

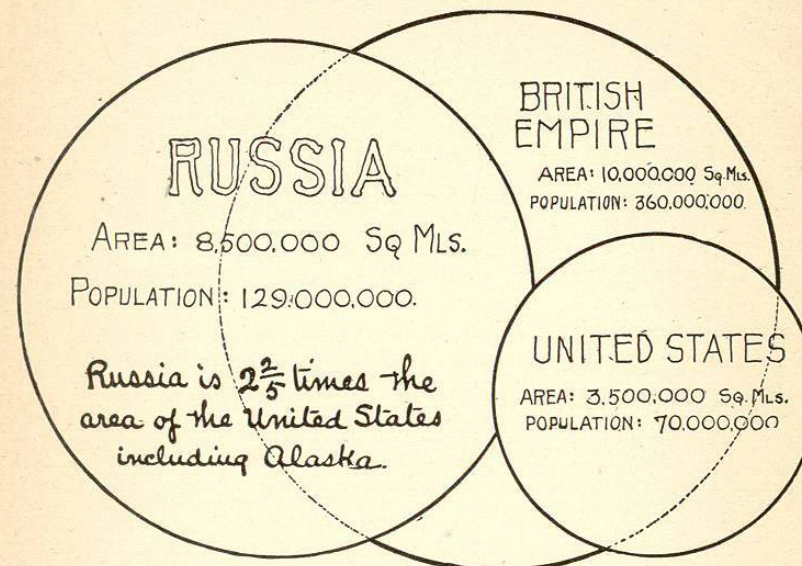
THE TRADE FEATURES OF THE GREAT COMMERCIAL NATIONS

V. THE TRADE FEATURES OF RUSSIA

RUSSIA, A COUNTRY WHOSE FUTURE IS A PROBLEM

THE position of Russia in the world is a sort of problem. Its area is immense. More than one seventh of the land surface of the globe is included within its compact borders. Of this vast territory the area of European Russia alone is only a fourth; but even so it is larger than the area of all other European states put together. The population of Russia is over 129,000,000, of which over 106,000,000 belong to European Russia. But taking even European Russia this is a population of only fifty-four to the square mile, the lowest proportion in Europe, except in Sweden and Norway. And the population is increasing. The birth rate is the highest in the world. And though the death rate is very heavy, being fifty per cent. more than it is in England, the increase from births is so great that the population doubles in forty-six years. There is thus apparently a prospect that Russia will, in the near future, play an important part in the drama of nations, her capacities and capabilities for growth seem so prodigious. And yet there is a reverse side to the picture. Of the 106,000,000 inhabitants of European Russia 10,000,000 belong to a cultured, progressive class,

quite the equal of any people in Europe. But the remainder are principally a low grade of peasantry, not long removed from slavery. The principal occupation



Russia, the British Empire, the United States compared.

of these peasantry is farming. But their farms are small, not more than ten acres apiece, and the total revenue they get from them does not average more than \$65 a year per farm. The food of these peasantry is the poorest in Europe. In the main it consists of rye bread and mushroom soup, worth about four cents a day. The houses are often mere huts, not more than five feet square. Women as well as men work in the fields, and yet the total amount of food raised is not more per head of population than one tenth of what is raised by the peasantry of France. The value of food raised per acre, too,

is but little more than one third of the average per acre for all Europe.

RUSSIA A COUNTRY OF SOCIAL EXTREMES

The degradation of the peasantry of Russia is not simply material. It is also moral. In the language of a recent traveller, "they are the drunkenest people in Europe." The principal intoxicant is a sort of whisky called "vodka." With drunkenness exist also dirtiness, idleness, dishonesty, and untruthfulness. And as yet little has been done to ameliorate this degradation. Ignorance prevails everywhere. Even of the young people of the peasant class more than eighty per cent. can neither read nor write. There is no middle class. The gulf between the upper class and the lower is so wide as to be absolutely impassable. And for the most part the upper class is quite content to have this state of affairs continue.

THE "ARTELS" OF THE RUSSIAN PEASANTS

There is, however, some hope for the lower classes of Russia. This is because of the prevalence among them, especially in villages, towns, and cities, of a communal custom in which self-restraint and self-government are necessary conditions of existence. In every branch of common industry "artels" are found; that is, communistic organisations, where all labour for a common purse in accordance with rules and regulations determined by the members of the organisations. These "artels" have done much toward increasing the industry, the honesty, the truthfulness, the thrift, and also the sobriety of their members. They exist throughout all Russia, but in some parts more prevalently than in others. As yet, however, they scarcely affect the character and

condition of the rural peasantry, and it is these who are most in need of elevation. It should be said, too, that the government is doing something to lessen the evil of drunkenness.

RUSSIA PRINCIPALLY AN AGRICULTURAL COUNTRY

Russia's principal business is AGRICULTURE. More than one half her whole internal trade is agricultural. Her agricultural products are one and one half times greater than the products of her manufactures and ten times greater than her mining products or her imports. And though her production of grain per acre is the lowest in all Europe except Italy, Spain, and Portugal, and her total production of all food products per acre by far the lowest in Europe (not more than one third that of Spain, which is next lowest), yet she manages to export a larger quantity of GRAIN than any other country in Europe, France only sometimes excepted. Russia's export of grain for some years past has averaged 266,000,000 bushels a year. Her export of WHEAT alone has averaged 94,000,000 bushels a year, or considerably more than a fifth of the total wheat export of the world. The explanation of this enormous export of wheat from so poor a country is that three fourths of the people live on rye. Among the peasants wheat bread is practically unknown, and nothing could be more pathetic than the hard rye lumps which passed as bread during the last famine. Other agricultural exports (besides grain) are flax, hemp, oil-seed cake, linseed and grass seed, butter, eggs, wool, hides, and hogs' bristles. Wood, lumber, and timber are also extensively exported. England is Russia's best customer. The amount of England's annual importation of the above products (including grain) exceeds \$112,000,000.

RUSSIA'S MINERAL WEALTH

In MINERALS Russia is enormously wealthy, but the mining lands are not diffused throughout the empire but confined to definite areas. Nor can they be said to be energetically worked. The great gold-fields of the Ural mountains would not pay expenses as worked at present were they not supplied with convict labour. Owing to the heavy import duty which is imposed on pig-iron nearly all the iron now needed for the IRON manufactures of the empire is obtained at home, but this amounts to only 46 pounds per inhabitant, as against 810 pounds per inhabitant used in Britain. COAL is very abundant, especially in the valley of the Donetz, but fire-wood is so plentiful for domestic purposes, and water power so plentiful for heavy manufactures, that the amount of coal mined in all Russia is only one twelfth that mined in Germany, and only one twenty-fourth that mined in Britain. Over 2,250,000 tons of coal are imported despite very heavy protective duties. There is one mineral product, however, in which Russia excels all other European countries. This is PETROLEUM. The oil-springs on the Caspian Sea produce an annual yield of crude petroleum of an average value of \$15,000,000. The value of the petroleum and petroleum products exported in 1896 was over \$22,000,000.

RUSSIA'S TRADE AND MANUFACTURES

Despite Russia's resources in farm products and in minerals, yet, owing to the ignorance and degradation of her people, she is a poor country, and her exports are always more than her imports. Her total wealth per inhabitant is only \$305, as against \$780 per inhabitant for

Germany, \$1260 for France, and \$1510 for Great Britain and Ireland. Her total foreign trade is only \$5 per inhabitant, whereas the foreign trade of her neighbour, Germany, is \$35 per inhabitant. Her total internal trade is only \$50 per inhabitant, whereas even in Greece the internal trade is \$65 per inhabitant, while in Germany it is \$130 per inhabitant, and in the United States \$215 per inhabitant. The reason of all this is the lack of energy and industry in the people. Their earnings per inhabitant average only 12 cents a day. Another reason is the lack of modern labour-saving devices. Comparing inhabitant with inhabitant, Russia has only one sixth of the steam power which Germany has. One half of all the manufactures of the country are produced domestically—that is, without motive power or machinery. No industry in Russia is fully up to the needs of the people when judged by the standards of other countries. For example, notwithstanding the severity of the climate, only two pounds of raw wool per inhabitant are consumed in Russia's woollen manufactures, as against seven pounds consumed in Germany, and the total annual value of all manufactures is only \$20 per inhabitant, as against \$56 in Germany, and \$88 in Britain. Notwithstanding these unfavourable comparisons, the factory industries of Russia are making progress. In seventy years the textile factories have increased fivefold and in thirty years twofold. In sixty years the cotton-manufacturing industry has increased sevenfold, and in fifteen years twofold. Until recently Russia exported wool. Now she imports more wool than she exports. Ninety years ago in Russia iron was dearer than bread, and the peasants used wooden ploughshares and left their horses unshod. Now the consumption of hardware, though still per inhabitant the smallest in Europe, is yet in the aggregate the fourth in Europe, although even so it is only two ninths what it is in Britain.

Beet-root sugar-making is also a new industry, and 500,000 tons are made annually, the number of sugar works being 235. The beet-root crop of the country amounts to nearly 6,000,000 tons annually. But the consumption of sugar per inhabitant is only seven pounds annually, as against eighteen pounds per inhabitant in Germany. A universal industry throughout Russia is TANNING, and Russia leather, with its fragrant birch-oil odour, is a highly prized commodity the world over. But the amount manufactured is only 114,000 tons yearly, and the quantity exported is inconsiderable.

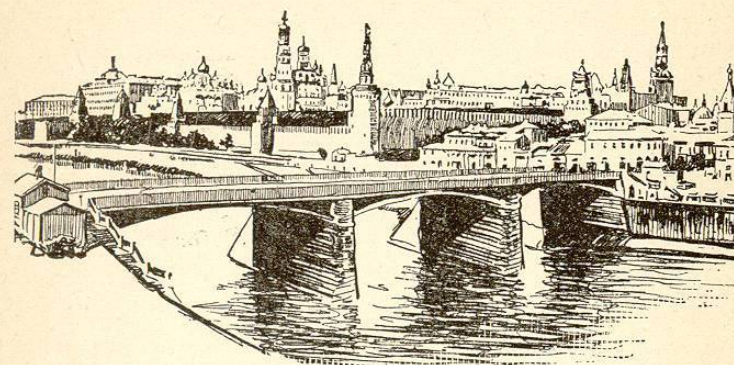
RUSSIA'S RAILWAYS AND NAVIGABLE RIVERS

The most characteristic physical feature of European Russia is its *flatness*. In consequence its rivers are almost all navigable, and, as the most important of them are interconnected by canals, the facilities for transportation which they afford are very considerable. Altogether the length of inland navigation thus afforded amounts to nearly 47,000 miles. This abundance of navigation facilities has retarded the growth of railways, but there are already 25,756 miles of finished railway in European Russia alone. The total length of railway in all Russia built and in building is 34,849 miles. The most important railway enterprise in the empire is the Trans-Siberian Railway, which will afford through communication from the Baltic to the Pacific. The shortest possible distance between these two bodies of water is 4500 miles. The length of the railway will be 4950 miles, and its cost, it is supposed, will be \$120,000,000. It is to be completed by 1905.

RUSSIA'S CITIES AND TOWNS

ST. PETERSBURG (with suburbs 1,267,000), the capital of Russia, is, like most European capitals, an important

trade centre as well as the seat of government. Its manufactures are general and numerous, but the chief ones are those concerned in making munitions of war. Until 1885



Moscow.

St. Petersburg was not a seaport, but in that year a canal was built which now permits vessels drawing twenty-two feet of water to enter its docks. Its harbour, however, is closed with ice from November to May. Near St. Petersburg is REVAL, the chief cotton port of Russia. The raw cotton importation of Russia averages about \$60,000,000 annually, most of which comes direct from the United States. Moscow (988,000), the ancient capital of Russia, is also a great manufacturing city, but its principal importance is derived from the fact that it is the great centre of the internal trade of Russia. WARSAW (615,000), the capital of Polish Russia, is a great railway centre, and the principal entrepôt of railway traffic between Russia and the rest of Europe. LÓDZ (315,000), also in Polish Russia, is the great cotton-manufacturing centre of the empire. ODESSA (405,000) is the chief seaport of Russia. It has an immense export trade in grain, tallow, iron, linseed,

wood, hides, cordage, sailcloth, tar, and beef. RIGA (283,000), the chief port of Russia on the Baltic, has a large export trade with England in characteristic Russian produce. KIEFF (249,000) is the centre of the Russian sugar-refining industry. ASTRAKHAN (113,000), on the Volga delta, is noted for its sturgeon fisheries, and its export of caviare, amounting, it is said, to \$1,500,000 yearly. TULA (111,000) is the Sheffield of Russia. Even in 1828 there were 600 cutlery establishments in Tula, but the manufacture was then principally domestic. It is now a city of factories, for it stands on a large coal and iron field. NIJNI-NOVGOROD (99,000) is noted for its fair, an Asiatic institution which modern civilisation will no doubt soon disestablish. Once a year merchants to the number of 200,000 come to Nijni-Novgorod from all over Russia, and even from India and China, to exchange their wares. The value of the exchange sometimes amounts to \$100,000,000. ORENBURG (73,000), on the Ural, is the terminal depot of the caravan trade of Asiatic Russia. ARCH-ANGEL (25,000), on the White Sea, is the chief emporium of trade in the north, with exports of characteristic northern produce. BAKU, on the Caspian Sea, is the chief seat of the petroleum industry of Russia. All the towns and cities above named have grown enormously during the last twenty years.

THE TRADE FEATURES OF THE GREAT COMMERCIAL NATIONS

VI. THE TRADE FEATURES OF INDIA

INDIA'S PAST AND PRESENT COMPARED

To the student of civilisation India is one of the most interesting countries in the world. It has always been one of the most fertile and populous regions of the globe. For centuries it was thought to be one of the richest. In consequence it has, time and time again, been the scene of invasion, conquest, and spoliation. But its riches never consisted so much in natural treasure as in the savings of an industrious and frugal people. Since the year 1600 European nations have had much to do with India, especially England, France, Portugal, and Holland. During the last 140 years, however, England has been the dominant power there. Whatever may be said as to the motive of England's interference in India's affairs in the first place, it can only be said that the present influence of England in India is immensely beneficial to the country. India's prosperity on the whole is now comparable with that of any civilised nation on the globe. And a people that once, because of repeated conquest and spoliation, had lost all sense of honour and self-respect, are now, under the benign influence of peace, law, order, and security, rapidly becoming honourable, self-