

institutions of his country, and the circumstances of his people, in consolidating what he already possesses, or may hereafter be constrained to acquire, rather than in coveting an extension of dominion, merely for its own sake. Such, in fact, was the task delegated to the house of Romanoff, when elevated to the throne of Russia, in 1613, as the task delegated, after the lapse of a century, to the house of Brunswick in England, was the protecting of civil and religious liberty. For fifteen years after the extinction of the line of Ruric, in 1598, Museovy was torn to pieces by the intestine dissensions of numberless pretenders, till at last, by the free choice of the nobles, Michael Fedrovitz Romanoff received the sceptre of the czars, in order to prevent the monarchy from falling to pieces. As such a duty was incompatible with a state of foreign war, this illustrious man preferred the unity of his dominions to their extent, sacrificing, for the sake of peace, Ingria and Carelia to the Swedes, and Smolensk, Tschernigore and Novgorod to the Poles, while, by devoting his undisturbed attention to internal ameliorations, he laid deep and broad the foundations of that strength, which ultimately led to the recovery of far more than what he had surrendered. It was in this same peaceful path, though happily without similar sacrifices, that Peter the Great—and, in fact, almost every Russian sovereign from Michael to Nicholas, has really won his brightest laurels.

The absence of the emperor, who had gone, as was supposed, to put an end to the disturbances already mentioned as existing in the government of Kazan, prevented my friend Baron Wrangell from introducing me, as he was most desirous of doing, to his majesty. In my peculiar circumstances I deeply regretted this disappointment. Even if I had never set foot on the patrimony of Nicholas, I could not fail to regard, in common with every man of knowledge or reflection, the autocrat of three continents, the master of the most extensive dominion of ancient or modern times, as an object not merely of philanthropic interest, but of mysterious awe. But, after seeing more of this colossal empire than any other foreigner, living or dead, I was naturally anxious, as an appropriate termination of my wanderings, to enter, as it were, into communion with the spirit that animated it. Independently of these general considerations, the present czar's personal qualities, physical, and intellectual, and moral, must induce every man's judgment to acquiesce in the homage which his feelings are constrained to pay. Nicholas is universally allowed to present the noblest mould of form and feature, to be the ablest and most laborious sovereign of the age, and, what is higher praise than all in an individual of his exalted station, to set before his people the brightest example of all the domestic virtues.

Of the conclusion of my wanderings, little remains to be said. After being confined, for eight days, to my room in St. Petersburg, I embarked on the steamer Nicolai for Lahie, halting for coal at Stitichau on the Island of Gothland, where we were received into the house of a merchant of the name of Enequest, whose daughter was decidedly the prettiest girl that I saw in the whole course of my travels. On the