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THE ENGLISH IN RUSSIA DURING THE SECOND HALF OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

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Read 8 January, 1920.

THE following paper contains the results of an independent study of an episode in the commercial history of this country which has been the subject of some important researches during recent years. The beginnings of mercantile adventure in Russia and other regions of Northern Europe and the Far East have been related by contemporary men of action, most of whose narratives have been carefully edited in the Hakluyt Series; but the political and economic environment of the Muscovy Company itself was still in need of elucidation from contemporary State Papers and other records. Some of these sources have been used by Madame Lubimenko, Dr. A. J. Gerson and Mr. O. T. Williams for special aspects of the subject; but a large mass of material of the first importance has remained untouched. This material has been examined by the writer of the present paper for the purpose of an exhaustive history of the Company's activities down to the end of the seventeenth century, and it has been utilized for the present paper to show, for the benefit of other students, how the recognized materials for the study of English Economic History can be supplemented by fresh information from the Archives which have not yet been described.

For this purpose the writer has attempted¹ to give an

¹ In this endeavour the writer has benefited by the advice and encouragement of Professor W. R. Scott, the greatest authority on the subject.

outline of the history of the Company in Russia during the Elizabethan period, based on printed works and obvious MSS. sources, filling in details or gaps from new sources which are indicated in the footnotes to this paper.¹

Most of the Englishmen who visited or lived in Russia in the sixteenth century were connected in some way with the Muscovy Company. This famous trading association was established by royal charter in 1555,² following a voyage of discovery planned by Sebastian Cabot, and financed by many of the nobles, ministers of state, and most prominent merchants of England.³ The aim of the voyage was the discovery of a route to China by the North-Eastern Seas, and, failing this, of any other country with which trade could be opened up by English merchants. One of the three ships which composed the expedition reached the White Sea, being probably the first to penetrate to those waters since the explorer Other, of Alfred the Great's time. Richard Chancellor, the pilot-general of the enterprise, travelled by sleigh to Moscow, and won from Ivan IV, then Tsar of Muscovy and Russia, valuable trading concessions.

Chancellor's success promoted the formation of the "Company for the discovery of New Trades," which received by royal charter, later confirmed by Act of Parliament,⁴ the monopoly of such trade as they should establish by sailing north, north-east, or north-west from England, and the new company began to erect an elaborate trading system in Russia.

¹ The most important of these are the State Papers, Domestic and Foreign (1553-1613), the K.R. Customs Accounts (1553-1600), and the K.R. Port Books (1565-1600) at the Public Record Office; with various documents among the Lansdowne, Cotton, Hasleian, and additional MSS. at the British Museum.

² R. Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (edition 1903), ii. p. 304; S.P. Dom., Mary, v. No. 4; Lansdowne MS. 141, No. 55; Cotton MS., Otho E, iii. ff. 51-63.

³ List of members, S.P. Dom. Addenda, Mary. viii. No. 39.

⁴ Hakluyt, iii. p. 83; 8 Eliz., c. 17; Lansdowne MS. 141, No. 56; Cotton MS., Otho E, iii. ff. 64-82.

Russia, or Muscovy as it was then generally styled, was emerging from its isolation as an inland State of Eastern Europe. Its ruler was the famous Ivan the Terrible, at this time an ambitious and energetic prince, who was engaged on almost continuous wars, both with the Tatars and other wild nomadic tribes of his eastern and southern borders, and with the Poles, Livonians, and Swedes on his western frontiers. His dominions were rapidly expanding in both these directions. He had just conquered Astrakhan on the lower Volga, thus expanding his rule, at least nominally, to the Caspian Sea, and a few years later he won the valuable port of Narva on the Baltic from the Teutonic Knights. This port became a considerable commercial outlet for Russian goods, until it was conquered by the Swedes in 1581.

Moscow, Ivan's capital, was by far the most important city in his country. Its houses were built chiefly of logs, and were rude, low, and roofed with shingle, but their number was forty thousand, and, as most of them were surrounded by spacious courtyards and herb-gardens, the city covered an extensive area.¹ The Tsar's citadel, the Kreml, was then being fortified by a wall of burnt bricks, built by Italian architects, but the city itself was without walls or fortifications. Along the banks of the River Moskva for five miles stretched a long row of houses interspersed with fields, where the smiths and other artificers who used fire, lived.² This precaution was essential since the wooden houses so easily caught fire, but it did not by any means prevent such catastrophes. The English and other foreigners often complained of the dirt of Moscow, the thick mud on the roads making it impossible to cross the city except on horseback. There was no

¹ S. von Herberstein, *Notes upon Russia* (1549), translated in the Hakluyt Society's Publications (1854), ii. pp. 4-5.

² R. Eden, *Of the North-East Frostie Seas*, edited by the Hakluyt Society (1854), ii. p. 224.

attempt at paving, and the melting snows in the spring made the roads almost impassable.¹

In Moscow, under the direct patronage of the Tsar, the Muscovy Company opened one of its factories. Moscow was then almost the only place in Russia where any foreigners resided, and these lived together in the foreign quarter.² During their first years of residence the English lived in this part, but in 1567 Ivan IV gave them a house near the market-place, behind the Church of S. Maxim, and in the vicinity of his own palace.³ Here, closely under the Tsar's protection, all the English in Moscow lived for many years, except the physicians or other experts in the Tsar's service and ambassadors visiting Moscow on a special mission. In this house, also, the Company's merchandise was stored and all their trade was carried on. They were allowed to have weights and measures on the premises, so that they were exempt from trading in the general market for foreign goods. This was a valuable concession, and placed them in a far more favourable position than other foreigners, giving them also some little security that they would not be turned out of the country at the Tsar's lightest caprice.

Moscow was not, however, the chief seat of the English trade in Russia. It was essential to have a factory there because Moscow was the residence of the Tsar and Court, with whom much of the trade was carried on. Moreover, it was often necessary for the English to address petitions to the Tsar, if they wished to keep their privileges, as the Tsar was their only protector against unfriendly nobles and merchants, and later they had Dutch and other rivals.⁴ Far higher prices were de-

¹ Hakluyt, ii, p. 429.

² S. von Herberstein, i, p. 113.

³ Hakluyt, iii, p. 93-7. Privileges granted to the Muscovy Company by Ivan IV.

⁴ The Dutch first began to use the White Sea route to Russia in 1578 (British Museum, Additional MS. 33837, ff. 70-81). During the sixteenth century they were, on the whole, less favourably treated than the English.

manded there, however, for Russian goods than in any other town,¹ and there was also the continual fear that their goods would be confiscated by the Tsar or his ministers. The members of the Russian Court could not be refused any merchandise they desired, and many rich goods had to be imported from England for their special benefit,² but the bad debts which resulted from these transactions mounted to many thousands of roubles in the Company's books.³

In these circumstances the company established several other factories at stages on the way from the White Sea to Moscow, and tried at least to buy the majority of their wares at cheaper marts than the capital. Arkhangelsk was not built till the end of the sixteenth century,⁴ but the Company founded a factory for unloading and storing their goods on a small island, called by them Rose Island, in one of the mouths of the River Dvina, opposite the monastery of S. Nicolas on the mainland.

Queen Elizabeth, in a letter to the Tsar in 1598, thanked him for "retayning their [*i.e.*, the English Company's] residence in Mosko and other principal cities," while other foreign merchants were "sent and limited to the uttermost parts and confynes" of Russia, that is, to the northern sea-coast (S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 56-9).

¹ Hakluyt, ii. p. 277; von Herberstein (*Notes upon Russia*, ii. p. 7) stated that the people of Moscow were more cunning and deceitful than other Russians, their honour being especially slack in business contracts.

² See below, p. 7

³ "Means of Decay of the Russe Trade," by Christopher Burrough, Lansdowne MS. 52, No. 27 (printed in *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia*, Hakluyt Society, 1866, Vol. I, Introduction, p. cviii.).

⁴ In 1584 the town was first built round the monastery of S. Michael (Hakluyt, iii. p. 346; *Early Voyages*, i. p. 190). The English were at first prohibited from trading there (1586, Hakluyt, iii. p. 352), but by 1596 the Company had built a house at Arkhangelsk (Hakluyt, iii. p. 443), and their privileges of 1598 mention their house at "St Archangell (S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 66-8, and Cotton MS. Nero B, viii. ff. 29-31). The London Port Book for 1599 (Bundle 10) enters the Muscovy Company's fleet as sailing "versus St Michael's in Russia" (*i.e.* Arkhangelsk), but previously "versus St Nico in Russia" (*i.e.* Rose Island). K.R. Customs Account 1588, outward tonnage roll, London, 1596-7, also enters the fleet as sailing "versus St Nico," so the change of port probably occurred between 1597 and 1599.

After a six or eight weeks' journey of some hazard, in a small ship of perhaps a hundred and twenty tons,¹ with only the hardest biscuit and the saltiest of meat as victuals, with the wild and desolate shores of Norway and Lapland under their lea, and buffeted by the monstrous waves of the northern seas, which were still full of ice, the crews must have felt much thankful joy in reaching this haven of safety. In July, when the voyage was completed, Rose Island was a most beautiful place, carpeted with sheets of violets, fragrant with the scent of myriads of roses "damaske and red," and shaded by groves of birch and fir. Here, beside "a faire spring," was built the most northerly house of the English,² and here, in the long summer days, the ships were unladen and laden again with cargoes of cables, wax, tallow, furs, tar and hides,³ collected ready in the warehouses near the water's edge for the return voyage, which had to be made at the beginning of August, to avoid the early winter ice.⁴ The mariners, meanwhile, turned eagerly to such surreptitious and illicit trading as they could carry on without the knowledge of the agents, for a "timber"⁵

¹ Ships of tonnages ranging from 60 tons to 120 tons are found in the London Port Books and K.R. Customs Accounts sailing to the White Sea in the sixteenth century. It is rare, however, to find them under 100 or over 160 tons, and an approximate average of 120 tons may be taken. The fleet varied from two to thirteen vessels, an average being possibly six ships of perhaps 700 tons burden yearly.

² Hakluyt, iii. p. 72.

³ The London Port Books (1565-1600) show instances of the following imports:—cordage, cables, ropes, "untired" (untarred?) ropes, cable yarn, wax, tallow, tar, flax, "flax unwrought," train oil, train oil blubbers, sealskins, wolf-skins, "wolverings," mink, squirrel skins, coarse sables, "bever bellies, bever backs, bever wool," "rogesen downe," hides, cow-hides, tanned cow-hides, losh hides (Russian for elk), calf-skins "in the heare," goat skins, rough bristles, dry cow-hides, isinglass.

⁴ S.P. Dom., James I, viii. No. 59: "The cuntrey of Russia is not to be sayled unto but only in the monethes of Maye and June and the shippes that then goe thither cannot make there aboade in those partes above a monethe or sixe weekes, unlesse they be frozen and lockt in for a whole yeare followinge".

⁵ "Timber"—"a legal quantity of small skins, 40 or 50 packed between two boards" (*Early Voyages*, p. 207, n.).

of squirrels' furs or a few sables might yield them a considerable profit in England.¹

From the port of Arkhangelsk, heavy flat-bottomed barges,² laden with English cloth, pewter and paper, and with jewels, rich silks, velvets and damask for the Court, or even a cargo of copper, lead and other munitions of war for the Tsar,³ proceeding slowly up the River Dvina for seventy miles, sailing when there was wind enough, and at other times towed by men to Kholmogori.⁴ Here the English had, with the Tsar's permission, built a house "surely the largest, tytest and fairest in all the Countrie and of warehouses, ambarres, and workhouses as well

¹ Nero B, xi. ff. 321-8 (printed in *Early Voyages*, pp. 206-25): "The marinarins bring every yeare excellent fures ". But by 1584 the Company had made stringent provisions to prevent this practice: "The newe agent and assisstant . . . spie so here at the shippes that there dareth nether purser nor maryner trade . . . The masters are bound in two hundreth pownds to the contrarie and for to seem trustie agents to the Company, they alweis when they slepe they lye in their clothes" (Nero B, xi. ff. 360-2).

² Hakluyt, ii. p. 419; iii. p. 70.

³ An early shipload of exports from England (K.R. Customs Account 1584 Tonnage and Poundage Roll, 4-5 Elizabeth) includes "folders plumbi . . . stanni opati . . . brassell . . . sulphur . . . croci . . . lignum vite . . . peces canvas striped wth goald and silver . . . panni Auri . . . crimesen Taffita . . . black velvet . . . crimesen damask . . . Raggad and seede pearle . . . Reames paper . . . wryting paper . . . figges corrupt . . . Raisens corrupt . . . vine corrupt" (cf. S.P. Dom., Eliz., cclv. No. 56, which recommends the sending of "corrupt wyne" to Russia, and also the selling for wine "sidar puting into it three or fower gallons of Bastard"). The above list, of course, excludes cloth, the staple export to Russia. It may be compared with a later list (Port Books, Bundle 10, 1599) which includes "plumbi iniacti . . . stanni opati . . . stanni in barres . . . copper . . . brymstone . . . Iron wyre . . . goades cottons manchesters . . . coarse Spanishe narrowe clothes . . . single bayes . . . Muscovie gloves . . . frauncconsence . . . Reames pott paper . . . Spanishe pap . . . demy pap . . . cotton wool . . . figges . . . grene ginger in syrup . . . Anny seedes . . . sugers . . . comfettes . . . synamone . . . vini Sackes . . . vini Allegant . . . vini Canaries . . . vini Moskadelles . . . vini Roin . . . vini Vascon". George Stoddard, a young English grocer, mentions also in his ledger "whyte sheuger candy" (Hubert Hall, *Elizabethan Society*, p. 53), and on the first voyage "English bookes of the Scriptures" (which met with no customer) (Hubert Hall, *History of the Customs Revenue of England*, i. p. 51). These lists, which include goods for the people, luxuries for the Court, and "warlike stores" for the Tsar of Russia, help towards forming an estimate of the influence of the English on Russia in the period.

⁴ Sir Thomas Smith, *Voyages and Entertainment in Russia* (1605), D2.

accommodated,"¹ and established another factory. Kholmogori was, in the sixteenth century, a great mart for the northern districts of Russia. Lapps, Samoyedes, Karelians, Russians and Tatars came there to trade in fish, oil, furs and feathers.² It was a large town built of scattered wooden houses, and the Russian inhabitants were rude, homely and given to drinking.³

From Kholmogori the barges, having unladen the goods required for sale there, proceeded up the river for seven hundred miles to Vologda. Anthony Jenkinson, the famous traveller, mentions "great rocks of alabaster and pineapple trees lying along within the ground, which were there since Noah's flood," to be seen a little distance above Kholmogori.⁴ "All the way," he continues in his account of the journey, "I went into no house, but lodged by the river side and carried provisions for the way. He who travels here should carry hatchets, timber box and kettle to make a fire and seethe meat".

Vologda, a large and important mart, had been selected for the site of an important factory of the Company.⁵ Prices were only half as much as at Moscow, and the English had built a house and warehouses there, on land given them by Ivan IV.⁶ Vologda, like the other towns, was built of fir-wood and extended over a considerable area, with a stone and brick-walled castle and many churches.⁷ "The English house" said Sir Thomas Smith, "hath a great many rooms but the house itself is very old [*i.e.* in 1604] and stands with an humble body as though it would shortly kisse the earth". Most of the

¹ *Voyages and Entertainment in Russia*, i. 2.

² Hakluyt, ii. p. 276; *Early Voyages*, I. Introduction, lxi.

³ Hakluyt, iii. p. 103.

⁴ *Ibid.* ii. p. 418; Similarly Sir Thomas Smith describes this journey (D2) "straight pine, tall cedar or fyrre woods; Alabaster Rockes or the pleasantness of walkes in sweet Meadowes and fair pastures, then which for 1,000 vers [verss] cannot be more welcome in the whole world".

⁵ *Ibid.* ii. p. 277. Vologda was "the resort of many rich merchants".

⁶ Hakluyt, iii. pp. 93-7. Privileges, 1567.

⁷ *Ibid.* iii. p. 104.

Company's apprentices and stipendiaries lived in this house, under the supervision of one of the agents.¹

From Vologda the journey to Moscow had to be undertaken by land. In winter the Russian sledges provided a rapid and comfortable means of travelling, for the snow on the roads soon became hard and the sledges skimmed easily over the good surface.² At stages on the journey there were hostelries where post-horses could be changed, and the English had no difficulty in obtaining these while they were in the Tsar's favour, for they were always kept ready for his servants.³ Though winter travel in Russia was thus more pleasant and speedy than in any other part of Europe,⁴ the conditions were very different in summer. The pace was then slow and the journey fatiguing, for the roads were almost impassable with mud and the carts often stuck fast in the ruts, which were sometimes a yard deep, while walking was impossible.⁵

There was, however, another trade route used by the Company from Vologda, by water. Their barges could sail along various waterways to Yaroslavl, where the Company had a fifth factory in the latter part of the century.⁶ Moreover, for over twenty years, from 1558-1583 the merchants passed down the Volga to the Caspian Sea, on their way to trade with Persia. Astrakhan, the last city in Russian territory, was a great disappointment to these early travellers. They mention the meanness of the houses, and the scarcity of bread and meat. The

¹ *Voyages and Entertainment in Russia*, H.

² Sir Thomas Smith (G. 2) describes the journey in winter as an "easy and pleasant passage in sleds, such a passage as this part of the world would wonder at, in which a man, though he go at a Hackney pace, may as easilye reade as slepe".

³ *Notes upon Russia*, i. p. 108; S.P. Dom., Eliz., xlv. No. 11; Hakluyt, iii. p. 116.

⁴ E. S. Bates, *Touring in 1600*, p. 293.

⁵ Hakluyt, ii. p. 425. Sir D. M. Wallace, *Russia* (1905), pp. 14, 23, 30.

⁶ Nero B, xi. ff. 360-2; *Russia at the Close of the Sixteenth Century* (Hakluyt Society, 1856), p. 227, Privileges obtained by Jerome Horsey, 1585-6.

beggarly inhabitants lived chiefly on sturgeon, and this was hung up in the streets to dry, attracting swarms of flies and giving off an abominable stench.¹ Here the English built boats in order to cross the Caspian, and their trade with Persia was most adventurous.² Pirates and land-robbers were a great and continual danger, and the voyage itself was most hazardous to men who knew very little of the squalls and shoals of this sea. In Persia itself the distrust and enmity of the population proved an added risk. In spite of all difficulties these daring merchants often succeeded in bringing home rich cargoes of raw and wrought silks, spices, turquoises and galls for dyeing, until the Turkish wars closed the route.

It was mainly in these four or five Russian cities, then, that the English servants of the Moscovy Company lived,³ buying and selling their goods, trading from one town to another as ordered by their agents, and occasionally making wider prospecting journeys to discover, if possible, new marts for their goods.⁴ The several agents of the Company were at the head of the entire commercial enterprises in Russia though subject to minute orders from the Governor of the Company in England. There was usually an agent at the head of each of the important factories, and these few men had an almost absolute authority over all the English connected with the Company in Russia, these being of two classes, apprentices and stipendiaries.⁵ The former were young men newly arrived from England, sent to learn the trade. They re-

¹ Hakluyt, ii. p. 445; *Purchas, his Pilgrimes* (1905-7 edition), xii. p. 7.

² See accounts in Hakluyt, ii. and iii., *Early Voyages*, Calendar of East Indies, 1.; and Joseph Hanway, *Historical Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea*, 1753; Vaughn, *English Trading Expeditions into Asia under the Authority of the Muscovy Company* (1912).

³ S.P. Dom., James I, viii. No. 59.

⁴ Hakluyt, ii. p. 383. e.g. Th. Southam and J. Sparke travelled in 1566 almost entirely by water from the White Sea to Novgorod the Great, to discover if this were a possible trade-route, without very satisfactory results. (Hakluyt, iii. pp. 73-82).

⁵ Nero B, xi. ff. 321-8, *Early Voyages*, 2, 6.

ceived at first no wages, but served for clothing, meat, drink, and lodging,¹ and the strictest rules were laid down for their life and conduct by the Company at home,² rules which, however, they found it easy, at so great a distance from England, to evade. The apprentices usually became in time stipendiaries, and the best of these were employed as clerks, to keep the accounts, and to act as the agents' deputies whenever he was forced to be absent,³ either at Rose Island, to superintend the unloading of the ships, or at Moscow transacting business with the Court, or trying to obtain redress of grievances from the Tsar. The stipendiaries, in addition to their ordinary duties of assisting in buying and selling within their own districts, were sent to other towns to buy up commodities at the most advantageous rates, or to attend markets, where the English goods might be displayed for sale.⁴

Except when on such trading journeys, all these factors were required to reside in the Company's house. They were not allowed to leave the house at night except with the agent's permission, and the agent had power to punish them for misbehaviour and to send them back to England if he found them incorrigible.⁵ Among themselves, the English were permitted to keep their own law,⁶ and the agent combined judicial and administrative functions with his commercial duties. In their houses the English were allowed by the Tsar to employ two or three native servants, but only for domestic service and not to help in the trade.⁷ The company was also

¹ S.P. For., Eliz., cii. No. 1980. It appears, however, that it later became customary to give the apprentices wages. In 1584 it is stated (Nero B, xi. f. 360-2) that the company "augmented to every apprentis 5^r more, so that nowe their wages is 15^r" (*i.e.* 15 roubles). S.P. For., Russia, i. f. 133-4, also mentions a servant hired for meat, drink and wages, but this may have been a stipendiary. Christopher Burrough (*Early Voyages*, Intro., p. cix.) in 1587 said "Their wages and allowance is very small, or (if they bee apprentized) nothing at all".

² Hakluyt, ii. p. 282-4.

³ Lansdowne MS. 112, f. 136.

⁴ Hakluyt, ii. p. 284.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 283-4, 406.

⁶ *Ibid.* iii. p. 118.

⁷ *Ibid.*, iii. pp. 93-7; iii. pp. 109-18; S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 66-8.

forbidden to employ Russians to go about the country to buy up goods for them.¹ A further restriction is notable in several of the later grants of privileges; this is that the English were only allowed to sell wholesale, and not retail as before.² The Tsars, although appreciating the value of this foreign trade to their country, took this precaution to prevent a closer intercourse between their subjects and the English colony. They feared lest the latter should gain too much knowledge of the government and state of the country, whilst they were equally afraid that their subjects might become unmanageable and rebellious if they imbibed foreign, and particularly Western, ideas of civilisation.³ The condition of the lower classes in Russia became worse towards the close of the sixteenth century, making ready for the inauguration of serfdom early in the seventeenth century. Dr. Giles Fletcher, on his return from his visit to Russia in 1591 commented on the increasingly hopeless condition of the peasant class, who, he said, suffered such depression that they were able to produce yearly less and less commodities, so that the foreign merchants in the country found it impossible to obtain adequate supplies of Russian goods.⁴

The English in Russia had other difficulties in addition to these. The half-civilised Muscovites had a profound distrust of all foreigners. Although the first English to reach Russia, remembering Sebastian Cabot's advice, used all courtesy towards the people,⁵ and although the company urged its servants to sell at moderate prices in Russia, and thus to win their confidence,⁶ the good effects of their early endeavour to win popularity did not

¹ Hakluyt, iii. p. 349; Nero B, xi. ff. 363-74 (printed in *Russia at the Close of the Sixteenth Century*, Appendix II.)

² e.g. S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 66-8 and unnumbered, following f. 132.

³ *Russe Commonwealth* (Hakluyt Society, 1856), p. 63. Also partly printed in *Purchas his Pilgrimes* (ed. 1907), xii. pp. 499-633.

⁴ *Russe Commonwealth*, p. 62.

⁵ Hakluyt, ii. pp. 202, 249.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 389.

last for many years. The English, by careful and honest dealing, won at first a reputation for honourable trading and this was confirmed by a curious incident typical of the Russia of the time. It appears that the Russian merchants, eager to participate in the profits of foreign trade, wished to be allowed to sail to England in the Company's ships and transact business there. Their request was refused,¹ and consequently those who wished to sell their goods in England had, perforce, to entrust them to English merchants and accept their bond for payment when the next year's ships arrived in Russia. Since this involved a year's delay before the transaction could be completed, certain Russian merchants demanded that the agent's goods should be seized because their debt had not been paid. The claim was decided by the drawing of lots,² and by the agent's success the English secured, for a time, a reputation for honesty.³ Later, however, the merchants became avaricious and lost their good reputation. An Englishman in Russia who was not a merchant speaks of "there garboyle, there stryvinge, there hating one another, there enterprising thinges unlawful, there discredytinge one another, ye and there gredye sekinge to rob one another."⁴ By such means they became detested by a people prone to dislike even the most inoffensive foreigners.

These Early English residents in Russia complained of the cunning and prevarication of the Russians. Unless bills were set down in writing the Russians refused

¹ Later, however, it was thought expedient to allow any Russian merchants who wished to trade into England to do so (S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 127-8; Nero B, xi. f. 339.) In consequence of this permission the Tsar sent two merchants to England to buy jewels and rich apparel for his treasury (Y. Tolstoi, *The First Forty Years of Intercourse between England and Russia*, No. 10), for which they were to exchange the wax and tallow they brought with them (S.P. Dom., Eliz., cvi. No. 61); Port Books, Bundle 4, 1567: "Stephano Twerdico et Theodor' Pogorell' de Russia mercator".

² In several of the grants of privileges, justice by lot is mentioned, e.g. Hakluyt, iii. pp. 93-7, 109-18.; S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 66-8.

³ Hakluyt, ii. p. 411.

⁴ S.P. For., Eliz., cxxiii. No. 362.

to pay,¹ and even when the bill was produced it was often impossible to recover the debt.² In course of time the English merchants, wishing to secure a larger profit, raised their prices very considerably, and thus incurred the resentment of their customers.³ The Tsar's favour towards these envied foreigners provoked further distrust, and when, in 1569, Ivan IV took them under his special protection by placing their houses within the Oprichnina or crown lands, many even of his own courtiers intrigued against them.⁴

The Russians hated this protection of the despised foreigner, the more because the English were but merchants, and merchants in Russia had no caste—the Russian merchant himself being but a “moujik” or boor.⁵ The fighting class, therefore, who were the powerful element in Russia, became antagonistic to the English, and, led by the Chief Secretary, Schelkalov, almost succeeded in turning them out of Russia at Ivan's death in 1584.⁶ But Ivan's son, Feodor, succeeded to the crown, and his brother-in-law, Boris Godunov, soon became the real ruler of Russia. Boris favoured the English,⁷ and, indeed, all foreigners, being exceedingly ambitious and anxious to secure as many friends as possible. To this end he corresponded at length with Queen Elizabeth and Burghley, and through the service of the English merchants accumulated a treasure of jewels, rich stuffs, and various metals, particularly copper, so necessary for munitions of war.⁸

¹ Hakluyt, ii, p. 391.

² The “desperate debts” of the English in Russia at times amounted to thousands of roubles (Hakluyt, iii, p. 329; S.P. For., Russia, i. No. 38).

³ S.P. For., Eliz., xcvi. No. 1755; W. Camden, *Annales of Elizabeth*, iv. p. 105.

⁴ Hakluyt, iii, p. 113; S.P. Dom., Eliz., liv. No. 7.

⁵ *Early Voyages*, Introduction, p. 58.

⁶ *Horsey's Travels* (Hakluyt Society, 1856), pp. 202-4; Tolstoi, No. 53.

⁷ S.P. For., Russia, i. Bundle 2, No. 6. Boris is here, as in many other documents, spoken of as “a professed frende to her maties marchauntes”.

⁸ Tolstoi, No. 80; S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 50 and 51; Calendar of the Marquis of Salisbury (Hist. MSS. Comm.), iii. p. 35, vii. p. 192.

In spite of this protection, however, the English had still to suffer greatly at the hands of the Russian populace. An English merchant remarked that "ye Russ . . . cannot forbear to spoile and fleece strangers now and then . . . if he suppose they gain by his country".¹ Accordingly, the Russians were continually seizing the merchants' goods. In 1589, when they were in great disfavour, no Russian was allowed to hire horses or boats to them, and their house at Kholmogori was fired by the crowd.² Russian merchants were accustomed to sell their goods at the coasts of the White Sea to the French and Flemish, and resented the loss of profits which resulted from the English privilege of trading up into the interior.³ Since they saw mainly the merchant-class of Englishmen, they regarded the whole nation as a "sordid people gaping after wealth,"⁴ and, consequently, doubled and trebled their prices when trading with them.⁵ This vindictiveness towards foreigners is shown by a quaint clause in one of the Tsar's grants of privileges. It was alleged that the Russians were accustomed to throw stolen goods over the Englishmen's palings into their backyards, causing the merchants to suffer at the hands of the law by the forfeiture of their goods, when such stolen property was found in their domain. A solemn grant was, therefore, made that they should not be brought to trial unless such articles were found under lock and key in their houses.⁶

The worthy merchants of London who formed the court of the honourable Muscovy Company were moved at times to dignified wrath against the dishonesty of their servants in Russia. For the view of his position taken by the typical stipendiary and even at times by the trusted

¹ *Early Voyages*, Introduction, cviii. (Lansd. 52, No. 27).

² *Russia at the Close of Sixteenth Century*, Appendix iv. (Lansd. 60, No. 59).

³ S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 133-4.

⁴ Camden, *Annales of Elizabeth*, iv. 124-5.

⁵ S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 133-4.

⁶ S.P. Dom., Eliz., xlv., No. 11. This privilege afterwards lapsed.

agent of the Company was this: he found himself condemned to spend the best years of his life in a most barbarous country, hated by the people, pierced by the cold, separated from his home by a dangerous voyage of some hundreds of miles, and with little prospect of getting his discharge from the Company;¹ and he was even forbidden to trade on his own account and to amass a fortune at the expense of those half-civilised drunkards, "the Russe". Some compensation, then, he must have, and he took what he could get. Since, as a rule, the agent was carrying on an illicit trade on his own account, he either winked at his junior's "privy trade" or went into partnership with him, using the Company's goods, money and credit for his own advancement.² Not only this, but the young stipendiary was sometimes tempted to provide himself from the Company's goods with rich satins and velvets, jewelled caps, and furred cloaks, and so, with a pouch of money in his belt, he set out to swagger among the young Russian nobles, as well appointed as the best.³ He would also invite these new friends to the English house, and supply them with such rare wines, such raisins, prunes, and finely dressed meats as they could not enjoy even at the Court. After these carousals, as

¹ S.P. For., Eliz., xciii. No. 1214; *Queen Elizabeth and Her Times* (J. Wright), i. 420. Wm. Smith to Jas. Woodcoke, speaking of the Company's service, said, "a man may soon come into it, but cannot get out. I am hired but from year to year, and to give me one year's warning, but I have given warning for five years ago, and yet cannot get away."

² An amusing picture of the factors' privy trade is given by one of the most audacious of them, Richard Relph (Nero B, xi. ff. 360-2, 1584). He also described an attempt of the Company to reform such conduct: "The Company will have no servant to travelle any whether and mean to have their buisness done in Mosco, Yeraslaly and Vologda . . . further they mean to chaunge their servauntes every second or third yere and those which serve them must be sworne that they shall use no privie trade, nor no man for them".

³ *Early Voyages*, Introduction, cviii. (Lansd. 52, No. 27); S.P. For., Eliz., cii. No. 1980, describes the Company's servants, who "after that they become factours far of, and owt of sight, do gyve them selves owt to be gentlemen & principall merchauntes & in contynuance of tyme through libertie and lack of grace, bring their masters to ruine and decay". The agent himself, Thomas Glover, had "used the Company's purse like a prince".

the anxious and reproofing letters from the Company imply, English merchant and Russian noble would be amicably sprawling together on the rush-strewn floor. Such excesses provoked indignant protests from the careful solid merchants at home. They complained that their young servants dressed themselves "in velvets or silks and ride when we [*i.e.* their masters in England] goe afoote," and that their housekeeping expenses in Moscow had been doubled by tippling and extravagant and unnecessary hospitality "to giue wyne and meate to comers and goers to our houses". This prodigal entertainment, they observed, was not the custom of the country "except we have brought up this corruption". They threatened to send no more wines to Russia, and charged the agent to make a "frugall proportion of fare per man," and to keep accounts of such "achates" carefully.¹

Finally, the members of the Company in England found it desirable to prescribe the necessary clothing to be supplied yearly to an apprentice, with the cost, down to a penny of each article.² These included "two vpper garments, buttons and stitching . . . one nether garment . . . furre for the same . . . one workday vpper garment without furre or stitching . . . three shirts . . . one pelch of furre which will serue 3 or 4 yeares . . . 1 Capp for holie dayes . . . 1 Capp for worke dayes . . . Girdle gloues and kniues". The cost in all was estimated at thirteen roubles, twelve altines, six dengas,³ or roughly £9 sterling for the first year, after which "the old apparel . . . wilbe sold ther againe for so much as will buy them newe for the next yeare".

¹ *Early Voyages*, pp. 206-25 (Nero B, xi. ff. 321-8).

² *Ibid.* p. 226.

³ von Herberstein (*Notes upon Russia*, p. 109) gives an account of Russian money. The only gold coins were foreign, and the currency consisted chiefly of silver coins, the "deng," 6 of which went to an "altin" and 200 to a rouble. John Hasse (*Hakluyt*, ii. p. 273) compared the "denga" to an English penny, the "altine" to a shilling, and the rouble to a pound, 6 dengas being worth an altine, and 23 altines 2 dengas a rouble.

These orders, however, had little effect. It needed greater influence than a letter or a brief visit from some "wise merchant" to reform a party of devil-may-care young Englishmen two thousand miles and three months' journey from home. They found further scope for extravagance,¹ keeping "dogges, beares and other superfluous burdens". Instead of the two or three Russian domestics allowed them by their privileges² they kept a considerable retinue of "bonde men and women attending upon them"; which last excess the Company especially reproved, since it "engendreth pride".

The harsh judgment passed on these young Englishmen was in its turn criticised by that capable and honourable agent, Christopher Burrough. He pointed out the difficult conditions and many temptations of this trying life.³ Through lack of proper discipline, lack in particular, he thought, of the wise teachings of a chaplain, these young men, thrust into a profane and licentious society, "fell into the hands of sin". They spent the Company's money on their expensive and corrupt pleasures and on making and keeping the acquaintance of the Russian courtiers to protect themselves against the Company should their "privy trade" be discovered by their masters. Burrough blamed the Company for its parsimony in refusing to engage the services of a preacher, with the excuse of having "no great number of servants thear". He condemned the small wages and allowance of the factors, and asserted that this led to their embezzling the Company's stock. He submitted the remedy of allowing each factor a share in the stock, alleging that this would make him zealous in the trade and prevent his trading with the Company's goods to enrich himself, contrary to his oath. Service in Russia became a byword, im-

¹ *Early Voyages*, p. 215.

² Hakluyt, iii. p. 111; S.P. Dom., Eliz., liv. No. 7; S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 66-8.

³ *Early Voyages*, Introduction, cviii.-cxiii. (Lansd. 52, No. 27).

plying of necessity a factor's dishonesty towards his masters.¹

Had Borrough's advice been taken, the Company would probably have enjoyed some alleviation from the pest of Interlopers. One of the greatest difficulties of this problem was that the Company's own servants so often joined with these Interlopers,² or even became Interlopers themselves,³ and thus rivals who knew every secret of the trade. The Interlopers, apart from these factors, traded to Russia through the port of Narva, until it was taken by the Swedes in 1584, and were chiefly men of York, Hull, Yarmouth, Harwich, and London.⁴ Their number seems to have been considerable,⁵ though in what proportion to the Company's servants it is, as yet, impossible to say. When Narva was closed to the Russians the Interlopers, on the pretext of fishing in the waters of Vardö, which, as the northern outpost of Denmark, was just outside the Muscovy Company's monopoly, took their ships to the northern shores of Lapland, and drew thither trade from Kholmogori and the River Dvina, to the detriment of the Company's commerce.⁶

¹ S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 133-4.

² Tolstoi, No. 16; S.P. For., Eliz., cii. No. 1780.

³ S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 46-7.

⁴ S.P. Dom., Eliz., cviii. No. 16; R. G. Marsden, *Select Cases in the High Court of Admiralty*, ii. p. 149. These merchants, together with some of the Company's own servants, petitioned Ivan IV for a grant of privileges for themselves, which they obtained (S.P. For., Eliz., xciii. No. 1554; c. No. 2316).

⁵ In Nero B, xi. f. 333, and Lansd. 60, ff. 157-60, thirty-five names of Interlopers of York and Hull, with the Company's servants who had joined them, are given—the list concludes, "and others". This, of course, was only one Company of Interlopers. In Lansd. 112, No. 37, it is stated that seventy English ships of Interlopers traded to Narva in 1566, with English, French, Dutch, and Scottish goods.

⁶ S.P. Dom., Eliz., cviii. No. 16. It would not be possible here to attempt an account of the relations of the Interlopers with the Muscovy Company, but it is interesting to discover that information found in the Port Books and K.R. Customs Accounts appears to bear out this assertion, that the Interlopers gave out that they were trading to a port outside the Company's privilege, and then sailed to a Russian port. Until 1566 the port of Narva was not definitely included in the Company's monopolised area, but in this year it was so included by

Some of the English factors in Russia married Russian and Polish women,¹ and occasionally they forswore their own faith and became members of the Greek Church. An interesting story of one Wiseman,² a servant to Jerome Horsey, illustrates the life and hazards of the English in Russia. This Wiseman was in love with a Russian gentlewoman, and, to obtain her hand, he reported to the Tsar's Chief Secretary, Schelkalof, a conversation which he had overheard while waiting at table on his master and Dr. Fletcher, the English Ambassador.³ Schelkalof, who was unfriendly to the English, and especially to Horsey,⁴ held this conversation to be

Act of Parliament (*see above*, p. 1, note 3). In the Hull Port Books there are several notices of ships returning from Narva in 1566 and 1567, but after this date there is only one while Narva remained a Russian port, and that in 1579. Many of the same merchants' names, however, appear after 1567 in ships bound for Danzig and Riga, and some of these may (as is asserted in S.P. Dom., Eliz., cviii. No. 16) have traded to Narva. There are also, in the Port Books and K.R. Customs Accounts, several instances of ships either ostensibly sailing to Vardö with cloth, which could not have been sold at that fishing station, or returning with wax or train-oil, the price of which, the Company complained, was greatly raised by the Russians, who traded to Lapland from Kholmogori. "Edmonde Cooke," whom the Company complained to be the chief merchant of Hull and York, was probably the "Edward Cooke" of the K.R. Customs Accounts (1586 and 1587) trading from Hull to Wardhouse" (Vardö) with cloth, and returning with train-oil. Merchants from Ipswich (Port Books, Bundles 589, 590, and 592) also declared that they were taking cloth "versus Wardhouse," and bringing wax and train-oil from thence, while merchants of Newcastle (K.R. Customs Accounts 1583) exported cloth and lead (a commodity in great demand in Russia) "toward Wardhouse".

¹ Tolstoi, No. 13; S.P. Dom., Eliz., cviii. No. 16; S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 48-9. It is uncertain whether there were any Englishwomen in Russia in the sixteenth century, though it is certain that in the first years of the seventeenth John Merrick's wife, an Englishwoman, was in Moscow (Sir T. Smith, *Voyages and Entertainment in Russia*, G. 3). Wives and children of English merchants in Russia are occasionally mentioned (*e.g.* S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 48-9; Hakluyt, iii. p. 169), but it is not known whether these were English or Russian.

² S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 103-4, and ff. 105-6; Nero B, xi. ff. 363-74 (printed in *Russia at the Close of Sixteenth Century*, appendix ii.).

³ S.P. For., Russia, i. Bundle 2, No. 8. Horsey said that Tsar Feodor "was meeter to be a fryer than a king, and to bear a pair of beads than a sceptor".

⁴ S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 13-16.

treasonable. Wiseman was rewarded for his treachery by the gift of the lady's hand, with money and lands to live as became a Russian gentleman. Horsey, however, thanks to the support of Boris Godunov, was able to prove his innocence. Boris took the matter before the Tsar, and Wiseman was seized, deprived of his newly acquired goods, and re-baptised into the Anglican Church. One account says that he was sent home in disgrace,¹ another that he perished miserably, a beggar in the streets of Moscow.² In any case, his disgrace shows how precarious an Englishman's fortune in Russia might be.

Wiseman's master, Jerome Horsey, is a good example of a certain type of Englishman evolved by long service in Russia. According to his own account of himself, in his "Travels,"³ he was a most brilliant and important personage in the Russia of his day, but other accounts depict him as a monster of infamy. At first an apprentice, he later became the stipendiary next in rank to the agent at Moscow,⁴ and at the same time he secured the friendship of Boris Godunov,⁵ with whom he exchanged a considerable correspondence.⁶ An apt scholar, he mastered the Russian language, a feat by no means accomplished by all the English in Russia. He was soon employed as an envoy from the Tsar with letters to Queen Elizabeth.

On one occasion when Russia was at war with Poland, Horsey succeeded in making the arduous journey overland through hostile territory, with a letter from the Tsar to Elizabeth, requesting a load of ammunition from England.⁷ He had concealed this letter in the false side of a wooden brandy bottle, covered by his horse's mane.

¹ S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 105-6.

² *Ibid.* ff. 103-4.

³ Printed by the Hakluyt Society (1856) in *Russia at the Close of the Sixteenth Century*: edited by E. A. Bond.

⁴ Lansd. 112, No. 40.

⁵ S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 13-16.

⁶ *Horsey's Travels*, p. 231-2; Nero B, xi. ff. 363-74, printed in *Russia at the Close of the Sixteenth Century*, appendix ii.; Tolstoi, Nos. 56, 60.

⁷ *Horsey's Travels*, p. 189.

On receiving the letter the Queen complained of the fumes which still clung to it, although it had been sprinkled with fragrant essences previous to presentation. This was a fortunate mission for Horsey, for Elizabeth greatly admired his ready rendering of Russian into English, while in Russia he was the welcome bearer of a load of munitions of war, smuggled through Poland, the country against which they were to be used.¹

On a later occasion Horsey took charge of another present for the Russian court,² including "lyons, bulls, doggs, guilt halberds, pistolls, peces [*i.e.*, muskets], armor, wyne, store of drugs of all sorts, virgenalls, musicions, scarletts, perrell chaines, plate of curious makeinge." The musical instruments gave great delight to the Empress Irenia, the sister of Boris Godunov, and the English musician sent to play them was often admitted to the Court when no other of his countrymen could effect an entry. Horsey is here seen as the finished and successful courtier; he bragged of his influence at the Court, of how prisoners were liberated at his request, and of how his interest secured for some their fortune.³

The English at Moscow, however, saw another side of this versatile man. They told of how he deposed one agent and appointed another, favourable to himself, of how he called himself the "President" of the Company, and went about the house beating and flogging the factors to show his own power. He extended the Company's buildings at Moscow, merely for ostentation, and took many of the Company's goods for his own use.⁴ Further,

¹ J. von Hamel, *England and Russia*, p. 236.

² *Horsey's Travels*, p. 217.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 182-3; appendix ii. p. 291.

⁴ The agent, Robert Peacock, wrote to Walsingham (S.P. For., Russia, i., Feb. 8, 1589), that Horsey's misdemeanours were as "a sea that hath no bottome". There are many accounts of these misdemeanours, *e.g.* S.P. For., Russia, i. Bundle 2, Nos. 1, 7, 8, 9; Lansd. 112, f. 137, f. 133 (34 complaints against him), and Lansd. 62, f. 22. Most of these, or extracts from them, are printed in *Russia at the Close of the Sixteenth Century*, appendix iii.

he procured the imprisonment, sometimes with torture, of any of the English who resisted his pretensions. Even Boris, a Russian and like most of his countrymen of that date of a cruel disposition, was sickened to see the torture to which Horsey had put an innocent servant of the Company, "setting him on the pudkey".¹

Horsey's triumph was short, for Boris seems to have tired of his arrogance,² and the Company, hearing of the vast debts he had accumulated in their name, petitioned Elizabeth most piteously to write to Feodor for his recall.³ Horsey seems, however, to have won the Queen's ear, for no particular steps were taken against him, and when he returned to England for good about 1593, he became a squire in Buckinghamshire, a knight and a member of Parliament.⁴

As a contrast to such a character we have Sir John Merrick, the honourable and beloved agent of the Company, and afterwards royal ambassador. Merrick was respected more highly than any foreigner who had hitherto visited Russia.⁵ Then there was Sir Francis Cherry, the capable merchant,⁶ who gained his experience by

¹ S.P. For., Russia, i. Bundle 2, No. 9. This form of torture is here described—Hornby, the sufferer, was "tossed by the arms on a gubitt," his arms disjoined, and given 24 lashes with a wire whip. In another document (Lansd. 112, f. 133, printed in *Russia at the Close of the Sixteenth Century*, p. 316), Hornby was "put to the pudkey, where he was hanged by both his handes tyed behind him, and waightes to his feet, and had 24 lashes with a wyer whippe". In the 1589 grant of privileges, obtained by Dr. Fletcher, a clause was inserted that henceforward no Englishman should be tortured (*Russia at the Close of the Sixteenth Century*, p. 350).

² *Russia at the Close of the Sixteenth Century*, p. 359.

³ *Ibid.* p. 326.

⁴ *Horsey's Travels*, p. 266.

⁵ Sir Thomas Smith (*Voyages and Entertainment in Russia*, G. 3) described him as "so honest and discreet an Agent, so well beloved by the Emperor, Prince and Nobility, so approoved of by the merchants . . . so thoroughly experienced in affairs, as well concerning their trade, as their customs and demeanure, having a mind and ability . . . for the benefit of the whole Company as never had nor will succede a fitter man".

⁶ S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 21-2, "the travailes of Fraunces Cherrye whence were not the least" of "the good indevors of her [Queen Elizabeth's] march-auntes trading Russia"; Cal. Marquis of Salisbury (Hist. MSS. Comm.), vii. p. 504.

spending ten years of his boyhood at the Russian Court. It was largely due to Cherry's efforts that Russian cordage¹ came to be used almost exclusively by the English navy in the last decade of the sixteenth century.² The fleet that defeated the Spanish Armada was largely rigged with Russian cordage and cables.³ Finally, mention should be made of Anthony Jenkinson, the famous traveller, who won the regard, not only of Ivan the Terrible, but of the Shah of Persia and the potentate of every Eastern State visited by him. Jenkinson must have possessed great natural dignity and charm, since, although he could not speak Russian, so capricious a monarch as Ivan should have repeatedly demanded his presence before he would grant any privileges to the English.⁴

In 1571, when the Tatars succeeded in entering and firing Moscow, the Muscovy Company sustained heavy losses in goods, money and buildings, but many of their resident servants, besides native Russians, took refuge in their cellars and so escaped. Still, the list of deaths among the English from this fire was serious, for twenty-five were counted "stifled in our beer-cellar".⁵ Although the English were unpopular with the Russians, there are instances of their humanity towards their Russian neighbours found in their kindness towards one Nikita Romanov, the brother of Anastasia, Ivan's wife. Nikita was the neighbour of the English in Moscow, and when Ivan deprived him of his goods, his house and even his

¹ See below, p. 24.

² Cal. Marquis of Salisbury, vii. pp. 484, 504; xiii. p. 510.

³ In 1587 more than a quarter of the whole expenses of the Navy, that is £3,351, was for rope bought from the Muscovy Company (S.P. Dom., Eliz., ccxvii. No. 72), and in the same year another £3,000 worth of cordage was ordered from the Company (Cal. S.P. Dom., 1581-90, p. 467).

⁴ S.P. For., Eliz., cxiii. No. 362, "Mr. Jenkinson, of whose cominge the Emperour (Ivan IV) lyked so well that . . . his maiestie hath grauntyd hym all he requestyd, unlesse it weare such goodes as weare taken in the tyme of his maities displeasure ageynste the merchauntes".

⁵ Hakluyt, iii. p. 170.

clothing, the English, at the serious risk of the Tsar's displeasure, gave him coarse cotton robes to clothe himself and his children, and other relief.¹ Again, the Livonians from Narva, who lived outside Moscow, were clothed and revived by the English after they had been despoiled and cruelly treated by Ivan.²

English ambassadors in Russia³ were usually fairly well treated, though the peculiar rules for their reception caused some bitter complaints. Their retinue sometimes consisted of as many as forty servants and young gentlemen eager to see the world,⁴ and these were lodged with them at Moscow in the house specially set apart for ambassadors,⁵ where the ambassador himself was "straightly kept" and neither allowed to visit, receive English visitors nor leave his lodging except for audiences with the Tsar or conferences with his ministers. This rule was conceived not, as so many ambassadors suspected, to do them dishonour, but with the almost Oriental idea that their rank should keep them aloof from the populace,⁶ and also probably to insure that the English merchants in Moscow should not tamper with their mission or tell them of too many grievances. After his first audience with the Tsar, which was purely formal,

¹ *Horsey's Travels*. p. 194. Nikita was the grandfather of Michael, first Tsar of the Romanov dynasty.

² *Ibid.* p. 195.

³ The English ambassadors sent to Russia in the reign of Queen Elizabeth were Thomas Randolph, the first royal ambassador to Russia from England (1568); Anthony Jenkinson (1571); Sir Jerome Bowes (1583); Dr. Giles Fletcher (1588); Sir Richard Lee (1601). There were also several envoys and messengers sent by Elizabeth to the Tsars. The Muscovy Company usually bore the expenses of the ambassadors. Sir Richard Lee was allowed £800 and his diet for himself and his followers, but he was to provide them and himself with suitable clothing (S. P. For., Russia, i. ff. 107-8.).

⁴ Hakluyt, iii. p. 102.

⁵ *Voyages and Entertainment in Russia*, E. 2.; Hakluyt, iii. p. 105. Accounts of the various embassies are found in Hakluyt, ii. and iii., *Russia at the close of the Sixteenth Century*, *Early Voyages*, *Voyages and Entertainment in Russia*, Nero B, xi. f. 400-2. All agree in descriptions of ceremonial and procedure.

⁶ Sir Thomas Smith remarked (C. 4.) "the greatest glory for the greatest men is rather to be reported than seen".

the ambassador was usually invited to the Tsar's banquet.¹ The banquetting hall was large, though roughly ornamented and low-roofed, and in the middle there was a great stand, on which stood immense gold and silver jars and dishes, four of which were four feet in height.² The ambassador sat alone at a small table placed at a little distance in front of the royal throne, and received bread, meat and drink from the Tsar's own table.³ From this time, until he received his dismissal, usually a period of some months, the ambassador received a daily allowance of food and wine for himself and his attendants.⁴

Dr. Willis, an envoy from Elizabeth in 1599, gave a somewhat soured account of his reception in Russia.⁵ He travelled overland, and when he reached Ivangorod, the Russian frontier fortress, he was kept six hours outside the walls "standing in the open street" before he was allowed to enter any house. During the five days of his stay in this town he was only given "a piece of old beef sodden for dinner, and part of the same, beinge first sodden, rosted in a stove oven for supper". When he arrived at the outskirts of Moscow, he was "bestowed in a smoakie unsavorye shed," and though hungry and weary could get no meat or drink, and his only rest was

¹ Sir Thomas Smith cut short his description of the banquet with the excuse that if he described it at length, "Garlicke and onions must besauce many of my words, as then it did the most of their dishes" (G. 2).

² Hakluyt, ii. pp. 288, 421.

³ In E. S. Bates' *Touring in 1600*, there is a description of the sequel to a Russian Imperial banquet by an Italian, Barberini, who visited Russia in Ivan IV's reign. After three hours' feasting, Barberini left the palace "picking his way through the outer rooms, pitch dark and strewn with courtiers in the weeping stage of drunkenness, down the stairs". Twenty yards from the foot of the stairs a crowd of servants was waiting with horses to take their masters home. Towards these they had to wade, knee-deep in mud, still in pitch darkness, and so continue a good part of the way home. No one was allowed to ride till out of the palace precincts (p. 157).

⁴ Sir Jerome Bowes daily allowance (Hakluyt, iii. p. 476) included 7 sheep, 70 eggs, 20 hens, 10 lbs. of butter, 70 white loaves, the third of an ox, quantities of mead of various kinds, meal, vegetables, candles, provender for horses, and various other food-stuffs.

⁵ Nero B, xi. ff. 400-2.

on a "bench in a smokie roome full of beggers and flies". At last, however, the English merchants brought him a good dinner, and the next day he was allowed to enter Moscow.¹

Dr. Willis was only one of the many doctors who were sent from Elizabeth to serve Tsars. Ivan the Terrible had especially great faith in the skill of English doctors, and frequently requested the Queen to send them to him, offering large rewards to such as would serve him, especially to any who had won a wide repute in his profession.² Dr. John Dee was offered a salary of £2000 a year, and provision for his table, in addition, from the Tsar's own kitchen.³ Elizabeth occasionally sent one of her own physicians⁴; but the post of physician to the Tsar does not seem to have been a popular one, for on one occasion a German doctor of doubtful repute, Dr. Elisius Bomel, who was imprisoned in England for practising sorcery, was offered his release if he would go to Russia to serve the Tsar.⁵ This Bomel did, and was for some years high in Ivan's favour, as his arts were acceptable in Russia. He is supposed to have suggested to the Tsar the possibility of an alliance with England, and even of a marriage with Elizabeth, but when his prophecies came to nothing, Bomel was burnt to death by the Tsar's orders.⁶ Dr. Willis was ignominiously dismissed from the Russian Court before he had even begun his duties, because his skill was doubted, as he arrived at Moscow without books or drugs. Unfortunately he had not been ready when the yearly fleet set out from England, so his luggage went before him in the ships, while he took the quicker overland route and arrived before it.⁷

¹ Unlike the liberal allowance accorded most ambassadors and messengers, the only gift Willis received was two rabbits, from the Chancellor. He added two more and "gave them to the messenger for his pains" (Nero B, xi. ff. 400-2).

² Cal. S.P. Dom., 1581-90, p. 354.

³ Hakluyt, iii. p. 446.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 310.

⁵ *Horsey's Travels*, p. 187.

⁶ von Hamel, *England and Russia*, pp. 202-5; *Horsey's Travels*, p. 173.

⁷ S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 70-1; Cal. of Marquis of Salisbury, x. p. 237.

Surgeons and apothecaries were also sent to serve the Tsar,¹ and were greatly appreciated in Russia, receiving considerable salaries for the times, and being well treated at the Court. They complained, however, of the difficulty of obtaining leave to depart from Russia when they wished to return home, and therefore few could be induced to go to Russia, though the Tsars continually asked for them in their letters.²

Ivan also requested Elizabeth to send him architects and miners who could discover gold and silver,³ and though there is no record of these miners being sent, Elizabeth dispatched architects to Russia, who built fortifications and castles for the Tsar. Various other craftsmen accompanied them, probably about twelve or fourteen in number, but they disliked their life in Russia, partly because of the hard and uncivilised conditions of life there, and partly because of their continual quarrels with the merchants.⁴ As the artificers were held in high esteem in Russia and would not consider themselves under the command of the agents—an impossibility since the former served the Tsar—the agents “slandered and and belied them”. However, most of them became greatly indebted to the merchants and were therefore in an awkward position, since they could not return home, having no money for the voyage, for the company would not allow them to use their ships until their debts were paid, and the journey overland was very expensive.⁵

¹ Hakluyt, ii. p. 383; S.P. For., Eliz., xcvi. No. 1755, and c. No. 2316.

² Tolstoi, Nos. 11, 42; S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 52-5.

³ Harleian MS. 296, No. 54; Tolstoi, No. 11. English Interlopers also supplied Ivan with artificers and workmen (Lansd. 16, No. 20). In 1599 Tsar Boris requested Elizabeth to send him “doctors, lerned men in secret artes, artificers”. All were to be allowed to return home when they wished, and those who were willing to remain in his service “shall receave a worthie stipende according to their desertes and enioy ther freedome and liberty” (S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 52-5.)

⁴ S.P. For., Eliz., xcvi. No. 1755, c. No. 2316.

⁵ Dr. Willis spent £80 on his overland journey, including the payment of guides (Nero B, xi. ff. 400-2).

Numbers of these craftsmen, as well as some of the company's servants who took service with the Tsar, because of the higher wages¹ and greater liberty, built galleys and brigardines for the Tsar at Narva,² and also at Vologda. Horsey mentioned that English artificers had built, in 1585, twenty ships for Feodor at Vologda, while another score were about to be built.³ At Narva the English not only built ships, but were given command of them and their crews by the Tsar. They became captains and master gunners and were given good wages, with "fifteen pence a day for meat and drink and every man a house at the Emperor's charge". "Mariners," said a merchant in 1572 "bear all the sway now."⁴

In addition to these craftsmen, the Muscovy Company employed a number of both English and Russian ropemakers at their ropewalk at Vologda. At one time as many as a hundred men were engaged on the work, most of them being Russians,⁵ though perhaps from a dozen to a score were English.⁶ But since the Russians could be engaged at a much lower wage than the English,⁷ they were employed in increasing proportions as they

¹ Humphrey Lock, an architect and engineer in the Tsar's service (S.P. For., Eliz., 1568, May No. 1757), stated that the doctor received 50 roubles, himself 40, and the other craftsmen wages varying from 15 to 30 roubles yearly.

² S.P. Dom., Eliz., cviii. No. 16; J. Wright, *Queen Elizabeth and Her Times*, i. p. 420; Wm. Smith to Jos. Woodcoke.

³ *Horsey's Travels*, p. 185.

⁴ J. Wright, *Queen Elizabeth and Her Times*, i. p. 420; S.P. Dom., Eliz., cviii. No. 16. In 1569, Ivan IV sent to Elizabeth requesting that English shipwrights and sailors might be sent to him (Tolstoi, No. 18; Camden, p. 86) and these were sent in 1571 (Tolstoi, No. 32). In 1568 (*Early Voyages*, ii. p. 263) it was reported to the company "that the Emperowre should requier a hundreth Englishemen to be his garde for sauegard of his person". This project was not realised, but in making it Ivan IV anticipated Peter the Great in desiring to employ English soldiers as a bodyguard. His evident desire for a fleet on the Western pattern and his anxiety for supplies of English munitions of war, also, are anticipations of Peter's ideas.

⁵ Hakluyt, iii. p. 170.

⁶ *Ibid.*, ii. p. 395; *Early Voyages*, p. 208 (Nero B, xi. ff. 32r-8), English ropemakers in 1567 were paid at rates varying from £5 to £9 a year.

⁷ Hakluyt, ii. p. 395.

became proficient in the work.¹ Scarcely any Englishmen were employed in the work after 1584.² In this ropewalk the Russian cordage, which became so famous in England, being "tarred in the yarn" was made, and rivalled that of Danzig, previously unsurpassed in Europe.³ This ropewalk became, at the end of the sixteenth century, a busy settlement,⁴ for many hundreds of "ends" were sent yearly to England, from small ropes of one inch in thickness, through every grade up to great cables of fourteen and sixteen inches.⁵

The Muscovy Company also employed in Russia an English skinner to test the furs, English coopers to make casks for their valuable cargoes of train-oil, and occasionally another Englishman to work and cut yew suitable for bowstaves.⁶ A maker of "poldavies" was also sent to Russia, and the company employed captives taken in the Russian wars to make this coarse sacking for the navy under his direction.⁷

The English colony in Russia consisted thus, not only of merchants and others directly connected with trade, but also of varying classes of professionals and craftsmen, who undoubtedly were the means of introducing several phases of Western European life into Europe. The doctors and musicians had, of course, an influence scarcely extending beyond the Court, but the craftsmen, whether architects, ropemakers or shipwrights, moved among the

¹ Hakluyt, ii. p. 395.

² Nero B, xi. ff. 360-2.

³ S.P. For., Russia, i. ff. 115-6; Cal. of Marquis of Salisbury, vii. p. 12; S.P. Dom., Eliz., clv. No. 83; William Borough, Comptroller of the Navy, described Russian cordage as "the best that is brought into our countries."

⁴ S.P. Dom., James I., viii. No. 59.

⁵ S.P. Dom., Eliz., ccxl. No. 121, ccliv. No. 14. The Port Books show the amount of cordage brought into London by the company in a year, e.g. in 1587, 889 "ends" weighing 4839 cwts (Bundle 7.)

⁶ Hakluyt, ii. p. 387.

⁷ *Early Voyages*, p. 208; S.P. Dom., Eliz., xl. No. 93. This coarse canvas or sacking was originally made in Brittany, and the company declared that their promoting its manufacture in Russia was a public service, since it had become very scarce in England.

Russian populace and instructed some of them in their arts, being the first from Western Europe to mingle thus with the Russians. Such influences, together with examples of Western civilisation, including dress, food, wine and ships, and the even more penetrating effect of imports from the West, cannot have been without result. Though frankly disliked as foreigners, the English succeeded in visiting many of the larger towns of Russia and not a few of the smaller ones. In all of these they were able to leave some mark of their commercial enterprise upon the half-civilised life of the Russian populace of the sixteenth century, and to show the Russian that though in his country the merchant was a "boor," in England he was rich and under the especial care of a Queen who sent royal embassies with much state to Muscovy to protect the traders' interests. The opening up of the route to Russia through the White Sea was, indeed, an event of far greater importance to the Russians than to the English merchants who immediately profited by it.