HOW BRITISH SUBJECTS HAVE MADE RUSSIA.

AND TO-DAY RUSSIA WOULD LIKE TO UNMAKE BRITAIN.

TO those who know something of the expansion of Russia, how she has become a great Power, and how the Romanoffs have risen, the "Situation in the Far East," which has been the leading line in the newspaper posters for so many months, affords a strange object-lesson in the art of irony. Juggling with mysterious treaties, manipulating solemn-looking Orientals who inevitably recall Bret Harte, the Czar stands on Chinese soil, obdurate, even defiant. He has outwitted our statesmen at every turn. He pooh-poohs the Cecil whose ancestors were expert diplomats when his own were barbaric. He bamboozles the Scot, Sir Claude MacDonald, when he has really been lifted to his pinnacle of power by Scotsmen most of all. His shadow dogs us at every step in the East, just as Napoleon's did eighty years and more ago, when the mere mention of Bonaparte was used to terrify the baby Britisher in his cradle. But there is this difference! France owed us nothing in those days—rather were we the debtors; for had she not given us a new mode of life when she sent William from Normandy, to say nothing of many a Princess—and principle? But Russia is the Russia we know, because we have shown her the way. Till we took her in hand—not officially perhaps, but none the less practically—Russia was but a vast conglomerate of hordes of undisciplined tribes. Britain helped to unify them all under the master touch of Peter; and having drilled his armies and created his navy, Britain helped him to expand in every direction, crushing the Turk in the south-west, solidifying the frontier on the west, and pushing far east. In short, Britain forged a sword and put it into the Czar's ambitious hand, and now he threatens to wield it for our chastisement, annexing our methods of expansion; menacing here and defying there; putting us to infinite expense in keeping a great army on the frontier of our Indian Empire; and now to-day parting China on a Slav scheme, so that we shriek impotently lest our prestige in the East be crippled. That is the ironic significance of the present crisis which a knowledge of Russia's evolution suggests; and it is all the more ironical because this year happens to be the two hundredth anniversary of Peter the Great's visit to England, and his carrying off of five hundred Englishmen to help him to build his Empire.

The Scot was among the first to invade Russia. Equipped with a magnificent system of cheap education, but offering few opportunities for the ultimate manipulation of these advantages, Scotland had to send her youths over the length and breadth of Europe. England was too antagonistic in its aims as yet to utilise this raw material, so the Scot went elsewhere. France swarmed with him; the German States gladly availed themselves of his services; and the great religious struggles of the day naturally absorbed the military energies of a people ever prone to dwell on dialectics. Russia, inchoate as it was, did not escape his notice. "The influx of Scotch," says Mr. Morfill, "had begun in the reign of Ivan the Terrible (1531-1584), and Russian history teems with the names of Bruces, Gordons, Leslies, Hamiltons, Carmichaels, and Dalziels." Some of these settled permanently in Russia and founded families whose names survive in

strangely perverted forms. Thus Hamilton became Khomutov, while the great poet Lermontov; who died in 1841, pointed to a Scottish ancestor bearing the ancient name of Learmont.

One of the most notable Britishers in the making of Russia was undoubtedly Patrick Gordon, of whom his great clansman Byron wrote—

> Then you've General Gordon
> Who girded his sword on
> To serve with a Muscovite master,
> And help him to polish
> A nature so owlish—
> They thought shaving heads a disaster.

The house of Gordon is divided into two great sections: legitimate and the "natural." This Patrick belonged to the latter (which has given birth to Lord Aberdeen's family), his father owning a small estate in the North called Auchleuchries. His side of the house have ever been notable fighters, his own main branch having produced in our own century Thomas Gordon, who helped the Greeks to win their freedom in 1830, and also Charles Gordon, the hero of the very China now in dispute. Young Patrick Gordon once wrote, "*Aliens* are scarcely employed in England, so that foreign service becomes a necessity." Russia was only too glad to take the men that England despised. So Gordon found himself at the age of twenty in the Swedish army fighting the Protestant cause of Gustavus, though he himself was a staunch Catholic. After an adventurous career, now under the banner of Sweden, now under the colours of Poland, he entered the Russian army in 1661, to serve the Czar Alexis, finding many of his countrymen—bearing such characteristic names as Douglas, Airth, Keith, Burnet, Calderwood, Guild, Stuart, and Menzies—installed as officers. From that year to the day of his death, thirty-eight years later, he was helping Russia to become the power she is. The task was not a pleasant one, for, though he found the Russians half barbaric, he and the other "foreign devils" who had come to civilise her were "looked upon by the best sort as scarcely Christians, and by the plebeians as mere Pagans."

Gordon spent the first year of his life in Russia warring against the Turks and the Tartars, and rising to be Lieutenant-General, but it was not until the advent of Peter the Great that the tenacious Scot's ability was fully recognised. The Greek Church opposed Gordon as a heretic, but Peter defied the Church and set aside all prejudice against foreigners; for none knew better than he that Russia must be civilised from without. Thus, when Peter came to London, precisely two hundred years ago, he not only saw our methods, but he annexed a little army of the men who practised them. He managed to get some excellent soldiers, for the Stuart sympathies of the military classes of England had driven many of our best soldiers into exile. It was Gordon who publicly congratulated Peter (in the name of the army) on the birth of poor Alexis. It was Gordon who really took Azov. It was Gordon who saved Peter from the mutinous Strelitzes of 1698, and, indeed, our chief knowledge of this conspiracy is due to Gordon's autobiography, which is one of the great national documents of Russia, and has been translated into German, but only partly into English. When Gordon died in 1699, Peter felt his loss intensely, and gave him a gorgeous funeral in Moscow, while he also took both his sons and his son-in-law (the Jacobite plotter, Alexander Gordon) into the army.

Then Peter went to Ireland for another remarkable general; for, having found such help in a Scotchman, he took a Limerick man, Peter Lacy, who came of a family of ubiquitous fighters. Lacy's father and two of his brothers had fallen for France. He himself at the age of thirteen helped King James to defend Limerick, and after having served Poland he was selected by Peter out of a hundred officers to train Russian troops. Lacy began as a Major in Colonel Bruce's regiment, but he soon got a regiment of his own, the Grand Musketeers, composed of a hundred Russian nobles, armed and horsed at their own expense. He helped Peter to reduce the Cossack chief, Mazeppa, at the battle of Pultowa, 1709; during the next twelve

years he fought the Swedes, the Danes, and the Turks in turn, extending Russia's sphere of influence in each campaign. In 1723 he took his seat on the Council of War at St. Petersburg; he helped to prop up Poland by putting the Saxon princelet Augustus on the throne, and then he helped to knock him over by attacking Dantzig. He fought the Swedes in 1741, with James Keith, Frederick the Great's famous Field-Marshal, as his second in command. His promptness in suppressing a mutiny of the Russian Guards in 1742 "saved St. Petersburg and perhaps the Empire." He was created a Count, while he ended his life in 1751 as the Governor of Livonia, where his vast estates lay; and his kinsman, Maurice Lacy, was afterwards Governor of Grodno.

But Peter had even greater dreams than the reform of his army. He was equally keen on a navy, and to this end he employed many a Britisher. One of these was Thomas Gordon, a Scot, who had left our Navy owing to his close friendship with the Pretender, who was perpetually urging him to induce Peter to invade England. Gordon was fifty-seven when he quitted England in 1719, but Peter made him at once a rear-admiral, and ultimately Governor of Cronstadt, bestowing on him the Order of St. Alexander. Indeed, to this Gordon as much as to Lacy Russia owed Dantzig, for had not his fleet come up in time the town would undoubtedly have held out. Far greater than Gordon, however, was another Scot, Samuel Greig, who left his native kingdom of Fife to fight our battles in France. In 1763 he entered the Russian navy, and within seven years he was a rear-admiral. Greig surrounded himself with Scottish officers, and they not only won Russia's immediate battles, but also perfected her as the fighter of the future. He remodelled the Russian navy from top to bottom, disciplining the crews and educating the officers, and he also gave Russia his son, Alexis Samuilovitch Greig, who was made a middy at birth and rose to be a rear-admiral. It is to him that Russia owes its Black Sea fleet, and, strange to say, his son (the third generation)

PETER THE GREAT.
From the Painting by Sir Godfrey Kneller.

opposed us from the Russian side during the Crimean War, distinguishing himself at the siege of Sebastopol.

Another of Peter's great discoveries was John Perry, the engineer, who was a Gloucestershire man. He began in our Navy and lost his arm in 1690, while engaging a French privateer. Peter met him in this country and engaged him on the spot as his Comptroller of Maritime Works at a salary of £300 a year—which during fourteen years he drew only once. For that is one of the strange things about this absorption of British brains by Russia. The Czar, on the impulse of a generous moment, gave his helpers and servers estates and honours; but they did not dream of paying salaries regularly, if at all. Even Gordon, Peter's favourite, complained bitterly of the "poor subsistence." Perry rendered notable service to Russian commerce by making a canal between the Volga and the Don, and rendering the Voronej River navigable from the city of Voronej to the Don. But as beggary stared him in the face, he ultimately came back to England, where he carried out some important engineering works.

Nor did this method of using Britain end with Peter. His successors carried it on—notably Catherine, who actually took across the English doctor, Thomas Dimsdale, to inoculate her for smallpox. The Czar Alexis had an English physician at his Court—to wit, Samuel Collins, who wrote a remarkable book on the state of Russia at the end of the seventeenth century. To another doctor, Surgeon John Cook, who was attached to Count Peter Lacy's army, we owe another classic work on Russian manners. A part of Finland was grasped by Russia in 1742 by reason of the martyrdom of a Scot, Major Malcolm Sinclair. In 1739 he was sent by Sweden to make a treaty with Turkey, so that the perpetual encroachments of Russia might be checked. On his way home he was trapped in Silesia by two of the creatures of Biren, the German favourite of the Empress Anne, and foully murdered. Sweden was so angry on his behalf that it declared war on Russia two years later, only to be beaten and robbed of another slice of Finland.

Even a British peer entered the service of Russia, for John Lindsay, the twentieth Earl of Crawford, fought with the Russians against the Turks in 1738. At the battle of Krotzka, near Belgrade, in 1739, his horse was shot under him, and he was so badly wounded in the thigh that he succumbed to the injury ten years later, when the wound broke out for the twenty-ninth time.

The most notable foreigner in Catherine's service was John Elphinstone, who refitted the Russian navy in 1770, and who gave one of his sons to the same service. Again, it was a British tar, Joseph Billings (a native of Turnham Green), who explored the seas lying east of Siberia between the years 1785 and 1794; while a Scotsman named Mackenzie was the first to show the capacities of Sebastopol as a harbour.

Most of the men I have mentioned, in spite of all temptations to belong to other nations, remained Englishmen, returning home to end their arduous careers in peace and safety. There were many exceptions, however, one of them being the family of Barclay de Tolly, one of the oldest houses in Scotland. They settled down at Riga, and in the end of last century three of them entered the Russian army and became ennobled. The most famous of them was Michael Bogdanovitch Barclay de Tolly, who commanded one of the three divisions of the Russian army that broke the back of Napoleon in 1812; he rose to be a Field-Marshal, and was ultimately created a Prince. A regiment of carabineers is named after him.

During the present century English gold has been freely spent in Russia, and a great many engineering operations have been done by Englishmen; but Russia had already learned the art of war too well to need our further aid. And to-day you may see the result of her power, for the newspaper posters boom that line, "GRAVE SITUATION IN THE FAR EAST." The dominance of that situation is one of life's greater ironies.—J. M. BULLOCH.