

The Russian Coronation.

BY CHARLES S. PELHAM-CLINTON.

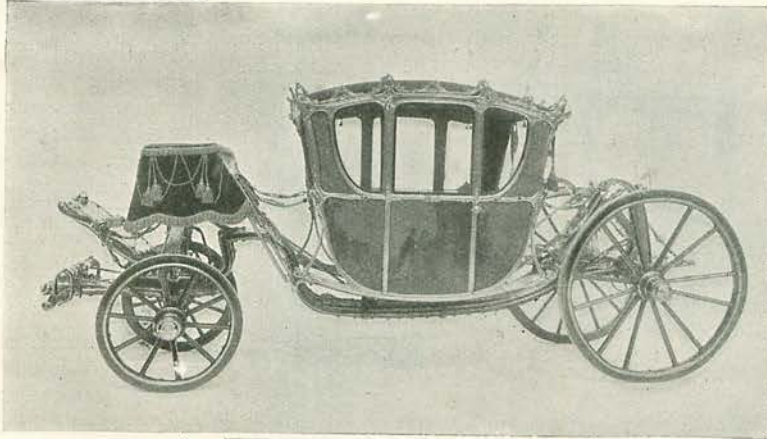
[The following article has been prepared with the special permission and approval of the Emperor and Empress of Russia.]



THE purpose of these pages is to give an account of a visit to Russia, made chiefly with the object of getting some information about the ceremonies which are about to take place in Moscow and St. Petersburg in connection with the coronation of the Czar, and to inspect the Royal stables and palaces; and the facilities accorded to me, owing to the gracious permission of

collection in the world, but twenty-four of them will be seen in the procession at the coming festivities. Among the most interesting is a double-seated carriage made by Buckindale, a London builder, in 1793, for the Empress Catherine II., which was restored in 1826 and 1856 to take part in the coronation processions of those years (No. 1). One of the most beautiful is another double-seated carriage, also built in England, and presented in 1795 by Prince Orloff to the Empress Catherine II. (No. 2). It took part in the coronation festivities of Nicholas I. and Alexander II., being used on both these occasions for the maids of honour, and in 1883 it was again restored for the coronation of Alexander III., being used by two of the Grand Duchesses. The

panels on its sides represent Abundance, Industry, Commerce, the Trades, etc., and there are Cupids scattering flowers, while on the back is a picture of Apollo and the Muses. Close by are still two more carriages, built by Buckindale for Catherine II. The first (No. 3) is a four-seated one,



NO. 1.—CATHERINE II.'S CARRIAGE. USED IN THE CORONATION PROCESSIONS.

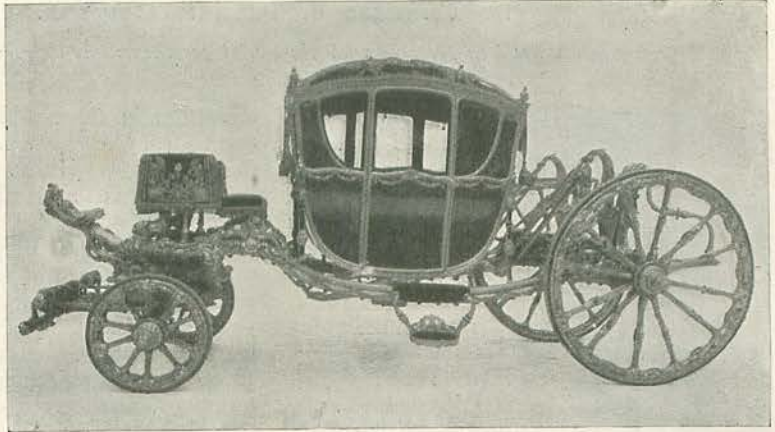
the Czar, enable me to lay before the reader what is, I believe, the first tolerably complete description of the Court of Russia.

One of the sights of St. Petersburg is the museum of Imperial carriages, for not only do they form the most remarkable



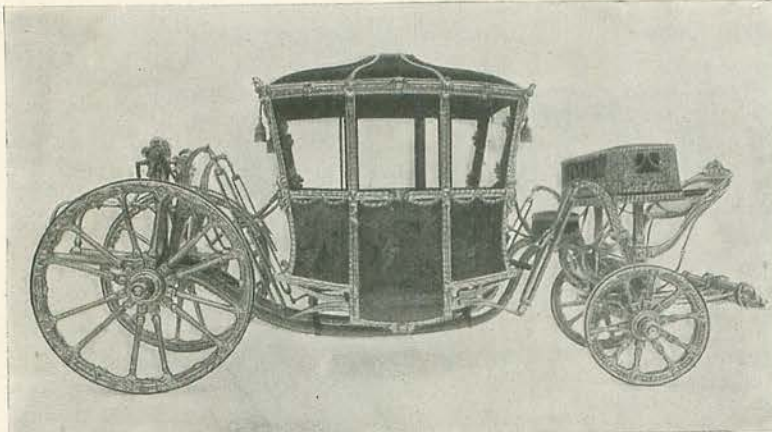
NO. 2.—THE ORLOFF CARRIAGE—THE FIRST INDIARUBBER-TIRED CARRIAGE IN THE WORLD USED IN THE CORONATION PROCESSIONS.

the paintings on its panels being by Watteau; the carving on the wheels and under-carriage is superb, that under the box-seat being equal to anything I have seen anywhere. It was restored in 1856, and was used by the Grand Duchesses Olga Nikolayevna and Helena Paelovna in that year, and by the Queen of Greece in 1883 at the coronation of Alexander III. The panels of the other (No. 4) are from the hand of Gravelot, and are very fine works of art; on



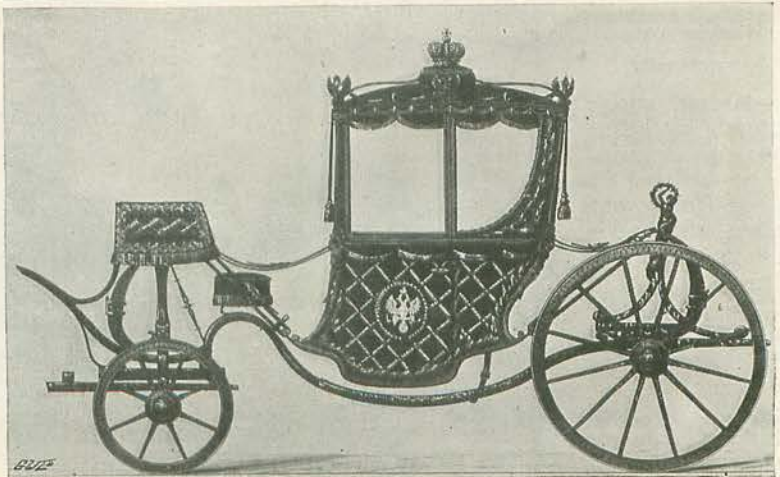
NO. 3.—THE WATTEAU CARRIAGE. USED IN THE CORONATION PROCESSIONS.

in gold, and was used at the coronations of 1856 and 1883. By the great kindness of Baron Frédériczsz, the Master of the Horse, to whose courtesy those who read the portion of this article dealing with the Royal stables, etc., are largely indebted for the facilities given me, and also for the illustrations, I am able to give a photograph of the Royal carriage which will be used at the coronation of their present



NO. 4.—THE VENUS CARRIAGE. USED IN THE CORONATION PROCESSIONS.

the front is Venus issuing from the water, on the left is the shepherd Paris with his flock, on the right is Juno, and the back panel represents Olympus, with the Empress Catherine dispensing peace and prosperity. It is lined with velvet, brocaded with point d'Espagne

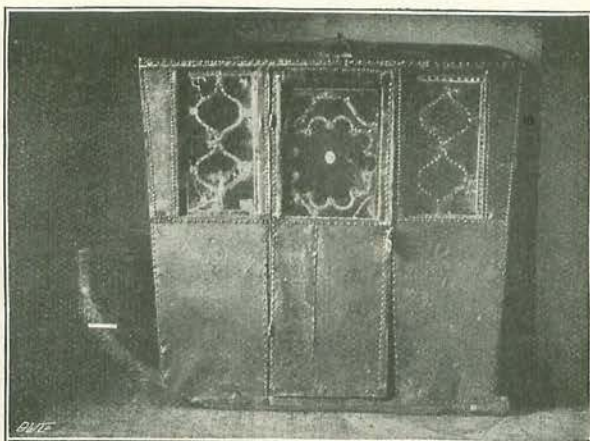


NO. 5.—THE ACTUAL CORONATION CARRIAGE USED BY THE EMPEROR AND EMPRESS.

Majesties, and though, perhaps, it is not so gorgeous as some of those used in the past, for perfection of appointment it will eclipse them all (No. 5).

The harness which will be used on the occasion has been made in Paris, there being twenty-two sets for six horses each, and two sets for eight horses each, the two latter being for the carriages to be used by the Empress and Dowager Empress. This harness is all made of red Morocco leather with white stitching, and the saddles of the outriders are of similar materials, while their stirrups are of chased and gilded bronze. The saddle-cloths are covered with gold lace, with a design of the Russian arms, which is freely used on all parts of the harness; and each of the 148 horses will have on its head a plume of white ostrich feathers.

Although it will not appear in the procession, one of the most interesting exhibits in the museum is the sleigh of Peter the Great, built by himself, which is in exactly the same condition as when last used by him (No. 6); to prevent the ravages of time it is wisely inclosed in a glass case.



NO. 6.—PETER THE GREAT'S SLEIGH.

While on the subject of carriages, I would mention several which are used personally by the Czar, and which when I saw them were at the Peterhof Palace, a favourite summer residence about nineteen miles from St. Petersburg. One of these is His Majesty's troïka (No. 7); driven

by the State coachman in Russian costume, his hat having a small crown and a peacock's feather round it. The carriage is a well-hung victoria, being, I suppose, more comfortable than a drosky, and, of course, has indiarubber tires. Three superb grey stallions were harnessed to this in Russian style, the shaft horse being a grand stepper. I succeeded in getting a good photograph of this, and also a snapshot of it in motion, moving at about sixteen miles an hour. The shaft horse trots, and never breaks his pace; the side horses gallop, and have only one rein each, and hold their heads outwards, as will be seen in No. 8; of course they had bells on each throat-lash. It was one of the prettiest sights possible, and the pace they went at was certainly marvellous.



NO. 7.—THE CZAR'S TROÏKA.



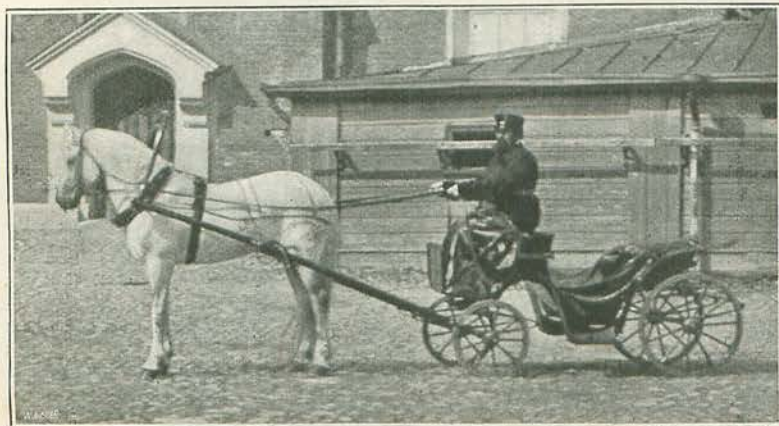
NO. 8.—THE CZAR'S TROÏKA—SHOWING THE PECULIAR ACTION OF THE HORSES, THE SHAFT-HORSE TROTTING, AND THE SIDE HORSES GALLOPING.

The Czar's drosky (No. 9) was the next thing to look at, it having harnessed to it an almost pure white stallion, with tremendous action, and a very fast mover. His Majesty's pair drosky, too, was a very handsome turnout, and the Empress's tcherna, or pony carriage, with a pair of neat brown cobs, was very smart. With such a limited space at my command, I must at once go on to the palace.

No monarch has such a choice of magnificent palaces at his disposal as the Czar of Russia, and it is not as if there were simply

one or two huge piles of bricks and mortar and a number of insignificant ones, but each is a palace in the true sense of the word; and not only are the exteriors worthy of the name, but the interiors also are as magnificent as the mind of man can conceive. Of course they are not all in St. Petersburg, but many of them are within a short distance.

One of the most beautiful of the country palaces of the Czar is that at Peterhof, for though it is very poor from an architectural point of view, the situation and surroundings surpass any of the others. It was commenced in 1720 by Peter the Great, but every succeeding Emperor has made additions or alterations of some kind or another. The interior is well worthy of a prolonged inspection, as there are some beautiful tapestries and very fine



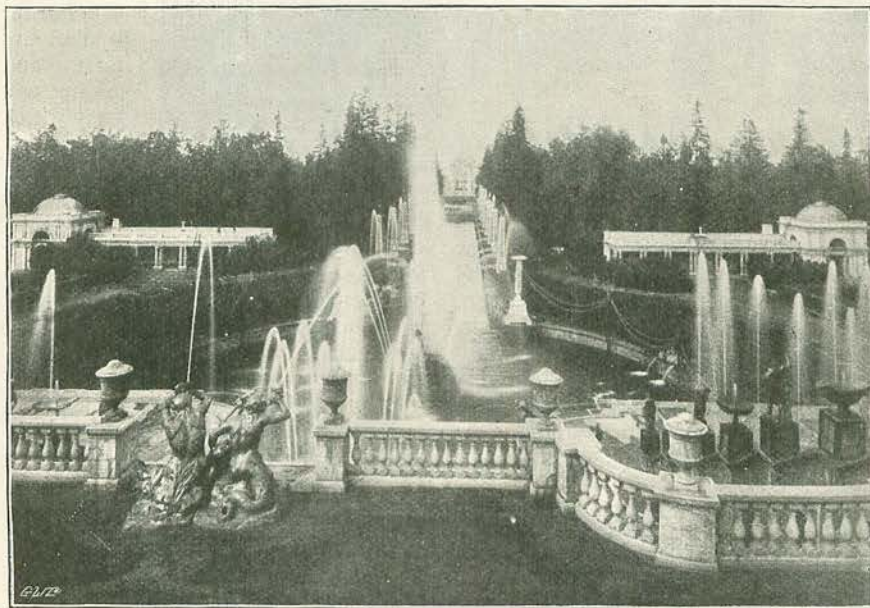
NO. 9.—THE CZAR'S SINGLE DROSKY.

pictures; but it is the gardens stretching from the palace down to the sea, and some two thousand acres in extent, that specially attract one's attention. They are the most beautiful I have ever seen, and the innumerable fountains, waterfalls, and water-courses equal, if they do not surpass, those at Versailles.

Directly in front of the palace is the far-famed fountain called "Samson" (No. 10), beautiful in design, and having close behind it a *jet d'eau* that sends the water close on roof-top into the air. The innumerable tritons, wild beasts, and vases that surround the central figure of Samson eject the water into the canal that flows towards the sea, on its sides being a succession of *jets d'eau* in various

apparently have been in their present position so long as the world has been; and yet every piece is the work of man's hand, commenced by Peter the Great, every successive Sovereign having added something to its beauty.

Mon Plaisir (No. 11) is a smaller *châlet* in the garden, and was one of Peter the Great's favourite places, but that which he liked best of all was Marly, a small building on the banks of a pond teeming with fish that answer to the custodian's call, and come swimming to the side for bread. Inside is the room Peter used, with his furniture as it stood in his time. Of course, there are numberless pieces of carving said to be his work, but my stay in Russia, I confess, made



NO. 10.—THE SAMSON FOUNTAIN AT PETERHOF.

forms. I should have said that "Samson" is a huge bronze figure, wrenching open the jaws of a lion, whence emerges a large stream of water. Two remarkable fountains are called "Adam" and "Eve," from the figures that form their central portions; they are at some distance apart, but looking towards each other. The Golden Staircase makes a most beautiful cascade when in full play, and the Narcissus fountain is another very fine one. Every turn reveals a lovely bit of scenery; perhaps the sea, or perchance a glimpse of placid lakes; then what might be a nook in an ancient forest, and, just beyond, a succession of rushing, roaring cataracts, foaming and falling from rocks that

me rather sceptical as to the authenticity of ninety-nine pieces out of every hundred, as so numerous are they, and many so elaborate, that if he had lived to the age of Methuselah, and done nothing else but make watches and carve images, etc., he would not have accomplished one-quarter of the work ascribed to him. It was at Mon Plaisir that the Empress Elizabeth used to amuse herself by cooking her own dinner, and while the fact is related, and her utensils exhibited, history says nothing of the results.

The eyes of Europe have been recently turned on the Tsarkoë Seloe (No. 12), another of the summer palaces of the Emperor, as it



NO. 11.—PETER THE GREAT'S CHÂLET, MON PLAISIR, ST. PETERSBURG.

was there that the birth of the first child took place, and great as the rejoicing was at the birth of a daughter, it would undoubtedly have been ten times greater had it been a son. Beautiful and comfortable as Peterhof is, this palace in every way exceeds it in architectural effect. The approach to the big flight of stairs leading to the front door is wide and handsome, and the building is far more massive and filling to the eye than that

as even now the building is unique, nothing that I have ever seen in the world approaching it. There is no uniformity of style of architecture: it is simply a conglomeration of every imaginable style of ancient and modern times made into one huge pile, with a succession of outbuildings, bridges, chalets of every kind and description, indiscriminately placed amidst woods, lakes, ponds, and running water. Some of the interior apartments must

of Peterhof or any of the other summer palaces. The façade is of tremendous extent, being no less than 800ft. in length, and, at one time, the whole of the statues and numberless columns with which it is adorned were gilded. Even a Russian monarch could not stand the enormous expense entailed by the ravages of time, and the gilding was done away with. What the effect must have been then it is hard to imagine,



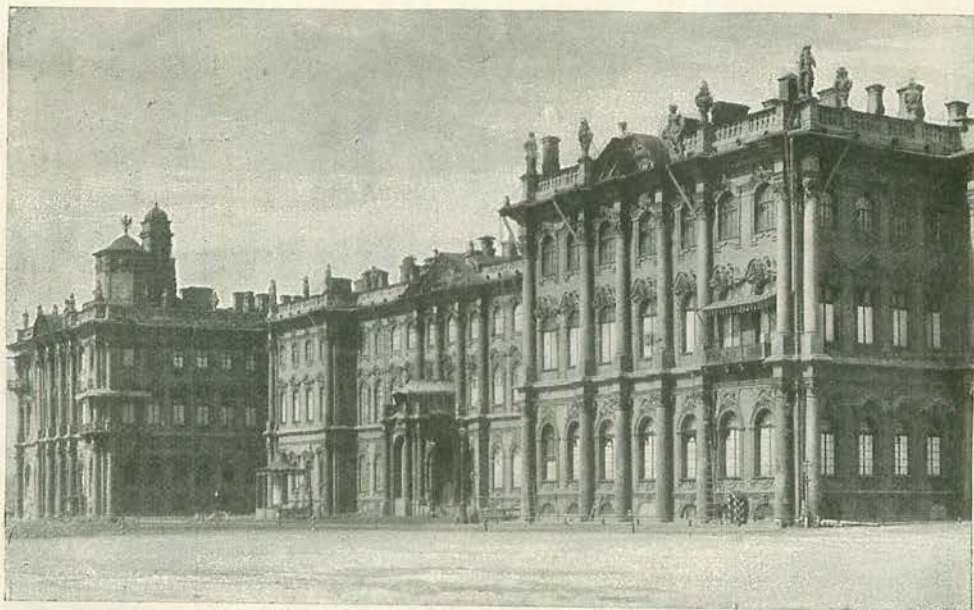
NO. 12.—THE CZAR'S SUMMER PALACE, TSARKOË SELOE, ST. PETERSBURG.

be ranked amongst the most gorgeous in the world. Imagine a floor of ebony inlaid with mother-of-pearl in huge floral designs, the walls of the room being a mass of *lapis lazuli*, and you have one of these rooms. Then let smokers who glory in the ownership of an amber cigar-holder, or who fondly look upon the mouth-piece of a pipe, conceive a room panelled with "the foam of the sea" in beautiful designs, and with the arms of Frederick the Great and Catherine's initials.

As in the days of David and Solomon silver and gold were accounted nothing, so in the days of Catherine II. malachite and *lapis lazuli* were trifles as little worthy of consideration as Portland stone and Peterhead granite are in England, for vast statues, pillars, doorways, and mantelpieces of both are to be seen in rich profusion in the palaces and art collections of St. Petersburg.

Coming back to the capital, however, the principal palace there is the Winter Palace

is superb, being entirely of pure white Carrara marble. The chapel, where the Czar was married, contains countless *ikons*, or holy pictures, studded with jewels of immense value. The Alexander Hall; the Golden Hall, with its gorgeous Byzantine decorations; the White Hall, with its enormous collection of gold and silver plaques presented to the late Emperor; the Drawing-room of the Empress Alexandra, the walls of which are covered with frescoes of great beauty after Raphael, and whose ceilings and doors seem almost to be overlaid with gold; the Concert Hall, all these are worthy of pages of description. But the finest apartment of all is the Throne Room, or St. George's Hall, measuring 140ft. long by 60ft. wide. Its roof is supported by beautiful Corinthian columns, and it is lighted by ten huge candelabra of silver gilt, of exquisite design and workmanship. The Order of St. George and the Dragon appears in many of



NO. 13.—THE WINTER PALACE, ST. PETERSBURG.

(No. 13), a huge building on the banks of the River Neva. It is an immense pile of granite, 455ft. long by 350ft. wide, and its size can perhaps be better understood when I say that no fewer than 6,000 people are in residence there during the Emperor's stay. A fully detailed account of this palace would fill a good many numbers of THE STRAND, so I can only mention some of the chief halls. The principal staircase, the

designs which adorn the walls and ceiling, St. George being the patron saint of Russia.

With such a brief glance I must leave the new capital, and get to Moscow, the ancient seat of the Government of All the Russias, which is soon to witness the most splendid coronation festivities on record.

Those who have not visited Moscow can have no true conception of that marvellous city, and I fear the task of describing it in

such a manner as to give a realistic idea of only part is quite beyond my pen. To commence with, word-painting and photographs alike fail to describe the wonderful mass of colour, almost rainbow-like in effect, that is produced by the innumerable domes and spires which meet the eye at every turn. The marvellous clearness of the air, and the utter absence of smoke, enable one to see the outlines as well as the colours with wonderful distinctness—for it is not alone the prismatic hues of the domes and spires, but also their extraordinary and fantastic shapes, which together make a spectacle unequalled even in the East.

It is not with Moscow itself and its beauties that I must deal, but with the coming coronation of the Czar and Czarina, and with the palaces and the churches connected with the ceremony, most of which are situated inside the Kremlin (No. 14).

the old centre of Government, its walls inclose some of the principal Russian palaces, and the three most holy churches of Holy Russia.

Perhaps the best view of the Kremlin is obtained from the banks of the River Moskva, from the pool where, every year, the ceremony of blessing the waters takes place, as, though it does not give one an idea of its beauties, it shows the size of the palace better, perhaps, than any other, and also the old walls with their numerous towers that form the boundary of the Kremlin.

In the Kremlin is the Cathedral of the Assumption (No. 16), where the actual ceremony of the coronation takes place. This church is, perhaps, a little disappointing in respect of size, for, as Dean Stanley says, it is more of a chapel than a cathedral. No one who enters it can, however, fail to be impressed with the solemnity of the place; the relics



NO. 14.—THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW.

The Kremlin was originally an inclosed space where the reigning Prince and his immediate Court dwelt. It has been several times almost destroyed by fire, the last occasion being so recently as 1812, during the Napoleonic war, but it has always been rebuilt, and holds now as strong a place in the affections and religious veneration of the Russian nation as it ever did. Besides being

of past Emperors and Metropolitans, of soldiers who have helped to make history, the *ikons* incrustated with jewels of almost incalculable value, and the fact that in this church the Autocrats of All the Russias have been successively crowned, give a feeling of veneration, made the more forcible by the sombre light that enters through the narrow windows. One of the



NO. 15.—THE INTERIOR OF THE CATHEDRAL OF THE ASSUMPTION. IN THE MIDDLE IS THE DAÏS ON WHICH THE CORONATION TAKES PLACE.

most valuable *ikons* is that of the Virgin of Vladimir, said to have been painted by St. Luke, and to have miraculous powers, the jewels with which it is incrustated being worth over £50,000. Those of the Blessed Virgin of Jerusalem, and of the Saviour, painted by the Emperor Manuel, are also very valuable.

In the centre of the nave is a platform, or daïs (No. 15), on which have been crowned the monarchs of Russia ever since Ivan the Terrible. On the occasion of the coronation

it will be covered with crimson cloth, and round it is a heavy gilded railing. On this platform are placed the throne of the Emperor and Empress, a photograph of the former of which I was fortunate enough to obtain. This throne stands, as a rule, in the Treasury, and is a most beautiful piece of workmanship, being a mass of gold filagree studded with jewels. Beside it on the platform is placed the throne of the Empress, which will be one of those used at the coronation of some of



NO. 16.—THE EXTERIOR OF THE CATHEDRAL OF THE ASSUMPTION.

the previous Czars. On entering the church, the Czar and Czarina are met by the Metropolitan, and after devotional exercises before the altar, their Majesties ascend the daïs, and seat themselves on their respective thrones. The Czar then places on his shoulders the Imperial robes, which are presented to him on cushions. The Metropolitan next presents the Czar with the crown, which he, contrary to any other monarch of Europe, places on his own head, for in Russia the ruler is not only head of the Empire, but of the Church as well. He is then presented with the sceptre, and seats himself on the throne. After a short pause he lays aside the sceptre, and after touching the forehead of the Empress with his own crown, he re-assumes it; then, taking the crown of the Empress in his hand, she kneeling before him,

he places it on her head, her coronation robe is next placed on her shoulders, and she is invested with the collar of the Order of St. Andrew. A prayer is then offered by the Metropolitan, everybody except the Czar kneeling, and immediately afterwards their Majesties descend from the daïs, and proceeding to the doors of the *ikonostase*, or sacred screen, the ceremony of anointing takes place. The

Czar then passes into the sanctuary through the doors in the *ikonostase*, on which are *ikons* of the four evangelists, and receives the Holy Communion inside, the Czarina partaking of the holy rite at the place where she was consecrated, for no women are admitted behind the screen. This being over, the procession is re-formed, the Church of the Annunciation, near by, is



NO. 17.—THE ENTRANCE TO THE RED STAIRCASE.



NO. 18.—ST. GEORGE'S HALL.

visited, and a return is made by the Red Staircase (No. 17) into the St. Andrew's Hall of the palace, where the Czar receives his guests.

Before the coronation their Majesties and the suite assemble in the St. George's Hall (No. 18), a truly magnificent apartment, dedicated to the Order of St. George, which Catherine II. founded. The furniture is tapestried in the colours of the Order (black and orange), and on the pillars are the names of the regiments and persons decorated with the Order since its foundation. The long windows look out on to a red balcony overhanging the walls of the Kremlin and the river. Along this balcony the Emperor and Empress proceed



NO. 19.—ST. ANDREW'S HALL, WITH THE EMPEROR'S THRONE.



NO. 20.—ST. CATHERINE HALL, WITH THRONE ON WHICH THE EMPRESS RECEIVES HOMAGE AFTER THE CORONATION.

round the corner of the building, down what is called the Red Staircase, and thence to the Cathedral of the Assumption, which I have

two griffins; it is approached by several steps, and stands under a canopy on which are the arms of Russia, the same device being on the

already endeavoured to describe.

Beautiful as is the St. George's Hall, that of St. Andrew (No. 19) eclipses it in every way; it is about 175ft. long by 70ft. wide, and 60ft. high, and its walls are hung with blue-watered silk, the colour of the Order of St. Andrew, which is, by the way, the oldest in Russia, having been founded by Peter I. in 1698. The Emperor's throne stands at the end, and is supported by the heraldic device of the Romanoff family,



NO. 21.—THE ALEXANDER NEVSKI HALL.

wall above the canopy. The parquet floor is emblematic of the Order, and contains about thirty different kinds of wood.

Beyond this is the St. Catherine Hall (No. 20), dedicated to the Order of that name, of which the Empress is the head, and it is here that she is enthroned directly after the coronation, and receives homage, while the Czar is seated on the throne in the St. Andrew's Hall. In the centre of the room is an enormous glass candelabrum reaching almost from the floor to the ceiling, and the walls are covered with white and grey; the chief piece of colour in

Czar is in residence, there is a magnificent display of gold plate at either side of the doors at the opposite ends of the room, and this, together with the numerous candles in the vast candelabra, enhances the beauty of the effect, and makes this hall, in some ways, the most attractive in the palace.

Another most interesting room to my mind is the Congratulation Hall (No. 22), where, after the coronation, the Czar receives the offerings of bread and salt from the heads of the various deputations from all over Russia. The room is of large dimensions, and rather curious in shape, the vaulted ceiling coming

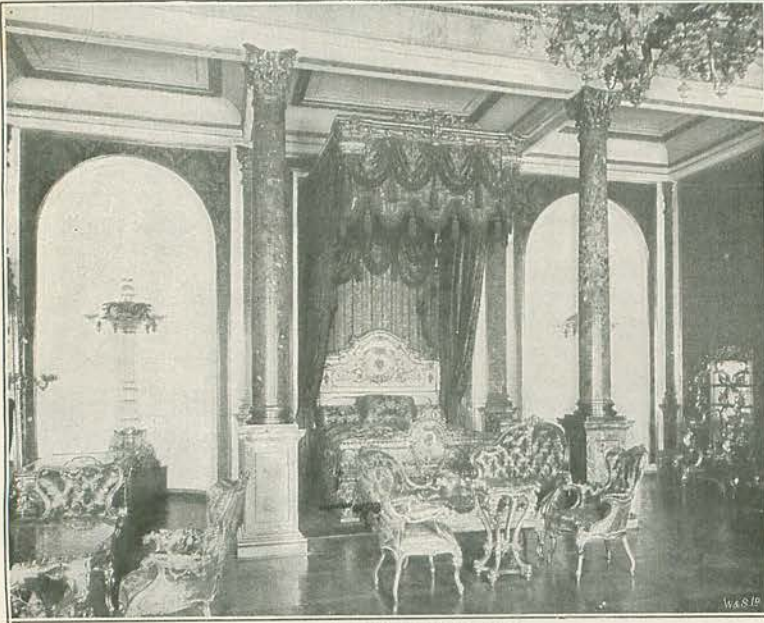


NO. 22.—CONGRATULATION HALL, WHERE THE CZAR RECEIVES THE OFFERINGS OF BREAD AND SALT.

the room is the heavy red velvet curtain forming a background to the throne. The Order of St. Catherine was established in 1714, to commemorate Catherine I.'s victories over the Turks.

The Alexander Nevski Hall (No. 21) has more colouring than any of the others, as pink and gold are largely used in its decoration. If my memory serves me rightly, it is the only hall decorated with pictures, which are by Professor Müller, and depict six incidents in the life of the patron saint. When the

to a point in the centre, and around the base of the pillar supporting this point is a species of bog oak sideboard, with a canopy of golden cloth heavily embroidered, and with a deep golden fringe at its base. In one corner of the room stands the throne, under a canopy of bog oak, rather resembling a four-post bedstead. The throne itself is of gold and crimson velvet, and the background of the canopy is of the same, with the arms of Russia richly embroidered. The walls are decorated with very fine pictures of Biblical



NO. 23.—THE EMPRESS'S BEDROOM.

incidents; the doorway is a mass of gold, and the ante-room has been re-decorated for the occasion. The private apartments of the Emperor and Empress are handsomely furnished, and contain many fine paintings. Her Majesty's bedroom (No. 23) is upholstered in crimson, and has a very handsome mantelpiece of jasper, the columns being of vert antique.

All the rooms above described, and many more, are in the Grand Palace of the Kremlin, but the Old Palace, or Terem, as it is called, has some equally interesting apartments. Among these are the Czarika Room, where the

a look at a few of the rooms which will soon draw to themselves the attraction of Europe, we must unwillingly leave the Kremlin, passing

through the Spasski Vorota (No. 24), or Gate of the Saviour, one of the five gates in the crenelated wall encircling the ancient fortress. Above the entrance is a picture of the Saviour, erected there by the Czar Alexis, in 1647; and everybody, from the poorest beggar to the Czar, uncovers as he passes through this gate. The custom is such a pleasing one, when poor and rich alike follow it, that foreigners cannot do better than do likewise.



NO. 24.—THE SPASSKI VOROTA,