

Pompous courtiers enter bearing on velvet cushions the imperial emblems, the eagle, the sceptre, the sword, the seal, the diamond crown; and lastly there comes one who uplifts the Imperial standard, heavy with silver and gold. Then abruptly the Tsar enters, followed by the two empresses, and advances, asperged by holy water, to the little altar. Nicholas II. wears his colonel's uniform of the Preobrajenski regiment; on the greenish tunic the red ribbon of St. Alexander shows like a splash of blood. So calm a little man! There is no meaning to be read into that still, bearded face. At his right hand the Empress Mother takes her place; Maria Feodorovna wears a Russian tiara and an immense court mantle of white satin, edged with fur; the Empress, standing at the Tsar's left hand, is dressed in cream-coloured robes, sewn with gold and pearls; they are stately women, towering above the little green-clad, bearded man between them. They stand there immobile, unreal, among the liturgic figures, hieratic and Byzantine, of the old priests. Far to the rear is a little group of grand dukes; they bow low and make vague signs of the cross. The grand duchesses and ladies of the court sweep over to the right of the throne and coil their long trains in front of them; what you see is row upon row of gleaming tiaras and naked shoulders and breasts. The wine-coloured choir boys chant softly, as the service proceeds the Tsar crosses himself again and again. At last the priests make an end. The empresses pass to the side of the throne and stand in front of their women. The clergy withdraws.

The little Tsar is left alone. For a moment he does not move. An immense space has been made round him. In the silence a little boy runs out from the grand-ducal party and starts toward the Tsar, smiling and important. It is the Grand Duke Dimitry Pavlovitch; parental authority reaches out and captures him. Then with an effort, it seems, the Tsar begins his long, solitary march, the length of the hall, toward the throne. He bows slightly to right and left—the gilded dignitaries abase themselves; the deputies stare at him with eyes troubled, sceptical, bewildered. And who would not stare at this little green figure, strutting with short-legged dignity, through splendour so barbaric, to the theatrical throne? A sombre little man! With care not to disarrange the purple mantle he sits down upon the throne. A chamberlain hands him a paper. He glances it over and rises; and in a steady, metallic voice he reads the speech from the throne. Now and then the even flow of words is broken by a stress of emphasis; but he makes no gestures. Very calmly, without visible emotion, he recites the words which, though he knows it not, strip him of autocracy, and free the one hundred and forty millions of men he has held in the hollow of his hand.

"I salute in you," and he glances at the black mass of the people's deputies. "The chosen best men, whom I commanded my subjects to elect. Difficult and complicated duties await you. I am convinced that love of your native land and a true desire to be useful to it will dictate your acts. I, on my part, will protect, without wavering, the institutions which I have granted, for I am firmly convinced that you will do all in your power to serve the fatherland with devotion; to give satisfaction to the needs of the peasants, so dear to my heart; to force the education of the people and the development of their prosperity, always remembering that for a state to be really prosperous it does not only need liberty, but also order, based on the principles of the constitution. May my ardent wish to see my people happy be realized, and may I leave as an inheritance to my son a solid, well-organized, and highly civilized state. May God bless the task which is before me in collaboration with the Council of the Empire and the Duma, and may this day of rejuvenation for Russia, from the moral point of view, mark the renaissance of new forces. Go to the task for which I have convoked you, and may you fully justify the confidence of the Tsar and of the Russian people. May God help me and help you."

Ever as he says "God help us!" the wild cheers break out; it is a tumult enormous, unceasing, frenetic; wave after wave, the cheers roll across the hall, echoing and re-echoing; the grand dukes are shouting—Roris, red and swollen

with drink, waves a blue handkerchief; and the white-breasted duchesses, in brodered coronas, cheer; and the old generals and the old senators and the old technicians cuirassed in gold. The military bands crash the national hymn. Only the deputies do not cheer. They are silent and morose. On the side where they are grouped not one cry is raised. When the Tsar, passing out, bows to them, they give no sign. They huddle there, timid, melancholy, confused—it was not for this they had been sent up to Petersburg, bearing the hopes of the nation. And when the empresses have departed, followed by lesser royalties, they shuffle out of the throne room, whispering bitter words.

One old peasant (whom you shall see again) looks with sombre eyes at the naked backs and white breasts of the women and says: "Do they think they can buy us with that?"

And Senick, the Cossack, glares at dignitaries plastered with gold, and says: "They told us there was no gold left in Petersburg!"

And the little mechanic-deputy in the yellow shoes waves a dirty hand and cried aloud a phrase. They tell me what he said was: "All this is ours—and we'll take it, too!"

A pageant and an experiment—the loosing of unknown forces.

You come out on the quay in time to see the Tsar take boat. He still wears, the green trousers and boots, but has donned a white tunic. As he comes down the steps the "populace"—stationed at either extremity—raises a loyal cry. The deputies, straggling by, pay no heed. And for a little while the Tsar stands there in the sunlight, the centre of a little circle, dominated by the tall old man with grey side whiskers—the Grand Duke Vladimir. Then unaccompanied he goes down to the little wharf. The Empress and the Dowager-Empress walk slowly after him, one in black and the other in grey. The little launch puts out into the stream and the Tsar is taken back to the safety of Peterhof.

III.

THE VOICE OF THE NATION.

The Taurus Palace got its name from that general of Catherine II. who conquered those Asian hills. It was built a few years before the French Revolution. It stands in fair gardens out in the Laitény quarter, flanked by barracks of the troopers of the guard; on one side is a prison, and on the other rise the five blue domes of the Cathedral of the Resurrection of the Redeemer. Architecturally, its bastard classicism recalls the old White House at Washington. It was toward this vast edifice that all St. Petersburg marched that torrid afternoon, for the Little Father had gone and the streets were free once more. Soldiers and police looked on, indifferent. The crowd poured into the broad Chpalernia leading to the Taurus Palace, and, when the street was filled from side to side, men scaled the balconies and perched on walls and roofs. And through this close-packed mob there throbbed a fierce rhythm of exultation. There were thousands of women, old and young; some of them were pretty in a haggard way. Louder than the men they lifted the cry of liberty—svoboda! svoboda! It became a chant, a menace, a declaration of rights. Svoboda—I saw one girl who leaped in the air and spat full in the face of a trooper. He wiped his beard and did not budge. And the crowd yelled with delight. Oh, liberty had come at last! I began to understand the soul of the mob. Such menudas as these, lean and hysterical, shouted once "A Versailles! A Versailles!" and may some day shout "to Peterhof!" To Peterhof? Women of the people and female students; with them many well-dressed men, but one and all the product of the great city; city-bred, too these visionary students, Poles, Jews, Armenians, dreamers, fanatics, gaunt "intellectuals," hungry with ambition, afeared with envy, thrown up from the black under-world of city life—svoboda! So much they had already gained, that speech was free. Here one and there another started up to harangue his fellows, impatient, verbose, with Slavic indignation and fury. From the balcony of the Democratic Club in the Chpalernia an orator declaimed will words. Suddenly a little detachment of cavalry came moving down the crowded street. The mob broke and fled in panic stricken disorder. For a moment he had forgotten it was free. The soldiers rode by laughing as one laughs at children. And the women, suddenly

remembering they were free, screamed, "Death to them! Death! Death!" The orator on the balcony gesticulated and beat his palms together, and there was no end to his liberty of speech.

Heat intolerable, the sun blazing down, and from democracy in sweat and triumph an odour rising more intolerable than the heat.

Cavities began to struggle through the crowd. Police and soldiers made a way for them. Chamberlains, functionaries, ambassadors got through as best they could. Many of the deputies came afoot, fighting their way. At last two men—one a pope and the other a student—made a lane for them through the press of people; when the heavy-footed peasants passed the crowd shouted "Land and Liberty!" But the dominating cry was "Amnesty! Amnesty!" From the barred windows of the prison innumerable handkerchiefs fluttered and hands were thrust out—Amnestia!

Iron gates; then a broad court; finally you go up a strip of red carpet, and, showing your card, enter the vestibule of the palace: Further on is the Hall of Wasted Footsteps, lighted by great windows veiled by sulphur-coloured curtains; round the walls stand red velvet benches, severely Empire; fastened to the pillars are little boxes into which aristocracy tosses half-burned cigarettes and into which democracy spits. The men who come and go are history-makers. Sooner or later their names will get themselves impressed on the public mind—Stakhovitch and Kovalevski, the "liberal leaders"; Milyoukov, the historian (he was once a professor in Chicago), who is a leader among the constitutional democrats, a skeptical, theorising man; Sabokov and Feodorov, who look toward the French constitution as a basis for Russian republicanism; and, more than any one else, Roditchev, the orator of the Assembly. Speak for a moment with this man. He is Sourov, deputy of the peasants of the Valuga; a dark bearded man, with black hair waved off his forehead; and to your question, "What do you want?" he laughs, showing strong white teeth, and answers, "Everything!" No political platform could be simpler.

These men have their grip on the future.

What will they make of it? For instance, Savveller, the labour deputy from Moscow, a working printer; he has a face of savage energy, big moustache, outstanding ears, and frowning brows; or this Tartar from the government of Oufa, who wears the dress of his race—Huranitch, a slow, deep, dangerous man. And here, stop stepping, lugubly bearded, comes a Jewish rabbi and takes your hand: "I am Levine, the deputy of Wilna."

You have speech with him in German; suddenly he asks: "Do you know my sister? She is a playwright in New York. Her name is Martha Morton."

And this is Khevilenko, of Pottava, a calm old man. He takes your hand between both of his big paws and holds it while he talks: "I have been sent here to get the land for the people—the land for the people," he says slowly, "and unless I get it I shall never go back—my brothers will kill me surely." From him you turn to a tall, clear-eyed, indifferent gentleman, who watches with amused eyes those monkeys and rabbits and mechanics, and he says: "The best thing is autocracy enlightened by public opinion"—it is Engelhardt, a leader of the Autocratic party. Out of such clashing opinions and ambitions and wants arises the Duma to make a government. Before we go in, however, to the Chamber, you should mark this burly, handsome, insolent man, who strolls up and down with half-shut eyes. He is Prince Paul Dolgoroukov. Moscow elected him to the Duma; he resigned his seat in favour of a Jewish banker, Hertzgenbaum.

"He knows more about finances than I do," said the Prince, with a pretty gesture of indifference.

A son of Rurik, of older royal race than the Romanoffs, he looks upon the Little Tsar as a kind of usurper who has got in his way; and in a covert fashion he dreams of making a constitutional Russia of which he shall be the head. He seeks friends in all parties—even the reddest. "Why shouldn't they throw bombs?" he asks and shrugs his shoulders. And so with half-shut eyes he walks up and down the Hall of Wasted Footsteps, dreaming.

The Chamber is bright and spacious, a hall infinitely better than those in which England and France and Germany house their parliaments. Behind the President's chair and tribune is a great circular window; to the right, the ministerial benches—Ivolski, the new minist-

ter of foreign affairs, has already taken his place; in front the members' seats rise, circle after circle. There is a long gallery facing the tribune, set apart for journalists and ambassadors. It is nearly five o'clock when the four hundred and twenty-three deputies take their places. The presents come last, for they have waited for the "Te Deum," which was chanted in the Hall of Wasted Footsteps. There is little ceremony. M. Fritsch, the senior member of the Council of the Empire, opens the sitting in the Tsar's name; and the State Secretary, Ishull, summons the members to sign the oath of allegiance. This takes a long time; for an hour the members file past—Mohammedans, Jews, Catholics, Russians, taking the vow of loyalty to the throne. And then comes the election of President. It is evident at once that this matter has been settled in preliminary caucus. By six o'clock Muromtsev has been elected almost unanimously; and a few moments later the first President of a Russian parliament takes the chair amid a whirlwind of applause. All this is very dull and businesslike.

For a moment Muromtsev is worth studying, though, according to the inexorable law of revolutions, he will be eclipsed ere long like his prototype, the Abc Seyer. He is a grave old man, a professor of law. His turn of mind is wholly academic. And yet in the first flush of his triumph he shows a flash of energy. On the floor of the House the Tsar's functionaries come and go, whispering the Deputies into order. Muromtsev glares at them through his spectacles. Then in a harsh, schoolmasterly voice he orders them to leave the Chamber. They troop out, angry or laughing, and the deputies applaud by clapping their hands. For the first time Democracy feels its power.

In due order the Vice-Presidents and Secretaries should be elected; but the Chamber is in no mood for work. The street cries, "Amnesty! Amnesty!" are still ringing in their ears, Petrunkevitch rises. He waits for no man's permission. An old, gray insurgent, he has spent half his life in the exile of Siberia and Archangel.

"I demand the amnesty!" he shouts; and loses a torrent of high-kayed eloquence. So time brings in its revenge. When the present Tsar took the throne, Petrunkevitch came up bearing the congratulations and allegiance of the Zemstvo of Tver, and, as he bowed to his monarch, he said: "Majesty, Russia is ripe for a constitution!"

The Tsar made two answers. He said, "It is a senseless dream." And sent Petrunkevitch to Siberia.

The years have made that senseless dream a reality, and in a constitutional assembly the old exile demands liberty for those who have fought, conspired, and killed in the holy cause. Think you the deputies cheer? The wild Muscovite cries rise like points of flame and menace. Only the old Muromtsev waxes; all this is out of time and order; the speech from the throne must be answered first; and with schoolmasterly decision he adjourns the Duma, bidding the deputies come again in two days. It is not very parliamentary, but so ended the first day. Shall we call it the first act of the tragedy?

Revolutions, you know, rarely have a happy ending until they have worked their way through the red coil of melodrama.

In the Palace of the Taurus the authorities had established a buffet, a restaurant, and a tearoom. I was sitting at one of the little tables drinking tea from a glass and eating cherry-tarts. In the garden without was a little lake with an island; down the lilac-lined paths soldiers in white tunics, with red and white caps, were hurrying.

"You see our guard of honour, eh?" It was Senick, the Cossack, who spoke; he is a friend of mine. He sat down and called for beer.

"Well, at last," said I, "you've got your constitution."

Senick is a big fellow, with wild, black eyes and a heavy fist; he bent the table till the glasses danced and declared that constitutions were a farce—"We want the Commune!"

Roditchev, the great orator, came up and listened with a calm, cynical smile; then he shrugged his shoulders and lit a cigarette.

"You see," he said, "what is to be done?"

Now Roditchev is wise, broad, liberal; withal he is a man of fiery democracy—when he speaks, the blue eyes shining, the grey-blond hair tossed back from the white forehead, you feel the force of real things; and yet his knowledge leads him