

CHAPTER XIII

IN THE CHIEF CITY

“ **THE chief city** ” is still **St. Petersburg**. Moscow has never wholly yielded her ancient supremacy to the new city on the Neva, and retains the proud title of the **St. Petersburg**. first capital. There are, in fact, two capitals in Russia, and if **St. Petersburg** may be described as the Imperial capital, Moscow is the Russian capital. Or perhaps Moscow may be regarded as the metropolis of sentiment and tradition and **St. Petersburg** as the metropolis of power. But this is true only if power be taken in the sense of political power. Economically Moscow is more influential than **St. Petersburg**, and as a literary and artistic centre Moscow is at least equal and in some respects superior to **St. Petersburg**. Since the trend of economic development in Russia is towards the south, towards the Black Sea Basin, it seems natural to suppose that the economic importance of Moscow will continue to grow much more rapidly than that of its rival. Moscow is nearer the greater part of the **Empire than the newer capital**. The resident of **St. Petersburg** in order to reach Eastern and South-eastern Russia, the Crimea, and the Caucasus must pass through Moscow. It is only to Kiev, Odessa, Warsaw, and the Western frontier that he possesses direct routes independent of the ancient capital. The Muscovite, on the other hand, is under no necessity to pass through **St. Petersburg** on his way anywhere, except to Helsingfors. The civic spirit is much **stronger in Moscow than in St. Petersburg**. And it is a curious fact that whereas Moscow, as the centre of the process of “ gathering in the Russian lands,” once represented a hard, shrewd, and calculating despotism it now embodies far more than **St. Petersburg** public initiative and civil liberty. Of those two figures who by their conflict and

co-operation have determined the course of Russian history, the full-blooded, broad-chested, roving bogatyr, and the diak or Government clerk, the former may now be said to have his seat in Moscow, the latter in St. Petersburg.

For all that the present is the St. Petersburg period of Russian history. The mere fact that the administration of such a vast Empire is concentrated on the banks of the Neva gives the city a steady predominance which it is difficult even for Moscow, with its traditional charm and its industrial and commercial energy, to shake. Moreover, St. Petersburg continues to be the "window looking out into Europe." It may be argued that this particular function is growing obsolete. Connection with Western Europe by sea can only be maintained for about eight months in the year. Regular connection can be maintained only by rail, and by rail Moscow is practically as close to Berlin and Paris as St. Petersburg is. But St. Petersburg still retains its significance as a "window," for while Moscow is in the very heart of Russia, is in the very midst of the sphere of Russian civilisation, St. Petersburg is a Russian outpost on the fringe of the Germanic sphere. The territory on which St. Petersburg stands is ethnographically hardly Russian at all. It is only made Russian by the fact of St. Petersburg being there. The city stands partly on the site of Finnish villages, and it is surrounded by Finns. Not only is the frontier of the Grand Duchy of Finland only an hour's railway journey from St. Petersburg. The peasants of Tsarskoe Selo and Pavlovsk are pure Finns, and the Finnish language may be constantly heard in the parks in the neighbourhood of the palace. And the farmers who look over the fence of the St. Petersburg Aviation Ground when flights are in progress are nearly all of them Finns. The Finnish population extends along the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland down to near Narva, where the Esthonians, another variety of Finns, begin. The word Neva itself is Finnish and means a swamp. Tsarskoe Selo was originally the Finnish village of Saari, which means

“**The Island.**” Saari became Saarskoe Selo (*selo* meaning a village), and since the place became an Imperial residence, the Saarskoe Selo very naturally became Tsarskoe Selo or The Village of the Tsars.

Finnish peasants and Russian Tsars—the juxtaposition is rather startling, but it has a very definite historical significance. The territory of St. Petersburg has not an exclusively Finnish past. It once formed part of the territory of the Republic of Novgorod, and in the Novgorod days there were Russians on Lake Ladoga, on the Neva, and on the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland. The Grand Prince Alexander Nevsky defeated the Swedes at the mouth of the Izhora near St. Petersburg. The region was, in fact, a perpetual battleground between Russians and Swedes, and the Finns passed under the dominion now of the one, now of the other people. In the long run the greater number of the Finns fell to Sweden and so were definitely annexed to the Germanic sphere of civilisation. The Finns in Tsarskoe Selo and around St. Petersburg are very simple folk, but the civilisation they have is Germanic. They are Protestants, and the newspaper they read is printed in Gothic letters. Peter wrested the Baltic from the Swedes, and when at the beginning of the eighteenth century he gained the mastery over the Baltic, the whole coast-line was in the grasp of a strong Germanic civilisation, or, in other words, of that form of European culture which contained the most vital elements of progress. When Peter founded St. Petersburg it meant that he planted his capital right within the Germanic and Protestant sphere. He made the two spheres, that of Russo-Byzantine and of Germanic culture interpenetrate. And it is for this fact, for the interfusion of two cultures that St. Petersburg still stands. It is not only a gate by which European influence enters Russia. It is also—and this second function grows more important as the years go by—a gate by which Russian influence passes into Europe. **It is the key to Russia.**

The position of St. Petersburg represents a development

of the most ancient traditions of Russian history. St. Petersburg is the successor not only of Moscow, but of Novgorod. The Varengers, or Variagi, the Scandinavian warriors who established themselves in Novgorod and Kiev, came up in their ships by way of the Gulf of Finland and the Neva. The spot where St. Petersburg now stands once formed the entrance to that "Great Way" which led from the land of the Varengers to the land of the Greeks, from Scandinavia to Constantinople. It is associated with the early civilisation of Northern Europe. And it is because St. Petersburg is where it is that Russia is now not merely an Eastern but a North European power.

The Neva opens out into the Finnish Gulf on the north of which is Finland with its Swedish associations and on the south Esthonia. Sweden lies just outside the Gulf and the Baltic Provinces, which begin with Esthonia and are impregnated with specifically German culture, end at the Prussian frontier. The whole of the area on which St. Petersburg looks out thus comes within the domain of Germanic culture in the broad sense. But this area is not confined to the Baltic. It is a maritime area and extends beyond, to Norway, Denmark, Holland and England. St. Petersburg draws vitality from the restless maritime enterprise in the Baltic and North Seas. The chief link between the continent and the ocean is here. St. Petersburg is the principal port in the vast Empire, even though navigation is ice-bound for five months in the year. Riga has a bigger export trade now that it has been linked up more closely by rail with the interior. But Riga owes its rapid modern growth to St. Petersburg. It was through the existence of the capital on the Neva that the Baltic Provinces were brought into that close and intimate connection with Central Russia, that gave the port of Riga at the mouth of the Dvina a new importance. In imports St. Petersburg leads. About half the import trade of the Empire follows overland routes, and of the overland imports the station of Wirballen, or Wierzbolowo

on the Prussian frontier registers the greatest volume. But St. Petersburg is in advance of Wirballen and all the ports as well. Yet the prominence of St. Petersburg in the Baltic and North Sea area is not a mere matter of imports and exports. It is a political prominence. St. Petersburg is the watch-tower of the greatest land Empire, and the outlook from this watch-tower is over the grey northern seas. The fact has manifold political implications, some hopeful, some disquieting. The Finnish problem is here, and the wariness of Sweden and to some extent the alertness of Germany are to be explained by the concentration of Russian energy on the Neva. On the other hand, Anglo-Russian friendship, the friendship between the land and the sea empires, seems to find its natural centre in this watch-tower. The famous meeting between King Edward and the Emperor Nicholas, which marked an epoch in the development of Anglo-Russian relations, took place at sea just off Reval. But this very fact indicates the weak point in the rapprochement. The friendship between the two countries would have been very much deeper, stronger, and more effective, if Russia had not been so torn by internal strife that the Government did not venture to arrange the meeting on land, in St. Petersburg, in the midst of its own people. It is the Neva that gives St. Petersburg character, life and beauty. The only other European capital that has a river to be compared with that on which St. Petersburg stands is London. One might easily debate the relative merits of the Neva and the Thames. There are moments when the one is strongly suggestive of the other. In the city area they appear to be about equal in breadth. The political importance of St. Petersburg as a maritime city is, however, diminished by the absence of a strong fleet in the Baltic and by the attraction of Russian political interest to the Black Sea region and the shores of the Pacific Ocean.

On the land side St. Petersburg appears to thrive on the assimilation of distance. Far more than Moscow the city

represents a conquest over nature. And this not merely because it was built on a swamp, but because it represents a concentration and centralisation of the resources of the Empire. It lives by the far rather than by the near. It lives by broad generalisation, and this accounts for an air of coldness and severity that contrasts with the cheerful spontaneity of Moscow. After all, what resources lie in the immediate neighbourhood of St. Petersburg? The greater part of the population of the St. Petersburg government owes its presence to the fact of the city's existence. The St. Petersburg government merges into the Novgorod region, but for all its ancient prosperity and importance the Novgorod government is far from being wealthy or progressive now. The last blows to the prosperity of Novgorod were due to the efforts of St. Petersburg to ensure rapid communication with the interior. The establishment at the beginning of the nineteenth century of the Marie Canal system opening communication with the Upper Volga at Rybinsk by way of Lakes Ladoga and Onega, Bielozero (or The White Lake), and the river Sheksna diverted traffic from the central waterways of Novgorod. And when the railway between St. Petersburg and Moscow was built it took a straight line between the two capitals, leaving Novgorod on one side to dream of the days when Imperial couriers rode swiftly, and when a constant flow of coaches, sleighs and tarantasses passed over the old high road between the Kremlin and the Neva. This treatment of Novgorod illustrates St. Petersburg's indifference to detail, of its eagerness to sketch out a broad plan which may afterwards be gradually filled in at leisure. The Baltic provinces are almost at the gates of the city and are being drawn more and more into the sphere of its influence. There is a large German colony in the city, a considerable part of which is of Baltic origin. There are German shopkeepers and artisans, and numbers of German girls from Esthonia, Livland, and Courland are employed as cheap governesses or nurses. There are large

Esthonian and Lettish colonies, too, with churches and benevolent and literary organisations. The Baltic element makes a useful and indispensable contribution to the city's work, but no one would describe it as characteristic of the capital. The railway that creeps along the southern shore of the Finnish Gulf from St. Petersburg to Reval, sending out a branch on the way to Riga, brings into the city daily large supplies of milk, butter, eggs and vegetables.

Finland, in spite of its nearness to St. Petersburg, is kept apart by its autonomy, which expresses itself among other things in the existence of a customs barrier. But of late years the influence of St. Petersburg has been extending into Finland. The growing population of the capital is going farther and farther afield in its search for *dachas* or summer cottages, in which the families of St. Petersburg residents spend the long school holidays, the working members of each family travelling daily to and from business. The line of *dachas* has crossed the Finnish frontier. Kuokkala and Terioki, two seaside villages just over the border, are crowded with Russians during the summer months, and this movement of summer colonisation following the Helsingfors railway line has now reached the outskirts of Viborg. A great deal of Finnish land in the region is being sold to Russians, and many of the *dachas* are displaying a tendency to become permanent residences. It is remarkable how in spite of this influx the region maintains its distinctively Finnish character.

To the north-east of St. Petersburg lie the Russian governments of Archangel and Olonets and Volagda. How close to the capital is this strange northern region that reaches up to the Arctic zone! There are times when the city seems to be caught in the power of the north, to be held on the fringe of existence, on the melancholy rim of the world, remote from the cheerful, bustling, turbulent life of Central and Southern Europe. There are grey, winter days, when the north wind comes straight down from the Polar regions and seems to claim the city for darkness and desolation.

Years ago the proximity of the north was made vivid by the Lapps, who came down in the winter with their reindeer, pitched their skin tents on the ice of the Neva and took children for rides in their reindeer sleighs. But in the daily life of the capital the northern regions play a comparatively small part. With the Olonets government connection is maintained in the summer by steamers which ply along the rivers, lakes and canals, and in the winter almost entirely by sleigh. A recently-constructed railway line, which follows a lonely trail across Northern Russia to the Ural iron region and farther on into Western Siberia where it joins the Trans-Siberian line, passes through Vologda and Viatka and Perm, and from Vologda a line leads due north to Archangel. Yet Archangel is less distant from Moscow by rail than it is from St. Petersburg. Peasants from the northern governments come to St. Petersburg to work, but their presence is barely noticeable. They are lost in the general mass. The actual importance of the northern governments to the capital is, indeed, very slight. They possess rich natural resources. The Archangel and Vologda governments are covered with dense forests, and in Vologda there are said to be rich oil deposits. But these resources have as yet been barely utilised. The importance of the shores of the White Sea and of the White Sea fisheries is only now coming home to the residents of the capital, and it is only very recently that Russian sovereignty over the island of Novaia Zemlia has been effectively asserted for economic purposes. The northern governments are still used as a region of exile for political offenders, at a time when even Siberia has lost its **terrors. They are still to a large extent waste lands.** And here, again, the St. Petersburg principle of sketching out a big plan, leaving it to time to fill in the details, is clearly manifested. It is an imperialistic attitude, the very reverse of that of tiny States which diligently cultivate every acre and make their whole land a garden.

To realise how far St. Petersburg represents a sum of

distances one has only to walk up the Nevsky Prospect, the chief thoroughfare of the city. Several churches face the Nevsky. In Eastern Europe religion is almost synonymous with nationality. The various churches stand for various forms of culture. And the churches on the Nevsky stand for most of the chief forms of Christian culture represented in the Empire. There is a Dutch Reformed Church, for instance, near the Moika Canal, which now stands rather as a monument to the past than as a place of worship for the little Dutch colony now in St. Petersburg. It recalls the days when the founder of the city worked in the shipyards of Saardam and Amsterdam, when the Dutch were still powerful on the seas. Dutch artisans were brought to St. Petersburg. Dutch shipping terms were adopted by the Russians, and the very name familiarly applied to the capital by the people is Pieter, the Dutch form of the Emperor's name. The days of transitory Dutch ascendancy are long since past, and the church near the Moika stands as their sober and worthy monument.

Higher up the Nevsky is the German Lutheran Church of St. Peter and Paul, which represents a very important element in the make-up of St. Petersburg and in the history of Russian imperialism. Nearly opposite the German Church is the Kazan Cathedral, which symbolises dominant orthodoxy, but not the grey, traditional ecclesiasticism which rules on the Moscow Kremlin. Rather with its eclectic architecture and its Doric colonnades does it represent that modernised Westernised Orthodoxy, that generalised official Orthodoxy which is characteristic of St. Petersburg. At the upper end of the Nevsky stands another important Orthodox centre, the Lavra or Monastery of St. Alexander Nevsky, where the metropolitan has his residence. Standing as it does between the factory district and the commercial part of the city, the Lavra, for all its air of cool seclusion from the world, fails to revive the genuine traditional spirit. In its modern surroundings it is too patently official.

Not far from the Kazan Cathedral and the German Church is the Roman Catholic St. Catherine's Cathedral, before which every Sunday morning stands a dense throng of Poles and Lithuanians. This Cathedral represents the culture of Western and South-western Russia, the Catholicism which Eastern Orthodoxy still regards as its most dangerous rival. Still farther up the Nevsky is an Armenian church representing that form of Christianity which has been in most frequent and intimate contact with the world of Islam; this church may be regarded as typifying the connection between St. Petersburg and the Caucasus in the subjection of which to Russia the Armenians co-operated so ardently. The Georgians have no church on the Nevsky, for they are Orthodox, and in the capital they worship in Russian churches. Just off the Nevsky Prospekt, near the Dutch and German churches, are Finnish and Swedish Lutheran churches. The main thoroughfare of the capital thus presents visible symbols of the principal types of Christian civilisation in European Russia.

Asiatic culture is also represented in St. Petersburg, but not on the Nevsky. On the so-called St. Petersburg side, near the spot where Peter began to build his new capital, a Mohammedan mosque is rising on a site presented by the Emir of Bokhara. The green cupola of the mosque is suggestive of Central Asia, and the building represents the twenty millions of Mohammedan Russian subjects in Eastern Russia, Turkestan, and the steppes to the south of Siberia. In the suburb of Novaia Derevnaia a Lamaist temple has been built, recalling the fact that the eyes of Buriats on the frontiers of Mongolia and Kalmyks in the steppes of the Lower Volga are turned towards St. Petersburg. It is only since the promulgation of the Toleration Edict that it has been possible to build in St. Petersburg the mosque and the temple, these emblems of the extension of the Russian power into the world of Islam and into the Buddhist region. And even so, influential obscurantists were bitter in their opposition:

they professed to be horror-stricken at the erection of a Mohammedan and a pagan place of worship in the capital of a Christian Empire. Yet both mosque and temple are in complete harmony with the imperialistic character of St. Petersburg.

The churches and temples typify the area of power. But the city is the seat of power. It represents centralisation carried to the highest degree. Centralisation means abstraction and generalisation. And this accounts for the coldness and severity of St. Petersburg. It is a city of bold and firm outlines rather than of warm colour and picturesque detail. It is a product of the brain rather than of the heart. It is perfectly flat. Its streets are straight. It contains a minimum of the spontaneous, the unexpected. There is quaintness in the by-ways of St. Petersburg, but it has to be searched for diligently. The capital represents the Empire, but as yet rather by its stern command over the Empire than by the spontaneous movement of manifold parts towards one centre. The building of the mosque and the Buddhist temple suggest what might possibly be, if all the rich resources of the Empire were to seek and to find expression in the capital. If on the site provided by St. Petersburg the great potential energies of European and Asiatic Russia could have full play, if they were completely focussed here the result would be one of extraordinary magnificence. But the time for that has not come. St. Petersburg still suggests the word of command, not organic growth. It is a sketch, an outline, a general statement. It stands for a distant bird's-eye view of an immense area. But the details, the intimacy, the warm, human sympathy that come when in the course of the years material dominance has been transformed into spiritual possession are not yet there. St. Petersburg is still young, just as the Empire is young; and the capital expresses the youth of the Empire, not in boisterousness, for the effort has been too great for any frolicking, but in a characteristically youthful assertion of the supreme validity of abstractions.

The assertion made by Peter the Great and his successors was so powerful that the forms of life have grown up around it, but this fundamental assertion is still dominant. Catherine and Alexander I in determining the architecture of the capital followed Greek and Roman models. And the sternness, the severity of outline thus attained is entirely in accord with the predominantly abstract character of the city. It expresses the true St. Petersburg. Buildings, especially churches, erected during the nineteenth century in a pseudo-Russian style are out of harmony with the St. Petersburg character. St. Petersburg is far less than itself when, instead of being broadly, powerfully, and imperially Russian, it sinks into a narrow and exclusive nationalism, forgets its native dignity and the manifold responsibilities of Empire, and, aspiring to be another Moscow, chills warm Russian nationalism into something lifeless and oppressive.

St. Petersburg has its own very strongly marked style which aberrations mostly dating from the latter half of the nineteenth century spoil at many points but cannot obscure. This style finds its fullest expression on the Neva quays and in their neighbourhood. The long, dark-red façade of the Winter Palace with its outlook on the Neva, the iron gates and the fine iron railing around the Winter Palace garden—the beauty of St. Petersburg is very suggestive of the beauty of fine iron-work—the Admiralty with its arched entrances and its spire whose graceful upward movement is a relief from the prevailing massivity of the capital, the long sweep of palaces and embassies along the Neva above the Winter Palace, the equestrian statue of Peter the Great in the Senate Square—these constitute the nucleus of the city. On the side of the Winter Palace facing away from the Neva is the Palace Square, a fine open space which, with an admirable sense of fitness, is kept perfectly clear, except for one slender and lofty column in the centre commemorative of the victory over Napoleon in 1812, a column which expresses in its fine self-restraint the very best in the St. Petersburg

spirit. This column is the one architectural feature in St. Petersburg suggestive of clear aspiration. Opposite the Winter Palace in the Palace Square are the Foreign Office and the War Office, the two ministries naturally most closely associated with the Monarch in the maintenance of a sovereignty essentially military in character. The Ministry of Finances is close at hand. An archway which pierces the line of Government offices leads out from this centre of power into the business part of the city. It is in the neighbourhood of the Winter Palace, the Hermitage, the Foreign Office, and that Bridge of Singers that leads over the Moika Canal to the building of the Court Choir that the impression of St. Petersburg is strongest and most intimate. It is an impression of power firmly and consciously grasped. And this impression is strongest when the Palace, the Column, and the Ministries stand alone in the emptiness of the Square. The presence of human masses does not add to it.

But human beings are made very definitely contributory to an impression of power in St. Petersburg. A short street, the Millionnaia, leads from the Winter Palace to a large open space behind the British Embassy called the Field of Mars. This is an oblong area covered with sand in which the sense of spaciousness is increased by the fact that only on one side is there an uninterrupted row of buildings. The field is the review ground for the troops of St. Petersburg, for the capital is strongly garrisoned and the Guards are naturally stationed here. Barracks occupy a considerable portion of the city area; traffic is frequently checked by the marching of troops, and officers of all ranks and privates are the most conspicuous figures in the city throng. The strangest thing of all is to see the Don or Kuban Cossacks riding through the streets of the capital—dark, handsome fellows, bearded—they are the only troops who wear beards—well mounted, they make a very effective picture as they ride slowly, holding aloft their long, glittering pikes. It is an irony of fate that the Cossacks have now come to

symbolise stern repression. A German writer once wrote a pamphlet entitled, "Is Europe going to be Cossackised?" meaning, Is the whole of Europe to be dragooned into submission to Russian absolutism? But the question might very well have another sense. The Cossacks at one time represented the anarchical element in the Russian State. They were freebooters who had escaped into the regions beyond from the tyranny of the central Muscovite power. And the German writer's question might very well have been, Will Russian anarchical principles permeate Western Europe? What has been the effect of the Russian revolution, for instance, in promoting such movements as syndicalism in France and militant suffragism in England? But the Russian Government has long since found a military use for the Cossacks, and what they signify in St. Petersburg now is the very reverse of anarchy. They signify the predominance of the military over the civil element in the State. The reviews formerly held annually in the Field of Mars—they have not been held since the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war—were one of the ways of expressing the splendour of military power. For St. Petersburg is the capital of an Empire that has nearly 30,000 miles of frontier to defend, exclusive of that long, imperfectly explored northern frontier that is defended by snow and ice. The capital in which such military power finds concentrated expression is naturally stern and even oppressive.

But St. Petersburg is not all militarism. It is not merely a garrison, an iron hand, a cold word of command. Near the Field of Mars there is a Summer Garden, the chief park in the city, which adds a touch of lightness. And then the brilliance of power is displayed in the capital. The aristocracy is here, naturally attracted by the Court, and the Quays, the Millionnaia, Gagarinskaia, and Sergeievskia streets constitute the fashionable quarter of the city. St. Petersburg and not Moscow is the centre of fashionable life. Only at present its brilliance is dimmed. The crisis through

which the Empire is passing finds its perpetual reflection in the life of the capital. The Court has not been in residence in St. Petersburg since the beginning of the revolution, that is, since January, 1905. The Court festivities, without which a St. Petersburg season was at one time inconceivable, have been abandoned. The Imperial Family only visits the Winter Palace on rare occasions, such as the tercentenary of the House of the Romanovs. Fashionable society is deprived of its centre and its tension is relaxed. It follows its routine. There are theatres, balls, visits, tennis, and skating. Roller-skating has been a favourite form of amusement during recent years. But if fashionable life in a capital is an ordered expression of the delight of the governing classes in the possession of power, it is just this delight that is lacking at present in St. Petersburg.

It is a relief to pass from overshadowing government buildings and all the solemn and stately symbols of power to the Neva. Without the Neva the city would be

The Neva. stiff and sombre, petrified in the consciousness of power. The Neva gives life and light and motion. Just above the city it takes a sudden bend and then its main stream flows out broad and majestic to the sea, sending off branches to the north-west and so forming islands on which part of the city and the suburbs are built. On the Neva the palaces, the St. Isaac's Cathedral, the Bourse, and the Academies all gain the necessary perspective and relief. The river brings down a tremendous volume of water from that inland sea, Lake Ladoga, to the Baltic, and brings it down in a swift current. This swiftly-flowing mass of water and that fine expanse of sky which the river keeps clear right in the centre of the city have a liberating effect. They make distance sensible, real, and visible. The current is motion amidst immobility, a perpetual and living reminder of connections and relationships, of possible comings and goings, of the spontaneity in things that is so easily forgotten in the streets beyond the quays. Glorious sunsets

are to be seen across the Neva, and the river broadening out below the quays leads into Western skies and the eager progress of the Western world. The river is incessant motion and stately impetus. And never is the feeling of liberation so strong as when the ice comes down in the spring. Gaps in the ice widen, the ice surfaces break and crumble, lose their brilliant white, become heaped-up clumps of dirty grey, and when at last their hold is loosed and the stream at last gains power, the tumbled mass yields to the mighty constraint and changes its immobility for movement, at first slow and uncertain, and then as it breaks up into floes and the floes collide and break and melt and the ice under the banks is loosened, the dark waters of the river appear at last after the long oblivion of the winter, and crags and patches and whirling blocks are borne down in the triumphant sweep of the current to be lost in the sea. And in the early days of spring the Neva, just freed from the ice, is majestic and powerful as at no other time of the year.

The Neva is all motion. But for all its vitality and volume it is almost motion in the abstract. There is little traffic on it in the region of the city. The port is at the mouth of the river and probably many residents have never seen it. Smaller coastal vessels, the steamers that ply to Reval, Riga, and Libau, to Helsingfors and Stockholm, berth under the Nicholas Bridge, the last of the bridges down stream. But higher up there are only the darting ferry-boats and the few steamers that maintain the Ladoga and Onega service and barges from the interior, though the barges mostly prefer the branches of the river and the canals, and rarely appear in large numbers in the main stream. The busy movement of human traffic is lacking, and the impression of pure motion given by the river is not diffused amongst the endless minutiae of human activities. It remains an impression of great possibilities, of latent power, of large scope for development. It reinforces by its vivid suggestiveness that sense of abstractness which dominates in the city.

In winter the motion disappears. The Neva becomes an expanse of ice. Only the sense of space remains. And this sense of space, exhilarating in summer because of the endless rushing of the stream, becomes brooding in the winter. It is still suggestive, it still holds power in its depths, but it is not power unfolding from within, developing from its own resources, but power stationary, power enthroned and waiting.

The Neva is beautiful in summer and very beautiful in winter. And in the winter the human element enters more closely into its beauty, the city becomes a worthier setting. It is a delight to look down the Neva on a winter night from the Liteiny Bridge—the broad, gleaming whiteness of the river under a starlit sky, the long line of lights on the quays throwing into relief the dark outline of embassies and palaces, the span of the lower bridge with gliding, lighted tramcars—on such evenings St. Petersburg loses its cold self-assertiveness and gains the true protecting quality of a great city.

On the opposite side of the Neva from the Winter Palace stand the seats of learning. The situation is indicative of deliberate choice, power on one side of the river, learning and the arts on the other, and commerce, too, for the Bourse is there; the idea is an expression of Peter's and Catherine's sense of magnificence. The learned institutions stand on an island, Vasilievsky Ostrov, or Basil Island, lying between the main stream of the Neva and one of its branches. Here are the Academy of Sciences, the University, and the Academy of Arts. None of these buildings, except the Academy of Arts, are distinguished by architectural beauty, but they represent a very characteristic side of the life of the capital. St. Petersburg is the gateway by which the arts and sciences of the West entered Russia, and the city has been the scene of a curious interpenetration of political power and civilisation. The interpenetration has frequently taken the form of conflict. There has been frequent hostility between the

**Seats of
Learning.**

two banks of the river. But there has been a constant process of modernisation of political power. The bureaucracy avails itself of the development of science to increase its own efficiency. There is an excellent Military Academy in St. Petersburg, in which officers pass through a severe and extensive course of instruction. Many of the students of the Academy are keenly intelligent and very versatile, and in the tramcars they may be seen reading not only text-books of tactics or strategy, but works on literary criticism and philosophy. Not a few Russian officers have made valuable contributions to science.

The Vasilievsky Ostrov is, then, the centre of enlightenment and progress in St. Petersburg. But the shadow that seems so essential an element in the life of the capital lies heavily here, because the University, with its scores of professors and thousands of students, has been a perpetual battleground between the forces of progress and the forces of reaction. The University is a big, red, barrack-like building with no pretention to elegance either inside or out. Within, bare lecture-rooms with desks and blackboards, laboratories, professors' rooms; outside, a desolate courtyard. There is nothing home-like, nothing to suggest corporate life. Yet there are over ten thousand students in the University, and their number is constantly increasing. These students come from all parts of the Empire, drawn by the strange magnetism of the capital. Most of them are poor, they rent cheap rooms, eat unappetising dinners, support themselves, or eke out their scanty resources by coaching backward schoolboys. They attend lectures diligently or slackly, as the case may be—at the present time students go to lectures very half-heartedly,—cram feverishly for the compulsory examinations every spring, and occasionally form reading-clubs or debating societies. Some pursue learning with interest and zest in spite of all difficulties. Many are indifferent and amuse themselves as they have means and inclination. The professors, too, are out of heart. There is no real corporate

life in the University, and the uniformed students who flock thither in thousands find themselves homeless.

The explanation of this melancholy state of affairs is simple. Before 1905 the Universities were full of the revolutionary spirit, and the majority of the students were actively or passively on the side of the revolutionary movement. In 1905 the Universities were freed from immediate government control, and were made autonomous under the administration of the professorial staff. When the revolutionary excitement died down the students lost interest in politics and turned with extraordinary enthusiasm to their University work. There was a sudden and real revival of learning in Russia. New sympathy and mutual understanding grew up between students and professors. All kinds of societies and clubs for special studies sprang up. The professors were delighted. Never had they met with such an eager response from the students, and they were stimulated to new efforts. But the political reaction reached the Universities. The Ministry of Public Instruction sought to regain its former immediate control and set to work step by step to destroy the autonomy granted in 1905. In the early stages of the process the students protested. At a moment when they had found an unexpected fascination in learning they were compelled to turn their attention to politics. They protested in their own way. They struck, that is, they refused to attend lectures, and they also made street demonstrations. The police dispersed the demonstrations and entering the University buildings arrested those who tried to maintain the strike by throwing about ill-smelling chemicals, and also those who took part in meetings of protest, and a large number of youths who were mere lookers on. Many of these were imprisoned for several months or exiled to the northern governments. The attempts of the professors to combat the restrictive measures led to the dismissal or removal of many leading scholars, and this was especially the case in Moscow, where the ablest and most popular men in all the

faculties were compelled to retire. The result of this policy is that the University has been reduced to the position of an aggregate of halls for lectures and examination purposes. It has no collective life. The students enrolled on its lists receive instruction, but they are not subjected to the educative influences proper to a University. Each drifts his own way; there is little possibility of grouping; the weaker ones fail; the bolder and more brazen come to the front; there is a general lowering of tone and temper, a distaste for the University that is only overcome by the necessity of passing examinations as a condition of entering the professions.

The University consists of a Historico-Philological or Arts Faculty, a Legal, Natural Science, Physics and Mathematics and Oriental Faculties. The Legal Faculty attracts the largest number of students because it opens the way to the Bar and to various kinds of Government service; formerly it owed its popularity largely to the fact that it provides courses in political economy and sociology which seemed to the students specially interesting because of their bearing on Socialism. The other faculties train teachers besides a small percentage of professors and scholars. The great proportion of students in the Oriental Faculty have the diplomatic service in view, though here, too, there are a certain number who pursue Oriental studies for their own sake. The University is well equipped, possesses many distinguished professors, and in spite of all the conflicts of recent years, it retains a tradition of scholarship which under favourable circumstances may again be richly developed.

But the University is only one of the many higher educational institutions in St. Petersburg. Students form in the city a category almost as prominent as those of military men, officials and tradesmen. There is no medical faculty in the University, but there is a Military Medical Academy which, until recently, was very liberal in its provision for students who did not intend becoming army surgeons. These

provisions have been altered, the students have been subjected to a stricter military discipline and made to wear a uniform resembling that of officers. Some of the highest medical authorities in Russia are professors at the Academy, which is splendidly equipped out of the funds of the War Office. There is a great variety of higher Technical Schools, The Technological Institute, The Institute of Civil Engineers, The Institute of the Ways of Communication (corresponding to the French *Ponts et Chaussées*), The Mining Institute, an Electro-Technical Institute, Agricultural Institutes, and many others. The Polytechnical Institute, which is situated in the suburb of Lesnoi, was founded by Count Witte during his term of office as Minister of Finances. It is a new type of educational institution giving a training in various kinds of engineering and in economics, providing, in fact, a general insight into the economic and technical side of modern civilisation. The course of instruction is astonishing in its scope, the Institute is magnificently housed and equipped, and is American rather than European in the breadth of its aims.

In the Academy of Arts students of painting, architecture, and sculpture wage hot disputes over futurism and the Italian masters. The Conservatoire now has a solidly-based reputation as a Musical Academy and gains dignity and importance even from those triumphs of Russian music which are associated with a revolt against its scholastic tendencies.

The higher education of women is well provided for in St. Petersburg, for it was here in the 'sixties and the 'seventies that the battle for the education of women was fought and won. Women were admitted to the University during a brief period after 1905, and several women completed their University course with great success. But in 1908 the Government barred the entrance to female students, and they were again obliged to have recourse to the institutions provided especially for them. The chief of these is the Women's University College on the Vasilievsky Ostrov, which was founded in

1878 by a private association with a capital of £25, but attracted such general interest and support that in a few years a suitable building was erected and provision was made for a large number of students. There are now about 6,000 students in the college, and they are distributed between Historico-Philological or Arts, Physics and Mathematics, and Legal Faculties. Many of the University professors lecture there, and there are several women professors, instructors, and laboratory assistants, most of whom are former students of the College. "Higher Courses of Lectures for Women" is the literal translation of the Russian title of the institution, and the students are commonly known as *kursistky* or "course-students." "Students and *kursistky*," or still more shortly *molodiozh*, or "the youth," are the general names for that mass of young, ardent, restless and perplexed humanity which counts for so much in St. Petersburg. Eager impulse on the one hand, and on the other the heavy weight of indiscriminating authority—that is the sad contradiction in the life of the capital which so far remains unsolved.

There is a special Medical Institute for Women which was founded in 1872 and sent a batch of women doctors to the Russo-Turkish War. There is also a Polytechnical College for Women, which among other interesting work performs the astonishing feat of training women engineers who build bridges and have worked on the construction of railways. There are a great many private colleges for women which impose less severe conditions of admission than the University College on the Vasilievsky Ostrov, which alone has a University reputation. The amount of energy and sacrifice represented by the Women's Colleges and Institutes is enormous, for they have all been founded and are all supported by means of voluntary contributions. They have shared in the troubles of the University and the other men's colleges, and the students have protested and struck, and been arrested and exiled. They have many defects which mostly arise from the lack of facilities for proper organisation. But they are

doing valuable work in training up a type of intelligent and independent women. It is curious that while women students are greatly interested in general questions and flock to public lectures on literature and philosophy, they do not seem to be particularly interested in a specifically women's question, and, on the whole, are indifferent to the suffragist movement.

A few years ago there was founded in St. Petersburg, mainly through the exertion of the alienist, Professor Bekhterev, a so-called Psychoneurological Institute. The chief aim of this institute is to give special facilities for the study of mental diseases, but it also serves the purposes of a kind of lower grade University. Lectures are given frequently by University professors on a variety of University subjects, literary, legal, philosophical, historical and economic, but the conditions of entrance to the institute permit many to become students who have not attained the University standard. Here are to be found a great many country school teachers in quest of higher education, Tartars, Armenians and Georgians, who have had no opportunity of completing a secondary school course, and Jews who have been prevented from entering the University by the provision that not more than a certain very limited percentage of Jews may be enrolled as students every year. Formerly the Psychoneurological Institute was situated on the Nevsky, and its students, men and women, were easily distinguishable in the throng by a certain nervous restlessness of manner. Now a large building has been erected for the Institute on the outskirts of the city. The Psychoneurological students form a transitional stage between the regular students of the University and Higher Technical Schools, and the hundreds who attend Commercial, Language, Feldsher, and other elementary medical courses. The number of young people who are studying something or other in St. Petersburg must be well over 50,000, exclusive of the pupils of primary and secondary schools. The mere association of the word "courses" with

St. Petersburg seems to have a fascination for provincial boys and girls. Unscrupulous adventurers take advantage of this, advertise courses of lectures on all imaginable subjects on special terms and attract the ill-prepared, the unwary, and the poor.

The students come from all parts of Russia, are of various nationalities and of very varied habits, tastes and upbringing. Subjected for a few years to the influences of the imperial city they acquire a certain common stamp. Professors notice that students from the provinces, even if they do not work very hard, display at the examinations in their third or fourth year a much higher level of intelligence than in their first year, simply because their wits are sharpened by city life. Yet the opportunities for development are far fewer than they might be considering the numbers of the students and the resources of the city. The abstract character of St. Petersburg asserts itself here in a curious way. The students are all learning something, some for practical purposes, some for the sheer love of learning, but they are all setting inquiring minds to work so as to secure some grasp on the trying problem of life. But the mere fact of their presence in St. Petersburg in such numbers supplies obvious means for solving the problem practically, by sheer manifold living, book-learning being assimilated in a generous exchange of experience amidst all the wealth of opportunity that life in a capital affords. But the natural and organic development of student life is constantly checked by restrictive measures. The students are held to their book-learning, their minds are fed on abstractions, they are artificially held aloof from the normal process of life that creates its own forms and builds strong characters. It is no wonder that students in this position become absorbed in abstract politics, or when bitter experience has shown the futility of politics, are oppressed by the sheer emptiness of life, grow reckless, live morally and materially from hand to mouth, and in large numbers find refuge in suicide. There is nothing sadder

in the life of St. Petersburg now than the daily record of suicides with its constant reminder of the bitter despair of the youth or girl who came from the provinces to the capital with golden hopes.

Quite apart from the other educational institutions stand the schools of the privileged classes, the Lyceum, the School of Jurisprudence, and the Corps of Pages, as well as the various schools for the training of officers. The two former institutions represent the closest parallel that Russia possesses to English public schools, only that the higher classes of the Lyceum and the School of Jurisprudence have a University character, and the completion of a course in these schools gives a rank in public service equivalent to that secured by the completion of a University course. They are boarding-schools with resident masters, and a conventional system of discipline in which English public school ideas are modified by the habits of wealthy Russian families.

The secondary boarding-schools for the daughters of the privileged classes are called Institutes, and are under the immediate patronage of the Imperial Family. In the Institutes great attention is paid to language and deportment, and the neat, well-mannered boy or girl of the privileged schools is a very different being from the rougher but far more frankly human pupils of the common schools outside. There are numbers of general secondary schools in St. Petersburg, both government and private schools. There are first of all the *gimnazii* or gymnasiums, dreary schools with a hard, dull routine lasting through the seven or eight classes up which boys or girls have to fight their thorny way. The *gimnazii* are fairly cheap—the fees amount to about ten pounds a year—but they are painfully lacking in humanising and vitalising influences; the abstract character of St. Petersburg is represented here in a very cold and bare form. The “real” and “commercial” schools emphasise modern as opposed to classical subjects. Attached to the German churches are German schools, which are frequently attended

by Russian children whose parents consider the German educative methods superior to the Russian. But there are a number of excellent private Russian secondary schools in which reformed methods are applied. Some of these schools are of long standing; others were founded during the revolutionary period when some of the best teachers left the State secondary schools for political reasons. In these schools the principle of displaying complete confidence in the pupils—of trusting in their sense of honour, making lessons not needless tasks, but means of arousing the pupil's interest in the subject, and stimulating inquiry—is carried out logically, and great attention is paid to what is called "general development," or all-round culture, including political science and philosophy. These newer schools are certainly superior to the State *gimnazii*, but it is difficult as yet to form an exact estimate of the value of their work. Most are still on the experimental stage. Some seem to encourage in their pupils a tendency to premature generalisation. But there is no doubt as to their awakening an interest in ideas and transmitting in a very pure form the humane tradition of the best Russian literature. One defect they share with the State schools in St. Petersburg, and that is, the lack of provision for the needs of the growing body. In some schools light and ventilation are better, in others they are worse. But all are situated in city streets; the only playground is a narrow courtyard surrounded by high walls. There is little opportunity or encouragement for sport. Some of the schools try to remedy this state of affairs by arranging week-end excursions beyond the city during the winter, and longer excursions during the summer. One private school in Tsarskoe Selo, which is conducted on English lines, gives the first place to physical training and to the hardening of the body. But the ordinary St. Petersburg high-school boy or girl spends the winter day in school in a round of lessons rarely interrupted by games, then comes home in the dusk of the afternoon and spends the evening hours in preparing endless

home lessons. In spring there is the fierce rush of examinations, the agonised dread of bad marks for idleness or as the mark of a teacher's spite, the reproaches of parents when a backward boy is sentenced to re-examination in the autumn. Then from June till the end of August rest in the *dacha* or in the country, for those whose parents have the means, while the poorer boys and girls drag through the summer months in the hot, dusty streets of the city. From September till June spending the days between school and flat, flat and school, without gardens or open spaces, with only sporadic beginnings of hockey and football on the outskirts of the city during recent years—no wonder the children of St. Petersburg look pale and anaemic and are tamed down to that submission to abstractions, that lack of great zest in living which is characteristic of the bureaucratic capital.

There are municipal primary schools, there are night-schools and kindergartens in the working-men's districts; there is a University Extension Society which provides every winter a great variety of popular lectures by prominent professors and has recently built a big People's Palace of its own. There is an army of tutors and governesses of all kinds. Surely never was city so bent on the pursuit of knowledge as St. Petersburg is. In this respect it is a true capital of the Russian people, the people of the alert, restless, inquiring mind that refuses to be put off with partial explanations, that is always searching for new aspects of truth. It is this eager spirit of inquiry that freshens the atmosphere of the city. Yet this strange capital somehow deliberately and persistently prevents knowledge from acquiring flesh and blood, from passing the test of real life, and holds it in the sphere of ghostly abstractions.

St. Petersburg has not only its schools, but its learned societies and repositories of learning. There are the Museums, the Zoological Museum with its skeletons of a mammoth, an antediluvian rhinoceros, a megatherium and other extinct monsters, the Ethnographical Museum of the Academy of

Sciences with valuable collections, particularly from the Far East and Siberia, the new Ethnographical Department of the Alexander III Museum which has not yet been opened to the public, but contains a wealth of material illustrative of the customs and religions of Russia and the neighbouring Asiatic lands. The Imperial Public Library and the library of the Academy of Sciences contain a large quantity of rare manuscripts, more particularly of Oriental works, and the number is constantly being increased by acquisitions from Central Asia and Mongolia. The Imperial Geographical Society, which now has a pretty stone building of its own near the Moika Canal, reaps the scientific fruits of Russia's expansion, equips explorers, and promotes by its publications discussions, and reports and by the work of its provincial branches the study of the ethnography, the statistical conditions and the physical geography of the Empire. The Imperial Archaeological Society studies the antiquities of the plain and its Oriental department forms the nearest Russian counterpart to the Royal Asiatic Society. At the head of the learned institutions of the Empire, bringing all their varied activities to a focus stands the Academy of Sciences, membership in the sections of which—there are sections of physics and mathematics, the Russian language, history and philology—is a reward for distinguished scholarship, while membership in the section of belles-lettres is a tribute to literary merit. The Academy, which has in the person of M. Sergius Oldenburg an energetic, scholarly, and versatile secretary, is a centre of scientific organisation, and Slavonic and Oriental studies and the natural sciences receive abundant encouragement there. In its Journals and Memoirs are recorded the chief results of Russian scientific effort. In connection with the Academy a Lomonosov Institute, named after the pioneer of modern Russian literature and learning, is being established with a view to the promotion of independent scientific investigation.

All the currents of St. Petersburg life mingle on the clear

sweep of the Nevsky Prospekt between the Nicholas Railway Station and the Admiralty. Peter's idea of cutting through the forests on the left bank of the Neva some straight avenues called "prospekts," or "perspectives," has received a brilliant justification in the Nevsky. There

The Nevsky. is something tense and exhilarating in the very straightness of this fine, broad thoroughfare, something that tempts the adventurous though heavily-padded coachman to drive his splendid horses at headlong speed, scattering humble cabmen before him. The electric tramcars which have come in of recent years have added a pretty touch of scarlet to the street scene, but they have put a check on that furious driving which the mere sight of the Nevsky used to stimulate. Taxis are running, too, and crowding out the bearded and be-kaftaned peasant cabmen or izvozchiks, and altogether the Nevsky is far busier than it used to be and has lost some of its old picturesqueness. But the charm of its main outline remains. The Nevsky is a business street, but it contains no very fine shops—in fact, there are no stores in St. Petersburg that make a great display; rich wares are bought and sold in hundreds of shops of moderate size and the Morskaia is the only street where trade assumes a certain splendour. There are three dark red palaces on the Nevsky, the churches and the Public Library, the Imperial Theatre and a garden, and a number of banks, some of which have recently adorned the Nevsky by erecting new stone buildings. There is no sense of crowding, of fierce competition that suffers no elbow room. The serenity of the capital dominates over the rush of business.

But all ways lead through the Nevsky, and its traffic is an epitome of the city's life. Chinovniks in plain clothes or in uniform going to and from government offices, students and kursistky on their way to Vasilievsky Ostrov, women making interminable afternoon purchases in the Gostinny Dvor; merchants from the provinces, contractors, and

commission agents who lodge in dreary, musty furnished rooms at the upper end of the thoroughfare, the *jeunesse dorée* of the city parading the latest modes, business men, workmen, officers, journalists, actors, idlers, beggars, sightseers from the provinces and abroad—all flow up and down the Nevsky in one steady stream, some stopping to bargain at street-corners with cabmen, some alighting from closed carriages or motor-cars, some waiting in groups for tramcar number 4, 5, or 13. On Sundays and holidays the crowd on the Nevsky is paler and less prosperous-looking, for it is then that hard-worked shop-assistants and dressmakers and poorly-paid clerks come out to enjoy that soothing, leisurely sense of spaciousness that the thoroughfare affords.

After all, though commerce and industry are thrust into the background, the great bulk of the population of the city earn their living in shop, office, or factory. The Gostinny Dvor marks the beginning of a large business area full of small shops with big businesses and markets. The traffic in the streets outside the Nevsky is frequently interrupted by processions of heavy drays laden with every description of goods, and there are far more of these drays in the streets than there would be if the big railway stations at various points on the fringe of the city were connected by something in the nature of a circular line. The Haymarket, which is also a provision market, lies on the Sadovaia beyond the Public Library. The Corn Exchange, which is the centre of another commercial area, lies beyond the Nicholas Railway Station. But although so much and such varied business is done in St. Petersburg, trade has no pride, no self-confidence even. It is modest, a little timorous, and undistinguished. The habit of dependence on the Government, of subordinating commercial initiative to the will of officials and departments is particularly strong here in the capital. The claim for shorter working hours which the shop-assistants successfully maintained during a brief period after the

revolution was a break in the routine of submission. And that most of those engaged in business are dissatisfied with the present state of affairs is shown by the fact that in the elections to the Duma St. Petersburg has invariably returned Opposition candidates.

Indeed it is only during the last few years that St. Petersburg has begun to show something like civic spirit. A

**Growth in
Civic Spirit.**

prominent building on the Nevsky is that of the City Duma or the City Council. This building has a shabby, neglected look, and its appearance is typical of the state of the administration of the city. No big European capital is so badly managed as St. Petersburg is. The city has a Governor or Prefect, called the Gradonachalnik, who is the Chief of Police and is responsible for the maintenance of order. But the administration of economic affairs is in the hands of an elective council. Under the Municipal Law the chief electoral power is in the hands of the wealthier property-owners, and for very many years the big house and property-owners in St. Petersburg, who are mostly well-to-do merchants or retired officials, formed in the Council a close and powerful coterie and managed the affairs of the city in their own interests. The privileged position of this coterie added to the constant intersection of the competency of the Council by that of the Gradonachalnik and the Government fostered corruption and checked development. The central area of the city is outwardly spick and span. But there is no proper drainage system. The water-supply is such that cholera never misses St. Petersburg in its periodical visitations to Europe. St. Petersburg did not secure an electric tramway service until 1908, and was one of the last cities in the Empire to do so, the house-owners fearing that electric trams would mean an exodus to the suburbs and a lowering of rents. The cobble pavements of many of the streets on the outskirts of the city are so full of holes that it is not wholly safe to drive over them. All imaginable defects of city government are, in

fact, well represented in St. Petersburg. After 1906 the population of the city grew restive under the misgovernment of the Council, the last cholera epidemic intensified the general discontent, and during recent elections the party of reforms has succeeded, in spite of the inequalities of the franchise, in securing a majority which includes a number of professional men and deputies and former deputies of the Imperial Duma. This new majority has pledged itself to effect a thorough renovation of the city. The changes in the City Council, the growing divergency between the burghesses and the governing classes, the increasing manifestations of individual taste in the architecture of private houses, the feverish building activity that has marked recent years, the general rise in the standard of comfort, indicate a growing determination to escape from the cold abstractions and generalisations that have hitherto formed the staple of life in St. Petersburg, and to live a full, many-coloured, many-sided city life.

The outline is being gradually filled in. The thousands who have hitherto seemed as mere human material for writing "St. Petersburg" in big, bold letters are ceasing to be a mere indiscriminate mass. Most of the working people of the city are of peasant origin. Year by year they come to St. Petersburg from Riazan, Orel, Kaluga, Yaroslavl, Kostroma, Tver, Novgorod, Viatka, Perm, Vologda, Archangel, come with their bundles in the third-class carriages of the slow trains, or else trudging on foot, in top boots or in bast shoes. Many find work as factory-workers, as cabmen, as Swiss or concierges, as dvorniks or house-yard servants, as messengers, floor-polishers, stonemasons, carriers or draymen, while many of the women become domestic servants. They live poorly at the best in dark, tiny flats in the back-yards of big houses, or in tumble-down wooden houses on the outskirts of the city; at the worst in "corners," paying for the corner of a room from a rouble and a half to two roubles (three to four shillings a month), and living on herring,

black bread, and tea, with various additions proportioned to their earnings. To a large extent they maintain their peasant outlook, associate with their *zemliaki*, their compatriots, people from their own village or government, throng to the churches early on Sunday morning, watch the weather and the passing of the seasons, thinking "now is the time for haymaking, now for harvest," and maintaining the peasant accent, the peasant decorum. Naturally they drink more in the city, and on Sundays and holidays staggering figures are to be met at every turn. The city does its fusing, levelling work upon them; they gather together in *traktirs* or tea-houses, and over glasses of weak tea slowly exchange and interpret the impressions that now come crowding in the shock of great events, now flow in a steady stream in the regular course of daily labour. They grow accustomed to the cheap amusements of the city. Hundreds are attracted to the *Narodny Dom*, the People's Palace, with its plays and operas at extraordinarily low prices of admission. In the summer evenings, or on Sundays and holidays, there are *guliania*, "walkings" in the public gardens, which are lamentably few and far between, and in the Petrovsky Park on the Petersburg Side. Here they walk in pairs, eating sunflower seeds, listening to the music of a military band, or else standing watching some melodrama on an open stage. And now there are scores of cheap cinematographs in all parts of the city, with scenes of blood-curdling tragedy, and pictures of all the wonders of the wide world. Cheap newspapers have appeared and cheap books, and there are night-schools and popular lectures, and the children go to school and grow up to be true city folk, and all kinds of new ideas spread swiftly amidst this busy, moving, alert, and endlessly communicative mass. Now they are carried away by the preaching of Father John of Kronstadt. Then comes the political upheaval with all its perplexing problems and wild hopes and bitter disappointments. Lay brothers come preaching temperance, and move hundreds to shake off

their slackness and live a cleanly life. A wave of pessimism passes through the mass, and the police records daily tell of suicides of working people—a workman jumps into a canal, a woman drinks acetic acid. It is a swift transformation of the neighbourliness of village life into a big city neighbourliness, confused, uncertain of itself, with many relapses into vice and much groping after goodness, with an inevitable urban vulgarisation and debasement of feeling, but at the same time with a sharpening of the intelligence to eager inquiry that is sometimes raised in a volume of collective emotion to the point of passionate moral questioning.

The great majority of the working people in the city—over 200,000 men and women—are employed in the factories—the cotton-mills, shipbuilding, machine and iron works, the cloth factories, boot factories, cigarette factories, that stand on the outskirts of the city, beyond the Alexander Nevsky Lavra, beyond the Narva gate, near the Finland Station, and along the banks of the Neva above the city. Among the working people the factory operatives are the pioneers of new ideas. They are peasants who have been caught in the whirl of the industrial process and are going through the inevitable mental evolution. But in their case the revolution has not merely taken the form of a gradual economic struggle. Ten years ago they were still simple peasants in their general outlook on life, with a vague longing for truth and justice. Then they were thrown into the forefront of the political conflict. A priest organised them in working-men's clubs, and then set them marching to the Winter Palace to ask for justice. Since that terrible Sunday in 1905 the working people of St. Petersburg have drawn stern knowledge from bitter experience. They have struck again and again, oftener for political than for economic reasons; they have formed trade unions, which after a short period of work were suppressed by the Government. Many of their number have been imprisoned, exiled, or executed. They

have been in constant conflict with soldiers, police, and detectives. They have been at fierce feud among themselves over the merits of various parties and groups, Social Democrats and Social Revolutionaries, Majority Social Democrats and Minority Social Democrats. They have turned away from politics in bitterness and disgust, and sunk into indifference or rowdyism, or else have plunged into the study of science and history. The movement in the factories is felt more or less directly by all the working population of the city. The old passivity is disappearing. The people is becoming conscious of itself, of its needs and its own vague aspirations. And for all the cosmopolitanism of city life these aspirations are distinctly Russian.

The capital does its stern, levelling, generalising work, trying to maintain a cold simplicity of outline, to eliminate complex detail, to continue to assert over the Empire a bare and indiscrete conception of power. But Russia is flowing into St. Petersburg, Russian life is constantly welling up in the capital and making the capital its interpreter. This warm feeling of genuinely Russian life underlying apparent hardness reconciles one to the chilliness, the heaviness that often seem inseparable elements in the city atmosphere. One symptom of the advance of national life is the presence of the Duma, which, even though it be hidden away amongst military barracks in a remote corner of the city, is still an Imperial Parliament.

But St. Petersburg, so long as it remains St. Petersburg, can never wholly lose its rigidity, its severity of outline, a certain coldness and aloofness of manner. It is the manner of a city in which are concentrated a great effort and fierce strain. The foundation of the city was the expression of Peter's gigantic attempt to raise the tsardom to the plane of a civilised world-empire. And since his day the Imperial effort has rarely relaxed. The strain of extending the Empire has been concentrated in St. Petersburg; here have been devised the methods of maintaining and administering it.

And now it is St. Petersburg that is bearing the heavy responsibility of leading the Empire through the severest and most profound crisis through which it has yet passed. The city in which is epitomised the struggle and pain of the Russian nation in its vast striving can never be a simply comfortable or cheerful capital. The tension is too perpetual, the historical responsibility too grave.