to suffer any punishment who had not well deserved it.

He hath been represented as making too frequent use of spirituous liquors to excess, which is an unmerited aspersions; for he had an aversion to all fots, and to those too much given to drink. It is true, he had his times of diversion, when he would be merry himself, and liked to see others so; this may have been necessary, and proper for the unbending his mind from affairs of great weight; but such amusements occurred generally during holidays, and festival times, and was, with him, at no time of long continuance. It hath been imputed to him, and not without some appearance of reason, that he had political views in encouraging drinking at these times of merriment; for, on these occasions, he mixed with the company, and, conversing with them on the footing of a companion, had better opportunities, at such times, of discovering the real sentiments of those about him, than when they were quite cool.

Those, who by their offices about the person of Peter the Great, might be supposed to be the best acquainted with his disposition, always disavowed his drinking to excess; and insisted on his being a sober prince. During the campaign of the expedition to Derbent in Persia, he was not guilty of the least excess, but rather lived abstemiously. In this point I could not be mistaken, as the tent of Dr. Blumentrost, his majesty's chief physician, with whom I