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By Sir John Murray IV, Baron Rowland Edmund Prothero Ernle

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ART. VII.—*Diario del Viaje á Moscovia del Embajador Duque de Liria y Xérica* (1727-1730). Published in 'Colección de Documentos Ineditos para la Historia de España,' Vol. XCIII. Madrid, 1889.

JAMES FRANCIS FITZJAMES STUART, Duke of Liria and Xérica, Earl of Tynemouth and Baron of Bosworth, is a personage not without interest to Englishmen. His father was the Duke of Berwick, natural son of James II., and his mother was Honora, Dowager Countess of Lucan. He was born at St. Germain in October 1696, and James and his Queen were his sponsors. So certain was Berwick of his own restoration to England that, on being created Duke and Peer of France, he excluded his eldest son from the succession, as being destined to inherit his English possessions. When these hopes waned, Berwick relinquished to his heir the Duchies of Liria and Xérica, once the appanage of the Infants of Aragon; and the young Duke struck yet deeper root in Spain by his marriage with the sister and heiress of the wealthy Duke of Veragua. He was, moreover, endeared to Spaniards and to the new Bourbon dynasty by his gallant conduct in the War of Succession; and for his services at Barcelona the Golden Fleece was placed round his neck by Philip's own hands. Naturally devoted to the Stuart cause, the Duke of Liria followed the Pretender to Scotland in 1715; and after hairbreadth escapes from shipwreck and dragoons, he made good his retreat to France. When Alberoni ran his tilt against the Powers of Europe in 1718, the Duke threw in his lot with Spain, though his father commanded the French invading force. Yet he had never bowed the knee to Alberoni; and since the peace he had lived the uneventful life of a courtier as Gentleman of the Chamber. The magnificent Duke of Arco, and the satirical Marquis of Santa Cruz, with our sprightly Duke of Liria, formed a trio of inseparable friends, who gave to the monotonous domesticity of Philip and Elisabeth what little life the Court of Spain possessed. It was under these circumstances that the Duke formed a close friendship with St. Simon, who visited Spain as Envoy Extraordinary; and who found at Liria's palace dinners and conversation more adapted to his taste than the sweetmeats and solemnity of the indigenous *tertulia.* St. Simon composed his Memoirs in their present form in later life, but they do not substantially differ from his less formal Diaries. Their interest for the present purpose lies in the fact that it seems tolerably clear that

the Diaries formed the model for the work under review; and the existence of this work may be another obligation which posterity owes to St. Simon. The short characters, in particular, of the chief personages at the various Courts which Liria visited recall the sharp outlines of St. Simon's sketches; to which indeed they are scarcely, if at all, inferior. The French writer has another point of contact with the Spanish nobleman's Diary, for it seems certain from the following passage that he had read it:—'From his Embassy the Duke returned to Paris, where he consoled himself to the best of his ability for the *ennui* of Spain, and where we met each other again with great pleasure. He even wished to give me some very curious pieces of his composition upon the Court and Government of Russia.'[1] It was these lines that led us to welcome the publication of this Diary, and to believe that it contained more interesting matter than the average of unpublished documents.

St. Simon was professedly a panegyrist of his friend. He describes him as being intelligent, honourable, and reasonably ambitious. His conversation was very gay, and also instructive when he was made to talk about what he had seen in different countries, and seen extremely well. A thorough courtier, he could unbend without sacrifice to dignity. So peculiar was his talent for languages, that he could speak Latin, French, Spanish, Italian, English, Scotch, Irish, German, and Russian like a native. Passionately devoted to pleasure, he was made for a free, varied, and agreeable social circle, which he did not find in Spain.

English Ministers formed a less flattering estimate of the Duke. Scattered references to him are to be found in the despatches of Colonel Stanhope and Benjamin Keene, and they are rarely complimentary. This was partly due to Hanoverian prejudice, for his palace was the asylum for all Jacobite refugees and adventurers who starved or fattened on Spanish bounty and credulity. Yet it is noticeable that the same criticisms are not applied to the party leader, the Duke of Ormond. Liria's intimacy with the Duke of Wharton was perhaps hardly creditable. 'The formidable hero over his bottle,' as this adventurer was termed by Holzendorf,[2] was, wrote Stanhope, hardly ever sober, and never had a pipe out of his mouth.[3] Keene was not unduly moderate, for the Abbé Montgon,

[1] 'Mém. de St. Simon,' ed. Chéruel, xviii. 23.

[2] Holzendorf to Delafaye, April 29, 1726. Record Office: Spain, 179.

[3] The Bavarian had promised to obtain for Stanhope a detailed plan by Liria for the invasion of Scotland, but for ten whole days he was unable to procure it, because the Duke was incessantly drinking with Wharton. (Stanhope to Newcastle, May 6, 1726. Ibid.)

who accompanied him to Gibraltar, was lost in admiration at the geniality of this shrewd diplomatist in drinking level with the officers of the garrison. Yet Keene also spoke contemptuously of Liria as the leader of the young Jacks who in their cups restored the Pretender. Even after the close of the events recorded in his Diary, when Liria, with a considerable diplomatic reputation, was sent to Vienna to forward an Anglo-Imperial alliance, he is described by Keene as 'but a vain weak creature, full of projects and suspicions, and consequently difficult to treat with.'[4] Readers of the Diary will probably convince themselves that there is some truth in Keene's sharp criticisms, as well as in St. Simon's panegyric.

Early in 1725 the diplomatic conscience of Europe was shocked by the announcement of the unnatural alliance between the two irreconcilable rivals of the War of Succession. Ripperda, who, if not the author, had been at least the agent of this combination, fell a victim to the fire which he had kindled; but his fall only added fuel to the flames. In the autumn of 1726 over against the allies of Vienna stood the alliance of Hanover, composing France and England, to whom the States accorded grudging, and the King of Prussia untrustworthy, support. In September, when its prospects seemed peculiarly gloomy, the Court of Madrid was cheered by the news that the Emperor had formed a close alliance with the Czarina, the widow of Peter the Great. Stanhope gives a graphic picture of the excitement which this announcement caused.[5] The Czarina's fleet was believed to be at sea, and the war in the North begun; nothing was thought more certain than that the English Baltic squadron had been destroyed, the King of Prussia frightened from the alliance, while King George would in a few months lose his German Electorate, and the Pretender be seated on the throne of England. The Duke of Liria publicly announced that it would shortly be a crime in Spain to mention George as King; he and his friends at a royal concert played the old Jacobite tune, 'The King shall enjoy his own again;' and on an explanation of its meaning, the Queen replied, 'I wish Stanhope would come here that we might welcome him with this tune.' It was publicly stated in King George's Speech to Parliament, and has been taken for granted since, that the Pretender's restoration was one of the very secret articles which supplemented the Treaty of Vienna.[6] This was not the case, but it was unquestionably included in the somewhat

[4] Keene to Delafaye, April 13, 1731. Record Office: Spain, 196.

[5] Oct. 4, 1726. Record Office: Spain, 179.

[6] These very curious articles—of which Von Arneth failed to discover the Imperial copy—exist in the Archives of Alcalá de Henares:—Estado: Legajo, 3369, N^{o}. 31.

visionary programme of the Spanish Court, and Alberoni's idea of throwing a Russian force upon the eastern coasts of Britain was revived. For this purpose it was essential to form a direct alliance with the Muscovite Court. Liria's personal friendship with his King and Queen, his Jacobite enthusiasm, his high rank and great social qualities, marked him out to be, as was believed, the first Spanish Ambassador to the Court of Russia. In December 1726, his instructions, which are printed in an Appendix to the Diary, were presented to him. They provided for the formation of an alliance similar to that already existing between the Czarina and the Emperor, with such alterations as the different circumstances demanded, especial precautions being taken to throw cold water upon demands for extensive commercial privileges. The main object was the execution of a diversion upon England by the mobilisation of a fleet, under some plausible pretext, at Archangel or elsewhere. Even a small number of troops would enable the Pretender's numerous partisans and the discontented classes to declare themselves, and great results would follow in favour of the Church, and the peace of Europe. Besides official instructions, the Minister received others of a less formal and a somewhat miscellaneous character. He was ordered to hasten the march of the thirty thousand auxiliaries which the Czarina had promised to the Emperor, to amuse the Russian Court by a proposal for a marriage between the Princess Natalia and Don Carlos, who was seriously, however, intended for the Archduchess Maria Theresa, and *en route* to effect a reconciliation between the Pretender and his wife, whom his bad conduct had driven from her home. After visiting the Pretender at Bologna, he was instructed to enter into confidential communications with the Court of Vienna, and thence to repair to those of Dresden and Berlin.

Thus the Duke's journey across Europe was a substantial part of his mission; and to this journey nearly a third part of his Diary is devoted. Few persons probably could have described such close relations, in the course of three years, with the old and the young Pretender, the Emperor Charles and Prince Eugene, Augustus the Strong and his successor, Frederick William of Prussia and the great Frederick, Maurice of Saxony, who was to become celebrated as Marshal Saxe, the Czar Peter II., the Czarina Anna, and the future Czarina Elisabeth, in addition to all the important Ministers of the Empire, Saxony, Prussia, and Russia.

The Duke left Madrid on March 10, 1727, his only companions for a great part of his journey being his valet and attaché, for whom he formed a singular attachment. This latter was no less than an Irish Captain of Dragoons, one Don Ricardo Wall, of whom history had much to say hereafter. The Diary illustrates the dangers of the Mediterranean coasts of France from African pirates, the grim horrors of the Riviera route, relieved only by San Remo with its groves of lemon and orange, stone-pine and palm. The Republic

of Genoa is seen in session, and its ballot-box with silvered and gilded sides is described. Due appreciation is bestowed upon the Certosa, and the Duke's 'Venice in a day' is worthy of another century and another continent. The splendour of the Archbishop of Salzburg; the squalor of Mittau, capital of Courland; the amber-producing shores of the Baltic; the spotlessness of Dantzic door-steps; the filth of East European inns, and the misery of eighteenth-century travel, all find their place in the Spanish envoy's Diary. But in these pages the more important incidents of his mission can alone receive attention. At Genoa the Duke of Liria had received the Order of the Garter at the hands of the Earl of Inverness, who informed him that, finding himself to be the main obstacle to the reconciliation of his King and Queen, he had absented himself from the Court. At Bologna the traveller was warmly welcomed by James himself, and repaid his hospitality by re-establishing a *modus vivendi* between the separated pair. His letter to the Queen, who had hitherto declined to discuss the subject, induced her to relent, and to return to her husband's home. This was probably the most successful moment in the Duke's mission. It is amusing to read the principles enunciated by Elisabeth Farnese, the termagant of Spain, who was believed to rule her husband with absolute authority. 'The Catholic Queen has ordered me to tell your Majesty in her name that it is time to close so unpleasant a dispute, and that, even if a husband gives his wife some reason for displeasure, it is prudent on her part to disguise her feelings, and to attempt to restore him to his better self by a gentle and blind resignation to his will.' Even in the eighteenth century domestic scandals affected political prospects, for the Queen added that this continued separation was injuring the Stuart cause, not only in England, but at the Courts from which the most support could be expected. The sympathetic Liria was loath to bid farewell to the Pretender, with whom he had been brought up, and whom he tenderly loved; and he never tired of looking at his children. The Prince of Wales was a beautiful boy of six and a half, agile, graceful, and intelligent; he could read perfectly, could speak English, French, and Italian fluently, and knew his Catechism as well as his tutor.

Not only did he ride and shoot, but was so skilful with his cross-bow, that he killed sparrows on the housetops; and if a ball were thrown on the ground, he would pierce it running without missing once in ten times. His brother, then two years old, was pretty, and remarkably strong.

At Vienna, the personality in whom the Spanish envoy was mainly interested was Prince Eugene, whom he enthusiastically regarded as a hero of the first order, possessing all gifts, moral, physical, and intellectual. The Empress was the most dignified and agreeable Princess that he had seen, except perhaps her predecessor; but his Bourbon prejudices led him perhaps to touch lightly upon the quondam Archduke Charles. He speaks

sympathetically of the Spanish refugees who had crowded to Vienna, laden with honours and possessions by the Emperor, but absolutely excluded from German society, and in danger of being stoned or starved upon the Emperor's death. During the Duke's visit the ambassadors of Spain, France, and Holland were busily discussing the preliminaries of peace, and on June 9 the fact of the signature was published. A few days previously the news reached Vienna that the Czarina Catherine had died, leaving the succession to her husband's grandson Peter, a boy of eleven years old. A Regency was appointed until he should be sixteen, and the change of government was effected with unexpected calm; the First Minister, Menshikoff, assuring the Imperial Government that the foreign policy of his Court would remain unaltered. An equally important announcement was that of the death of George I., which, had it been earlier, would possibly have prevented the signature of the preliminaries, and which undoubtedly long delayed their ratification at Madrid. The Duke of Liria conveyed the news in a postscript to his letter of June 30. He felt that, as George had to die so soon, he might as well have gone to the other world a month earlier; the English, instead of dictating the law to Spain, would then have had to come a-begging for conditions. Knowing the character of the Prince of Wales, he believed that in six months' time there would be a general revolution, if not before; and that if Walpole had an ounce of spirit and resolution, he would try and restore King James, which he had the power to do. Otherwise he was a lost man, and the new King would cut his head off. 'Time will tell,' he concludes, 'whether I am a good prophet or not.' The Duke was not a prophet; but this confidential opinion from a leading Jacobite illustrates the current views respecting the fidelity of Walpole to the Hanoverian cause.

Liria lingered at Vienna in the hope that the changed circumstances might render his mission to Russia unnecessary. At length, however, on July 8 he took his leave with greater regret than when he left Paris, his fatherland, for the first time.

His reception at Dresden must have consoled the Duke for the extreme discomfort of his journey. The Minister, Count Flemming, suspected indeed that he was commissioned to discuss the thorny questions of succession and religion, hut was assured that his only mission was to renew a friendship too long interrupted, and at most to persuade the King of Poland to accede to the alliance of Vienna. Social life at Dresden was far too busy for politics. All day long the ambassador shot with the King, and dinner at the royal table at Pilnitz was followed by concerts and French plays. The Queen's very recent death did not interrupt the Michaelmas festivities.

'On the 28th there was another play, and then we dined in a room with four small tables, and lots were drawn to distribute the guests among them. After dinner I led off the ball with the King's

favourite natural daughter, and we danced till 5 A.M. The whole time that the ball lasted everybody did nothing but drink, so that we were all cheerful, for his Majesty set the example, and at 1 A.M. there was a second supper. After the ball I went straight off stag-hunting, and, having killed five, returned home to mass, for it was Michaelmas-day. In the evening there was another play, and a ball at night. This day also people drank quite as much as was good for them, so that the liveliness lasted two days.'

Notwithstanding the dancing and drinking and hunting, with interludes of mass, the Ambassador did not fail to take notes upon the Saxon government, and regarded its form as being that of most well-governed countries; consisting, as it did, of a Cabinet of five Ministers and two secretaries. The real monarch was Count Flemming, who was abhorred both by King and heir; but they could not shake off his yoke, because he had become indispensable. A Pomeranian, and therefore no vassal of the King, he is another striking example of the absolute cosmopolitanism in governmental and military circles in the eighteenth century. The little fat man, with his handsome face, had made a great stir in the world, yet was not the great man he was thought. Craving in vain to meddle in all the affairs of Europe, he was reduced to domineering over his own Court in the pettiest details, saying all the time that he was tired, and did not wish to interfere. A Lutheran by profession, he would turn Turk or Catholic to suit his ends. Eminently mediocre, he believed himself to be perfection, in flirting, in riding, in music, as in politics and war. He had saved vast sums of money and had married a Polish princess, in the hope of succeeding his master, and was constantly striving to lead the King of Prussia to his views. The celebrated Elector King, Augustus the Strong, with his bright eyes and *distingué* though not handsome features, had been the strongest man in Europe, and still excelled in all physical exercises, as in all accomplishments. Nobody understood better than he the interests of foreign Powers and the political condition of Europe. His courtesy and kindness were unequalled, and he was liberal to excess; yet, notwithstanding the vast sums which he was squandering, his revenue was free from debt. Liria, however, does not conceal the shady side.

'In the midst of these great qualities he has some incurable defects; though he works hard, he detests application to business, and this makes him lean upon his ministers. His affection for the feminine sex is notorious, for he has an infinite number of natural children; he has been a little too fond of wine, and has committed countless excesses in the company of Bacchus, as in that of Venus. In the first respect he is already somewhat reformed, and his years are bringing moderation in the second. Nevertheless, he is the most lovable monarch in Europe, and carries away the hearts of all who know him.'

The Prince was a striking contrast to his father. He was tall and handsome, but very fat. He loathed wine, was unswervingly

faithful to his wife, and was a zealous and self-sacrificing Catholic. Notwithstanding a tender affection for his father, he lived in retirement, for fear of exciting the jealousy which Flemming was only too anxious to foster. A war of religion in Germany seemed at this moment to be among immediate possibilities. Flemming and the Saxons feared that, once on the throne, the Prince would cease to employ Lutherans, and gradually force his subjects into Catholicism. The Minister was suspected of laying the train of a revolution which should place the zealous Lutheran line of Gotha on the electoral throne, and to this were attributed his frequent visits to the King of Prussia. The Duke of Liria, however, believed that such a Protestant combination had no prospect of success against the Emperor, supported by the Catholic electors. Notwithstanding the rise of the Hohenzollerns, Protestantism had, to all appearances, been greatly on the wane.

During the Duke's Dresden visit two events occurred in Russia which were likely to have unfortunate results for the Spanish mission. The Imperial Ambassador Rabutin died, and it was with him alone that the Spanish envoy was to work in closest harmony, and from him alone he could obtain the necessary lights. Equally serious was the sudden disgrace of Menshikoff, who was ruling Russia with absolute authority, and had hoped to perpetuate his influence by the marriage of the young Czar with his daughter. It was during Liria's residence in Russia that injudicious friends caused the great Minister's final fall. Banished to the Isle of Berosova on the White Sea, he died, working with his own hands for sustenance—a terrible example to Russian royal favourites.

The Court of Berlin differed widely from that of Dresden. Here there was no Cabinet, no all-powerful Minister. The King administered the whole Monarchy himself. Every day the despatches were sent to him under seal, and he returned the result of his resolutions on paper to the Ministers. He had, indeed, a Privy Council, but no use was made of it. The tribunals and departments forwarded a daily report of their proceedings to the King. Frequently as Frederick William has been described, the Duke of Liria's impressions may be worth recording. The King was of middle height and fairly fat, with a bright complexion, though much tanned, for every day he spent hours in hunting. He always wore his blue uniform with waistcoat and breeches, and never took his boots off. He liked to dine in company; but his table was very poor, which was not surprising in the stingiest prince in Europe. He would trust no one with money, and was his own treasurer and paymaster. Not gifted with much intelligence, he did not lack a cunning comprehension of his interests, which made him the most unreliable of allies; for if it were to his own advantage he would change sides on the instant. His rule was most disastrous for his kingdom, which, if he lived ten years more, would be entirely ruined. The beautiful town of Berlin, with all its facilities for

navigation, had completely lost all its trade since, his accession, notwithstanding the presence of the French refugees, whose workmanship was as perfect as in Paris. All money that came into the country went to the Treasury and never left it; thus the sources of trade and wealth were inevitably dried up. Yet the King had his merits; he was frank, and liked others to be so; he disliked nothing so much as hints and mysteries; he hated women, and had no inclination for drink, though a great smoker. His Calvinistic zeal amounted to hypocrisy; yet full liberty of conscience was accorded, and favour was even shown to Catholics, not from any affection which he bore them, but from love for his Grenadiers, for he cared for nothing else; and as there were 600 Catholics in. the regiment, he favoured Catholicism to keep these men contented. On the subject of Grenadiers he was a spendthrift, and would give all the money in his Treasury to keep or recruit a tall man. Liria naturally visited Potsdam to inspect the celebrated regiment, and was entertained at dinner by the officers. The first battalion contained no man under six feet two, while the tallest, Jonas, a Norwegian, measured seven feet. With such a regiment the King naturally thought himself a great warrior, and indispensable to Europe, though his personal courage was open to doubt. The Guards numbered 2500 men, and the army 70,000 of the best quality that the Duke had ever seen, while the train of artillery and military stores were unsurpassed. The whole character of the State was completely military; no official could appear before the King except in uniform. The general impression left is that of Prussia of to-day, minus its professors.

At Berlin, as at Dresden, the Duke of Liria was made welcome. He hunted with the King at Wusterhausen; he begged the life of an Irish Grenadier; and the King's dinner of four courses was increased to six—a most unusual distinction. Yet it is clear that he looked forward to the future *régime*, and paid his court to the Prince, with whom he promised to correspond from St. Petersburg, as in fact he did. Frederick he regarded as a prince of great promise. Completely the reverse of his father, he was liberal, courteous, and yet reserved. He was fond of music and books, though he was obliged to read on the sly, for his father would have him as ignorant as himself. The people loved the Prince as much as they detested the King, and the very Princes of the Blood spoke equally ill of the King and well of his heir in the most barefaced manner.

From Berlin the Spanish Minister travelled by way of Dantzic, Königsberg, and Mittau to Riga, and thence to St. Petersburg. At Dantzic he stayed to buy his furs, and was deeply interested in the great Hanse town, now under Polish Protectorate. He dwells on its civil and military constitution, its peculiar relation to the Polish Crown, its brisk commerce, the exquisite cleanliness of its inhabitants, and, notwithstanding its Lutheran establishment, its

toleration of Jews, Anabaptists, and the numerous Catholic religious orders. By the senators he was greeted with a Latin speech and twelve pitchers of wine; but a greater pleasure was the accidental meeting with Maurice of Saxony, the Elector's natural son, who in former years had been his intimate friend at Paris. The future hero had started badly. Having been elected by the nobility of Courland as heir to the absentee and childless Duke, he had fled at the approach of General Lacy, leaving his followers and his luggage in Russian hands. For the latter he was the more concerned; for one portmanteau contained his love-letters, and a diary of the amours of his father's Court, which, if once seen, might be his ruin. The recovery of this compromising literature was one of the chief interests of the Duke of Liria during his Russian mission.

The Envoy's stay at St. Petersburg was only sufficiently long to receive his first audience, to present his somewhat miscellaneous gifts of snuff and chocolate, silk handkerchiefs, and perfumed pastilles, and to receive in return the inevitable furs. He was already pressed to assume the character of Ambassador, instead of that of Minister Plenipotentiary, and to concede to the Czar the title of Emperor. To neither of these proposals was he authorized to consent, and he was of opinion that the Imperial title should be the price for substantial advantages. After witnessing the curious ceremony of the blessing of the Neva, he followed the Court to Moscow in company with the Polish Envoy Lefort,[7] who did his best to compensate him for the irreparable loss of Rabutin. While the horses were being changed at Novogorod he visited the town, which he describes as typical of all Russian cities, large and badly built, the houses all of wood, very low, and distributed without plan. Its chief curiosity was the body of St. Anthony, which had come from Rome by water on a millstone. Being the seat of the Primacy, Novogorod was ecclesiastical in character, and contained one hundred and twenty-five convents. The Primate was a man of learning, a phenomenon among the Russian clergy; he had studied in Rome, and knew Latin and Italian.

Moscow was reached on February 11; and from the date of the Czar's formal entry on the 15th, the Plenipotentiary's mission may be said to have seriously begun. The period of his visit to Russia has its peculiar interest as lying between two eras of premature expansion. The latter of these is naturally associated with the name of Catherine, but it may be said to have set in with the appearance of a Russian *corps d'armée* on the Rhine in 1735. The reign of

[7] The Duke could hardly have found a better informant than Lefort, who is probably the best authority for this period. His despatches, though printed, are hidden away in the somewhat inaccessible 'Büsching s Magazine,' vol. ix.

Peter II. was reactionary. It seemed to prove that his grandfather was but an ill-timed individual genius, and not the representative of a progressive nation. Nobles and people hated the belauded reforms, and struggled desperately to return to comfortable barbarism. On the other hand it is already possible to trace the power, to Englishmen incredible, which an unpopular officialism can exercise over Slavonic myriads. The Czar himself, his nobles, and the mob of Moscow, did their best to hamper the administration, essentially German, which Peter the Great had bequeathed to Muscovy. Yet this bureaucracy, even in the absence of any genius of the first order, subsisted and governed, outlasted an oligarchical revolution and a monarchical *coup d'état*, and was ready to the hand of a Czarina who was to all intents and purposes a German. It is this all important dualism between East and West, between indigenous conservative and exotic progress, the everlasting action and reaction of Teuton and Slav, which gives the interest to the Duke of Liria's Diary. His mixed English, French, and Irish blood, and his Spanish associations, gave him a stand-point peculiarly external and impartial. His social gifts procured ready admittance behind the scenes, and his mingled sympathy and satire endowed him with the choicest qualifications of a critic.

Throughout the reign of Peter II. it seemed probable that Russia would turn her back upon the West. It is true that several high officials of the late *régime* still surrounded the young Czar. But Golofkin, the Chancellor, was very old, and Apraxin hated the novelties which the great reformer had introduced. He had never left Russia, was a mortal enemy to foreigners, and would sacrifice all to restore the monarchy to its ancient condition. The Court, as the Council, was divided into two parties. Around the Czar gathered all the Russians who longed to rid the country of the foreigners. His sister, however, the Grand Duchess Natalia, and his Aunt Elisabeth adhered to the principles of Peter the Great. The balance of practical ability was on their side, and their main supporter was the Vice-Chancellor Osterman. The son of a Lutheran pastor in a Westphalian village, he had been utilized by Peter as interpreter. On the Czarina's death, Menshikoff had made him guardian and grand chamberlain of the young Czar; he was now practically First Minister. He was untiring, and, though avaricious, incorrupt, desiring honestly the good of the Russian monarchy. Religion was of little or no importance to him, for he had passed through three. A master of dissimulation, he gave such a semblance of truth to statements which were directly the reverse, that the most experienced were deceived. 'In a word,' concludes the writer, 'he was a great minister; but had he been even an angel descended from heaven, the brand of foreign extraction would be enough to make him loathed by the Muscovites, who frequently did their best to ruin him, though his ability always saved him.'

The continuance of Osterman's power was doubtless facilitated by the number of foreigners who held high position not only in the Government, but in the public services. The navy was naturally almost exclusively commanded by strangers; but even in the army foreign names were numerous in the highest ranks. Field Marshal Sapieha was a Pole, and no credit to his nation, for he neither possessed a shadow of intelligence, nor the first rudiments of strategy; he was passionate, false, vindictive, and drunk every day in the week. Field Marshal Bruce, venerated even by Russians, was Scotch: and among the Generals were Lacy, an Irishman; Bohn, Weisbach, and Münnich, Germans; and the Scotchman Keith. Yet Osterman could hardly have maintained his position but for the split in the Russian party between the two great houses of Galitzin and Dolgoruki. The former seemed most extreme in its conservatism. 'What do we want new fashions for?' was old Prince Dimitri's stock question; 'as our fathers lived, so can we live too, without foreigners coming to impose new laws upon us.' Less prejudiced was Field Marshal Galitzin, the hero of Russia, the darling of the troops, feared by the grandees and by the great Czar himself, who would have been in a less barbarous land a truly great man. Hating foreigners as he did, he yet did justice to those who served with merit. This house was more hostile to Osterman's system, and he had consequently added Princes Basil and Alexis Dolgoruki to the Council of Four.

The alternative of Moscow or St. Petersburg as capital was the test question between the native and the foreign party. Peter and his widow had made the latter their residence, to be in sight of their growing marine, and to keep the Swedes in awe. The young Czar could not bear the sight of the sea nor of ships, and was passionately devoted to hunting. The Russians, who longed to return to Moscow, which was nearer to their estates, dwelt incessantly on the beauty of its climate, and the abundance of game in its neighbourhood. Throughout the reign of Peter II. the attempts to make him return to St. Petersburg and to keep him at Moscow have more than a merely personal interest; it was realized that on the issue depended the future of Russia.

The other subject of vital importance was the maintenance of the fleet. On June 19, 1728, the Duke of Liria wrote that the Grand Council had decided that Moscow should be the capital, and that he was informed as a fact of two other decisions which, if true, would completely restore the monarchy to its ancient condition: first, that no more ships were to be built, while those which existed were left to wear out; and secondly, that commerce was to be transferred to Archangel, which would imply the ruin of St. Petersburg.

The Spanish Minister regarded the great Peter's favourite creation with some contempt. The Grand Admiral, Apraxin, did

not know the first principles of navigation. The other officers were excellent, but they were all foreigners, and it seemed likely that, as they died or retired, others would not be appointed; while the natives could never learn seamanship, for their self-conceit made them think that they knew more than Ruyter, as soon as they had learnt the elements of manoeuvring. Seamen, moreover, were lamentably deficient, for the crew of a ship in commission comprised only one hundred sailors, while all the rest were landsmen. 'The Russians are like a schoolboy wearing a sword for the first time; every moment he looks at it, and turns it round, and tries to see if everybody notices that he has got a sword, and is delighted if they think that he knows how to use it.' In July 1728 the Cronstadt squadron was commissioned, to impose upon the Imperial Minister. Sails were bent to make neighbours believe that it was no mere joke; but the ships had no crews but scrubbers. Of the five captains appointed, two were English, two Dutch, and the other a Dane. Half the ships were bought in Holland; those of Russian build did not last more than seven or eight years.

In other departments the artificial order of Peter was giving place to total disorganization. 'As to the Government,' wrote Liria, 'everything is going badly; the Czar does not attend Council, nor does he think of doing so. Nobody is paid; and as nobody knows what is to be the end of the Treasury, every one goes on robbing as best he can. All the departments are at a standstill; there is an infinity of grumblers; each man does just what he fancies; nobody thinks seriously of a remedy, except Baron Osterman, who cannot apply it unaided, so that in my opinion we are daily exposed to some revolution which might redound to the irreparable ruin of the monarchy.'[8] It is no wonder that the salvation of the nation was felt to depend upon Osterman's life, and that all honest men sustained a shock on hearing that the Vice-Chancellor had been sick fifty times in a single day. They regarded him, with reason, as the monarchy's sole support.

The Czar's character caused serious apprehension. Before he was thirteen he declared himself of age. He had already had

[8] Cf. Lefort, July 1728:—'Scarce a feeble shadow of the government of the Czar's grandfather seems left. We live in a state of incomparable indolence, and of carelessness so blind that it is hard to conceive how so huge a machine can still continue to exist, when nobody puts a band to it. Nobody will assume any responsibility, nobody dares open his mouth, every one passes the ball on to his neighbour . . . The monarch by the Grace of God knows that no one dare contradict him, and people have constantly been zealous to convince him of it. Hence it is that no reasonable measure can be carried through, and everything is left to chance.'

amours, which Liria stated to be not so surprising; for notwithstanding the climate, the age of puberty was earlier in Russia than in Spain, and boys of eleven were sometimes married. No one dared to correct the Czar, while the Russians lured him on in his evil propensities. Osterman alone ventured to lecture the young monarch on his mode of life; the Czar turned his back upon his guardian, and answered not a word. Returning to the charge, the Vice-Chancellor said that a few years hence the Czar himself would cut his head off, if he now failed to point out the precipice towards which he was rushing; as he did not wish to witness his ruin, he should resign his guardianship. The impetuous but inconsequent young Slav fell on his guardian's neck, implored him not to desert him, and that very night returned to his evil courses.[9] Yet his death was dreaded, for fear lest worse should follow. 'If this monarch were to die,' concludes Liria, 'there would be a terrible revolution. I do not venture to prophesy what would happen; I will only say that Russia will relapse to its old condition, without a hope of raising herself again, at least in our days.' Of such a revolution the first result was expected to be a massacre of foreigners; even during the Duke's embassy it was feared that the mob would fire their houses on account of their unreasoning prejudice. The heir-presumptive, the Princess Elisabeth, had strong German sympathies, and the Russian party was full of projects for her marriage and removal. She was not unlikely to have suitors. Liria, who was a connoisseur, regarded her sister, the Duchess of Holstein, as probably the most beautiful princess in Europe. On her early death Elisabeth had strong claims to the vacancy. The Duke had rarely seen a more beautiful woman in his life. Her marvellous complexion, her roguish eyes, her perfect mouth, were set off by a beautiful throat and matchless figure. She was tall and extraordinarily lively, danced well, rode fearlessly, and was full of fun. On the other hand she was false, avaricious, and susceptible to a superlative degree. No wonder that the amorous Infant of Portugal loved her at first sight, and that she had to retire from Court to avoid his parting importunities. The scion of the Stuarts was at once amused and shocked at her being suggested as a substitute for the wife with whom the head of his house was believed to be at ill accord. A cadet of the house of Brunswick was rejected as inadequate, but it was thought that she might import an agreeably sparkling element into the Bayreuth branch of Hohenzollern. Yet she was not a desirable wife. While yet a girl her passions led her into the excesses which disgraced her as Czarina. Her fancies ranged from Prince Butlerlin to Grenadiers of

[9] The Czar's favourite pastime was, according to Lefort, to dash through the streets at night in his sleigh. He dwells on the rapid deterioration of his character, adding that he resembled his grandfather in all but his good qualities. (Nov. 22, 1727.)

the Guard. Her most serious suitor was undoubtedly the Czar, her nephew. He was for long completely under her spell. If later he showed publicly his displeasure, it was perhaps rather due to pique than cooling of affection. After his engagement to Princess Dolgoruki, he still visited her in private, and aunt and nephew wept bitter tears over their enforced separation. But contiguity was a fatal bar to their not unnatural affection; and had the Greek Church been as lax on the subject of royal avuncular marriages as the Latin, the fortunes of the house of Romanoff might have been somewhat different. The gross excesses of the later Czarina cannot altogether deprive the brilliant and unfortunate girl of sympathy. Amid the lust, the drunkenness, the falsity, the barbaric extravagance of Russian life, there was one pure pathetic personality on which the Duke of Liria loved to dwell. The Spanish, French, and English elements in his character all found some sympathy with the Czar's sister, the Grand Duchess Natalia. The pupil of St. Simon hits as hard as his master, but he redeems his scientific savagery by a tenderer touch. It was a mere accident that he was instructed to amuse the Muscovite Court by asking the hand of Natalia for Don Carlos, whom his mother destined for Maria Theresa, and none other. His feeling for the young girl is obviously personal, and not diplomatic. In this simple character the mock-heroics, the sham sentimentalism of Slavonic life and literature are entirely absent. She is described as adorned with all the gifts that imagination could bestow. She was no brilliant beauty, for her face was ugly, though her figure good. Lovable, generous, thoughtful, all graciousness and goodness, she attracted every one that knew her. She spoke French and German to perfection, was fond of reading, and a patroness of foreigners. 'All these qualities made one wish that she might live long; but God would not allow it, and He took her to Himself after a lingering illness, on November 3, 1728, at the age of fourteen and a half, bewailed by Russians and foreigners, by small and great.' These are no mere courtly phrases. A man who in ill-health and bad humour praises an ugly woman, may be believed. Post-mortem characters are justly regarded with suspicion, but the passage in the Diary, dated May 18, 1728, attracts sympathy not only to the ill-fated Russian girl, but to Keene's 'Young Jack,' who caroused with the Duke of Wharton, and to the diplomat whose headpiece was criticised by Prince Eugene as 'being a little English.'[10]

'The health of the Princess was not good, and the doctors believed that she had inflammation of the lungs, and treated her as a person whose chest was affected. But her real malady was not consumption, and the only doctor who could cure her was her brother. To understand this, we must go some way back. When the Czar succeeded to the throne he had such complete confidence in his sister, that he did whatever she told him,

[10] 'Il a la tête un peu Angloise et parle assez librement.' (Von Arneth, 'Prinz Eugen,' iii. 576.)

and could not be a minute without her. . . . Little by little he fell in love with his Aunt Elisabeth; and the Czar's favourite, and other courtiers who disliked the Grand Duchess, owing to her affection for Osterman and all foreigners, tried to increase the influence of Elisabeth, who could not bear her niece. Consequently she gradually alienated the Czar from his sister, so that in six months' time he never talked to her on business, and their confidences entirely ceased. The Grand Duchess, who had the best heart that I have ever known, deeply felt her brother's estrangement, and her unhappiness was increased by the constant slights which he inflicted upon her, publicly showing preference for his aunt, who in turn triumphed in her victory, affecting to make no count of the Grand Duchess. This was the real cause of her ill-health, for heartache had such an effect upon her as to cause a slow fever, which was within an ace of carrying her to the grave. However, her strong constitution and tender age saved her.'

The Czar's sister was not spared for long. On the night of December 2 she slept for two hours, but in the morning was seized with a violent access of fever. In the evening it abated, and at 10.15 she knelt down to pray. Her prayers finished, she returned to bed, but at that moment was convulsed, and died in less than two minutes.[11] She was not pretty, but what matters the beauty of the face when the heart is perfect? She was the idol of honest men, the pearl of Russia, and, in a word, too perfect for God to leave her in the midst of barbarians who do not know what true and solid virtue is.' It was a Russian custom to kiss the hand of deceased royal persons, as though they were alive, and it was with the greatest tenderness that the Duke kissed his young friend's hand. Her brother was away hunting when she died, but her bier was opened, that he might kiss the corpse.[12] It seems strange that in so matrimonial an atmosphere this charming Princess died without having had a serious suitor, but, as the Spanish Envoy remarks, few Princes would care to send to Moscow to find a wife.

Meanwhile reaction was observed in all departments. Peter the Great's victims were rehabilitated. Among these was his first wife, whose estrangement and imprisonment had been due partly to her dislike of foreigners, partly to the discovery of her amours. Even in prison she had found a lover, who suffered the not uncommon penalty of impalement for his offence. Her restoration to the palace was expected to give fresh impetus to the reaction. Religious intolerance was on the rise. Eighteen natives of Smolensk who had become Catholics were forced to revert, and one more obstinate than his fellows was condemned to death. He finally yielded, and

[11] Lefort states that when Natalia's death seemed imminent, five couriers were sent, one after another, to fetch the Czar, who disregarded the summons. At the moment of death her only attendant was a Finnish maid, who stole her jewels.

the whole party were despatched to Siberia until they should give proofs of their detestation of Catholicism. Yet complete tolerance was still extended to foreigners, and Lord Marshal's brother, James Keith, whose Protestantism disqualified him for a Colonel's commission in Spain, was at Liria's request made a General in the Russian service.

Eastern affairs naturally excited interest at the Russian Court, and much enthusiasm was caused by the return of Count Sava Jaguzhinski from China. He had, beyond all hope, re-established relations long broken, and had secured an advantageous commercial treaty; overcoming the national cleverness and distrust of the Chinese. In November 1729 the news that the Emperor of China had resolved to despatch a formal embassy caused the highest satisfaction. There was no precedent for such a mission to any European Power, and it was thought glorious for Russia that the first should come to its sovereign. In Persia, also, Russia derived great advantages from a treaty with the usurper Esref. The acquisitions of the recent war were recognized, and although the merely nominal possession of the provinces of Astarabat and Mazandaran was abandoned, it was stipulated that they should be alienated to no other Power, a precaution against the Turkish ambition to obtain a foothold on the Caspian shores. Above all, Russia obtained full rights of commerce throughout Persia, and her caravans had for the first time access to India and Bokhara.

Negociations with the Porte related to Turkish aggression towards the Caspian, and to Russian intrigues in Georgia and Circassia. Yet the Sultan declined, in consideration of his ancient friendship with the Czar, to accept the request of the Prince of Daghestan to place himself under his Protectorate, on the plea of common religion. The Czar, while the friendliness of this refusal, could not refrain from saying that uniformity of religion gives no right to appropriate that which is not one's own; that as in Russia there were many vassals who professed the Mohammedan creed, so in the dominions of the Porte there were many who held the same religion as the Russians; and that, in conclusion, it was not uniformity of religion, but treaties established and confirmed which formed the guarantee of a nation's possessions, and the limitation of its boundaries. The principle involved in this reply is noticeable when viewed in the light of subsequent Russian diplomacy.

Eastern complications were only a subject of intelligent interest to the Spanish Minister. The fortunes of his embassy were decided in the West. Even before his arrival in Russia his mission had become well-nigh without an object. He attempted to employ himself by countermining against the subterranean approaches of England, acting at first for the Court of Vienna as well as for his own, for the alliance of Vienna still retained apparently its

solidarity in the face of the league of Hanover. But in the summer of 1728 rumours reached Moscow that the Court of Madrid had been seduced by the engagement of France and England to convey Don Carlos to Italy with a Spanish force, and that the inevitable result was a breach with the Emperor, who believed his possession of Sicily to be endangered. The Duke officially assured the Russian Ministry that nothing could change the complete harmony which reigned between his Court and that of Vienna; but he could not deceive himself. He had constant information that distrust was daily increasing; that Count Königsegg had only for the moment prevented Elisabeth Farnese from throwing herself into the arms of the allies of Hanover; but that the Imperial Alliance could not last, for the Emperor would never of his own free will consent to the transport of Spanish troops to Italy.

At the close of the year arrived the news of the Treaty of Seville. The English and French agents now entered into friendly relations with Liria, while Osterman and the new Imperial envoy Wratislaw treated him with increasing reserve. With the latter he had never had real sympathy. A worse Minister than Wratislaw could hardly have been selected, and it was suspected that Rabutin's friends had sent him to Russia to immortalise the late Minister's memory. The Russians expected ambassadors to be courteous, well-bred, and sumptuous. Count Wratislaw belonged to an old Bohemian family, but he showed his coarseness even in ladies' society. He boasted of his extravagance, but his avarice was transparent; false to the core, he dilated on the excellence of his heart. Talking incessantly, *he* would not listen to others, even when he let them speak. He plumed himself upon his gambling, but his dirty tricks were discovered the second time that he touched the cards. His intelligence was as scanty as his conceit was illimitable; and such was his credulity, that he believed anything to another's prejudice. 'He was,' concludes his critic, 'more fit to be an old woman, and send children to sleep with his old wives' tales, than to be a Minister.'

Henceforth the Duke of Liria's efforts were directed to counteracting the policy of Osterman and Wratislaw. Sent to Russia to hasten the march of her auxiliaries, he stayed to retard their departure. In his heart he had always believed that a Russian alliance would be rather a burden than a boon. At the most he had fancied that an advantageous treaty of commerce might be framed, with a view of eliminating the English, Dutch and Hamburg middleman, and buying at first hand. Russia supplied Spain with masts, sails, tackle, hemp, suet, and pitch. Siberian iron was the best and cheapest in Europe; while oil of hemp and linseed, flax, tow, pigskins, dried and salted fish would find a ready market in Spain, which could buy her imports with her wines, brandies, and fruits. If three or four light frigates were sent each year to Archangel, the Crown would make the full profit, and also provide

a training school for sailors, for one voyage to Archangel was worth four to the Indies. The export duties were two and a half per cent. higher than at St. Petersburg; but freightage, lading, and insurance were cheaper, the duties of the Sound were saved, and the North Sea was less dangerous than the Baltic. Another alternative was to commit the Russian trade to the new Caraccas Company and the Biscay whaling fleet. To students of prices the elaborate schedule which accompanied the report, giving the prime cost, duties, package and freightage of numerous articles, is of considerable interest. Among the more fancy wares are caviare at three and a quarter roubles the cask of 40 lbs. Russian, and black bearskins at four roubles the skin.

National prejudices or mere brutishness added to the diplomatic difficulties of the Duke of Liria. His gentlemen were well-nigh beaten to death by an officer of Guards, his attendants and the mob. Another guardsman, coming uninvited to a banquet in the Pretender's honour, drank himself mad, hit the sentinel with drawn sword, and insisted on fighting his host. Nothing could reconcile the Spanish Envoy to the incurable melancholy of Russian life. He began his Diary for 1729 with an ardent wish for speedy recall from a land where he found neither friendship nor amusement, and where he was losing the little health and patience which remained to him. He deeply felt the enforced departure of Captain Wall, who fell into such an extreme melancholy that he could not leave his room. 'He talked with so much pathos that I could not resist his desire to return to our own Spain. But I have felt few things so deeply, for I placed all my confidence in Wall, and unbosomed myself to him in all my disagreeables, which were many; and when he left, I had to stay without any one in whom I could repose real trust.' On the score of health, an interesting passage refers to the scourge of influenza in April 1729. In every house more than two-thirds of the inmates were ill, and the doctors began to fear some contagious epidemic. The Czar, however, ordered a post-mortem examination of all who died suddenly, and a diagnosis of the current complaints, and it was found that they possessed no malignant character. It seems probable that the Czar himself was a sufferer, for he had a feverish chill with a cough; but he stayed in bed three days, and, after twice perspiring freely, was well again. It may be worth noting that in the following winter the epidemic spread to the western extremities of Europe. The Abbé Montgon describes it as keeping the Spanish royal family indoors for four days, while Villars wrote of it as being universal round Paris, and as killing some eight hundred persons per week in London.

If Russia were not amusing, it was not for lack of entertainments. These were unusually magnificent, owing to the fashion of inviting the Czar to the more important parties. Liria was notorious in Spain for the excellence of his dinners, and the brilliancy of his entertainments. His first essay in Russia was

confessedly the finest feast that had yet been seen. Though the Minister's house was one of the largest in Moscow, two spacious rooms were built in the courtyard, plates of which are given in the Diary. On four buffets, ten feet wide, the choicest Chinese porcelain contained exquisite sweets and fruits, the huge Portuguese oranges evoking especial admiration. The ten varieties of iced drinks comprised chocolate, melon, strawberry and cherry syrups; but the guests did not confine themselves to these, for the evening's consumption included 310 bottles of Tokay, 250 of champagne, 170 of Burgundy, 220 of Rhenish wines, 160 of Moselle, 12 barrels of French wine, 2 of brandy, and 12 of beer. The Czar arrived at 7 P.M. and opened the ball by a minuet with his sister. Dinner was served on a horseshoe table in the second hall. The *diner à la Russe* does not seem to have been yet in vogue, for the hot and cold meats were on the table, though down the middle ran a long line of oranges.

At midnight a second supper was served, consisting exclusively of fish, for the fast of St. Peter then began, and Russians were rigid in respect of fasts. Dancing lasted until 3 A.M., and the Czar expressed himself well satisfied, as well he might be. After the ball the guests inspected the Minister's illuminations. St. Simon states that the Spaniards surpassed all other nations in this art, and the host's detailed description on this occasion proves an elaboration unknown in these degenerate days. The cost of the banquet amounted to two thousand doubloons. A later entertainment was marred by the news of the wreck of a ship which was to replenish the Duke's cellars, a loss which be keenly felt in a country where much wine was drunk, and not a drop that was good was to be bought.

Meanwhile the absorbing topic of conversation was the announcement of the Czar's engagement. Since his arrival at Moscow the Dolgoruki influence had become supreme and sole. Every morning after his toilet Peter was carried off by Prince Alexis to a country house, a league from Moscow. The professed object was to remove him from the fascinations of his aunt, but the real desire was to defer a return to St. Petersburg, to prevent the Czar from applying himself to government, to press upon him the re-introduction of the old system, and finally to marry him to one of the Prince's daughters. Alexis even availed himself of his own son's neglect of duty to undermine the favourite's influence with Peter. 'Some may think this strange,' the Duke writes, 'but it must be realized that in Russia there is no such thing as obligation to any one; each man seeks his own end, and to attain it will sacrifice father, mother, relations, and friends.'

Patriots regarded the monopoly of Prince Alexis with extreme disfavour. While the Czar amused himself the livelong day with childish games, the disorder of the Government was complete. The

people of Moscow respected no authority, and vented its spite upon the foreigners. The deserted Princess Elisabeth consoled herself with gallantries, which had become a public scandal. The climax of the Czar's fate was felt to be approaching when the Princess Dolgoruki and her two daughters accompanied him to the hunt. On November 30, Peter formally announced his engagement, and on December 11 the betrothal was celebrated. The function took place in a ball of the Palace. The Czar's betrothed sat on the Epistle side of the altar in an arm-chair, with her relations behind her. On her left were the Princesses of the Blood on low stools; on her right the widowed Czarina in an arm-chair. On the Gospel side sat the Czar, with the Foreign Ministers on his right, and the native magnates on his left. In front of the altar was a gorgeous *baldacchino* held up by six Field Marshals. Beneath this the Archbishop of Novogorod exchanged the rings of the affianced couple, according to the Greek rite. Every one kissed the hands of the Czar and the Princess, and all the artillery of Moscow burst into a *feu de joie.* Yet, notwithstanding the fireworks and the dancing, the festivities were dreary. The *fiancée* was tired, and her withdrawal stopped the ball. 'There was no supper,' plaintively adds the Diarist, 'though divers tables were provided with all that was necessary for those who wanted supper.'

It was of ill-omened significance that during the ceremony the ordinary guard of 150 men was increased to 1200, and that as the Czar entered the hall the Grenadiers, commanded by his favourite, surrounded the guests, and held the doors. Muskets were loaded; and if the function were disturbed, for which in Russian history there were several precedents, they had orders to fire. These arrangements were made by Alexis Dolgoruki without the knowledge of his uncle the Field Marshal, who frankly expressed surprise on the entrance of the Grenadiers. He had indeed strongly opposed the marriage, from which he foresaw the ruin of his house.

The Czar's betrothal was but the prelude to his death. Rarely has there been more rigid adherence to the established sequence of Court doctors' bulletins. 'The King is ill.' 'The King is better.' 'The King is dead.' On January 18 the Czar was feverish, and stayed indoors; three days later virulent smallpox declared itself; on the third day copious perspiration allayed the fever; by the 28th he was out of danger, and at 1. 25 A.M., on the 30th, he was dead. Notwithstanding previous criticisms, Liria regarded Peter's loss as irreparable for Russia, for his excellent understanding, his ready power of comprehension, and his reticence gave promise of a glorious and happy reign. He had shown, so far, no very particular propensity to any form of vice, and drunkenness, so common in Russia, was not to his taste. He was good-looking, and extraordinarily tall for his age. He spoke Latin, French, and German fluently, and had received a fair educational grounding.

Having begun to reign, however, at eleven years old, he had never looked at a book again, and the Russians in his *entourage* tried to give him a dislike for reading, that he might be as ignorant as his predecessors. As yet he had not sufficient strength of will to act for himself, and Prince Alexis Dolgoruki, his guardian, and Prince Ivan, his favourite, abusing his weakness, governed at their pleasure, and with such absolute authority, that nobody felt the young monarch's death, in whom was closed the main line of the house of Romanoff after a rule of 118 years.

Peter's consent to his betrothal was extracted from him[13] 'Many people thought,' writes Liria, 'that he would never have married; it is certain that he made very little of his betrothed, and I could bear witness that he would scarcely look at her. One very peculiar circumstance is that, from the day of the commencement of his engagement, he fell into such deep melancholy that nothing could cheer him, and he told his *confidants* that he should die before long, and that he had nothing to live for.'

An infinity of Slavonic pathos lies in that phrase, 'he had nothing to live for.' The Czar of all the Russias, with his fourteen years, his splendid physique, his rapid intelligence, his lack of resolution, and his premature amours, had exhausted life! The Duke of Liria rightly judged that Russia, with all its drink, was a melancholy land; a melancholy partly the result of the Slavonic temperament, partly of hereditary vice,—twin causes hard to

[13] Lefort fully confirms Liria's impressions. 'The Czar bites at the apple, but without showing good appetite.' 'If the betrothed couple are not more affectionate *tête-à-tête* than they appear in public, no very grand predictions can be formed of their happiness.' Even before the engagement, when at a game of forfeits it fell to the Czar's lot to kiss the Princess, he left the room and rode away. He would weary of hunting and go home alone, making presents of his hounds, and sending hunting, and those who drove him to it, to the devil, in no measured terms. In the three weeks succeeding the betrothal he only paid two visits to his *fiancée*, and his preference for his aunt was an open secret. But the Princess deserves little sympathy, for within three months of Peter's death Lefort writes,'La chaste promise du défunt Czar est heureusement accouchée d'une fille, digne production d'un Chevalier Garde.'—*April* 17, 1730. According to Mme. Rondeau, the Princess was a victim to her father's ambition, for she was engaged and deeply attached to the Imperial Minister's brother. After the betrothal ceremony she sat passive, while the Czar held out her hand to receive the salutations of the guests. When her late lover approached, she tore her hand away, and, with signs of strong emotion, gave it to him to kiss. (Letter V.)

disentangle. The death of the young Czar Peter recalls many a half-forgotten or recently read romance of Slavonic life and character, from 'La Cousine Bette' to 'Marie Baskirtseff.' The latter would have found a more interesting ideal for her ambition and a more sympathetic partner for her morbid melancholy in the young Czar Peter than in the florid Duke of her unwholesome dreams.

Before the Czar was dead, the Grand Council and the magnates discussed the question of succession. The claims of the Czar's betrothed were pressed by her family, but he had not the strength to sign a will in her favour. A majority offered the crown to the Czar's grandmother, who declined on the ground of age and gout. The Princess Elisabeth, and her sister's son, the Prince of Holstein, were respectively proposed by two other parties, who found small support. The house of Galitzin, which had lost its influence, now once more lifted up its head. It had long cherished the idea of tying the hands of the monarch by an aristocratic constitution on the English model.[14] It was proposed to elect Anna, widowed Duchess of Courland and daughter of Czar Ivan, if she would accept capitulations. The Dolgoruki concurred in the proposal, which was carried by the majority of the Junto. Within four hours of the Czar's death, the Council, the Senate, the other Tribunals, and all Generals and Colonels in Moscow, were summoned to the Palace. The Chancellor being hoarse, Prince Dimitri Galitzin proposed the Princess Anna, whose name was received with repeated *vivas.* The Generals notified the election to the troops, and three deputies were sent to Mittau to obtain the Czarina's signature to the conditions of election. These capitulations formed a remarkable attempt to replace absolutism by an oligarchy intended to resemble that of the great Whig families. It was provided that the government should rest with a Grand Council of eight members. The Czarina could neither marry, nor nominate a successor, nor declare war, nor make peace, nor bestow any commission above the rank of Colonel. The royal domain, the Treasury, the command of the Guards and the army, were out of her control. The monarch could levy no new taxes, nor degrade nobles without just cause; the good of the people was the sole rule for conduct. To these astounding conditions Anna subscribed, adding the words, 'If I do not govern in accordance with the above articles, I declare myself to have forfeited the Crown.' The Council summoned a Convention of some eighty persons to consider the Czarina's acceptance. Prince Dimitri Galitzin, after reading the capitulations, invited free discussion, and, turning to General Jaguzhinski, asked him to take the articles in his hand, examine them, and state his conscientious conviction without roundabout phrases. Jaguzhinski

[14] Lefort believes that the aristocratic reaction which followed the death of Charles XII. in Sweden, was the model for the Russian magnates.

was at a nonplus, whereupon Galitzin ordered him not to leave the room. The General turned white, and with good reason, for Field Marshal Dolgoruki entered with a sergeant-major of Guards, and carried him off to the Palace prison. After so promising a constitutional exordium, Galitzin told the nobles that any scheme for an improved constitution, if committed to writing, would be considered. Jaguzhinski's arrest caused much excitement. He was a personage in Moscow, owing to his resolution and capacity for intrigue. A devoted servant of the Czarina, he had written to advise her to stand firm, for he and his friends would sacrifice their lives to give her the same sovereignty which her predecessors had enjoyed. His envoy arrived five hours after the deputies, and his letter was intercepted. But the party of absolutism was not disarmed. Prince Cherkaski realized that time is against a revolution, and to gain time proposed a Constitutional reform levelled against the oligarchical ring of Dolgoruki and Galitzin. This provided for a supreme Tribunal of twenty-one persons, and of a Senate of eleven members for the more rapid despatch of business. The election to these and other important offices was left to the Estates-General; and to check the dominating influence of the great families, a provision familiar to students of the Venetian Constitution was introduced, that not more than one member of a family could be elected, and not more than two could vote. The function of legislation was attributed to the Supreme Tribunal, the Senate, the nobles, and the Commons. Measures were to be suggested for the entrance of the nobility into the army without a liability to more than twenty years' service, and the reaction against the recent system was seen in the provision that no noble should be compelled to serve in the navy, nor to learn any mechanical duties. The clergy and the merchants were relieved from the quartering of soldiers, and the peasants, as far as possible, from taxation. A project was drafted by General Matuskin on much the same lines, adding that the Czarina should be compelled to reside at Moscow; while a memorial by Prince Kurakin suggested that a distinction should be made between the old and the new nobility, as in other free countries. These projects were practically set aside by the determination of the Council that eight persons only should form the Government, and that these should belong exclusively to the two great houses of Dolgoruki and Galitzin.

Public opinion was much disturbed by this resolution, and was further excited by the appearance of an unusually brilliant meteor. All the old men and women regarded this phenomenon as a divine warning of some imminent disaster. The majority believed that the very fiery colour portended civil war, forgetting that nothing was more common in Russia than meteors, which were due to the coldness of the climate.

The meteor portended, if anything, the collapse of the Constitution. The new Czarina, to judge by the Duke of Liria's

later sketch, was ill-calculated to be a cypher. 'She is tall, fat, and swarthy, and, to tell the truth, has a very masculine face. She is amiable, friendly, and extraordinarily attentive. Her liberality amounts to prodigality; she has an excessive liking for display, and has placed her Court upon a footing which is unquestionably the most gorgeous in Europe. She likes to be obeyed and punctually informed of all that happens. Neither services, not yet offences, are forgotten, and she is extremely liable to nurse any dislike that she has once conceived. People say that she is somewhat susceptible, and I am inclined to believe it; but her operations are secret, and I can assert that she is a Princess of high quality, and worthy to reign many years.' Anna, before entering Moscow, expressed to the officers of the Preobrazhenski Guards and the Horse Guards her intention of being Colonel of the one, and Captain of the other. The officers were beside themselves with joy, kissing her hand and bathing it with tears. The oligarchs had resolved to deprive the Czarina of the command, but her intrepid action reduced them to silence or applause. They had no courage to present to the troops the form of oath of fidelity to the Czarina and the Council, which they had drafted.[15] The Czarina entered Moscow on the 26th of February, and on the 8th of March she became absolute. The Council, fully aware of Cherkaski's views, had resolved to send him to Siberia; but he forestalled their action. Prepared by his wife, the Czarina gave a reception to the nobility. Cherkaski here read a memorial, stating that the capitulations inspired alarm. He therefore prayed that the schemes suggested should be examined, and that the proposal favoured by the majority should be presented for the Czarina's approval. Upon this, the Council requested her to retire for consultation. Her sister, the Princess of Mecklenburg, said that deliberation was unnecessary, and advised her to sign Cherkaski's memorial. This was greeted by a general murmur, and Anna, calling the captain on guard, ordered him to obey no orders but those of her uncle Soltikoff, his lieutenant-colonel; adding that she did not feel her person to be safe. She then took a pen and signed. The nobility withdrew, and in the evening besought the Czarina to accept the sovereignty as her predecessors held it, and to annul the capitulations. It was suggested that the Council and Senate should be replaced by a Senate of twenty-one members, and that the seats therein, as well as the provincial governments and the presidencies of the colleges, should be distributed, as of yore, among the nobles. It was a blow levelled as well against the exotic bureaucracy as against the indigenous oligarchy.

Upon hearing the petition, the members of the Council became as graven images. The Czarina ordered the Chancellor to bring the capitulations, and tore them in pieces in the sight of all. This act

[15] Lefort states that the Guards threatened to break Field-Marshal Dolgornki's legs if he presented the oath.

was greeted with a general *viva,* and nobles and officers crowded to kiss her hand. Jaguzhinski was released, and received again his sword and Order of St. Andrew. Had the Council offered resistance, or had the Czarina left the hall, there would have been bloodshed, but the blood would have been that of the Councillors, for they were only five. The Chancellor favoured the lesser nobility, and Osterman had since Peter's death stayed in bed on pretence of illness, giving constant counsel to the Czarina through the medium of his wife.

Basil Dolgoruki was deprived of his office of Grand Chamberlain. He had brought the Czarina from Mittau almost as a prisoner, and had been the mainspring in the attempt to keep her as 'a slave in a golden cage.' Beyond this no immediate punishment was inflicted. Six members of the late Council were included in the new Government. But the fall of the house of Dolgoruki was not long deferred. Prince Alexis and his son had appropriated not only the diamonds of the ill-starred Menshikoff, but royal plate and jewels, and the best of the horses and dogs from the royal stables and kennels. Immediate restitution was demanded, though robberies from the Treasury were pardoned. Within three months their ill-fortune reached its climax. Alexis and his family were banished to Berosova, where Menshikoff had expiated his ambition. Basil was confined in a rock convent hanging over the Glacial Sea, which the climate and continuous fish diet, unbroken by bread or wine, made equivalent to a death sentence. The brothers of Alexis suffered lighter penalties, Alexander being condemned to serve as ship's lieutenant on the Caspian Sea. 'Thus,' concludes the Diarist, 'was completed the ruin of that branch of the house of Dolgoruki, and its fall seemed a just judgment of God for its ill-governance and its unmeasured pride and ambition.'

The last act of the Grand Council had been to order the despatch of the contingent promised to the Emperor. The Spanish Minister had vainly protested that this was neither obligatory nor prudent, he had extolled the power of Spain and her allies, and not without skill laid bare the weakness of the Imperial system. The Czarina's *coup d'état,* in which he fully sympathised, did not advance his interests. Anna, who fell completely under the influence of the German party, was resolved to fulfil her treaty obligations. Liria's position became intolerable. Osterman conspired with Wratislaw and the Russian Ambassador to ruin his credit. He was represented as the close friend of Basil Dolgoruki, as the opponent of absolute monarchy, as the intimate correspondent of Maurice of Saxony. For some six months the Minister was boycotted by the Court. He showed a brave face, but he keenly felt his isolation. He was a man of warm affections, and the death of the Swiss Master of Ceremonies, Habichstal, deeply touched him, especially as he died in the errors of Calvinism. 'This,'he writes, 'was the greatest loss

that I could experience, for this worthy friend was my sole consolation in that hell where they do not know what friendship is.' A little later died Count Soltikoff, the Czarina's uncle, whose death also went to his heart, for nothing was rarer in Russia than a virtuous man and a trustworthy friend, and Soltikoff had proved himself to be the latter when all others had turned their backs. It is gratifying to learn that the Duke regained his credit before leaving Russia. He convinced the Czarina that he had been on bad terms with Basil Dolgoruki; he had privately ridiculed the republican enthusiasm as absurd and mad; he had always informed his Court that the situation would end in absolutism, though, as it did not matter to his master whether the Czarina were absolute or not, he had not been fool enough to meddle in what did not concern him; his correspondence with Maurice related solely to Maurice's *billets doux*, which could not affect the Russian Monarchy, and which Osterman, notwithstanding repeated promises, delayed to deliver. The Czarina generously admitted her misconception; the Minister gallantly replied that his greatest consolation would be to pass many years at her feet, and that the order to leave Russia was the only mandate of his master which he obeyed with displeasure. This rejoinder was only diplomatically true. He had long been craving for his recall. This was now necessitated by the withdrawal of the Russian envoy from Spain. The order for departure reached Moscow in August 1730, but the Minister could not pay his debts; illuminations and banquets had brought him into too intimate relations with the Russian Jew. If the Marquis d'Argenson is to be trusted, Spanish ambassadors of this period were apt to pay with their foretopsail; but Liria was too proud for this. The English Consul facilitated an adjustment with reasonable creditors. But the Jew Liebman was unconscionable. In vain the Comte de Biron pledged his credit, offering a bill at six months. Rescue came from the Czarina. Hearing of the Jew's rascality in desiring payment, she asked the Minister to a farewell dinner, and insisted on advancing the full amount. Such was the financial finale of this brilliant embassy, which cost the Spanish Government 2,100,000 reals, in addition to 650,000 reals which its Minister was unable to recover.

The Duke finally left Moscow on November 30. On December 27 he entered Warsaw, crossing the floating ice of the Vistula, with only his bag, and in complete prostration. Travelling in Eastern Europe was not luxurious. For twenty-nine days he had not changed his clothes; the necessities of life could only be found in the Jews' houses, and they were such a rough and dirty people, and their houses were so offensive, that he could not enter them. From Warsaw the Duke passed to Vienna, where he aided in the negociations for the Treaty of Vienna. Here he was happier than in Russia. Viennese cookery and Viennese ladies were thoroughly to his taste. He never returned to Spain; after a visit to his beloved Paris he served with Don Carlos in his Neapolitan campaign. His

health had, however, been undermined by his residence in Russia, and he died of consumption at an early age on June 2, 1738.