

ing its fruit in all classes of Russian society.

It was now war to the knife. Assassination was organized. Society was dislocated. Anarchy stalked through the land. Panic seized the Government. Martial law was proclaimed over large tracts of the Empire. Legal procedure was superseded, and absolute power given to governors in the storm-centres. But punishment of the most severe character, by "administrative order," availed little. "The most absolute Government in the world was checkmated by an inner ring who had made a pact with death."

General Melikov, holding that the battle with anarchy could only be gained by the good-will of the Russian people, strove to persuade his imperial master to adopt milder measures, hoping to inoculate him with the idea of granting to Russia a constitution. This would draw the teeth of the Nihilists, and win back the esteem, now well-nigh forfeited, of those who had delighted to call him "the Czar-Liberator." A scheme was laid before the autocrat early in 1881, of which he signified his approval in the form of a rescript. He then hesitated, and postponed the publication of the edict until March 12th, on which day he again hesitated. On the next day, when he had resolved to promulgate it, the lonely, harassed emperor was assassinated. Thus perished a great monarch who saw the goal to which he ought to guide his people, but lacked strength and courage for the herculean task.

Obscurantism triumphed, and the reign of his successor, Alexander III., the pupil of Pobiedonostsev, was to be on the whole reactionary. Honest, virtuous, not overweighted with brains, he had little even of "the vague liberalism" of his father. After displaying vacillation in refer-

ence to the vast project of reform which his father had sanctioned, he declared his resolve to maintain the autocratic power unsullied and to extirpate heinous agitation. He cashiered his father's ministers, and called to office men who were pledged to support him in the struggle with the universal anarchy. The extremest instruments of repression were again employed. "The whole machinery of justice was superseded by a military dictatorship." To breathe a liberal sentiment was a crime past forgiveness. From ten thousand to twelve thousand persons, few of whom were Nihilists, were every year arrested, and many of them, loaded with chains, sent to Siberian prisons or mines, or condemned to eat out their hearts in awful isolation on the shores of the Polar Sea.

Order was restored, but the cruel character of irresponsible despotism was burnt into the soul of the intelligence of the Russian nation too deeply for the scars ever to be obliterated. And the Czar himself, terror-haunted, was quite unfitted to conduct openly the affairs of State. In one thing he succeeded—in the education of the people in anti-monarchicism. The disgraceful crusade against the Jews added to the unrest of the Empire, and made every coterie of Hebrews sympathizers with treason.

Meanwhile Poland, "stabbed to the heart in her social institutions, religion, language, and culture," by Alexander III., whose maxim was "One Russia, one creed, one Czar," succumbed in an unequal struggle. The national spirit was apparently destroyed, but the inextinguishable embers of patriotism smouldered under the super-imposed weight of Russian despotism—and lately they have burst into flame. Steadily the Muscovite Empire was advancing in Asia,