

THE GROWTH OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE.

The enormous plain, stretching from the Arctic Ocean south to the Caspian and Black Seas and the Caucasian Mountains, and from the Ural Mountains in the east to the Baltic Sea in the west, was, up to the 9th century, rather a wild country. The chief occupations were fishing and hunting, and hence the Slavic tribes which inhabited it settled mostly in the vicinity of the river basins and around the lakes.

The history of Russia may be divided into four periods:

- (1) The period of independent principalities (862 A.D.-1238);
- (2) The Mongol domination (1238-1462);
- (3) The Tsardom of Muscovy (1462-18th century);
- (4) Modern Russia (from the 18th century).

1. The first period was a time of strife between the various principalities. Each of the princes wanted to obtain supremacy over the rest. By and by, Novgorod, the seat of the first Russian prince, Rurik, was surpassed in importance by Kiev, which then became the seat of the Grand Duke.

The most notable event of this period