

RUSSIA OF TO-DAY.

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The tremendous strides which Russia is making these days have caused people to wonder wherein lies the source of her phenomenal strength. She is forcing back the Teuton hordes beyond the Lipa; and to-day's threatened. She has crossed the Carpathians, and it would not surprise us to hear any day that there will be a peace-offering from Vienna or from Buda-Pesth.

We have just learned that the Turks have evacuated Erzincan, their most important stronghold in Asia Minor; and once the Bear gets his paws on this city, it is but a question of time until we find him stretching them towards the Levant. Disorganization of the Turkish forces must result; and though we have a Berlin despatch saying that "important results" will soon be visible in the Balkan region, we discount this information as we must do all literary stuff that is manufactured in Berlin.

To understand the actual strength of Russia we must view it from within. The Russian Empire comprises one-seventh of the land surface of the globe. Its area is (since the Treaty of Portsmouth which concluded the Russo-Japanese War) 8,417,118 square miles; and the rapidity of the growth of its population may be gleaned from the following figures:

1762	19,000,000
1815	45,000,000
1859	74,000,000
1897	129,209,297
1913	174,000,000

Since the year 1905 the Government of Russia is a constitutional hereditary monarchy, though the legislative, executive, and judicial power continue to be united to a great extent in the Emperor who is known as the Autocrat of all the Russians. On August 6, 1915, the first step towards a representative Government was made, and an elective body of representatives of the country, empowered with consultative powers only, and named the State's Duma (*Gosudarstvennaya Duma*) was created. A few months later, on October 17, a new law was promulgated, conferring on the State's Duma legislative powers. At the same time the principles of the inviolability of the person, and of freedom of conscience, speech, assembly, and association, were promulgated by the Emperor, and it was established as an inviolable rule that no law should come into effect without the approval of the Duma and the Council of the Empire (*Gosudarstvennyy Sovyet*), established in 1810, and that to the elected of the people should be guaranteed the possibility of a real participation in the control of the legality of the acts of such authorities as are appointed by the Emperor. Under a Manifesto published on February 20, 1906, the Council of the Empire was transformed into a legislative council. As at present constituted the Duma consists of members elected for five years and representing the governments, or provinces, and the cities of Petrograd, Moscow, Warsaw, Kiev, Lodz, Odessa and Riga. Members of the Duma are paid 10 roubles per day during session, and once a year travelling expenses to and from Petrograd.

The Empire is divided into governments and provinces (*oblast*), subdivisions of which are districts, *uyezd* in the governments, and *okrug* in the provinces. At the head of each government is a governor-general, the representative of the Emperor, who as such has the supreme control and direction of all affairs, whether civil or military. A vice-governor is appointed when the governor-general is absent. Each government is divided into from 5 to 15 districts (815 in all the Russian Empire), having each several administrative institutions. The townships (*gradonachalnik*) of Petrograd, Moscow, Sebastopol, Odessa, Kerch, Nikolayev, Baku, and Rostov-on-Don are administered by special governors; Kronstadt is under a separate military governor.

In European Russia the government of the parish, in so far as the lands of the peasantry are concerned, and part of the local administration, is entrusted to the people. For this purpose the whole country is divided into 17,075 cantons (known as *volosts* among the Russian population; *gminas* in Poland; *stanitsas* in Cossack lands; *ulus* in territories peopled by natives), which are presided over by an elder (*volostnoi starshina* in the volosts), elected at the cantonal assemblies, which are composed of delegates of the village communities in the proportion of one many to every ten houses. The village communities elect an elder (*starosta*) or executive officer of a commune, and also a tax-collector. All these officers are elected

at a "Mir" or communal assembly composed of all the householders in the village, who discuss and decide all communal affairs. The peasants have thus special institutions of their own, which are submitted also to special colleges "for peasants' affairs," instituted in each government.

The administration of the economical affairs of the district and province are, to some extent, in the hands of *zemstvos*, or provincial assemblies, composed of representatives elected by the peasantry, the householders in the towns, and the landed proprietors. The president of the nobility of the district, or of the province, presides *ex officio* over the *zemstvos* or district, or of the province, and in his default, the president of the local tribunals presides.

The towns and cities have municipal institutions of their own, organized on nearly the same principles as the *zemstvos*. All householders are divided into three classes, each of which represents an equal amount of real property, and each class elects an equal number of representatives to the Dumas.

The Grand Duchy of Finland, ceded to the Emperor of Russia by the Treaty of Fredrikshamn, September 17, 1809, has preserved the Swedish Constitution, dating from the year 1772, reformed in 1789, slightly modified in 1869 and 1882, and reformed in 1906. The national parliament, which formerly consisted of four estates—the nobles, the clergy, the burghers, and the peasants, now consists of one Chamber of 200 members chosen by direct and proportional election, in which all who are entitled to vote have an equal vote.

The suffrage is possessed, with the usual exceptions (soldiers, students, police officers, and governors do not vote) by every Finnish citizen (man or woman) who has reached his or her 24th year. There are 16 electoral districts with a representation proportioned to the population, a re-arrangement being required every 10 years. Each district is divided into voting circuits; and the voting system devised with a view to proportional representation, provides for the formation of voters' associations, which prepare three name-lists of candidates, the votes for whom are in a falling scale, according to the order in which the voter has placed them. Every citizen entitled to vote is eligible to the Diet, the members of which receive 1,400 marks (about \$280) for each session of about ninety days. The Diet last for three years unless sooner dissolved. The Grand Duke summons and may dissolve the Diet which can decide on any motion not affecting fundamental laws or the organization of land and sea defence.

To the superficial observer, Russia has invariably appeared as a nation within whose borders existed unmistakable signs of decomposition; and this was the prevailing feeling of many at the outbreak of the War when it seemed as if Russia were on the brink of ruin. There were differences between the Government and the people, a disorganized front, and the resultant lack of public interest in the outcome of the struggle. There were gloomy forebodings, and the pessimist declared that Russia was perishing. Yet, instead of perishing, Russia passed through one of those paradoxical experiences of which Russia only is capable. Some profound, elemental, incomprehensible power intervened; and just at the moment that the Teutons seemed assured of a glorious triumph over Russia, they suddenly turned aside—to the Balkans. Russia did not disintegrate, but suddenly assumed a strong defensive, and is now pushing the enemy to the frontier, while in Asia Minor her victories are set down as among the most notable military achievements of modern times.

Thus we are forced to admit that the fateful signs of ruin and disintegration which were manifest at the beginning of the great struggle with the Teuton lie on the surface and do not express the state of affairs in the heart of the nation. There is beyond the Russia which first strikes the eye and covers its field of vision, another, truer, better Russia which has not been appreciated. It is not difficult to understand this illusion, as Russia is pre-eminently a rural, agrarian nation, but the casual observer sees but the urban life of the Empire with its many ills and difficulties. The social maladies from which contemporary Russia is suffering are not rural but urban phenomena; and this contrast is especially striking in the economic realm.

The destinies of Russia do not rest with the cities, but in the village. The growth in the prosperity of rural Russia within recent years has been

phenomenal. Whatever the future development of the Russian Empire as an industrial and manufacturing country may be, at present it is an agricultural empire.

As a result of the new policies adopted by the Russian Government in 1906 more acreage is passing into the hands of the peasantry. The old communal system, by which the members of the village community owned the village lands jointly and worked them by triennial divisions of the fields, is slowly passing away, and the perpetual holding of land is steadily growing, being aided largely by the financial assistance furnished by the Peasants' Land Bank. Over a million separate peasant's holdings, aggregating some 55,000,000 acres had been allotted to the end of 1912. This system is an incentive to progress and thrift, as formerly, when the land was held in common, the debts of the individual members of the community were communal also, and nobody had a desire to save or be considered richer than any other member of the commune; if he did, he was liable to be called upon to pay the debts of the thrifless.

The war has had marked influence on Russian agriculture in a way which will likely have enduring results. Russian products, owing to the closing of nearly all the frontiers to any export and import business, except what is actually needed for the immediate conduct of the war, are now staying in the country. Just what these products are may be gleaned from the following statistical information:

In 1915, in European Russia, not reckoning the provinces occupied by the Germans in Poland and the Baltic regions, there were 210,000,000 acres in cereals. On the basis of triennial averages, the yield of 1915 has been computed at over 73,000,000 tons of grain which works out at an average of about 700 pounds per acre. This tonnage is greater than that of 1914 by 24.2 per cent. This was especially the case in the "Central Black Earth" Districts. In addition to the above amounts, on June 28, 1915, the quantity of cereals remaining on hand from the preceding year, 1914, was 7,628,400 tons, or an increase over the previous year's stock left over of 253,000 tons. The amount of anticipated grain consumption is given in the official statistics as follows:

Seeding for next year, 11,513,200 tons.
Feeding 127,500,000 people, cattle and poultry, 60,493,600 tons.
Reserve Supply, 23740,000 tons.

Though the net profits on the crops on hand are smaller than under normal conditions, yet this has not been an unmitigated evil to the country or the people at large, as every day witnesses the introduction of new methods to employ these articles profitably at home, not only for the purpose of aiding the agriculturists to dispose of them, but with a view to make the country, as far as possible, commercially independent after the war.

This may be exemplified by taking the Russian crop of flax as an illustration. For some years Russia has been raising about 450,000 tons of flax annually, of which nearly 70 per cent, was sold in the raw state to foreign countries. This industry had begun to decline owing to the exorbitant profits made by the middlemen engaged in the sale and handling of the crop, and to foreign competition. It is thought that the stoppage of ex-



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portation will do much to encourage home manufacture.

Another factor of importance is the fact that the Russian export trade in hemp had passed in recent years from Petrograd and Riga to Königsberg in Germany, which handled from 50 to 75 per cent. of the total export. Great Britain taking the balance. It is asserted that there is a great future for Russian hemp in the manufacture of binder-twine which is so largely imported, and for which Russian hemp is said to be admirably adapted. Experiments are now being carried on with this end in view; and if they result satisfactorily, the industry to be established will have an important economic result; and the Russian hemp growers will presumably be very glad to increase the acreage of a crop which seems admirably adapted to the land and climate of the country.

The phenomenal prosperity now enjoyed by the rural population of Russia is an astounding paradox. In war times, it has been almost a nation, that the productivity of a nation is diminished; all enterprises are, as a rule, tend to destructive and not constructive ends. In Russia you find the reverse—a colossal increase in the nation's power of productivity. This prosperity, so says a distinguished Russian Diplomatist, Prince Troubetzkoy, is due to three causes.—First, the prohibition of alcohol; second, the allowances given by the Government to the wives and families of the reservists; third, because the peasantry are earning high wages.

The most eloquent proof of this prosperity is the billion of rubles deposited in the savings banks since the beginning of the war. The ban on alcohol amply accounts for this billion. "But," adds our authority, "the monetary billion should be multiplied several times in order to get the nation's prosperity for prohibition has raised the productivity of the country many times." If to the billion incident to the prohibition of alcohol be added the total of the monthly allowances paid out to the wives of the soldiers, and if the fact that the wage of the laborer is now from one-and-a-half to twice as high as before the war, be taken into consideration, the prosperity of rural Russia is fully accounted for.

Thus rural Russia indicates "the mental power which arrested the German invasion." It was just this same power—the power of the Russian village—against which the Napoleonic hordes were wrecked a century ago. "Had the war been of brief duration," says Prince Troubetzkoy, "we could not have won....but now, when it has become a war of exhaustion, it is different. No machinery in the world can create the basic forces necessary for winning this war. In the economic circumstances of our village life we can continue the war indefinitely. Our foe can do no such thing, and that is why, instead of continuing the invasion of Russia, he turned to the Balkans in quest of human and food supplies....Our chances for victory are very good. Whatever the efficiency of organization and management....in this prolonged war the decisive factor will be the power of resistance based on numbers and on the prosperity and spirit of the population."

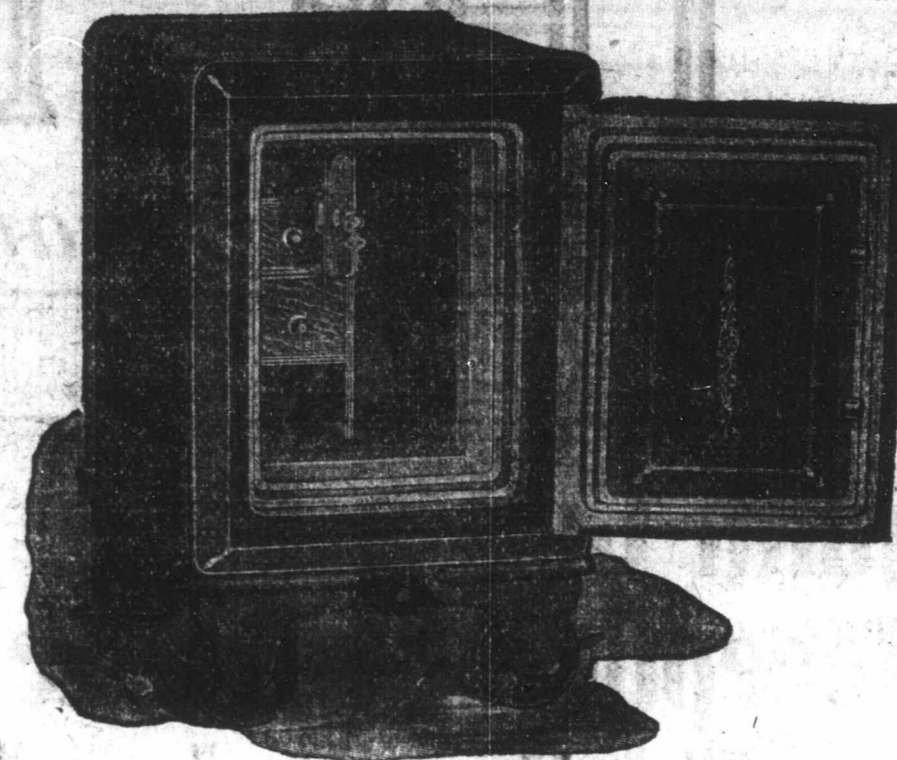
The prosperity of the people is an asset which cannot be adequately appreciated at this juncture; it is not a material gain; but it is the result of a great moral and spiritual victory—over alcohol. Russia has begun to understand her powers and have faith in herself; and this faith will lead her to victory.

To-day Russia is battling for the cause of right, not on her own borders alone; she has reached out beyond the Caucasian heights, and wrestles with the Turk on his own territory. She has planted her standard upon the battlements of Erzerum and Trebizond, delivered Armenia from the bloody hands of the Janissary, and is now at the walls of Erzurum; nor is this all: she has heard the call of the West, and Russian soldiers are now fighting shoulder to shoulder with the legions of France on the sodden fields of Lorraine.

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