A STATESMAN OF RUSSIA.

CONSTANTINE POBEDONOSTZEFF.

BY ANDREW D. WHITE,
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ON arriving in St. Petersburg in November, 1892, there was one Russian whom I more desired to meet than any other—Constantine Pobedonostzeff. For some years I had seen his name in various English and American reviews, coupled with charges of bigotry, cruelty, hypocrisy—indeed, of the most hateful qualities which a human being can possess. But the fact remained that he was generally admitted to be the most influential personage in the Russian Empire under Alexander III, and that, though bearing the distinctive title of "Procurator-General of the Most Holy Synod," he was evidently no less powerful in civil than in ecclesiastical affairs.

As to his history, it was understood to be as follows: When the Grand Duke Nicholas, the eldest son of Alexander II, a young man of gentle and kindly characteristics, greatly resembling his father, died upon the Riviera, the next heir to the throne was the Grand Duke Alexander, a stalwart, taciturn guardsman, respected by all who knew him for the honesty, simplicity, and directness of his character, but one who, having never looked forward to a throne, had been brought up simply as a soldier, with few of the gifts and graces traditional among the heirs of the Russian monarchy since the days of the great Catharine.

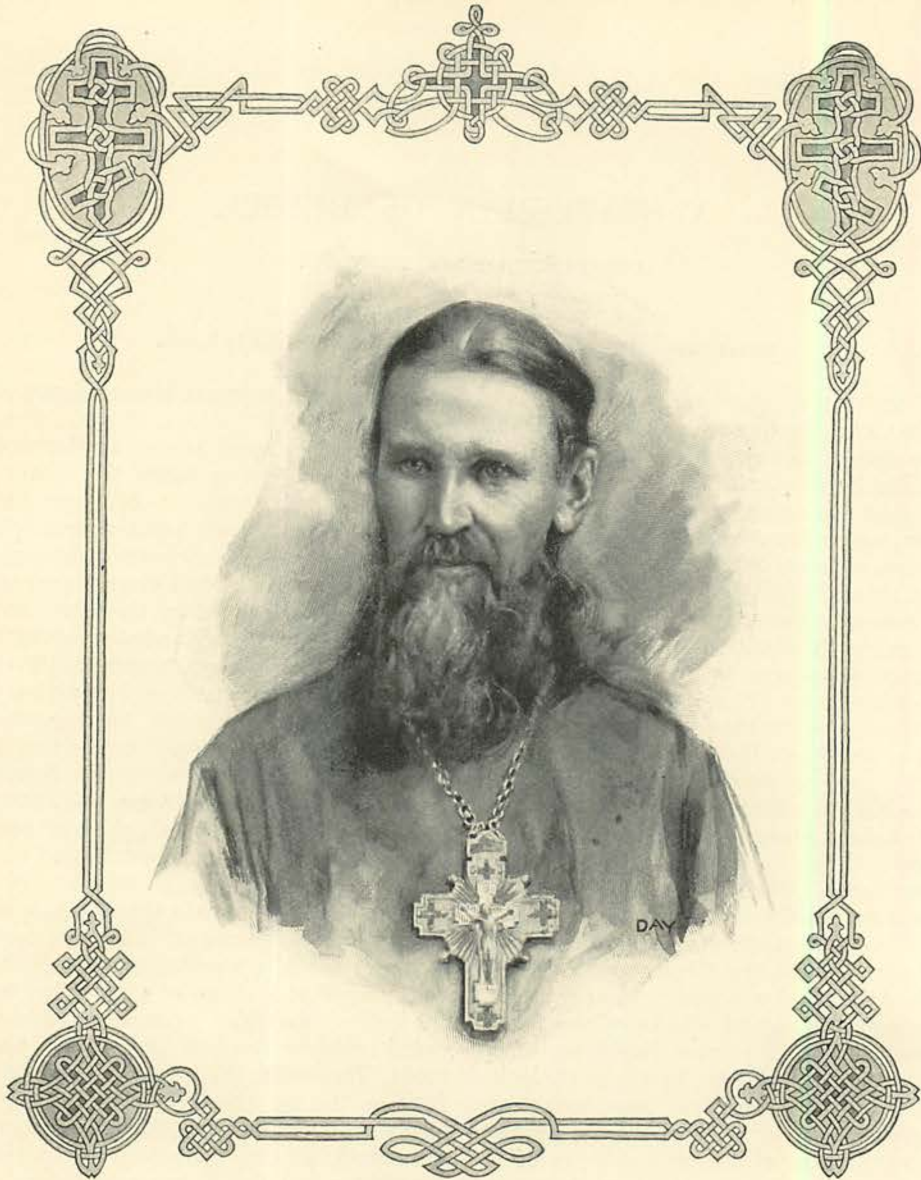
Therefore it was that it became necessary to extemporize for this soldier a training which should fit him for the manifold duties of the position so unexpectedly opened to him; and the man chosen as his tutor was a professor at Moscow distinguished as a jurist and theologian—a man of remarkable force of character, and devoted to Russian ideas as distinguished from those of western Europe.

During the dark and stormy days toward the end of his career, Alexander II had called in as his main adviser General Loris-Melikoff, a man of Armenian descent, in whom was mingled with the shrewd characteristics of his race a sincere desire to give to Russia a policy and development in accordance with modern ideas.

The result is well known to the world. The Emperor, having taken the advice of this and other counselors,—of deeply patriotic men like Miloutine, Samarin, and Tcherkasky,—had freed the serfs within his empire (forty millions in all), had given his sanction to a vast scheme by which they were to arrive at the possession of landed property, had established local self-government in the various provinces and districts of his empire, had improved the courts of law, had introduced Western ideas into legal procedure, had greatly mitigated the severities formerly exercised toward the Jews, and had virtually sanctioned a constitution which, in all probability, would have been promulgated at his approaching birthday.

But this did not satisfy the nihilistic sect. What more they wanted, it is hard to say. It is very doubtful whether Russia even then had arrived at a stage of civilization when the institutions which Alexander II had conceded could be received by her wholly with profit. But, with their vague longings for fruit on the day the tree was planted, the leaders of the anarchist movement decreed the death of the Emperor, the greatest benefactor that Russia has ever known, and one of the greatest that humanity has known, and his assassination followed. It was perhaps the most fearful blow ever struck at liberty, for it blasted the hopes and aspirations of over a hundred millions of people, doubtless for many generations.

At his death the sturdy young guardsman became the Emperor Alexander III. It is related by men conversant with Russian affairs that at the first meeting of the imperial councilors, Loris-Melikoff, believing that the young sovereign would be led by filial reverence to continue the liberal policy to which the father had devoted his life, made a speech taking this for granted, and that the majority of the councilors seemed fully in accord with him, when suddenly



DRAWN BY FRANCIS DAY, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

FATHER IVAN OF CRONSTADT. (SEE PAGE 117.)

there arose in the council this tall, gaunt, scholarly man, who, at first very simply, but finally with burning eloquence, presented a different view. According to the chroniclers of the period, Pobedonostzeff told the Emperor that all so-called liberal measures, including the constitution, were a delusion; that, however such things might be suited to western Europe, they were not suited to Russia; that the constitution of that empire had been from time immemorial the will of the autocrat, directed by his own sense of responsibility to the Almighty; that no other constitution was possible in Russia; that this alone was fitted to the traditions, the laws, the ideas of the hundred millions of various races under the sway of the Russian scepter; that in other parts of the world constitutional liberty, so called, had already shown itself an absurdity—socialism, with its plots and bombs, appearing in all quarters, attempts making against rulers of nations everywhere, and the best of presidents having been assassinated in the very country where free institutions were supposed to have taken the most complete hold. He insisted that the principle of authority in human government was to be saved, and that this principle existed as an effective force only in Russia.

This speech is said to have carried all be-

fore it. As its immediate result came the retirement of Loris-Melikoff, followed by his death, not long afterward, upon the Riviera; the entrance of Pobedonostzeff among the most cherished councilors of the Emperor; and, as the consequence of this, the suppression of the constitution, the discouragement of every liberal tendency, and that complete reaction which is in full force at the present hour.

This was the man whom I especially desired to see and to understand, and therefore it was that I was very glad to receive from our State Department instructions to consult with him regarding some rather delicate matters needing adjustment between the Greek Church and our authorities in Alaska, and also in relation to the representation of Russia at the approaching Chicago Exposition.

I found him, as one of the great ministers of the crown, residing in a ministerial palace, but still retaining in large measure his old quality of professor. About him was a beautiful library, with every evidence of a love for art and literature. I had gone into his presence with many feelings of doubt. Against no one in Russia had charges so bitter been made in my hearing. It was universally insisted that he was mainly responsible for the persecution of the Roman Catholics in Poland, of the Lutherans in the Baltic provinces and in Finland, of the Stundists in central Russia, and of the dissenting sects everywhere. He had been spoken of in the English reviews as "the Torquemada of the nineteenth century," and this epithet seemed to be generally accepted as correctly describing him.

He was to all appearance a scholarly, kindly man, ready to discuss the business which I brought before him, and showing a wide interest in public affairs. There were indeed few doctrines, either political or theological, which we held in common; but he seemed inclined to meet the wishes of our government as fully and fairly as he could, and thus was begun one of the most interesting acquaintances I have ever made. His usual time of receiving his friends was on Sunday evenings, between nine and twelve; and very many such evenings I passed with him in his study, discussing, over glasses of fragrant Russian tea, every sort of question with the utmost freedom.

I soon found that his reasons for that course of action to which the world so generally objects are not so superficial as they are usually thought. The repressive policy which he has so earnestly adopted is based not merely upon his views as a theologian, but upon his convictions as a statesman. While as a Russo-Greek churchman he regards the established church of the empire as the most primitive and the purest form of Christianity now extant, and while with his esthetic nature he sees in its ritual, in its art, and in all the characteristics of its worship, the nearest approach to his ideals, he looks at it also from the point of view of a statesman—as the great cementing power of the vast empire through which it is spread.

This being the case, he naturally opposes all other religious bodies in Russia as not merely inflicting injury upon Christianity, but as tending to the political disintegration of the empire. Never, in any of our conversations, did I hear him speak a harsh word of any other church, or of any religious ideas opposed to his own; but it was clear that he regarded Protestants, and dissident sects generally, as only agents in the progress of disintegration which in western Europe seemed approaching a crisis, and that he considered the Roman Catholic Church in Poland as virtually a political machine in deadly hostility to the Russian Empire and to Russian influence generally.

In discussing his own church, he never hesitated to speak plainly of its shortcomings. Unquestionably, one of the wishes nearest his heart is to reform the abuses which have grown up among its clergy, especially in their personal habits. Here, too, is a reason for any repressive policy which he may have exercised against other religious bodies in the empire. Everything that detracts from the established Russo-Greek Church detracts from the revenues of its clergy, and, as these are already pitiably small, aids to keep the priests and their families in the low condition from which he is so earnestly endeavoring to raise them. As regards the severe policy instituted by Alexander III against the Jews of the empire, and which Pobedonostzeff, more than any other man, is supposed to have inspired, he seemed to have no harsh feelings against Israelites as such, but his conduct seemed based upon a theory which, though I thought it mistaken, and in various conversations combatted it, he presented with much force; namely, that Russia, having within its borders more Jews than exist in all the world beside, and having suffered greatly from these as from an organization really incapable of assimilation with the body politic, must pursue a repressive policy toward them, and isolate them, in order to protect its rural population.

While he was very civil in his expressions regarding the United States, he clearly considered all Western civilization a failure. He seemed to anticipate before long a collapse in the systems and institutions of western Europe. To him socialism and anarchism, with all that they imply, were but symptoms of a wide-spread political and social disease, indications of an approaching catastrophe destined to end a civilization which, having rejected orthodoxy, had cast aside Heaven-born authority, given the force of law to the whimsies of illiterate majorities, and accepted the voice of unthinking mobs, utterly ignorant of their own highest good, and, indeed, of their own simplest material interests, as the voice of God. It was evident that he regarded Russia as representing among the nations the idea of Heaven-given and church-anointed authority—as the empire destined to save the principle of divine right and the rule of the fittest.

Revolutionary efforts in Russia he discussed calmly. Referring to Loris-Melikoff, the representative of principles most strongly opposed to his own, no word of censure escaped him. The only evidence of deep feeling on this subject that he ever showed in my presence was when he referred to the writings of a well-known Russian refugee in London, and said, "He is an escaped murderer."

As to education in the empire, he evidently held to the idea so thoroughly carried out in Russia, namely, that the upper class, which is to discharge the duties of the state, should be highly educated for those duties; but that the great mass of the people need no education beyond what will keep them contented in the humble station to which it has pleased God to call them. A very curious example of his conservatism I noted in his remarks regarding the droshkies of St. Petersburg. The droshky-drivers are Russian peasants, simple and as a rule pious, never failing to make the sign of the cross on passing a church or shrine, or at any other moment which seems to them solemn. They are perhaps picturesque, but certainly dirty in their clothing and in all their surroundings. A conveyance more wretched than the ordinary street droshky of a Russian city could hardly be conceived. Measures had been proposed for improving this system, but he could see no use in them. The existing system was thoroughly Russian, and that was enough. It appealed to his sense of conservatism, and the droshky-drivers, with their Russian caps, their long hair and beards, their picturesque caftans, and their kindly, deferential demeanor, satisfied his esthetic sense.

What seemed to me a clash between his orthodox conservatism on one side and his Russian pride on the other, I discovered on returning from a visit to Moscow in which I had had sundry walks and talks with Tolstoi. On my referring to this, he showed some interest. It was clear that he was separated by a whole orb of thought from the great novelist, yet it was none the less evident that he took pride in him. He naturally considered Tolstoi as hopelessly wrong in all his fundamental ideas, and yet was himself too much a man of letters not to recognize in his brilliant countryman one of the glories of Russia in the present epoch.

But the most curious—indeed, the most amazing—revelation of the man I found in his love for American literature. He is a wide reader, and in the whole breadth of his reading American authors were evidently among those he preferred. Of these, Hawthorne, Lowell, and, above all, Emerson were his favorites. Curious, indeed, was it to learn that this "arch-persecutor," this "Torquemada of the nineteenth century," this man whose hand is especially heavy upon Catholics and Protestants and dissenters throughout the empire, whose name is spoken with abhorrence by millions, within the empire and without it, still reads as his favorite author the philosopher of Concord! He told me that the first book which he ever translated into Russian was Thomas a Kempis's "Imitation of Christ"; and of that he gave me the Latin original from which he had made his translation, with a copy of the translation itself. He also told me that the next book which he translated was a volume of Emerson's essays; and he added that for years there had always lain open upon his study table a volume of Emerson's writings.

There is thus clearly a relation of his mind to the literature of the Western world very foreign to his feelings regarding Western religious ideas. This can be accounted for, perhaps, by his own character as a man of letters. That he has a distinct literary gift is certain. I have in my possession articles of his, and especially a poem, in manuscript, which show deep poetic feeling and remarkable power of expression.

It is a curious fact that, though so fond of English and American literature, reading it with accuracy and ease, he utterly refuses to converse in English. His medium of communication with foreigners is always French. On my asking him why he would not use our

language in conversation, he answered that he had learned it from books, and that his pronunciation of it would expose him to ridicule.

In various circles in St. Petersburg I heard him spoken of as a hypocrite; but a simple sense of justice compels me to declare this accusation unjust. He, indeed, retires into a convent for a portion of every year, to join the monks in their austerities and religious exercises; but this practice is, I believe, the outgrowth of a deep religious feeling. On returning from one of these visits to the monastery, he brought me a large Easter egg of lacquered work, exquisitely illuminated. I have examined, in various parts of Europe, beautiful specimens of the best periods of medieval art; but in no one of them have I found anything in the way of illumination more perfect than this which he brought me from his monkish brethren. In nothing did he seem to unbend more than in his unfeigned love for religious art as it exists in Russia. He discussed with me one evening some photographs of the new religious paintings in the Cathedral of Kieff in a spirit which showed that this feeling for religious art is one of the deepest characteristics of his nature.

He was evidently equally sensitive to the beauties of religious literature. Giving me various books containing the services of the Orthodox Church, he dwelt upon the beauty of the Slavonic version of the Psalms, and upon the church hymnology especially, as embodying worthily the most elevated thoughts and aspirations.

The same esthetic side of his nature was shown at various great church ceremonies. It has happened to me to see Pius IX celebrate mass, both at the high altar of St. Peter's and in the Sistine Chapel, and to witness the ceremonies of Holy Week and of Easter at the Roman basilicas, and at the time it was hard to conceive anything of the kind more impressive; but I have never seen any other church function, on the whole, so imposing as the funeral services of the Emperor Nicholas during my first visit to Russia, nor have I ever heard any other music so beautiful as that of the three great church choirs which took part in them, and at various great imperial weddings, funerals, name-days, and the like, during my second visit. On such occasions Pobedonostzeff frequently came over from his position among the high ministers of the crown to explain to us the significance of this or that feature in the ritual or in the music. It was plain to see that these things touched what was deepest in him, and that, whatever else may be said of him, it must be confessed that in his attachment to the church he is sincere.

Nor were these impressions made by him peculiar to me. It fell to my lot to present to him one of the most eminent journalists our country has ever produced, the late Nestor of the American press—one who could discuss on even terms with any European statesman all the leading modern questions. This countryman of mine had been brought into close contact with many great men, but it was plain to see—what he afterward acknowledged to me—that he too was most deeply impressed by this eminent Russian. The talk of two such men threw new light upon the characteristics of Pobedonostzeff, and strengthened my impression of his strong intellectual qualities and of his sincerity.

In regard to the relation of the Russo-Greek Church to other churches I spoke to him at various times, and found in him no personal feeling of dislike to them. The nearest approach to such a feeling appeared, greatly to my surprise, in certain references to the Greek Church as it exists in Greece. In these he showed a spirit much like that which used to be common among High-church Episcopalians in speaking of Low-churchmen. Mindful of the earnest efforts made by the Anglican communion to come into closer relations with the Russian branch of the Eastern Church, I at various times broached that subject, and the glimpses I obtained of his feeling regarding it surprised me. Previous to these interviews I had supposed that the main difficulty as to friendly relations between these two branches of the Church Universal had its origin in the Filioque clause of the Nicene Creed. As is well known, the Eastern Church adheres to that creed in its original form,—the form in which the Holy Ghost is represented as "proceeding from the Father,"—whereas the Western Church adopts the additional words "and from the Son." That the Russo-Greek Church is very tenacious of its position in this respect, and regards the action of the Western Church, Catholic and Protestant, in this matter as savoring of blasphemy, is well known, and there was a curious evidence of this during my stay in Russia. Twice during that time I heard the "Missa Solennis" of Beethoven. It was first given by a splendid choir in the hall of the University of Helsingfors. That being in Finland, which is mainly Lutheran, the creed

was sung in its Western form. Naturally, on going to hear it given by a great choir at St. Petersburg, I was curious to know how this famous clause would be dealt with. In various parts of the audience were priests of the Russo-Greek faith, yet there were very many Lutherans and Calvinists; and I watched with some interest the approach of the passage containing the disputed words. But when we reached this, it was wholly omitted —any allusion to the "procession" was evidently forbidden. Great, therefore, was my surprise when, on asking Pobedonostzeff, as the representative of the Emperor in the Synod of the Empire, the highest body in the church, and he the most influential man in it, really controlling archbishops and bishops throughout the empire, whether the Filioque clause is the insurmountable obstacle to union, he replied: "Not at all; that is simply a question of dialectics. But with whom are we to unite? Shall it be with the High-churchmen, the Broad-churchmen, or the Low-churchmen? These are three different bodies, with distinctly different ideas of church order—indeed, with distinctly different creeds. Which of these is the Orthodox Church to regard as the representative of the Anglican communion?" I endeavored to show him that the union, if it took place at all, must be based on ideas and beliefs that underlie all these distinctions; but he still returned to his original proposition, which was that union is impossible until a more distinct basis than any now attainable could be arrived at.

I suggested to him a visit to Great Britain, and his making the acquaintance of leading Englishmen; but to this he answered that at his time of life he had no leisure for such a recreation ; that his duties absolutely forbade any such indulgence.

In regard to relations with the Russo-Greek Church on our own continent, he seemed to speak with great pleasure of the treatment that Russian bishops had received in our country. He read me letters from a member of the Russo-Greek hierarchy, full of the kindliest expressions toward Americans, and especially acknowledging their friendly reception of him and of his ministrations. Both the archbishop and Pobedonostzeff himself were very much amused over one fact mentioned in this letter, which was that the Americans, after extending various other courtesies to the archbishop, "offered cigars."

He discussed the possibility of introducing the "Holy Orthodox Church" into the United States, but always disclaimed zeal in religious propagandism, saying that the church authorities had quite enough work to do in extending and fortifying the church throughout the Russian Empire. He said that the pagan tribes of the imperial dominions in Asia seemed more inclined to Mohammedanism than to Christianity, and gave as the probable reason the fact that the former faith is much the more simple of the two. He was evidently unable to grasp the idea of the Congress of Religions at the Chicago Exposition, and seemed inclined to take a mildly humorous view of it as one of the droll inventions of the time.

He appeared to hold our nation as a problem apart, and was perhaps too civil, in his conversations with me, to include it in the same condemnation with the nations of western Europe, which had, in his opinion, gone hopelessly wrong. He also seemed drawn to us by his admiration for Emerson, Hawthorne, and Lowell. When Professor Norton's edition of Lowell's letters came out, I at once took it to him, and it evidently gave him great pleasure, perhaps because it revealed to him a civilization, life, and personality very different from anything to which he had been accustomed. Still, America seemed to be to him a sort of dreamland; he constantly returned to Russian affairs as to the great realities of the world. Discussing, as we often did, the condition and future of the wild tribes and nations within the Asiatic limits of the empire, he betrayed no desire either for crusades or intrigues to convert them; he simply spoke of the legitimate influence of the church in civilizing them.

I recall a brilliant but denunciatory article, published in one of the reviews some time since by a well-known nihilist, which contained, in the midst of various bitter charges against the Russian statesman, a description of his smile, which was characterized as forbidding and even ghastly. I watched for this famous smile with much interest, but it never came. A smile upon his face I have often seen, but it was a gentle, kindly smile, with no trace of anything ghastly or cruel in it.

He seemed to take pleasure in the society of his old professorial friends, and one of them he once brought to my table. This was a professor of history, deeply conversant with the affairs of the empire, and we discussed the character and career of Catharine II. The two men together brought out a mass of curious information, throwing a strange light upon transactions which only the most recent historians are beginning to understand. At one of Pobedonostzeff's visits I

tested his knowledge in regard to a matter of special interest, and obtained a new side-light upon his theory of the universe. There is at present on the island of Cronstadt, at the mouth of the Neva, a Russo-Greek priest, Father Ivan, who enjoys throughout the empire a vast reputation as a saintly worker of miracles. This priest has a very spiritual and kindly face. He is known to receive vast sums for the poor, which he distributes among them, while he himself remains impoverished. I was assured by persons of the highest character, and those not only Russo-Greek churchmen, but Roman Catholics and Anglicans, that there could be no doubt as to the reality of the miracles, and various examples were given me. So great is Father Ivan's reputation in this respect that he is in constant demand in all parts of the empire, and was even summoned to Livadia during the last illness of the late Emperor. Whenever he appears in public great crowds surround him, only hoping to touch the hem of his garment. His picture is to be seen, with the portraits of the saints, in vast numbers of Russian homes, from the palaces of the highest nobles to the cottages of the lowliest peasants.

I may be pardoned for repeating here an experience, which I have related elsewhere, which throws light on the ideas of the Russian statesman.

On my arrival in St. Petersburg, my attention was at once aroused by the portraits of Father Ivan. They ranged from photographs absolutely true to life, which revealed a plain, shrewd, kindly face, to those which were idealized until they bore a near resemblance to the conventional representations of Jesus of Nazareth.

One day, in one of the most brilliant reception-rooms of the northern capital, the subject of Father Ivan's miracles having been introduced, a gentleman of very high social position, and entirely trustworthy, spoke as follows: "There is something very surprising about these miracles. I am slow to believe in them, but I know the following to be a fact. The late Metropolitan Archbishop of St. Petersburg loved quiet, and was very averse to anything which could possibly cause scandal. Hearing of the wonders wrought by Father Ivan, he summoned him to his presence, and solemnly commanded him to abstain from all the things which had given rise to these reported miracles, as sure to create scandal, and with this injunction dismissed him. Hardly had the priest left the room when the archbishop was struck with blindness; and he remained in this condition until the priest returned, and restored his sight by intercessory prayers." When the present writer asked the person giving this account if he directly knew these facts, he replied that he was, of course, not present when the miracle was wrought, but that he had the facts immediately from persons who knew the parties concerned, and were cognizant directly of the circumstances of the case.

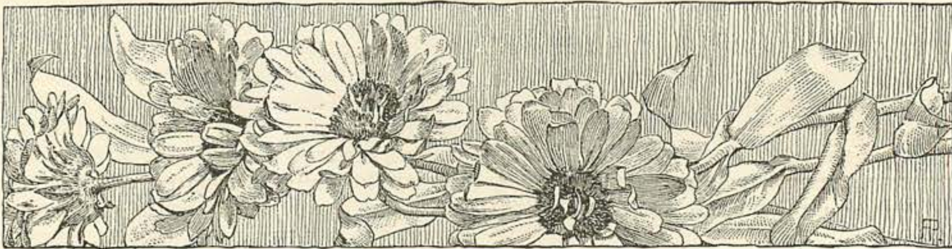
Some time afterward the present writer, being at an afternoon reception of one of the greater embassies, the same subject was touched upon, when a distinguished general spoke as follows: "I am not inclined to believe in miracles, in fact, am rather skeptical; but the proofs of those wrought by Father Ivan are overwhelming." He then went on to say that the late Metropolitan Archbishop was a man who loved quiet and disliked scandal; that on this account he had summoned Father Ivan to his palace and ordered him to put an end to the conduct which had caused the reports concerning his miraculous powers, and then, with a wave of his arm, had dismissed him. The priest left the room; and from that moment the archbishop's arm was paralyzed, and it remained so until the penitent prelate again summoned the priest, by whose prayers the arm was restored to its former usefulness. There was present at the time another person besides the writer who had heard the previous statement as to the blindness of the archbishop; and on our both questioning the general if he were sure that the archbishop's arm was paralyzed, as stated, he declared that he could not doubt it, as he had it directly from persons, entirely trustworthy, who were cognizant of all the facts.

Some time later, meeting M. Pobedonostzeff, I asked him which of these stories was correct. He answered immediately: "Neither. In the discharge of my duties, I saw the archbishop constantly down to the last hours of his life, and no such event ever occurred. He was never paralyzed, and never blind." But the great statesman and churchman then went on to say that, although this story was untrue, there were a multitude of others, quite as remarkable, in which he believed; and he then went on to give me a number of legends showing that Father Ivan possesses supernatural knowledge and miraculous powers. These he unfolded to me with much detail, and with such a real accent of conviction that we seemed surrounded by a medieval atmosphere, in

which signs and wonders were the most natural things in the world.

Acting in accordance with his views of duty, Pobedonostzeff has, of course, aroused bitter enmities. Personages of great influence and of every belief have for years labored to discredit him with the Emperor, and to bring about his downfall. At various times during my stay reports came that these efforts had been successful, that he had been treated with coolness at the Winter Palace, and that his sway was ending. But in every case these reports were soon seen to embody hope rather than fact; and on one of these occasions, when the report of his downfall was even more circumstantial than usual, one of his most bitter enemies, a lady moving in the highest court circles, said to me: "Look out now for some new monstrosity in the shape of persecution. I have always noted that a report of his disgrace is only the prelude to some new and ingenious form of outrage against his religious or political opponents."

Such is the man who, during the reign of Alexander III, exercised vast power throughout the Russian Empire, the statesman who stood nearest the throne then, and who apparently stands nearest the throne now. He is indeed a study. The descriptive epithet which seems to cling to him, "the Torquemada of the nineteenth century," he once discussed with me in no unkindly spirit—indeed, in as gentle a spirit as can well be conceived. His life furnishes a most interesting study in churchmanship, in statesmanship, and in human nature, and shows how some of the men most severely condemned by modern historians—great persecutors, inquisitors, and the like—may have based their actions on theories the world has little understood, and may have had as little innate ferocity as their more tolerant neighbors.

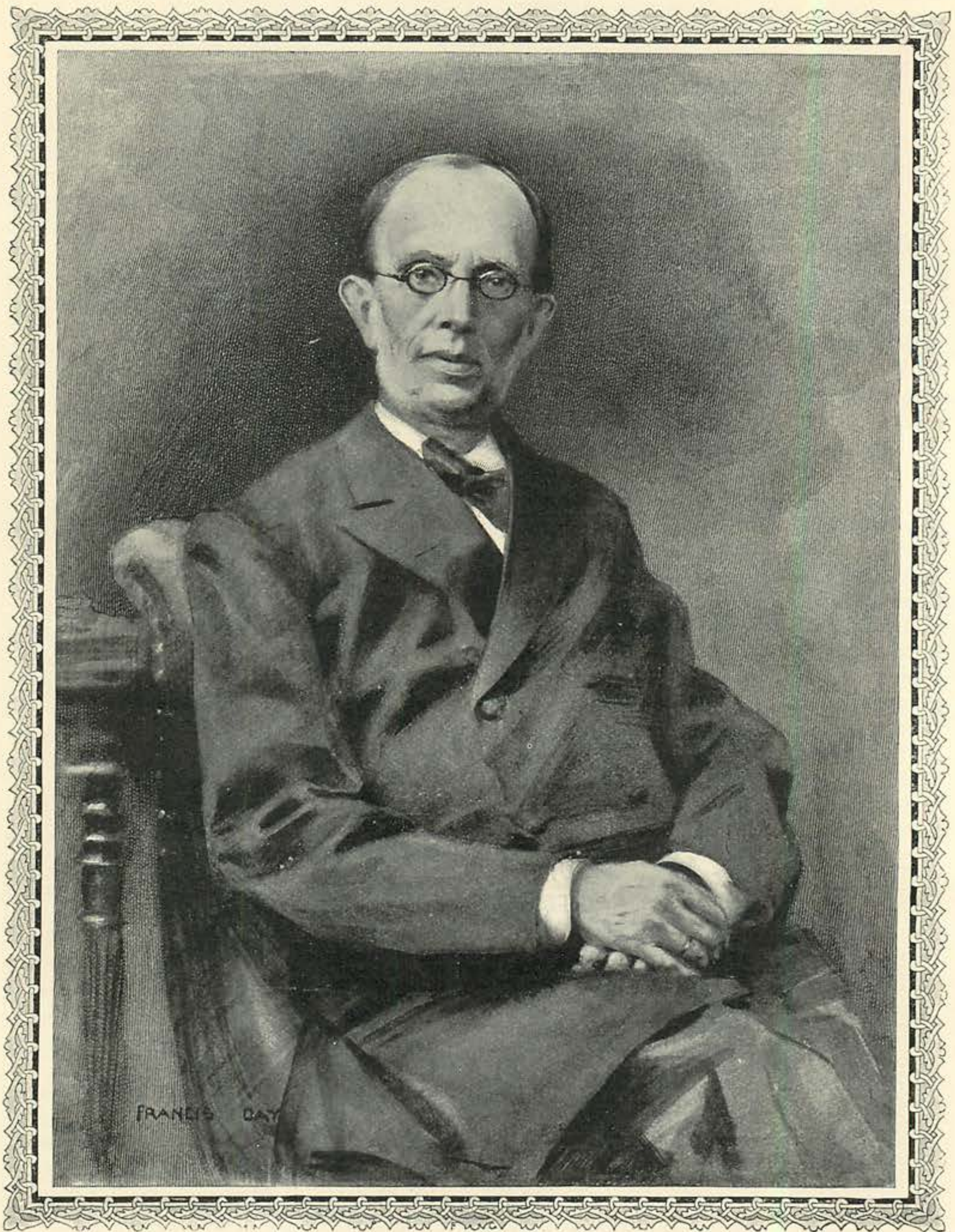


AFTER-DINNER ORATORY.

BY BRANDER MATTHEWS.

A FRIEND of mine considers it to be a most curious coincidence that the rise of after-dinner oratory in New York was almost simultaneous with the decline of negro minstrelsy. He is ready enough to admit that the banquet-hall is not the fit arena for the perfervid magniloquence of Patrick Henry, but he holds also that it should not be a mere circus-ring for the idle capering of Joe Miller. He tells me that even at the reunions of the alumni of his college, where those present may be supposed to be every one a gentleman and a scholar, he is annoyed to discover that not a few of the speakers vie with one another in stringing together cheap anecdotes wholly unrelated to the topic in hand; and he declares that this is no better than the competitive grinning through a horse-collar which used to be an attraction in the country fairs of Merry England. He wishes absolutely to banish the anecdote from the festive board, on the ground that the man who is invited to address him has no right to substitute for the expected speech the recital of a leaf from an old jest-book.

And here it seems to me that my justly irritated friend goes too far. Like many reformers, he urges total abstinence where all that is needed is moderation in use. The anecdote should be ancillary always; it is a handmaiden to be summoned only when wanted. The comic story is a good servant, but a bad master. Only too true is it that some postprandial addresses are so thin in theme, and so thick with jokes, that they resemble the peanut candy, where you cannot see the candy for the peanuts, or (to put it only a little differently) where you cannot catch the thought for the chestnuts. The man who habitually makes a speech of this sort is wont to think of himself as a wit; but, as *Olivia* says in Wycherley's play: "He a



DRAWN BY FRANCIS DAY, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

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