

MEMOIR

ON THE

PROGRESS OF RUSSIA

SINCE THE PEACE OF PARIS.

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MEMOIR.

BEFORE I enter upon the subject of the cause and the actual position of Circassia, whose interests the two envoys who have visited this country have the honour to represent, permit me to cast a glance upon the attitude of the Russian empire, not only towards Circassia, but all the countries that are its neighbours. All these questions are so intimately connected with one another, that it is impossible to treat one without touching upon the others. The question of nationalities and the natural frontiers of peoples occupies much attention at the present time. Unhappily, the more important question of races has not received sufficient attention. Two centuries ago, no one in Europe dreamt of considering Muscovy as an European country, and its inhabitants as Europeans. Towards the end of the last century the Empress Catherine II. published an order, in accordance with which the Muscovites (Great Russians) were declared to be European, which

caused the celebrated Mirabeau to say that the Muscovites were only European by virtue of an order of their Empress. From this time forward the Muscovite Government has used every means—has paid writers who would sell their pens; has persecuted others whose honesty revolted against a falsification of history, by means of which the atrocity exceeds the most hideous records of Asia. The Muscovite Government has perfectly understood the importance of the question of races; and by force of perseverance and cunning it has succeeded in persuading the Muscovite people that it is Russian Slave and European, and in establishing the same opinion throughout Europe. The consequences of the entrance of the Muscovites into the European system have been quickly terrible. A great state in the centre of Europe, which for long ages had been a rampart of the civilised world—Poland—has been destroyed; Turkey has lost the chief part of its possessions on the Black Sea; Sweden one-half of its territory, Finland; the conquest of the Caucasus has been begun. The European powers—dazzled on one side, flattered on the other, at having received a young robust brother of great promise, have contented themselves with the official explanations of the Muscovite race being European; and instead of rejecting in the outset the unjust pretensions of this race, they have participated morally and even materially in its crimes, and have helped it to build up that gigantic power which now threatens the world. The Muscovites (Great Russians)—that is

to say, the whole mass of the population of the empire, excepting the Poles, the Ruthenians, a part of the inhabitants of the Caucasus, and foreign colonists—are neither Slaves nor Europeans, and belong to the Mongolian race. This truth, in the present year, has been demonstrated by a Ruthenian *savant*, M. Duchinski, of Kiew, and has been supported by one of the great intellectual powers of France, M. Visquenet; and the power of this truth has been such that the Muscovite Government, after fruitless efforts to contend against it, has been obliged to give up the intellectual contest. Having shown to you that the adversary of the Circassian nation is of the *Turano-Mongolian* race, I think I shall be right in sustaining that the Circassian, or Abasian nation, [belonging to the Indo-Germanic race, has more claim to family sympathy from European nations, and is much more nearly related to them than the Muscovite nation. But sympathy even for the most just cause is not always sufficient to sustain that cause; unhappily justice does not reign upon the earth, and it is necessary that their interests should be identical; in order that one nation should sustain another morally or materially. I do not doubt the sympathy of England. It remains then for me to show that the fate of the Circassian people ought not only to interest Englishmen as that of a people of the same blood as themselves, as that of a generous and heroic people, but that the fate of this people ought to interest Great Britain and all Europe, be-

cause of their own interest. It is often said that events do not repeat themselves. This is a supposition, the falsity of which is demonstrated by history from the earliest to the most modern times. In every part of the earth, in every country, in the life of every nation, even of every family, numerous examples may be found of similar events repeating themselves. When I look at the map, and rest my eye upon that immense plain, where at present dwell a people of fifty millions of Muscovites, of pure Mongolian blood, whose arms reach to America, Japan, China, the country of the Turcomans, Persia, Turkey in Europe and Turkey in Asia, Austria, Germany, and Sweden, I recal history to my recollection, and I see that it repeats itself continually from the time that we know it. When the greatest conqueror of the East, Alexander the Great, was all-powerful in Asia, little was known of Muscovy at that time. Various savage hordes, in great numbers, known by the general name of Scythians, inhabited that country. These hordes appeared so dangerous to the most powerful monarch the world has ever seen, that to protect rich and civilised Asia from them he considered the mountains of the Caucasus an insufficient barrier. In his reign was built that gigantic wall of the Caucasus, connecting the Caspian with the Black Sea, and strengthened with innumerable forts. But neither the mountains nor the forts and walls were sufficient to keep back the hordes of the North, and the Scythians ravaged Persia as well as Syria.

Ages after, the name of this people is changed, but not their devastating character. We see the hordes of the Avars, the Huns, the Magyars, coming from these unknown countries and ravaging Germany, Roumelia, Italy. We see their terrible chief Attila encamped before the walls of ancient Rome. New ages pass, and new hordes, under the name of Mongols, fall upon Europe. The dynasty of Genghis Khan ruled what is now Russia and China at the same time. Later these hordes change again their name, their language, their religion. They are Mohammedans; they speak the Turcoman language, and are called Tartars; and this terrible scourge again afflicts Christian Europe. The Tartar monarchy has the fate of all conquests that have not the moral means of sustaining themselves. It is divided into several States. We see a Grand Duchy of Muscovy, which learns little by little the language of its neighbours—the Slaves of Novgorod, which embraces an anti-European form of Christianity—viz., Greek orthodoxy, and models it to suit its character. We see the Khans of Kasan and the Crimea remaining faithful to the religion of Mahomet. Little by little Muscovy absorbs her weak neighbours. The Grand Duke of Muscovy becomes Khan of Kason, Khan of all the nomad populations on the Ural and the Volga; he subjugates Novgorod and several Slave countries on his frontiers. The Greek religion, and the Slav-Russian language begin to prevail about the fifteenth century. The savage hordes are mastered; the step of conquest becomes slower and more measured,



but also more certain. The Grand Duke takes the title of Czar. Peter the Great ascends the throne of Moscow. A new era commences for this country. The Czar understands that in order to conquer the world he must, before all things, build a fleet, and form an army. He becomes a carpenter and a sailor, learns the drill of the German corporals, begins by continual defeats from Charles the 12th of Sweden, and ends by crushing him. He is looked upon in Europe as a great regenerator; thousands of officers, artisans, &c., offer him their services without thinking that they are forging chains for their own countries. Muscovy begins to be called Russia. Catherine II., the worthy successor of Peter, takes the title of Empress of all the Russias, and Europe applauds her. The Russias—Ruthenia—was part of Poland. The Empress of all the Russias invades Poland, a great state. The rampart of Europe is destroyed; and, whilst a part of Europe regards this monstrous fact with a sort of apathy, the other part divides the spoils with Muscovy. The history of the last fifty years is well known. Let us pass over this time, and get to the last days of the Czar Nicholas I.

The Czar depended upon the political decadence of France; upon the boundless gratitude of Austria; upon the *inertia* of England; upon the absolute devotion of Prussia; upon the complete powerlessness of Turkey. The Czar, in throwing off the mask, committed a grave error. Against all expectation, the Western Powers moved to send help to Constantinople. Austria took a hostile

attitude. Turkey developed an unexpected energy. All the world, and above all the Czar, for a moment believed the Russian Empire to be in danger. Nicholas I. is said to have died of grief. If he had only known that Europe would spend millions of money, and hundreds of thousands of lives, to burn some dozen of old wooden ships, and *not* take Sebastopol, certainly he would never have become ill.

Russia victorious could not have come out of the war with much more honour than Russia conquered. Excepting an insignificant loss of territory on the Danube, things remained as they were before the war. But Russia gained a precious experience. She learnt that the imperious tone she had taken towards Europe was dangerous for her policy. She learnt that she could no longer obtain accomplices, as in the last century, for the dismemberment of Poland. She learnt that in acting against Europe, she could only depend upon her own strength, and with the energy of a young giant and Satanic astuteness, she set to work to increase her strength.

This short review of the past will have shown that it is no new danger we have to combat. The invasions of Europe by the Mongolians have been repeated throughout ages. The danger in our days is perhaps greater than ever, because this race, being under a Government of iron, organised and administered in a military manner, will be more dangerous to us than their ancestors to our ancestors.

Let us now fix your attention upon the actual work and terrible present progress of the Muscovite power. Russia has learned that the time has not yet come to throw the gauntlet down openly to the civilised world; and she has set to work to add to her strength. Since the treaty of peace of 1856, the tone of Muscovite diplomacy has become more modest; she pretends to have become liberal, talks of the emancipation of the serfs, of non-intervention, and nationalities. These are fine words, but have borne no fruit, except in taking the attention of Europe away from the progress of Russian conquest in Asia. North of Novgorod Russia erects a monument as a rallying flag for the Slave races. In Warsaw, a brother of the Czar is Viceroy, and does all he can to persuade the Poles that they and the Muscovites are brothers which, happily, they will by no means understand and believe. In Austria, a secret society makes every effort to shake this ancient edifice, which is an inconvenient barrier to Muscovite ambition. In Turkey, the Greco-Slave populations are worked upon, so as to become a constant embarrassment to the Turks, at the same time that the Muscovite policy will not allow them to combine their forces.

So long as Herzegovina was in arms against the Ottoman army the Muscovite agents kept back Montenegro; when Herzegovina was exhausted they pushed on Montenegro; after the fall of this country they are exciting Servia, Greece, and the Christian mountaineers in Asia. Russia calculates

that these countries will be crushed by the Ottomans one after the other, and that, when the bloody drama is over, the Christians will be in despair, and will invoke the aid of Russia with loud cries; the Turks will be without army and without money, and Russia mistress of the situation. Thus, without taking the lofty tone of the Government of the Czar Nicholas I., the present Russian Government is more powerful and of more influence in Europe than the last.

But this agitation, however important it may be, is not to be compared with the fearful progress that Russia has been making in Asia during the last six years. It may be said that from the time that Peter the Great commenced to assail the Caucasus, and to march over the steppes of Central Asia in the direction of Turkistan and China—that is to say, for 130 years past—Russia has not made such important acquisitions as since 1856.

She began with the "*rectification of the frontier*" between China and Siberia. Under this modest pretext, Russia obtained the left bank of the Amoor—that is to say, a rich fertile country with a population of a million and a half, and equal in size to France. Shortly after, Russia received as a present the island of Saghalien, a little present about as large as Ireland, lying at the mouth of the Amoor, and possessing the finest ports in the world. There, at this moment, an army of soldiers, workmen, and convicts, is engaged in raising a second Sebastopol. Nothing has been heard of the increase of the Russian fleet in Europe, whilst

we daily hear of the increase of the fleets of all other powers, even the smallest. The explanation is very simple. Having magnificent ports in the Sea of Japan, which is open all the year, Russia is no longer obliged to have a navy locked up in ice for nine months of the year. She prefers free navigation and exercise for her navy. Before long the world will be astonished at the power of the newly-constructed Russian fleet.

The internal revolutions of China are a great assistance to Russia for the conquest of this empire, but a true piece of good luck for her has been the war of France and England against China, not only that the last prestige of the power of the Emperor of China has fallen in the eyes of his subjects, and that there now exists no real government in this ancient country, but that the Muscovites have taken advantage of the war and the troubles caused by it to take military possession of all the country upon the right bank of the River Sangari as far as the peninsula of Corea inclusive—that is to say, a trifle as great as Great Britain and France put together, with a population estimated at 15,000,000 souls. Lastly, the Russian troops, under the pretext of protecting the dignity of the Russian flag and the safety of Russian subjects, have taken possession of the great and populous island of Yezo, forming part of the empire of Japan. Such is the progress of Russia against China and Japan. For 120 years the Muscovites have been advancing without intermission against these empires; the immense steppes have been

crossed after the vast and continued sacrifices of more than a century. Whilst it was possible to have stopped them with small efforts, nothing was done; now it appears to be too late. Every stage the Russians now make gives them rich towns and populous countries.

The Chinese, who could never understand European civilisation, which is contrary to their turn of mind, already understand perfectly Muscovite civilisation, which on all points of importance is identical with their own. As to language, experience shows that the *Turano-Mongolian* races change it very easily. The traveller who thirty years before has visited various parts of the Muscovite empire, will be astonished to find, where he left savage tribes, well-disciplined Muscovites, speaking Russian, and professing the orthodox Greek faith, without the least regret for the past. The Chinese, like the Muscovites, have no idea of hereditary property in land, the possession of which is governed by the good pleasure of the "*Bohdy-Han*" (Emperor) in China, of the Czar in Russia. The Chinese, like the Muscovites, are divided into fourteen classes, and in their virtues as well as their vices entirely resemble them. This inert mass of 400 millions, which is not capable of defending itself against 100,000 Cossacks, and which cannot be defended by Europe, is a certain prey of Russia. The levity with which this immense question is regarded in Europe is most alarming, especially when it is remembered that this empire, united with Russia

and organised by the hand of the Czar, will increase the power of Russia twenty-fold. Such is Muscovite progress in China. In Turkestan, upon the Sea of Aral, the Russians have long had a flotilla, and recently they have passed the steppes. There their harvest has also commenced, and it can hardly be doubted that by this time the rich and populous countries of Khiva, Bokhara, Kokan, and Samarcand—the populations of which are incapable of resistance—have fallen into their hands.

We now come to the question which especially occupies us at present, the question of the Caucasus. It would be too long to give in this paper an exact description of this country. Such a description is contained, however, in a work which I have in the press. At present I can only remark, that if the Muscovite Government has made more progress in Eastern Asia during the last six years than in one hundred and twenty years previous, it has also made more progress in the Caucasus since 1856 than for thirty years previous. The situation of the independent countries of the Caucasus—that is, of the Circassians and Abasians—was much better before the war with Russia than it is at present. Before the war these peoples had not the least idea that Russia was capable of holding her ground against the two greatest powers of the world. After having been more or less witnesses of the struggle, from participating in which the intrigues of Constantinople prevented them, these peoples after the treaty of Paris were in a state of utter demoralisation—the worst of things that

can befall men fighting for their hearths. The lion of Tchetchina and Daghestan, Schamyl, was the first to become the victim of this demoralisation. Abandoned by his followers, he was given up to the enemy, and forced to accept the golden captivity of the Czar. Russia then, at least for the present, has done with the ferocious war in the mountains bordering upon the Caspian Sea, and in 1859 it appeared to the Russians that they were masters of the situation. That was a mistake. The most noble and most brave people of the Caucasus, whether by their race or by their moral qualities, declared that it would not accept the yoke, and would perish rather than become the subjects of the Czar of Moscow. This people are the Abasa, or Adighe, a people of a million and a half of souls. It is their representatives who are now in England. For six years all the strength of Russia has been directed against this heroic people. For six years their country has been ravaged without pity or intermission. They are driven from the plains into the mountains ; their coast is blockaded. This people is the vanguard of the European race against the invading Mongolian race. It has stood in the breach for half a century without aid or encouragement from any one. Examine the map of Europe, and you will see that between Europe and Asia there is one position only which is unassailable—the Caucasus. Whatever power obtains this position will rule the world. It has cost the Russians 100 years and immense sacrifices to obtain possession of the greater part of this

position, but so long as they have not obtained the whole their victory is insecure; but in case they should take the last rampart, no power on earth will be able to dislodge them. It is now only a question of time. Certain it is that if, without much delay, England does not find some means to compel Russia to respect her neighbours' property, she will soon be forced to defend her own.

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