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Author(s): Madame Inna Lubimenko

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## THE CORRESPONDENCE OF THE FIRST STUARTS WITH THE FIRST ROMANOVs.

By MADAME INNA LUBIMENKO, DOCTOR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF  
PARIS (LETTERS).

*Communicated December 13, 1917.*

THE early relations of England with Russia were not only of a commercial, but also of a political character. The correspondence of Queen Elizabeth with the Russian Czars has already been described by the author.<sup>1</sup> The friendly intercourse between both courts had attained the force of a tradition at the end of the century, and even the great unrest, the 'Smuta,' which preceded in Russia the elevation of the new dynasty, had no fatal influence on the position of the English in the Muscovite empire. Since the accession to the Russian throne of Czar Michael, the relations of the two courts, interrupted for a time, were resumed, and an animated correspondence followed between the first Stuarts and the first Romanovs. For the period of thirty-seven years (from 1613-49) we can identify 128 letters, though it is probable that a few others have not come to our knowledge. Of these, seventy-five were written by the English court, sixteen by James I, fifty-seven by Charles I, and two by the young prince Charles; fifty-three letters were written in Russia, forty-four by Czar Michael and nine by his father, the patriarch Philaret. We see that the two

<sup>1</sup> See Inna Lubimenko, *The Correspondence of Queen Elizabeth with the Russian Czars* (*Amer. Hist. Rev.*, April 1917), and *A Suggestion for the Publication of the Correspondence of Queen Elizabeth with the Russian Czars* (*Roy. Hist. Soc. Trans.*, 3 Ser., vol. ix. 1916).

principal correspondents of that time were Czar Michael and King Charles.

If we compare this correspondence with that of the sixteenth century, we find that of ninety-eight letters known to us for the time of Queen Elizabeth, forming a period of forty-three years (from 1561-1603), sixty-five were written by the Queen and only thirty-three by her Russian correspondents. We see, therefore, that the English court was in general more prodigal of letters; but if in the sixteenth century the difference was 1 : 1, 9, for the seventeenth it is 1 : 1, 4.

It has been already noticed that the correspondence of the sixteenth century had its fluctuations, the average being two to three letters a year; the greatest number was seven in 1589, but there were whole periods when the exchange of epistles entirely ceased, for example, from 1575-81. In the seventeenth century the fluctuations are even greater and the average has mounted nearly to four letters per annum. But long intervals cannot be found here. Beginning in 1613 with a very limited intercourse, the correspondence reaches in 1621 the total of nine letters, and for the years 1630-32—twelve, sixteen, and eleven respectively. These are the highest figures for nearly a century (from 1561-1649). But already in the years 1632-41 we find only one to five letters per year, and after 1641 the Russian letters cease, and from 1643-45 we have a period of complete interruption of the correspondence, after which the English court sends again one to two letters per year, but receives no answer from Russia.

The letters of the seventeenth century have nearly all remained unpublished and can be studied only in the archives.

The total of 128 letters which I have identified, is made up of originals, copies, old translations with a few mentioned or described in different sources. The total of originals is ninety-one : fifty-eight English, preserved

at Moscow in the series of *English Letters*<sup>1</sup> of the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and thirty-three Russian, preserved at London in the Public Record Office<sup>2</sup> (*Royal Letters*). In the *Foreign State Papers, Russia*, Nos. 1-3, we find copies of the English letters, with old translations of the Russian, making us acquainted with documents which seem to have been lost in their original form. Old copies and Russian translations are to be found in Moscow in the series of *English Affairs*.<sup>3</sup> We see that the greater number of these letters has come to us in their original form and could be published with full identifications.

The originals of the Czars' letters are generally parchment documents richly ornamented with gold, but the English letters show a still more beautiful ornamentation. The initial letter of the King's name is generally decorated with a handsome miniature of considerable dimensions, which may include the portrait of the King enthroned, or figures of animals, flowers, etc. Coats of arms and symbolical ornaments are depicted on a broad coloured stripe, traversing the upper and side margins. The first line of the title is generally written in large gold characters on a blue or dark red ground, but at the end of Charles I's reign this ground-work disappears. More gold is used at that time in the ornamentation, but the floral decoration is rarer.

The Russian letters are generally very long, a great part of them being occupied by the title of the Czar and a detailed summary of the preceding English letter. The style is heavy and loaded with repetitions. The English

<sup>1</sup> *Anglijskija Gramoty*.

<sup>2</sup> We find here forty-six beautiful originals of the Russian correspondence, from 1581-1680. Two letters belong to Czar Ivan the Terrible, three to Czar Boris (one illuminated), twenty-four to Czar Michaël, eight to the Patriarch Philaret, one to Czar Alexis, one to the ambassador Prozorovsky, and one to the Czars John and Peter. The seals have been preserved unbroken only on three letters of Michael. The Russian copies, made at the Record Office and apposed to each letter, are very defective.

<sup>3</sup> *Anglijskija Dela*.

letters are shorter and simpler, though they also contain some exuberances of style, especially those of Charles I.

This correspondence deals with political and commercial questions, but politics have a large place.

Czar Michael at his accession was in a difficult situation. The treasury was empty, the land devastated, the army entirely disorganised, rebellion and treason seemed inrooted in the political life of the vast empire which had to be pacified, the wars with Poland and Sweden being brought to an end. Happily Russia was tired of troubles and aspired to peace and order; yet help from abroad was imperatively needed.

Soon after his coronation the young Czar, nearly a boy, sent embassies to the courts of England, Holland, Denmark, and France, asking for money to continue the Swedish war, or for mediation with a view to a peace with Gustavus Adolphus. Sir John Merrick, Knight,<sup>1</sup> an influential member and later governor of the Muscovy company, was sent over from England with a letter from King James, dated June 19, 1617,<sup>2</sup> recommending him as a mediator, apt to consolidate the ancient amity of both countries, and to help the conclusion of peace between Russia and Sweden. After this epistle had been read to the Czar (January 3, 1615), drafts from earlier letters and privileges were prepared to acquaint him as to the relations of his predecessors with the Kings of England.

Merrick soon proved to be a most energetic and tactful mediator. His first step was to go personally to Narva; whence he reported the difficulties of the situation to the Czar,<sup>3</sup> who wrote to James, asking him to assume personally the rôle of arbitrator or to help Russia against Sweden with his armies.<sup>4</sup> When the efforts and the

<sup>1</sup> Some of his earlier letters are preserved at Moscow in the series of *English Affairs*. For later times see Guildhall Records, *Remembrancia*, iii. and iv.

<sup>2</sup> An old Russian translation in the work of Lygin, *Stolbovsky dogovor*, Append. No. 7. The original seems to have disappeared.

<sup>3</sup> December 1615, *State Pap. Russia*, ii. fol. 216, original with the seal of Merrick.

<sup>4</sup> *Engl. Lett.*, 23, August 18, 1615.

ability of Merrick had at last succeeded in carrying through the negotiations,<sup>1</sup> the Czar wrote again (September 30, 1616), expressing his pleasure at hearing the good news.<sup>2</sup> The services of Merrick have been fully appreciated in the descriptions of the negotiations; these often took place in his own lodgings; he opened the proceedings at the first meeting of the parties with an address in English; he also wrote many times to the Czar and English King and received their personal answers.<sup>3</sup> When peace at last was signed, in February 1617, the treaty was left in his hands, as well as the 20,000 roubles, which the Czar had to pay to Sweden. On June 1, 1617, James warmly congratulated the Czar on the conclusion of this peace.

Two Russian ambassadors, Volynsky and Pozdeev, accompanied Merrick to England with instructions to continue the negotiations with the object of concluding a loan in England and to pave the way for a 'perpetuall league and alliance against all mutuall ennemies'.<sup>4</sup> The English merchants decided to invest their capital in this Russian loan, the East Indian Company joining with the profits.<sup>5</sup> Muscovy Company on condition of a share in its The sum of £200,000 was invested, and Sir Dudley Digges, a most eminent member of the Muscovy company, was chosen to transport it to Russia and hand it over to the Czar. The conditions were: 1. Free trade with Persia through Russia. 2. A privilege for the trade in hemp and flax and the exportation of cordage. 3. Exclusion of the Dutch from the Russian privileges. 4. Establishment of a fixed date for the repayment of the loan.

Sir Dudley Digges landed safely on the Russian coast,

<sup>1</sup> *State Pap. Russia*, ii. fol. 224, August 10, 1616.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i. fol. 91, and *Engl. Lett.*, No. 24.

<sup>3</sup> *State Pap. Russia*, ii. fol. 229, and Lygin, *Stolbovsky dogovor*, nine letters to Gustavus Adolphus and a letter of the Czar to Merrick.

<sup>4</sup> *Nero*, B. XI., fol. 320; *Cal. St. Pap. Dom.*, 1611-18, pp. 494, 497, and 530; *State Pap. Russia*, 2, Feb. 4, 1618, and *ibid.*, fol. 236.

<sup>5</sup> *Cal. State Pap. Dom.*, 1611-18, pp. 532, 533.

but after having reached Kolmogory, suddenly with great secrecy left his Russian suite, and returned home, leaving only £40,000 in their hands; the rest was brought back to England and never reached the hands of the Czar.<sup>2</sup> Michael received the rest of the embassy, and accepted the £40,000,<sup>2</sup> which were paid back two years later through Merrick, a letter of the Czar announcing the fact to King James.<sup>3</sup>

The conduct of Digges provoked great amazement in Russia and its motive has not been hitherto explained. But the negotiations for the conclusion of an 'eternal league and friendship' between both countries were not interrupted; their beginnings can be retraced to the sixteenth century, for a document of 1569 mooted the project of an eternal political alliance, on behalf of Czar Ivan the Terrible,<sup>4</sup> which was, however, declined by the president Elizabeth. The new Russian dynasty, which had to seek for friendship and help abroad, took up the matter again and now found a more favourable reception in England.

The English merchants, who had always promoted the friendship between the two countries, presented to the Council a memorial, containing useful instructions as to how the negotiations with the ambassadors should be conducted.<sup>5</sup> The possibility of a league is seriously considered in some of the letters of that period;<sup>6</sup> but the real object of the Russian court was to find in England help against the Poles.

The instructions received by Merrick to continue the negotiations proved insufficient; a long letter of Michael

<sup>1</sup> *Engl. Affairs*, 1618, July 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1619, No. 1, January and July.

<sup>3</sup> *Royal Lett.*, 49, original, and *State Pap. Russia*, i. fol. iii., Engl. translation, August 17, 1621.

<sup>4</sup> Tolstoy, *The First Forty Years of Intercourse between England and Russia*, Nos. 21 and 44.

<sup>5</sup> *State Pap. Russia*, ii. fol. 253, March 28, 1618.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 249-52, May 1618, and Bantysh-Kamensky, *Obzor vneshnik snoskeny*, May 31, 1618.

complained that he had refused to give a direct answer to the Russian court, and expressed doubts as to the serious intentions of James in the matter.<sup>1</sup> The two Russian ambassadors, Pogozev and Vlasiev, who brought this letter, waited in vain during the whole winter for a definite answer from the English court.<sup>2</sup> At their departure they were joined by Merrick, but the letters conveyed by the latter both ignored the question of a treaty.<sup>3</sup>

At last, in November 1623, an English merchant, Christopher Cocks, arrived at Moscow and declared in his first interview with the 'boiars' that he had brought with him the text of a treaty, signed and sealed by King James.<sup>4</sup> The joy of the Russian court was great at this happy news, but it was soon turned into disappointment, as Cocks ten days' later denied this statement,<sup>5</sup> asserting that he had come only to hear the propositions of the Czar. Michael thereupon wrote a long letter to the English King, asking if Cocks was really authorised to treat or not,<sup>6</sup> but James died without having answered this question.

And yet we know that an act of this kind had been really signed by him, sealed by his royal seal, and committed to Cocks.<sup>7</sup> This was an instrument of political alliance, but contained also regulations for the commercial intercourse between both countries. Its tenor might furnish an interesting subject for a special paper. In case one of the allies was involved in war, the other was to help him with troops and ammunition, to give

<sup>1</sup> *Royal Lett.*, 49.

<sup>2</sup> An evasive answer in *State Pap. Russia*, i., also Alexandrenko, *The Rôle of the Privy Council in the Diplomatic Relations*, (Board of Education, 1889, November, p. 269).

<sup>3</sup> *Engl. Lett.*, Nos. 30 and 31, June 1, 1622.

<sup>4</sup> *Engl. Affairs*, 1623, No. 1, November.

<sup>5</sup> An undated paper in *State Pap. Russia*, ii.

<sup>6</sup> *Royal Lett.*, 49, and *State Pap. Russia*, ii., June, 1624.

<sup>7</sup> *Foedera*, t. vii. pp. 71-3, "Articles of a Perpetual League and Alliance," etc.



his armies a passage over his lands, to refrain from selling victuals or ammunition to the enemy, and to assist the conclusion of peace.

Though this was a much looser alliance than had been intended by Czar Ivan, it still wore the character of an eternal offensive and defensive treaty. Its commercial paragraphs were also less important to the Muscovy company than its earlier privileges. This document in fact clearly indicates the changed position of the English in Russia during the last fifty years. Their rôle of pioneers was now nearly forgotten, other strangers had long ago followed their example and obtained friendly reception and privileges from the Czars.

A special paragraph of the treaty was directed against interlopers, who had to be 'excluded from the protection and benefit of this treaty and together with their goods delivered unto the agent'. This stipulation seems to afford the key to the conduct of Cocks, who in one of his letters<sup>1</sup> ingenuously confessed, that the treaty had been committed to him. A later document speaks of Cocks as 'a brother of the greatest interlopers,' and this suggests that he may have found it more profitable not to discover the treaty.

The death of James interrupted these negotiations, and, though the correspondence was continued by Charles, who expressed his desire to 'happily inherit together with the crownes and kingdoms of our dear father, that princely alliance,'<sup>2</sup> the negotiations about the league were definitely dropped. In his letters Charles used words expressive of friendship; 'being no less anxious to preserve than his father to begin this strict alliance and brotherly amity,' he promised 'to answer those sweet effects of brotherly love and respect by all the like royal expressions'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *State Pap. Russia*, ii., Aug. 14, 1624; see another of his letters, *ibid.* April 17, 1624.

<sup>2</sup> *Engl. Lett.*, No. 38.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 37, Feb. 1, 1627.

One of the new subjects of that correspondence was the military help of England for the reorganisation of the Russian army. On November 29, 1630, Michael had asked permission from King Charles to buy in England 5000 muskets and other ammunition.<sup>1</sup> In a party of officers, arrived that year from England, we find the Scotch colonel, Alexander Lesly, who was soon despatched abroad to find 5000 foot soldiers for the Russian service. A letter (January 29, 1631)<sup>2</sup> was sent with him to King Charles, announcing the intention of the Czar to make war on the Poles and asking for permission to buy ammunition and enlist soldiers and officers in England. Lesly, however, had little success there, and he continued his search in Sweden, Denmark, and Holland whence he wrote to Charles,<sup>3</sup> who had sent out another Scottish officer to Russia to be employed by the Czar instead of Lesly, an offer which was declined.<sup>4</sup> In a letter dated January 4, 1632, Michael asked again for permission to levy soldiers and to purchase in England 5000 swords,<sup>5</sup> and the King 'out of his love and respect of his dear brother,' granted both requests.<sup>6</sup> An English merchant, John Cartwright, brought the promised arms to Moscow with a letter from Charles;<sup>7</sup> and on August 17, 1634, Michael could at last announce to England the happy news of the conclusion of a peace between Russia and Poland,<sup>8</sup> receiving from the English King (January 5, 1635) very gracious congratulations<sup>9</sup> on this event.

If many letters of the seventeenth century, treating

<sup>1</sup> *Royal Lett.*, 49. An answer to this letter from May 20, 1631, in *Engl. Lett.*, No. 58; see also *ibid.*, No. 59, a letter from Charles to Philaret.

<sup>2</sup> *Royal Lett.*, 49.

<sup>3</sup> *Cal. St. Pap. Dom.*, t., 1631-3, 1631, Aug. 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Royal Lett.*, 49, March 4, 1631.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>6</sup> *Engl. Lett.*, No. 61, June 18, 1632.

<sup>7</sup> See letter of Cartwright, May, 1632, in *State Pap. Russia*, ii.; also 1632, No. 3, November 1, and *State Pap. Russia*, iii.; also a letter of Michael to Charles, dated May 31, 1638, in *Royal Lett.*, 49.

<sup>8</sup> *Royal Lett.*, 49.

<sup>9</sup> *Engl. Lett.*, No. 69, original, and *State Pap. Russia*, iii. fol. 245, copy.

of important political questions, are precious and detailed documents for the history of that time, there are also many other very short epistles. Some of them announce the expedition of new ambassadors or agents,<sup>1</sup> often in the form of safe-conducts to these persons,<sup>2</sup> some are simple recommendations, given to different Englishmen, merchants, doctors, officers, desiring to enter into the Czar's service.<sup>3</sup> In this category may be mentioned letters of the English Kings in favour of Englishmen or other strangers, serving the Czar and desiring to return to their native country,<sup>4</sup> as well as the Czar's answers to them.<sup>5</sup>

Sometimes this correspondence, concerning the position of Englishmen in Russia or Russians in England gives valuable glimpses into their personal affairs. Such was the case of Anne Bernuli, an English widow, married in Russia to a French baron, forced by him to embrace the orthodox religion, and shut up after his death in a Russian monastery. The intercession of the English King had no success, the Czar alleging the necessity of her remaining under the safeguard of the Russian clergy.<sup>6</sup>

An interesting series of letters relates the vicissitudes of Russian boys in this country. Czar Boris had already chosen some young Russians to be sent to learn abroad, and four of them had been taken by John Merrick to England. During the "Smuta" they were forgotten there, but later their return was desired. This, however, was no easy matter. They had shown a great capacity for assimilation, and had adopted the English standard of life; one of them had gone to the colonies, another had become an English clergyman. Their countrymen could not be easily reconciled to their defection, and the English court was suspected of self-interest in keeping them back.

<sup>1</sup> For example, *Royal Lett.* 49, June 1613, and *Engl. Lett.*, No. 27, May 31, 1618, and No. 62, June 18, 1632.

<sup>2</sup> *State Pap. Russia*, ii., June 1613.

<sup>3</sup> *Engl. Lett.*, No. 29, June 11, 1621.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Nos. 54 and 55, Jan. 20, 1631, and No. 67, Dec. 24, 1633.

<sup>5</sup> *Royal Lett.*, 49, October 20, 1632.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 49, March 7, 1638.

On June 17, 1621, Michael wrote in that sense to the King, expressing his wish that they should be sent home,<sup>1</sup> but his intervention had no success.

Other boys, sons of strangers, interpreters and doctors, had been sent from Russia in his reign. A letter of Michael (February 13, 1628)<sup>2</sup> on behalf of one of them, John Elmsen, who had been sent in 1622 to study physics in Cambridge, asked, that, after having been taught with all attention and speed, he might be sent back to Russia. Two other letters<sup>3</sup> speak of a certain Almanzenov, who had studied in Cambridge "Latin, Greek, and other liberal sciences," and then was allowed to go to France and Italy. It is interesting to notice that the English King maintained this lad "at his own wages and nurriture".<sup>4</sup>

Though commercial questions are not of the first importance in the correspondence, many letters, especially in the reign of King Charles, give interesting glimpses of the English trade in Russia. Notable articles of English import were cloth and metals, but the export from Russia was of more interest to the King; sixteen letters debate the conditions on which grain might be brought out of Russia. Since 1628 the prices of corn were going up dangerously in Europe, and after 1630 England suffered nine successive years of scarcity. Eight letters of Charles, written from 1628-30, asked for the exportation of grain from Russia by different Englishmen.<sup>5</sup> On October 10, 1629, he explained his requests by 'reason of a great dearth and scarcity of corn, which

<sup>1</sup> *State Pap. Russia*, ii. fols. 103 and 116, two translations of this Russian letter, the original seems to have disappeared.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. fol. 171.

<sup>3</sup> In *Royal Lett.*, 49, Feb. 13, 1628, and Dec. 7, 1630; also *English Affairs* 1630, No. 5, Dec. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Letter of Charles, dated May 20, 1631.

<sup>5</sup> *Engl. Lett.*, No. 40, April 12, 1628, No. 44, October 31, 1626, Nos. 48 and 49 and 51, August 10, and September 10, 1630; Nos. 52 and 53, September 17, 1630, and No. 54, September 30, 1630.

has lately been and still continues in our kingdom of Ireland, whose wants we are in all princely compassion to releave, as also in regard of that extraordinary quantity of corn, which is dayly shipped out of our kingdoms of England and Scotland to supply the necessities of the Princes of our confederacie, whose dominions ly wasted and ruinated by the fearfull destruction of a long and bludy war'. This wish was to buy at least 100,000 quarters of grain, but only 30,000 were allowed by the Czar (March 4, 1631),<sup>1</sup> who had excused himself by the scarcity of grain in Russia, though other countries had at several times been allowed to export grain.<sup>2</sup> In a letter of thanks Charles petitioned that the remaining 70,000 quarters may be sent in future,<sup>3</sup> but this privilege was never obtained.

Many years later (February 7, 1646) Charles wrote to the new Czar Alexis, asking for a permission for a certain Luke Nightingale to buy 300,000 quarters, and proposing to pay for them with English cloth;<sup>4</sup> this petition was repeated in 1648 from the Isle of Wight,<sup>5</sup> and at the end of the year a request was received from Hague from the young Prince Charles to buy 40,000 quarters of grain for Ireland.<sup>6</sup> All these last letters remained unanswered; we know that letters of recommendation, given by Charles for such commercial operations, generally without the knowledge of the Muscovy company, and often to persons of bad reputation,<sup>7</sup> who simply paid a good price for them, had produced a deplorable effect and discredited the King's recommendations at the Russian court.

<sup>1</sup> *Royal Lett.* 49.

<sup>2</sup> *State Pap. Russia*, ii., letter of the agent Fabian Smith, original, with a seal.

<sup>3</sup> *Royal Lett.*, 49.

<sup>4</sup> *Engl. Lett.*, No. 79.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 81.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 82.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, evidence as to a certain William Bladwell, *State Pap. Russia*, iii., and *Engl. Lett.*, No. 74, December 17, 1639, and *State Pap. Russia*, iii. fols. 280-91, June 20, 1640.

Another article of export from Russia was tar, badly needed in the English rope-walks. On March 25, 1636, Charles wrote to ask permission for Englishmen to export, custom free, 3000-4000 barrels of tar yearly for seven years, 'which, without prejudice to your affairs, may accommodate our navy, which is an important part of that power wee have to assist our good friends and annoye our enemies when there shall be cause'.<sup>1</sup> An answer (January 11, 1638) informed him that, with the consent of the English merchants, this trade had been already given up to the Dutch, the English being only allowed to buy tar in Kolmogory and Arkangelsk.<sup>2</sup> On this Charles wrote again,<sup>3</sup> but his new petition had no better success. The demands of the King and the company were not co-ordinated, and this produced a bad effect in Russia.

Nearly all the principal questions relating to the organisation and activity of the Muscovy company are mentioned, and sometimes in great detail, in this correspondence. One of the most important points was the reorganisation of the Muscovy Joint-Stock into a Regulated company. A letter of James, dated May 30, 1623, had announced to the Czar the intention of the English to trade 'in a several and particular trade every man for himself'.<sup>4</sup> But the joint-stock organisation of the English had received the sanction of time in this conservative country, and the news of a reform provoked a series of questions from the Czar, who asked for information as to the reason of the change, the number of merchants who would trade 'in several and apart,' and if they would have a principal agent.<sup>5</sup> The company itself was not

<sup>1</sup> *Engl. Lett.*, No. 71. See also for earlier years *English Affairs*, 1622, No. 2; 1625, No. 4; 1627, No. 1; 1628, No. 1

<sup>2</sup> *Engl. Lett.*, No. 73.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 73, and *State Pap. Russia*, iii. fols. 289-91, June 20, 1640.

<sup>4</sup> *Engl. Lett.*, No. 34, original, and *State Pap. Russia*, ii., copy.

<sup>5</sup> *Royal Lett.*, 49.

unanimous on this question;<sup>1</sup> the party of reform prevailed, but only for a short time.

Another point was the permission to pass by the newly discovered route to Arkangel. A letter of Charles (April 23, 1629) explained that the English 'by reason of the troubles of these parts of Christendom at this time are compelled for their better safety to send into your Majestie's dominions ships of greater force and burthen than heretofor they have used, which, by reason of the shallowness of the water upon the bar of Podozemsky, are forced to ride in open sea and there to lade and unlade their goods in boats and small vessels to their great danger, trouble, and charges'.<sup>2</sup> Other letters of the same kind followed<sup>3</sup> and at last (July 8, 1631), the Czar announced that the passage by the new bar could not be granted.<sup>4</sup> During the following years Charles returned to that question,<sup>5</sup> but as the English merchants had refused to pay a supplementary custom for the maintenance of the new bar, its use remained forbidden for a long time.<sup>6</sup>

The commercial relations of Russia with England cannot of course be studied by the correspondence of the courts alone, other documents having a much greater importance for that subject. But as the great London fire of 1666 burned nearly all the papers of the Muscovy company, the historian has to utilise every document of that period throwing a light on the efforts of England to keep and develop its commercial relations with Russia.

The deplorable political condition of England at that

<sup>1</sup> *State Pap. Russia*, iii. "The openione and advice of Sir John Merricke and some other Brethren of the Muscovia Company, concerning the trade of Russia.

<sup>2</sup> *Engl. Lett.*, No. 42.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 45, Oct. 31, 1629, and No. 46, Jan. 5, 1630.

<sup>4</sup> *State Pap. Russia*, ii. fols. 279-83.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 138-40, June 8, 1632, and fols. 142-4, June 22, 1634.

<sup>6</sup> *Royal Lett.*, 49, original, and *State Pap. Russia*, iii. fols. 271-3, English translation, May 31, 1637.

time had produced serious disaffection among the King's agents in Russia, as we have seen by the conduct of Sir D. Digges and Christopher Cocks. This had probably a greater influence on the estrangement shown by the Russian court to the English at that time than the news of the conflict between Charles and his Parliament, constitutional theories finding no credit in the Muscovite empire. Of course if the league had failed, the principal reason was not the conduct of Cocks or the death of James, but the difficulty of co-ordinating the politics of both countries, England having had little reason and interest to ally herself with a country of slender military resources against Poland or Sweden. And yet in 1623 the Anglo-Russian alliance had been very nearly concluded.

The Russian merchants grudged the English their privileges and envied their successes, longing to evict them from the native markets. Several times they had petitioned against them and at last succeeded. The young Czar Alexis, who had left unanswered all the last letters of Charles, showed a sincere indignation at the news of his violent death, wrote a protest on that behalf to all European courts, and banished in 1649 the English merchants from Russia, under the pretext of this bloody crime. An attempt made by Cromwell to renew commercial relations had no success, and his ambassador was not received;<sup>1</sup> but an intercourse existed between Czar Alexis and Prince Charles, whose ambassador even obtained for his master a loan of 40,000 rix-dollars, payed in firs and corn.<sup>2</sup> When after the Restoration the relations and correspondence were again resumed, the activities of the English as the 'discoverers of a new country' had definitively come to an end; the Dutch had profited by their banishment and had taken their place.

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. St. Pap. Dom.*, t. an. 1655, p. 316.

<sup>2</sup> *Engl. Lett.*, No. 85, July 30, 1655.