

RUSSIA'S ENLIGHTENED CZAR.

Real Meaning of the Decree Issued by Nicholas II on His Father's Birthday.

Religious Intolerance in Russia.

Of all forms of Old World tyranny and medieval despotism, the one that is most abhorrent to the eyes of twentieth century progress and civilization is religious intolerance. Perhaps the principal source of the grandeur and prosperity of the United States is the absolute freedom in the matter of religious belief and the prevalence of that principle which Frederick the Great endeavored to introduce into Prussia, and which he expressed as follows: "Ein jeder soll nach seiner Weise seelig werden" (let everyone attain salvation by the means which seem to him to be best). In spite of the enunciation of somewhat similar views by Catherine the Great of Russia, who was an admirer of Voltaire, and who endeavored to apply them, after a fashion, to the people subject to her rule, Russia has remained until now more than any other country in the civilized world a land of religious intolerance, a land where withdrawal from the national church was regarded as partaking of the character of treason to the state and disloyalty to the crown, where proselytism on the part of non-orthodox denominations was treated as a criminal offense and punished as such, and where the members of creeds other than that of the state church of Russia were subjected not merely to all sorts of civic disadvantages, but likewise to downright persecution.

Primate as Well as Czar.

This has been done not so much to the existence of any laws bearing on the subject as to administrative tyranny—that is to say, to the abuse of authority on the part of the officials, metropolitan as well as provincial. In Russia the church and the throne are very close, since the Emperor, besides being the temporal ruler, is likewise the "Summus Episcopus"—that is to say, the supreme spiritual head of the church, consecrated as such at the time of his coronation, and enabled by means of this ecclesiastical dignity to take the sacraments in the manner of the clergy instead of as a mere layman. It had not been difficult, therefore, to create throughout nearly all classes of officialdom the impression that people who denied the Czar's spiritual supremacy likewise rebelled against his supremacy in temporal affairs; that orthodoxy was inseparable from loyalty to the crown, and the fact of being a Lutheran, a Roman Catholic, an Anglican, or, in one word, a dissenter of any kind or form, was equivalent to being a foe both of Emperor and state. This belief was particularly fostered during the reign of the first Emperor Nicholas, during the closing years of Alexander II, and throughout the reign of Alexander III. Not that the latter was himself an intolerant man in matters of faith. Indeed, his most trusted and devoted general, aide-de-camp, and secretary, old General Richter, was a devout Lutheran, and another of his chosen friends, and a man for whom he entertained the most profound reverence and affection, was a Roman Catholic village priest in Russian Poland.

Russia's Evil Genius.

But in an unfortunate moment he appointed his old tutor, Pobiedonostoff, to the post of procurator general of the Holy Synod, knowing him to be a man of the most sterling integrity, with the idea that he would, as the alter ego of the crown in ecclesiastical matters, inaugurate an era of greater discipline among the clergy, as well as introduce some urgently needed reforms. The procurator general, however, was a man imbued with a fanaticism in matters of religion that was totally out of keeping with the present age, and this, together with his deep-rooted devotion to the Czar, led him not only to make use of his position to foster the doctrine among all classes of officialdom that orthodoxy was indispensable to loyalty, and that religious dissent spelt treason, but also to exert all his authority as perhaps the most influential member of the council of ministers and of the senate of the empire to persecute by administrative means all the non-orthodox subjects of the Czar into joining the established church. That constitutes the keynote of the era of tyranny which may be said to have prevailed during the reign of Alexander III, and in a milder form until recently a tyranny of the existence of which it is impossible to deny, since it led to the expatriation not merely of hundreds of thousands but even of millions of subjects of the Russian crown who declined to join the orthodox church, and which resulted in the banishment of many hundreds of Roman Catholic clergy, and even some Bishops to Siberia, as well as in the closing of some of the most famous and in the dominions of the autocrat.

Pobiedonostoff Dethroned at Last.

Emperor Nicholas, however, is a man of broader views and of more progressive mind than his father. He had enjoyed the advantages of more extensive foreign travel than had ever fallen to the lot of his predecessor on the throne and being an omnivorous reader, he had been able to keep himself abreast of and in touch with foreign ideas and with the spirit of the age. While fully appreciating the integrity and the devotion of Pobiedonostoff he entertained but little of Alexander III's sympathy and affection for the man, and after repeatedly remonstrating with him he has at length asked for and received his resignation. And in order that there shall be no mistakes either at home or abroad about his complete disapproval of the late procurator general's policy, he has issued the decree of March 10 in which, after having called attention to the "principles of religious tolerance, laid down by the fundamental laws of the Russian empire," that is to say the

laws established by Peter the Great and by Catherine the Great, he demands "unwavering observance" thereof, and the assurance "to all our subjects of other religions (than the orthodox church) and to all foreign persuasions, freedom of creed and of worship in accordance with their respective rights." This means that the 12,000,000 Roman Catholics, the 7,000,000 Protestants, the 4,000,000 Jews and the 12,000,000 or more dissenters of one kind and another, in European Russia will be free to practice their religion without let or hindrance, and will be no longer persecuted and treated as disloyal and as rebels merely because they refuse to join the orthodox church, and to regard the Czar not alone as their temporal ruler, but as their spiritual Pontifex Maximus.

Reservations of the Ukase.

Of course, there is nothing in this decree to indicate that those fanatic sects of dissenters who imagine that they attain salvation by having themselves buried alive and by practicing upon themselves the most horrible mutilations will be allowed to carry on rites which are revolting to every civilized mind and opposed to the laws of every civilized country. Neither need the ukase be taken to mean that those dissenters who have sought refuge in Canada rather than serve in the army will be permitted to evade the laws on the subject of obligatory service in the army without punishment. Neither are the statutes restricting the Jews to certain portions of the empire likely to be modified by the decree, for these latter are prompted, not by religious, but by economic considerations.

That Nicholas should have selected precisely his father's birthday for the issue of this decree may be taken to mean that he wished to bear a public tribute to the fact that his father, contrary to popular belief, both at home and abroad, was the most tolerant of men in matters of religion. He wished, in one word, to dissociate Alexander III from all the religious persecutions carried on in his name, and usually without his knowledge or consent, and to identify his predecessor on the throne in the minds of the people with one of the most notable ukases that has ever been promulgated by any autocrat of all the Russias since the days of Peter the Great. It may also be taken to imply that the decree has the approval of his mother, the widowed Czarina, who, at any rate as long as Nicholas remains without a son to inherit his crown, remains a power in the land—a power that has until now been regarded as reactionary by reason of the circumstance

that, passionately devoted to the memory of her late husband, she is believed to regard any departure from his policy as impious. If Nicholas has a son, then his consort would in the event of his own death become regent during the boy's minority, and Muscovite officialdom would feel itself assured of a continuity of the Emperor's progressive policy. But as long as he remains without a direct heir the Technoviki—that is to say, all the officials, from the highest to the lowest—have no guarantee whatsoever that in the event of any sudden demise of the crown the successor—that is to say, the Grand Duke Michael—would not completely reverse his elder brother's policy, and regard with disfavor all those who had identified themselves therewith.

Michael is known to be passionately devoted to his mother, between whom and himself much the same complete confidence and intimate companionship prevail as that which existed between Queen Alexandra of England and her eldest son, the late Prince Eddie, Duke of Clarence, and he would be, as Emperor, at any rate for some years to come, wholly subject to his mother's influence. If I mention this it is because the issue of the Czar's decree on his father's birthday implies his mother's approval, and, therefore, the hope that the ukase will not remain a dead letter but receive vigorous execution and enforcement.

Caution Against Press Reports.

Criticisms of the decree, and deprecatory comment, purporting to come from St. Petersburg, should be received on this side of the Atlantic with a considerable amount of caution. For nine-tenths of the stories that reach us concerning Russian affairs, portraying the Czar, his government, and the condition of affairs in his empire in an evil light, emanate from Berlin and likewise in a minor degree from Vienna, where these tales are fabricated and published in the local press for the purpose of influencing Russian funds, which are largely dealt with on the money markets of these two great European capitals. Indeed, these Berlin newspapers and press agencies are responsible for most of the ignorance and misinformation which prevails concerning the true condition of affairs in the dominions of the Czar, and it is probably news to most people abroad that the Russians enjoy in many respects a far greater amount of popular government than do the people in republican France. Indeed, in no country of Continental Europe does the village commune or "mir," with its duly-elected elders, possess

such extensive powers, powers that comprise even the right to deport to Siberia the black sheep of the community. Then there are the cantonal or district assemblies, also elected, and the provincial councils or zemstvos, in which 64 per cent of the votes belong to the peasantry, 12 per cent to the nobility, 4 per cent to the artisans, 5 per cent to the clergy, and 10 per cent to the merchants.

All these various local parliaments are constituted by means of popular elections, and the zemstvos, which have a very large voice in the administration of justice, and in the right to levy rates and taxes, have, indeed, infinitely more power than the departmental councils general in France. In one word, Russia enjoys a far greater amount of self-gov-

ernment than foreigners imagine. Only it is local, and it is not national in the sense that there is no Imperial parliament at St. Petersburg in which the people are represented and are able to hold in check of the Imperial government the administration of the Imperial government. Russia, in one word, has local self-government throughout the empire, subject not to a national legislature, but to the theoretically autocratic Czar, Nicholas II, the most humane, well-meaning, and enlightened of European sovereigns, one who thoroughly realizes the fact that the constitutional development of his people must be gradual, since they only divested themselves of Orientalism two centuries ago, and who appreciates the importance of that old Italian adage, "che va piano va sano."

EX-ATTACHE.

STUDENTS PRESENT "THE PRINCE OF LIARS"

A comedy entitled "The Prince of Liars" was given last night by the students of the Washington School for Boys at Dunster Hall, in the presence of over eighty people, the majority of them being relatives or friends of the students. The play was an amusing one, representing the difficulties that a newly married man got himself into by being an enthusiastic reader of the "Arabian Nights." The characters introduced were represented by the following persons: H. P. Cooper, R. W. Hooper, A. D. Waring, A. Washburn, and R. R. Van Law. The comedy will be presented by the same cast at the Odeon National Park Seminary, on Saturday, March 28.

HETY GREEN VEXED; PAYS TAX ON DAUGHTER'S DOG

NEW YORK, March 21.—Rather than take chances of a fine of \$25 for failing to secure a license for the skyrterrier Dewey, Hety Green sent \$2 to the Hoboken health department today for a tag. Charles Gabagan, one of Mrs. Green's agents in Hoboken, explained while applying for the license that the dog is not owned by Mrs. Green, but is the property of her daughter Sylvia, who keeps the pet in her apartments in the Park Avenue Hotel, Manhattan, and takes it to Hoboken when she visits her mother. Gabagan said that Mrs. Green was vexed over having to pay \$2 for a dog that does not belong to her.

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<h4>MATTINGS.</h4> <p>Words would not be sufficient to express all we could say about this Matting stock. It comprises everything in China and Japan. As to assortment and price, we would have you remember that we carry no imperfect or damaged goods, no matter how low the price.</p> <p>9c for Fancy China Matting.</p> <p>15c for Excellent Fancy Matting.</p> <p>20c for Heavy Quality China Matting.</p> <p>22c for Very Fine China Matting.</p> <p>25c for Carpet Patterns in Jap Matting.</p> <p>Liberal discount on all carpet size Rugs.</p> <p>Floor Covering put on floor without cost.</p>	<h4>BEDROOM FURNITURE.</h4> <p>\$37.50 for Polished Quartered Oak Bedroom Suite, large dressing case, swelled front; cost elsewhere, \$50.</p> <p>\$24.50 for pretty Oak Suite, swelled front, dressing case, with large mirror; cost elsewhere, \$30.</p> <p>\$12.95 for 3-piece Solid Oak Bedroom Suite; cost elsewhere, \$18.</p> <p>\$18.50 for Very Good Solid Oak Suite, dressing case, with French plate mirror; actual value, \$25.</p>	<h4>CHAIRS.</h4> <p>59c for Oak, Cane Seat Chair; actual value, \$1.</p> <p>95c for High Back, Brass Arm Dining Room Chair; actual value, \$1.50.</p> <p>\$1.95 for Polished Box Seat Dining Room Chair; actual value, \$3.</p>	<h4>SIDEBOARDS.</h4> <p>This Sideboard line should be seen by every prospective Sideboard purchaser. It is positively unequalled anywhere. Over a dozen factories represented on our floor in this one line.</p> <p>\$15.95 for Handsome Swelled Front Sideboard, with large glass; actual value, \$22.50.</p> <p>\$9.75 for Good, Solid Oak Sideboard; actual value, \$14.</p> <p>\$27.50 for Very Large Oak Sideboard; actual value, \$35.</p>
<h4>50c Veils, 39c.</h4> <p>(Tomorrow Only)</p> <p>Choice of Palais Royal matchless collection of new 50c Veils, Paris novelties, plain, dotted, and figured meshes; black, white and black, and white effects. Choice for..... 39c</p>	<h4>Handkerchiefs, 10c.</h4> <p>(Tomorrow Only)</p> <p>They are sheer and pure linen, every thread, initial, in bow knot, floral, or fancy design; hand-embroidery in the corner of each; all initials are here. 10c</p>	<h4>ODD DRESSING CASES.</h4> <p>Oak, Birch, Mahogany, and Bird's-eye Maple Dressing Cases, from \$6.50 to \$150, in solid mahogany.</p> <p>\$8.75 for Pretty Golden Oak Dressing Case; actual value, \$12.</p> <p>\$12.50 for Oval Mirror, Swelled Front Dressing Case; actual value, \$18.</p>	<h4>HALL RACKS.</h4> <p>Hall Racks, Hall Seats, and Hall Mirrors of every kind.</p> <p>\$7.50 for pretty Golden Oak Hall Rack with French plate mirror; actual value, \$10.</p> <p>\$12.50 for large Oak Hall Rack; actual value, \$15.</p>
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