



MOSCOW, WITH A VIEW OF THE IMPERIAL PALACE.

THE CITY OF THE TSARS: A VISIT TO MOSCOW AND THE KREMLIN.

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It is almost impossible to conceive two cities more dissimilar than the ancient and modern capitals of Russia. While Peter the Great's creation is a collection of wide streets, magnificent palaces and stately buildings, the ancient capital is a combination of eccentric fantasies, a mixture of Eastern and European architecture thrown together without any regard for symmetry, the conglomeration making a sight to be seen in no other city in the world. As one looks down upon the city from the low Sparrow Hills the brilliant colour and gilt of the vast number of domes and spires, no less than their wealth of variety and Oriental shapes, form a striking picture against the green of the plain beyond. The city itself is divided into five well-marked zones, the outer one of which is called the Slobodes, or suburbs, and here the very poorest of the inhabitants reside. Within this is the Zemlianoï-Gorod, or Earthen City, so called because it was at one time surrounded by a wall of earth, most of which has now been converted into spacious promenades. Inside this again is the Bjeloï-Gorod, or White Town, which comprises some of the best houses of Moscow, palaces and public buildings, and is, in fact, far more like an ordinary European town

than any other part of the city. These three form concentric circles, and in the space enclosed between them and the river Moskva is what is known as the Inner Town, which includes the Kitaï-Gorod, or Chinese Town, and the Kremlin. The former is the chief commercial part of Moscow, and it is here that the Bourse, the Bazaar, and the principal business houses and shops are to be found. This circle encloses the Kremlin, the centre and very heart of the ancient capital, to which it holds about the same relation as the Tower, Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's combined do to London. But it is something more than even all this, for it is still a royal residence, and, like the Tower, has quite a small town within its walls. It is first mentioned in history as having been founded by Prince George Dolgorouki in 1147, he having established a camp there, and, as a little town sprang up round this, he surrounded it with wooden walls on which were towers of the same material. In the fourteenth century the Grand Dukes of Russia took up their residence here, and in the latter half of that century Dmitri Donskoï replaced its wooden ramparts by a wall of stone, and 100 years later Ivan III. increased the size of the citadel, making the walls about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles in circumference, and these

still stand with their battlements, towers and gates; the principal architects of the walls, by the way, were Italians.

So the Kremlin grew, and for four centuries it was the centre of the Government of Russia, the Tsars residing there until the time that Peter the Great's wonderful city sprang up on the banks of the Neva. Time after time has the Kremlin been the scene of most destructive conflagrations, and time after time has it risen, phoenix-like,

Grand Duchesses and Tsarinas of Russia. Passing this we come to the Bell Tower of Ivan Veliki, wherein hang some thirty-four bells, the largest of them weighing no less than 64 tons, but even this is quite eclipsed by the monster "Tsar Kolokol," or King of Bells, which stands on a pedestal at the foot of the tower; it was cast in 1736, fell during a fire, which burned through the beam supporting it, and has never been rehung; it is 26 feet high, and weighs about 200 tons.

Leaving the Bell Tower on our left, we come to a large iron gate, through which we enter the Square of the Cathedrals, which is surrounded on all sides by churches and palaces. On the left is the Cathedral of the Archangel Michael, and farther on the white walls and gilded cupolas of the Cathedral of the Annunciation stand out clearly against the Imperial Palace at the foot. Close by, on the right, are the celebrated Palais Anguleux and the Grand Palace, on the south side of which descends the famous Red Staircase, having at its top the no less famous Red Terrace. In the middle of the Square stands the old Cathedral of the Assumption, the principal sanctuary of Moscow, and behind it is the Patriarch's house, in which is the famous library of the Kremlin. Just outside the Cathedral Square is the Grand Palace, which is quite a modern building, next to it is the old Terem Palace, and within the walls are also a number of smaller palaces, barracks, an arsenal, and other important structures; but a very brief description of some of the principal rooms in the large palaces, which are occupied



BELL TOWER OF IVAN THE GREAT.

from its ashes, growing larger and stronger at each new birth.

Standing on a slight incline rising from the river Moskva, the walls enclose a space roughly triangular in form, and in them there are five gates, above which are five great towers, known as the Nicolski, Spasski, Borovitski, Troitski, and Taïnitski gates. Facing the Red Place and the world-famous Church of Vassili Blagennoi is the Spasski Gate, which is decorated with a picture of the Saviour, every person uncovering when passing beneath it, and entering by this gate we see on our right the Convent of the Ascension, where lie the remains of the

by their majesties during the coronation festivities, and of the cathedrals used during the ceremony is all that space will allow.

The Grand Palace stands on slightly rising ground, whence it commands a magnificent view of the whole of Moscow. The spot on which it is built has always been occupied by the dwelling of the sovereigns of Russia, but the present building was only commenced in 1839. It is in the form of a square, the south side forming the principal façade, the Terem Palace being on the north, while on the east is the Cathedral of the Annunciation, and on the west the Winter Garden. It contains eighteen altars



“TSAR KOLOKOL,” THE BIG BELL OF MOSCOW.

(This bell, which holds the world's record, being about 200 tons in weight, was cast in 1736. The metal of which it is made is valued at about £70,000, as many offerings of gold and silver were given for its manufacture. Its height is about 26 feet. The breakage was caused by its falling from the burnt beam which supported it.)

in nine chapels, thirty-two staircases, and seven hundred rooms, all sumptuously furnished. The principal rooms are: the St. George's Hall, which is 200 feet long by 65 wide and 58 high, decorated in white, and whose six large chandeliers can hold 3200 candles, but are now lighted by electricity; the Great Hall of St. Alexander Nevski, which is 100 feet long by 65 wide and 65 high, and has a large dome, is ornamented with frescoes and gilt arabesques; the Hall of St. Andrew, or Throne Room,

material; four very fine pieces of Gobelín tapestry hang on the walls depicting the adventures of Don Quixote, and there are some China vases of colossal dimensions. The Picture Gallery has some splendid old masterpieces by Raphael, Rubens, Rembrandt, Teniers, Murillo, etc.

The Palace of the Terem is much older than that just described, dating back to the fifteenth century, and its Throne Room has some superb old decorations, the walls being covered with gilt ornamentation; on



ST. GEORGE'S HALL IN THE GRAND PALACE.

with statues of Peter the Great, the founder of the Order of St. Andrew, Nicholas I., who dedicated this as its Chapter Room, and Paul I., who carved the statues; the St. Catherine Room, the Chapter Room of the Order of St. Catherine, of which the Tsarina is chief, has its walls hung with white silk.

The State Bedroom is remarkable for the richness of its decorations, the green jasper mantelpiece being especially handsome. The Tsarina's drawing-room is called the Silver Room because of the quantity of silver articles it contains, mirrors, tables, fire-screens, etc., being made of this precious

material; on the right, facing the door, is the throne, and there used formerly to stand by it a golden box in which petitions to the Tsar were placed. In the Golden Chamber, or Tsarika Room, the Tsarinas used to receive congratulatory visitors; it is a much smaller apartment than any of the rooms above mentioned, but has a grandeur of its own; the low vaulted roof, which is strengthened with gilded iron girders, the deep embrasures of the windows, and the roof and walls covered with frescoes, carry one's mind back for

centuries to the time when this room was first built. The Gold Dining Hall too has some very handsome frescoes, and on the shelves which surround the pillars supporting the arched roof is a display of ancient gold and silver plate which cannot be equalled anywhere else. It is in this hall, built in the fifteenth century, that the State dinners take place after the coronation, and here, too, the Emperor receives congratulatory addresses.

The Treasury in the Kremlin contains a collection of curiosities in jewels, the duplicate of which is to be seen in no public collection in Europe. The building was erected in 1851 on the west side of the Palace. Of course this Treasury does not hold any of what may be termed the Crown jewels of Russia, as these are all at St.

richly ornamented with ancient Russian armour, and also with arms of all kinds, and entrance to the main suite of apartments is gained by a large doorway at the head of this staircase. It is almost impossible to describe in detail the rooms through which one passes, as a visit of several days hardly makes one acquainted with the wonderful collection of curiosities stored in them. The first room contains some marvellous sets of armour and Russian arms of numerous kinds, as well as cases containing mementoes of various personages of note in Russian history. In the room beyond are a number of thrones which have been used for the coronation of various Tsars, but which, while beautiful in construction and interesting to examine, are not bejewelled



THE KREMLIN.

Petersburg, but the crowns of a large number of the Tsars, and relics of Peter the Great, Catherine II., and Ivan the Terrible, are to be seen in profusion. On the left, on entering, is a large collection of ancient carriages that belonged to the Tsar Boris Godunof, several presented to him by Queen Elizabeth, which are ornamented with pictures of the Crusades. The small toy carriage of Peter the Great, when a child, is particularly interesting, and so is the sleigh, or rather carriage on runners, used by the Empress Elizabeth when she journeyed between Moscow and St. Petersburg in the winter time.

Some good tapestry and very handsome harness ornament the walls of this apartment, while beyond are pictures by celebrated Russian artists. The staircases are

like those in the Circular Room. This room, to which entrance is gained by high iron doors, is where the ancient crowns and coronation robes are kept, as well as the jewelled thrones, the like of which are not to be seen anywhere else in the world. One of the most interesting crowns is that of the last King of Poland, Stanislaus Augustus, and near by is that of Paul I. when Grand Master of the Order of Malta. The Oriental crown of Simeon, Tsar of Kazan, is a marvellous piece of work. In this room is a casket in which is a curious old document, the Code of Tsar Alexis, which is written on sheets of parchment measuring in all 368 yards long; it dates back to 1649. The next room contains an immense collection of gold and silver plate, representing

the work of almost every country in Europe, and each country has its examples in a group by themselves, the total number of pieces being over 1600. The collection would have been larger if much of the old plate had not been used by needy Tsars to melt down and convert into coin, and much of it had not been given as indemnity to the Polish invaders in 1612. What there is left mostly only dates back to the seventeenth century; but there is one cup of plain silver which is said to be over 700 years old, and a few pieces which are between 400 and 500 years old. Polish, Russian, Persian, Chinese, Danish and English work in the precious

Emperor Alexander I., and a vast number of other articles of silver, fill this large room.

One of the rooms has a wonderful collection of guns, rifles and fowling-pieces, some of which are as much as 400 years old, while others are much less. Most of them are of Russian make, but the fowling-pieces are said to have been given by an Englishman named Fabian Smith to the Tsar Michael early in the seventeenth century. There are some interesting historical Russian helmets here, and some old standards and flags, notably that which was carried to the conquest of Siberia, and the one that Ivan the Terrible carried at Kazan in 1552.



MOSCOW.

metals are well represented, among the English specimens being the presents taken to the Russian Court by the ambassador of King Charles II., the Earl of Carlisle, consisting of jugs, vases, dishes, candlesticks, all of chased silver, and a very large ewer, which weighs no less than 24 lbs., of solid silver. There are also presents from Charles I. and James I., and the German silver-work is particularly fine. There is some very fine Gobelin tapestry at one end of the room, and in front of this is a statue of Napoleon which came from Hamburg. Two silver tables, the travelling-case of knives and forks that once belonged to the

Farther on is a room which is a regular portrait gallery of the Romanoff family, to which the present Tsar belongs. In cases in this room are some magnificent jewelled objects, among which are a sceptre of gold studded with yellow diamonds, and a sword whose hilt is encrusted with the same very rare stones. In another case is a saddle which was presented by the Sultan Abdul Hamid to Catherine II. in 1775; its trappings are of cloth of silver trimmed with lapis lazuli and coral. In the middle of the room is a glass case containing the English jewel of the Garter, which some say was bestowed upon Ivan the Terrible by Queen

Elizabeth; but there is no account of this in the records of the Order, so that it is more probable that it was bestowed on one of the Tsar's subjects, and by him lodged here. In this same case is a collar of splendid enamel, said to have been given to the Tsar Vladimir Monomachus by the Emperor Constantine in 1113. A small black box at one end of the room is perhaps the most interesting object in the collection, for it contains the constitution which Alexander I. granted to his Polish subjects, and which, owing to their treachery, had to be recalled.

The Arsenal contains an enormous number of guns taken from various nations, there being close on 900 pieces of ordnance of different sorts and sizes, the French being most largely represented. The largest piece of all is called "Tsar Pushka," or Tsar of Cannons, and it is over 300 years old, having been cast in 1586, in the reign of Theodor I.; it weighs no less than 40 tons.

But I must hasten on and give a very slight description of the cathedrals before leaving this old-world enclosure. To attempt a detailed description of these, to say nothing



ARC DE TRIOMPHE.

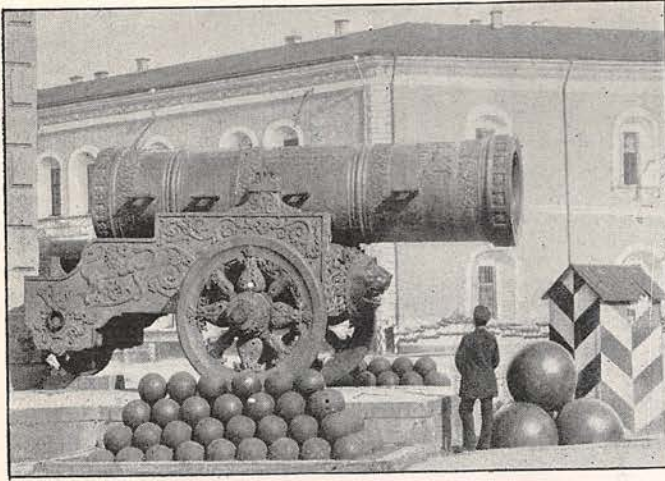
of the dozen or so other churches and monasteries within the walls of the Kremlin, would fill a volume.

The Cathedral of the Assumption claims first place by reason of seniority, as the first wooden church was built in 1326, and was replaced by the present stone structure in 1475, and this has had enacted within its walls many scenes which have gone to make Russian history, and in it are buried the

Patriarchs of the Russian Church. It is built in the Byzantine style, and is perfectly square in shape, having in the centre four large pillars which support the central cupola. It is not a large building, being rather what we would call a chapel, but the interior is magnificent, the dim light which comes in at the high windows playing on gold and silver frames, crowns, brilliant ornaments, and on the enormous silver lamp-holder hung in the middle of the building; and before each of the icons, or holy images, a lamp is continually burning. Before the principal altar—dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary—is a magnificent screen covered with richly-jewelled icons representing biblical characters and saints. On the left is a miraculous image of the Virgin of Vladimir, which tradition says was painted by St. Luke.



KRASNAYA PLÓSCHAD, OR RED SQUARE.



THE TSAR OF CANNONS.

Close to the first of the massive pillars on the left is the balcony on which the Tsar and Tsarina stand during the coronation ceremony, and near by is that used by the Patriarch on all ceremonious occasions. There are some wonderful relics, both in the cathedral itself and in the sacristy and library.

On the very top of the rising ground of the Kremlin a small wooden church was built in the twelfth century, and in the year 1500 the present Cathedral of the Archangel Michael was erected in its place. In shape and size it is not unlike the Cathedral of the Assumption, but, unlike it, the Byzantine frescoes which decorate the interior are not painted on gold. In this place are buried all the Grand Dukes and Tsars of Russia up till the time of Peter the Great, and their tombs, which occupy the greater part of the floor, are covered with tapestry and crimson velvet, and have silver plates with the dates of the birth and death of him who lies below.

The Cathedral of the Annunciation was originally built in 1394, and the

vaults under it were at that time used to hold the royal treasures. It was burned down several times, and finally rebuilt in its present form about the middle of the sixteenth century. It differs from the other two cathedrals in having a gallery round it and having nine cupolas instead of five. The interior walls, roof and cupola are covered with paintings, and the floor is mosaic of jasper, exactly like that in the Cathedral of St. Mark, at Venice. This cathedral, communicating as it does by a private door with the Palace, has always been the church of the Court, and

here the Grand Dukes and Tsars were married, had their children baptised, and here they performed their devotions just before the coronation ceremony.

Just outside the Kremlin is the Kitai-Gorod, or Chinese Town, which, as I have before said, is the chief business quarter of Moscow. It however contains some most remarkable buildings, one of them, the Cathedral of Vassili Blagennoi, or St. Basil the Blessed, being, I should think, the most grotesque pile that has ever been erected, not alone from its fantastic shapes, but also from the marvellous mixture of colours in which it



INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION.

is painted. It was built by Ivan the Terrible in 1552, the architect, an Italian, having his eyes put out by the Russian monarch immediately on its completion, in order that he should never have a chance to build anything still more grotesque. Each of its nine chapels has a differently designed cupola, and all the façades are different, the colouring is crude, and yet the whole forms "an admirable mysterious harmony." This church had a narrow escape from the hands of Napoleon, who ordered it to be destroyed, but the order was disobeyed, and it was only desecrated by being used as a stable by the French.

Close to is the Bazaar, which stretches the entire length of one side of the Red Square. It is a gigantic three-storied building, containing over four hundred shops, the passages and galleries into which it is divided being covered in with glass. The silver shops are well worth a visit, but more interesting to my mind are the enamel factories, as Moscow is the centre of the celebrated Russian enamel industry. We visited one of these factories some little distance off, driving over the most abominable road it has ever been my misfortune to traverse; indeed, so rough was it that the springs of the much enduring drosky gave way, and the last half mile had to be done on foot. The article to be enamelled is made out of silver, or even gold, the pattern being traced with threads of the same metal, and the interstices are filled with enamel of the requisite colour, the whole being afterwards baked. Certainly the results are very beautiful, but the prices are by no means suitable for slender purses; however, economy in Russia is not by any means a primary consideration.

The Exchange is not a very important looking building, but the Romanoff House is well worth a visit.

The hotel we stopped at, the Slavianski Bazaar, was one of the most interesting places of its kind I have ever seen, for attached to the hotel was an enormous restaurant, patronised for the midday meal

by the leading merchants of Moscow, and capable of seating about four hundred people at a time. At the buffet in one corner were arranged a large number of small dishes, containing appetisers of various kinds, and as each person entered the room he adjourned to this sideboard and commenced operations with a good-sized glass of vodki and a small piece of bread on which was some of the appetiser before mentioned. Another side-table fairly groaned with cold meats of every sort and kind, sucking-pig being very prominent, no less than half a dozen being seated



CHURCH OF ST. BASIL THE BLESSED.

in one dish, each with a lemon in his mouth; besides this there were large quantities of sturgeon done in different ways, while close by, swimming in a pool, were a number of sterlet, or young sturgeon, which the Russian gourmet declares to be the best fish in the world—it ought to be from the price they charge for it. The scene was a curious one: the Tatar waiters, with their high cheekbones, rushing about in obedience to orders given them; the vast throng of diners included apparently dozens of nationalities, and almost every conceivable tongue seemed to be spoken. A gallery ran round this apartment, and on almost every occasion we

were there we could notice that one or two men paraded this gallery, keeping an eye on those below—evidently police spies.

On Sunday mornings a fair is held in the Great Market Square, where the country people bring in all sorts of curiosities for sale. The name given to this collection of personages by the Russians is not a very pleasing one, being nothing else but the Louse Market, for reasons we need not go into. Knowing this, the best way to see this fair is from the seat of a drosky, whereby contact with the dirty-looking gentlemen and ladies who form the crowd is avoided.

One of the things to do in Moscow is to

drive out to the Sparrow Hills and dine in one of the restaurants overlooking the city. Delightful as the view is, the journey there and back is by no means pleasant, as the pavement of the Moscow streets is so bad that one is flung about from side to side of the drosky until every portion of the anatomy is a mass of bruises and contusions.

From the terrace on the edge of the hills, however, a magnificent view of the city can be had, and the extraordinary clearness of the air makes it possible to see each of the spires or mosques of the 400 or 500 churches or mosques which add so much to Moscow's beauty.



GENERAL VIEW OF MOSCOW.



THEIR IMPERIAL MAJESTIES THE TSAR AND TSARINA OF RUSSIA.
(WHOSE CORONATION IS APPOINTED TO TAKE PLACE IN MAY.)