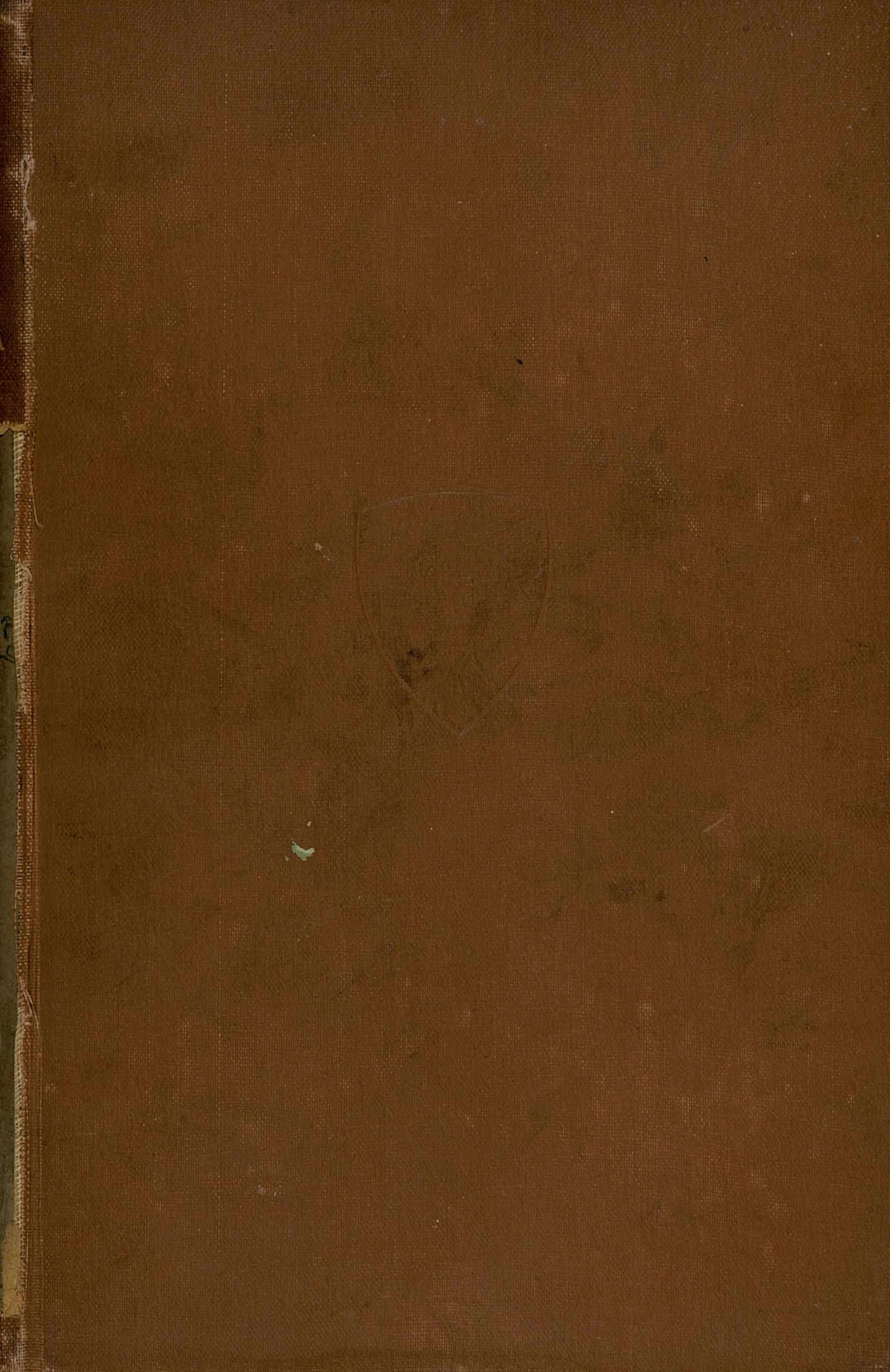

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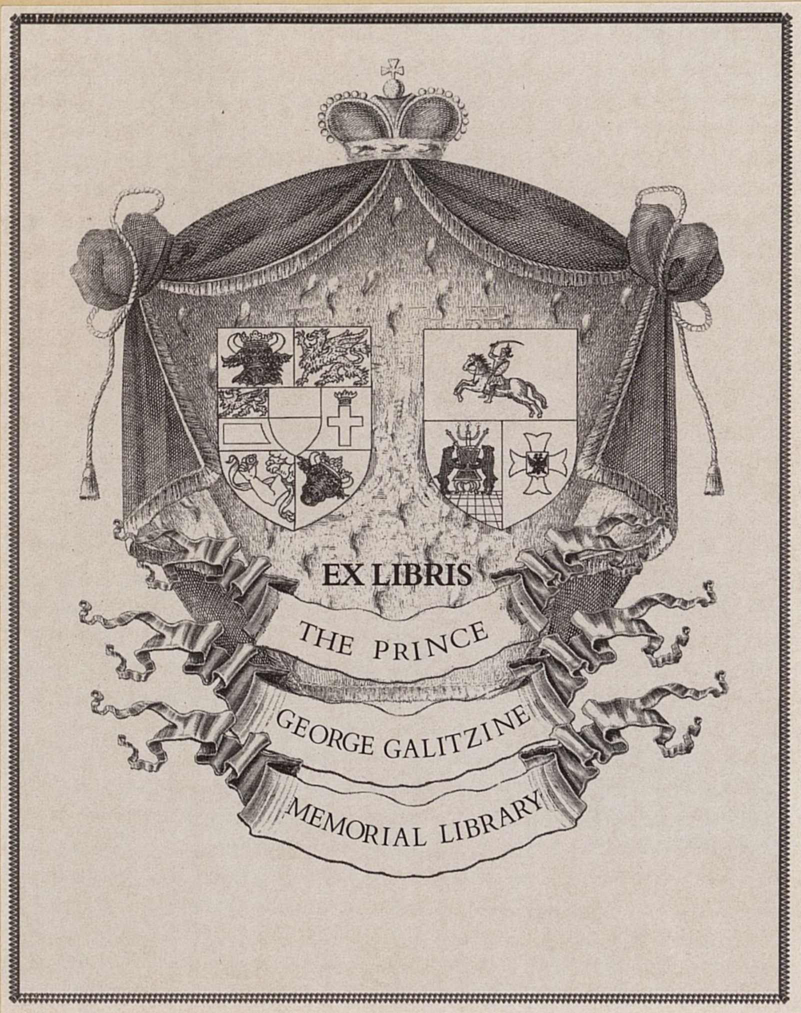
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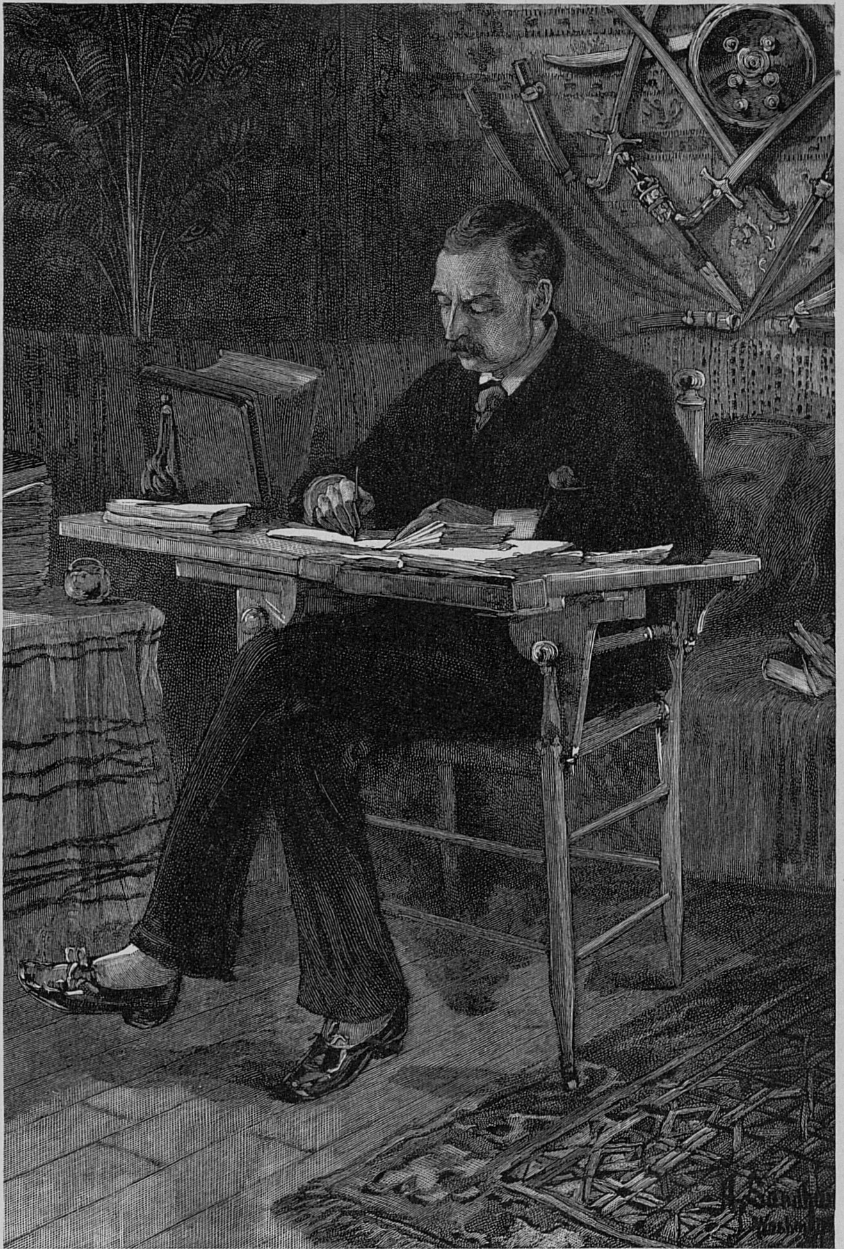

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GEORGE KENNAN.

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SIBERIA AND THE EXILE SYSTEM

BY GEORGE KENNAN

VOLUME ONE

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PREFACE

THE idea of exploring some of the less known parts of Siberia, and of making, in connection with such exploration, a careful study of the exile system, first took definite form in my mind in the year 1879. From such observations as I had been able to make during a residence of two and a half years in the country, and a subsequent journey of five thousand miles overland to St. Petersburg, it seemed to me that Siberia offered to a competent investigator an extremely interesting and promising field of research. To the Russians, who had possessed it in whole or in part for nearly three centuries, it was, of course, comparatively familiar ground; but to the average American, at that time, it was almost as much a *terra incognita* as central Africa or Thibet. In 1881 the assassination of Alexander II., and the exile of a large number of Russian revolutionists to the mines of the Trans-Baikál, increased my interest in Siberia and intensified my desire not only to study the exile system on the ground, but to investigate the Russian revolutionary movement in the only part of the empire where I thought such an investigation could successfully be made,—namely, in the region to which the revolutionists themselves had been banished. It seemed to me a hopeless task to look for nihilists in the cities of St. Petersburg and Moscow, or to seek there an explanation of the political events and the social phenomena that interested me. Most of the leading actors in the revolutionary drama of 1878-79 were already in Siberia; and if the imperial police could not discover the few who still remained at large in European Russia, it was not at all likely that I could. In Siberia, however, communication with exiled nihilists might perhaps be practicable; and there, if anywhere, was to be obtained the information that I desired.

Circumstances, and the want of time and means for such an extended journey as I wished to make, prevented me from taking any definite steps in the matter until the summer of 1884, when the editor of *The Century Magazine* became interested in my plans, and proposed to me that I should go to Siberia for that periodical and give to it the results of my work. I thereupon made a preliminary excursion to St. Petersburg and Moscow for the purpose of collecting material and ascertaining whether or not obstacles were likely to be thrown in my way by the Russian Government. I returned in October, fully satisfied that my scheme was a practicable one; that there was really nothing in Siberia which needed concealment; and that my literary record—so far as I had made a record—was such as to predispose the Russian Government in my favor, and to secure for me all the facilities that a friendly investigator might reasonably expect.

The opinions which I held at that time with regard to the Siberian exile system and the treatment of political offenders by the Russian Government were set forth fully and frankly in an address that I delivered before the American Geographical Society of New York, in 1882, and in the newspaper controversy to which that address gave rise. I then believed that the Russian Government and the exile system had been greatly misrepresented by such writers as Stépniak and Prince Kropótkin; that Siberia was not so terrible a country as Americans had always supposed it to be; and that the descriptions of Siberian mines and prisons in the just-published book of the Rev. Henry Lansdell were probably truthful and accurate. I also believed, although I did not say, that the nihilists, terrorists, and political malcontents generally, who had so long kept Russia in a state of alarm and apprehension, were unreasonable and wrong-headed fanatics of the anarchistic type with which we in the United States had become so familiar. In short, all my prepossessions were favorable to the Russian Government and unfavorable to the Russian revolutionists. I lay stress upon this fact, not because my opinions at that time had intrinsically any particular weight or importance, but because a just estimate of the results of

an investigation cannot be formed without some knowledge of the preconceptions and personal bias of the investigator. I also lay stress upon it for the further reason that it partly explains the friendly attitude towards me which was taken by the Russian Government, the permission which was given me to inspect prisons and mines, and the comparative immunity from arrest, detention, and imprisonment which I enjoyed, even when my movements and associations were such as justly to render me an object of suspicion to the local Siberian authorities. It is very doubtful whether a traveler who had not already committed himself to views that the Government approved would have been allowed to go to Siberia for the avowed purpose of investigating the exile system, or whether, if permitted to go there, he would have escaped serious trouble when it was discovered that he was associating on terms of friendly intimacy with political criminals of the most dangerous class. In my frequent skirmishes with the police, and with suspicious local officials in remote Siberian villages, nothing but the letter which I carried from the Russian Minister of the Interior saved me from summary arrest and imprisonment, or from a search of my person and baggage which probably would have resulted in my expulsion from the empire under guard and in the loss of all my notes and documentary material. That letter, which was my sheet-anchor in times of storm and stress, would never, I think, have been given to me, if I had not publicly defended the Russian Government against some of its numerous assailants, and if it had not been believed that personal pride and a desire to seem consistent probably would restrain me from confessing error, even should I find the prison and exile system worse than I anticipated, and worse than I had represented it to be. How far this belief was well founded, and to what extent my preconceived ideas were in harmony with the facts, I purpose, in the present work, to show.

I wish it to be clearly understood, however, that I do not aim to present a complete and comprehensive picture of Russian society as a whole, nor to survey every part of the vast field occupied by the Russian Government, nor to set forth, in due order and pro-

portion, all of the complex, heterogeneous and inter-related facts and phenomena that go to make up the composite national life of a hundred millions of people. A task of such magnitude would exceed my strength, and would carry me far beyond the limits that I have set for myself. All that I aim to do is to give the reader a clear and vivid impression of the scenery, the people, and the customs of Siberia, to record the results of a careful study of the exile system, and to consider the attitude of the Russian Government toward its subjects so far—and only so far—as may be necessary to throw light upon the facts, the characters, or the events by me observed.

Some of the criticisms that have been made upon the articles on Siberia and the exile system published in *The Century Magazine* have been based apparently upon the assumption that a survey of any one particular department of national life must necessarily be incomplete and misleading, and that the fair-minded investigator should supplement it by taking into the field of vision a quantity of unrelated facts and phenomena from a dozen other departments.

"Your articles," certain critics have said, "give a false impression. Your statements with regard to Russian prisons, indiscriminate arrests, and the banishment of hundreds of people to Siberia without trial may all be true; but there are in Russia, nevertheless, thousands of peaceful, happy homes, where fathers and brothers are no more in danger of being arrested and exiled to Siberia than they would be if they lived in the United States. Russia is not a vast prison inhabited only by suspects, convicts, and jailors; it is full of cultivated, refined, kind-hearted people; and its Emperor, who is the embodiment of all the domestic virtues, has no higher aim in life than to promote the happiness and prosperity of his beloved subjects."

The obvious reply to such criticism as this is that it wholly mistakes the aim and scope of the work criticised. I did not go to Russia to observe happy homes, nor to make the acquaintance of congenial, kind-hearted people, nor to admire the domestic virtues of the Tsar. I went to Russia to study the working of a penal sys-

tem, to make the acquaintance of exiles, outcasts, and criminals, and to ascertain how the Government treats its enemies in the prisons and mines of Eastern Siberia. Granted, for the sake of argument, that there *are* thousands of happy homes in Russia; that the empire *does* abound in cultivated and kind-hearted people, and that the Tsar *is* devotedly attached to his wife and children; what have these facts to do with the sanitary condition of a tumble-down *étape* in the province of Yakútsk, or with the flogging to death of a young and educated woman at the mines of Kará? The balancing of a happy and kind-hearted family in St. Petersburg against an epidemic of typhus fever in the exile forwarding prison at Tomsk is not an evidence of fairness and impartiality, but rather an evidence of an illogical mind. All that fairness and impartiality require of the investigator in any particular field is that he shall set forth, conscientiously, in due relative proportion and without prejudice, all the significant facts that he has been able to gather in that selected field, and then that he shall draw from the collected facts such conclusions as they may seem to warrant. His work may not have the scope of an encyclopedia, but there is no reason, in the nature of things, why it should not be full, accurate and trustworthy as far as it goes. An investigation of the Indian question in the United States would necessarily deal with a very small part of the varied and complex life of the nation; but it might, nevertheless, be made as fair and complete, within its limits, as Bryce's "American Commonwealth." It would, perhaps, present a dark picture; but to attempt to lighten it by showing that the President of the Republic is a moral man and good to his children, or that there are thousands of happy families in New York that have not been driven from their homes by gold-seekers, or that the dwellers on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston are refined and cultivated people who have never made a practice of selling intoxicating liquor to minors, would be not only illogical, but absurd. If the gloominess of the picture is to be relieved, the proper way to relieve it is to show what has been done to remedy the evils that make it gloomy, and not, by any means, to prove that in some other part of the country, under

wholly different conditions, a picture might be drawn that would be cheerful and inspiriting.

In the present work I have tried to deal fairly both with the Government and with the exiles. If the Government's contention is not always set forth as fully as may seem to be desirable, it is simply because most of the Government officials to whom I applied for information, both in Siberia and St. Petersburg, either manifested such a disinclination to talk that I could not pursue the subject, or else made such transparent and preposterous attempts to deceive me that their statements were merely grotesque. It will be seen, however, that a large part—perhaps more than one half—of my information with regard to Siberian prisons and the working of the exile system has been taken directly from official sources, and that a very small part of it—probably less than one-fifth—rests upon the statements of exiles or prisoners. I have appended, in the shape of classified groups of facts, a quantity of information relating to the exile system obtained by going through ten years' files of Siberian newspapers, as well as a mass of statistics from reports of the Russian prison and medical departments to show the sanitary condition of Siberian prisons and the rate of mortality in exile parties. I was assured by honest and intelligent officers of the exile administration in Siberia that these statistics are often "cooked" in such a manner as to show a much more favorable state of affairs than that which in reality exists, but they are the best official evidence obtainable. In other appendices will be found two reports of Governor-general Anúchin to the Tsar with the Tsar's marginal notes; a collection of facts bearing upon the treatment of Russian and Siberian authors by the Minister of the Interior, and of Russian and Siberian periodicals by the bureau of censorship; a small collection of revolutionary documents, and another of laws, rules, and orders of the Government relating to revolutionists, and finally a bibliography of the Russian literature relating to Siberia and the exile system so far as I am acquainted with it.

The system of spelling Russian names that I have adopted is

that sanctioned by the Royal Geographical Society of Great Britain in 1885, and since that time used by it in all of its publications. Its rules are as follows.

1. No change will be made in the spelling of words and names that have become, by long usage, familiar to English readers, such as *Cossack*, *droshky*, *Moscow*.

2. The true sound of the word as locally pronounced will be taken as the basis of the spelling, but only an approximation to the sound is aimed at.

3. Vowels are pronounced as in Italian and consonants as in English.

4. One accent only is used, the acute, to denote the syllable on which stress is laid.

5. Every letter is pronounced. When two vowels come together, each one is sounded, though the result, when spoken quickly, is sometimes scarcely to be distinguished from a single sound, as in *ai*, *au*, and *ei*.

6. The values of the vowels and of the principal consonants are as follows:

a—has the sound of *a* in *father*. au—has the sound of *ow* in *how*.
e— " " " *e* in *benefit*. ei— " " " *ey* in *they*.
i— " " " *i* in *ravine*. zh— " " " *s* in *vision*.
o— " " " *o* in *mote*. ch—is soft as in *church*.
u— " " " *oo* in *boot*. g—is hard as in *gun*.
ai— " " " *i* in *ice*. kh—is guttural as in *khan*.
y—is a consonant as in *yard* and is never used as a vowel or a terminal.

An exception will be made to Rule 1 in the case of a few words, such as *Czar*, *mujik*, *Nijni*, which are misleading in their common English form, and which have been correctly transliterated by such authorities as Wallace, Ralston, and Morfill.

An exception will also be made to Rule 2 in the case of certain surnames, such as *Kropótkin* and *Tourguénef*, whose possessors have adopted for themselves a definite form of signature in roman letters. A guide, however, to the pronunciation of such surnames will be found in the vocabulary at the end of Volume II.

Before closing this preface I desire to tender my most sincere and hearty thanks to the many friends, acquaintances, and well-wishers throughout European Russia and Siberia who encouraged me in my work, coöperated in my researches, and furnished me with the most valuable part of my material. Some of them are political exiles, who imperiled even the wretched future that still remained to them by writing out for me histories of their lives; some of them are officers of the exile administration who, trusting to my honor and discretion, gave me without reserve the results of their long experience; and some of them are honest, humane prison officials who, after reporting again and again upon the evils and abuses of the prison system, finally pointed them out to me, as the last possible means of forcing them upon the attention of the Government and the world. Most of these people I dare not even mention by name. Although their characters and their services are such as to make their names worthy of remembrance and honor, it is their misfortune to live in a country where the Government regards a frankly expressed opinion as an evidence of "untrustworthiness," and treats an effort to improve the condition of things as an offense to be punished. To mention the names of such people, when they live under such a government, is simply to render them objects of suspicion and surveillance, and thus deprive them of the limited power they still exercise for good. All that I can do, therefore, to show my appreciation of their trust, their kindness, and their aid, is to use the information which they gave me as I believe they would wish it to be used,—in the interest of humanity, freedom, and good government. For Russia and the Russian people I have the warmest affection and sympathy; and if, by a temperate and well-considered statement of the results of my Siberian investigations, I can make the country and the nation better known to the world, and ameliorate, even little, the lot of the "unfortunates" to whom "God is high above and the Tsar is far away," I shall be more than repaid for the hardest journey and the most trying experience of my life.

George Kennan.

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SIBERIA AND THE EXILE SYSTEM

CHAPTER I

FROM ST. PETERSBURG TO PERM

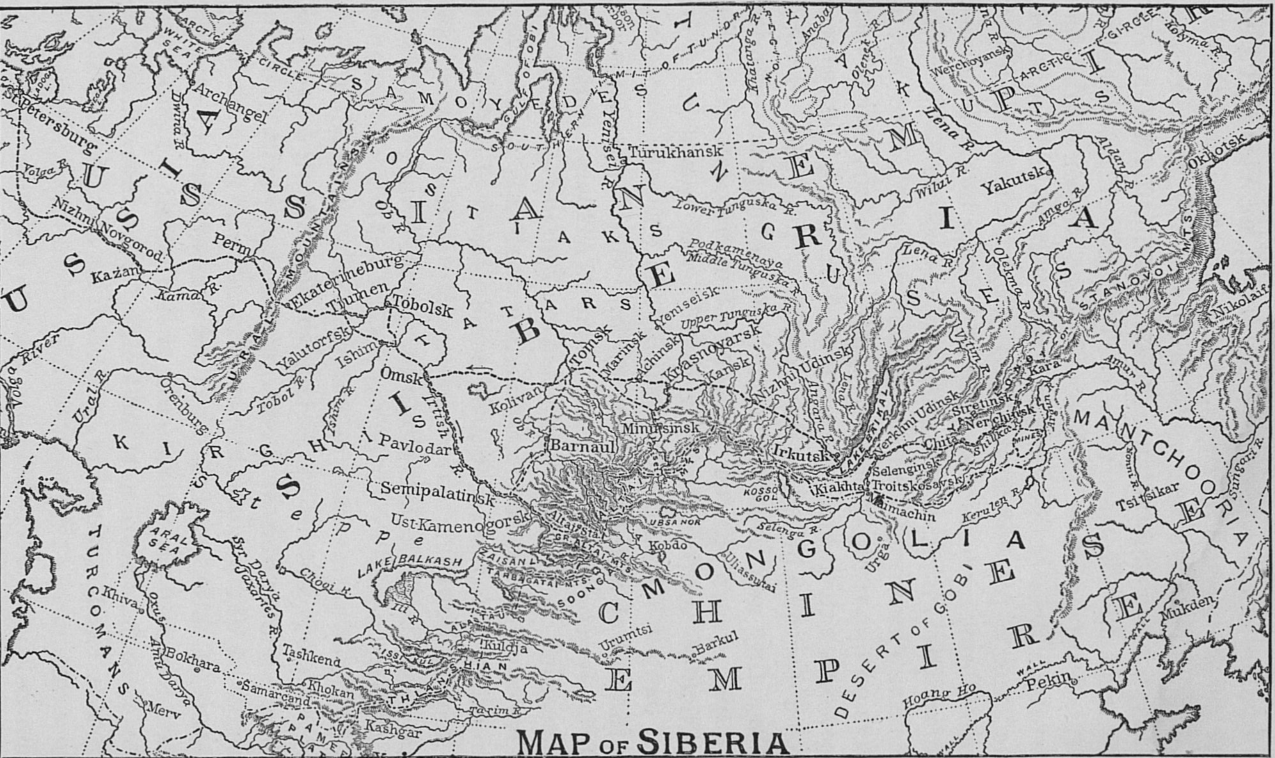
THE Siberian expedition of *The Century Magazine* sailed from New York for Liverpool on the second day of May, 1885. It consisted of Mr. George A. Frost, an artist of Boston, and the author of this book. We both spoke Russian, both had been in Siberia before, and I was making to the empire my fourth journey. Previous association in the service of the Russian-American Telegraph Company had acquainted us with each other, and long experience in sub-arctic Asia had familiarized us with the hardships and privations of Siberian travel. Our plan of operations had been approved by *The Century;* we had the amplest discretionary power in the matter of ways and means; and although fully aware of the serious nature of the work in hand, we were hopeful, if not sanguine, of success. We arrived in London on Sunday, May 10, and on Wednesday, the 13th, proceeded to St. Petersburg by rail, via Dover, Ostend, Cologne, Hanover, Berlin, and Eydkuhnen. As the season was already advanced, and as it was important that we should reach Siberia in time to make the most of the summer weather and the good roads, I decided to remain in the Russian capital only five days; but we were unfortunate enough to arrive there just at the beginning of a

long series of church holidays, and were able to utilize in the transaction of business only four days out of ten.

As soon as I could obtain an interview with Mr. Vlangálli, the assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, I presented my letters of introduction and told him frankly and candidly what we desired to do. I said that in my judgment Siberia and the exile system had been greatly misrepresented by prejudiced writers; that a truthful description of the country, the prisons and the mines would, I thought, be advantageous rather than detrimental to the interests of the Russian Government; and that, inasmuch as I had already committed myself publicly to a defense of that Government, I could hardly be suspected of an intention to seek in Siberia for facts with which to undermine my own position. This statement, in which there was not the least diplomacy or insincerity, seemed to impress Mr. Vlangálli favorably; and after twenty minutes' conversation he informed me that we should undoubtedly be permitted to go to Siberia, and that he would aid us as far as possible by giving us an open letter to the governors of the Siberian provinces, and by procuring for us a similar letter from the Minister of the Interior. Upon being asked whether these letters would admit us to Siberian prisons, Mr. Vlangálli replied that they would not; that permission to inspect prisons must in all cases be obtained from provincial governors. As to the further question whether such permission would probably be granted, he declined to express an opinion. This, of course, was equivalent to saying that the Government would not give us *carte-blanche*, but would follow us with friendly observation, and grant or refuse permission to visit prisons as might, from time to time, seem expedient. I foresaw that this would greatly increase our difficulties, but I did not deem it prudent to urge any further concession; and after expressing my thanks for the courtesy and kindness with which we had been received I withdrew.

At another interview, a few days later, Mr. Vlangálli gave me the promised letters and, at the same time, said that he would like to have me stop in Moscow on my way to Siberia and make the acquaintance of Mr. Katkóff, the well-known editor of the *Moscow Gazette.* He handed me a sealed note of introduction to Baron Búhler, keeper of the imperial archives in Moscow, and said that he had requested the latter to present me to Mr. Katkóff, and that he hoped I would not leave Moscow without seeing him. I was not unfamiliar with the character and the career of the great Russian champion of autocracy, and was glad, of course, to have an opportunity of meeting him; but I more than suspected that the underlying motive of Mr. Vlangálli's request was a desire to bring me into contact with a man of strong personality and great ability, who would impress me with his own views of Russian policy, confirm my favorable opinion of the Russian Government, and guard me from the danger of being led astray by the specious misrepresentations of exiled nihilists, whom I might possibly meet in the course of my Siberian journey. This precaution — if precaution it was — seemed to me wholly unnecessary, since my opinion of the nihilists was already as unfavorable as the Government itself could desire. I assured Mr. Vlangálli, however, that I would see Mr. Katkóff if possible; and after thanking him again for his assistance I bade him good-by.

In reviewing now the representations that I made to high Russian officials before leaving St. Petersburg I have not to reproach myself with a single act of duplicity or insincerity. I did not obtain permission to go to Siberia by means of false pretenses, nor did I at any time assume a deceptive attitude for the sake of furthering my plans. If the opinions that I now hold differ from those that I expressed to Mr. Vlangálli in 1885, it is not because I was then insincere, but because my views have since been changed by an overwhelming mass of evidence.



MAP OF SIBERIA

On the afternoon of May 31, having selected and purchased photographic apparatus, obtained all necessary books and maps, and provided ourselves with about fifty letters of introduction to teachers, mining engineers, and Government officials in all parts of Siberia, we left St. Petersburg by rail for Moscow. The distance from the Russian capital to the Siberian frontier is about 1600 miles; and the route usually taken by travelers, and always by exiles, is that which passes through the cities of Moscow, Nízhni Nóvgorod, Kazán, Perm, and Ekaterínburg. The eastern terminus of the Russian railway system is at Nízhni Nóvgorod, but, in summer, steamers ply constantly between that city and Perm on the rivers Vólga and Káma; and Perm is connected with Ekaterínburg by an isolated piece of railroad about 180 miles in length, which crosses the mountain chain of the Urál, and is intended to unite the navigable waters of the Vólga with those of the Ob.[1]

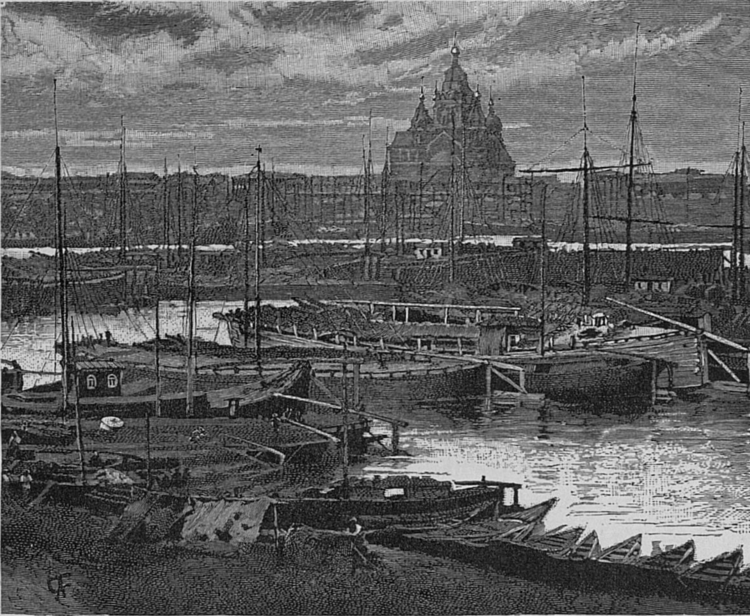
Upon our arrival in Moscow I presented my sealed note of introduction to Baron Búhler, and called with him at the office of the *Moscow Gazette* for the purpose of making the acquaintance of its editor. We were disappointed, however, to find that Mr. Katkóff had just left the city and probably would be absent for two or three weeks. As we could not await his return, and as there was no other business to detain us in Moscow, we proceeded by rail to Nízhni Nóvgorod, reaching that city early on the morning of Thursday, June 4.

To a traveler visiting Nízhni Nóvgorod for the first time there is something surprising, and almost startling, in the appearance of what he supposes to be the city, and in the scene presented to him as he emerges from the railway station and walks away from the low bank of the Óka River in the direction of the Vólga. The clean, well-paved

[1] During our stay in Siberia this railroad was extended to Tiumén, on one of the tributaries of the Ob, so that St. Petersburg is now in communication, by rail or steamer, with points in Siberia as remote as Semipalátinsk and Tomsk, the former 2600 and the latter 2700 miles away.

streets; the long rows of substantial buildings; the spacious boulevard, shaded by leafy birches and poplars; the canal, spanned at intervals by graceful bridges; the picturesque tower of the water-works; the enormous cathedral of Alexánder Névski; the Bourse; the theaters; the hotels; the market places — all seem to indicate a great populous center of life and commercial activity; but of living inhabitants there is not a sign. Grass and weeds are growing in the middle of the empty streets and in the chinks of the travel-worn sidewalks; birds are singing fearlessly in the trees that shade the lonely and deserted boulevard; the countless shops and warehouses are all closed, barred, and padlocked; the bells are silent in the gilded belfries of the churches; and the astonished stranger may perhaps wander for a mile between solid blocks of buildings without seeing an open door, a vehicle, or a single human being. The city appears to have been stricken by a pestilence and deserted. If the new-comer remembers for what Nízhni Nóvgorod is celebrated, he is not long, of course, in coming to the conclusion that he is on the site of the famous fair; but the first realization of the fact that the fair is in itself a separate and independent city, and a city that during nine months of every year stands empty and deserted, comes to him with the shock of a great surprise.

The fair-city of Nízhni Nóvgorod is situated on a low peninsula between the rivers Óka and Vólga, just above their junction, very much as New York City is situated on Manhattan Island between East River and the Hudson. In geographical position it bears the same relation to the old town of Nízhni Nóvgorod that New York would bear to Jersey City if the latter were elevated on a steep, terraced bluff four hundred feet above the level of the Hudson. The Russian fair-city, however, differs from New York City in that it is a mere temporary market — a huge commercial *caravansarái* where 500,000 traders assemble every year to buy and to sell commodities. In September it has fre-



THE FAIR-CITY OF NÍZHNI NÓVGOROD.

quently a population of more than 100,000 souls, and contains merchandise valued at $75,000,000; while in January, February, or March all of its inhabitants might be fed and sheltered in the smallest of its hotels, and all of its goods might be put into a single one of its innumerable shops. Its life, therefore, is a sort of intermittent commercial fever, in which an annual paroxysm of intense and unnatural activity is followed by a long interval of torpor and stagnation.

It seems almost incredible at first that a city of such magnitude — a city that contains churches, mosques, theaters, markets, banks, hotels, a merchants' exchange, and nearly seven thousand shops and inhabitable buildings, should have so ephemeral a life, and should be so completely abandoned every year after it has served the purpose for which it was created. When I saw this unique city for the first time, on a clear frosty night in January, 1868, it presented

an extraordinary picture of loneliness and desolation. The moonlight streamed down into its long empty streets where the unbroken snow lay two feet deep upon the sidewalks; it touched with silver the white walls and swelling domes of the old fair-cathedral, from whose towers there came no clangor of bells; it sparkled on great snowdrifts heaped up against the doors of the empty houses, and poured a flood of pale light over thousands of snow-covered roofs; but it did not reveal anywhere a sign of a human being. The city seemed to be not only uninhabited, but wholly abandoned to the arctic spirits of solitude and frost. When I saw it next, at the height of the annual fair in the autumn of 1870, it was so changed as to be almost unrecognizable. It was then surrounded by a great forest of shipping; its hot, dusty atmosphere thrilled with the incessant whistling of steamers; merchandise to the value of 125,000,000 rubles lay on its shores or was packed into its 6000 shops; every building within its limit was crowded; 60,000 people were crossing every day the pontoon bridge that connected it with the old town; a military band was playing airs from Offenbach's operas on the great boulevard in front of the governor's house; and through all the streets of the reanimated and reawakened city poured a great tumultuous flood of human life.

I did not see the fair-city again until June, 1885, when I found it almost as completely deserted as on the occasion of my first visit, but in other ways greatly changed and improved. Substantial brick buildings had taken the place of the long rows of inflammable wooden shops and sheds; the streets in many parts of the city had been neatly paved; the number of stores and warehouses had largely increased; and the lower end of the peninsula had been improved and dignified by the erection of the great Alexánder Névski cathedral, which is shown in the center of the illustration on page 7, and which now forms the most prominent and striking architectural feature of the fair.

It was supposed that, with the gradual extension of the Russian railway system, and the facilities afforded by it for the distribution of merchandise throughout the empire in small quantities, the fair of Nízhni Nóvgorod would lose most of its importance; but no such result has yet become apparent. During the most active period of railway construction in Russia, from 1868 to 1881, the value of the merchandise brought annually to the fair rose steadily from 126,000,000 to 246,000,000 *rúbles*,[2] and the number of shops and stores in the fair-city increased from 5738 to 6298. At the present time the volume of business transacted during the two fair-months amounts to something like 225,000,000 *rúbles*, and the number of shops and stores in the fair exceeds 7000.

The station of the Moscow and Nízhni Nóvgorod railway is situated within the limits of the fair-city, on the left bank of the river Óka, and communication between it and the old town on the other side is maintained in summer by means of a steam ferry, or a long floating bridge consisting of a roadway supported by pontoons. As the bridge, at the time of our arrival, had not been put in position for the season, we crossed the river on a low, flat barge in tow of a small steamer.

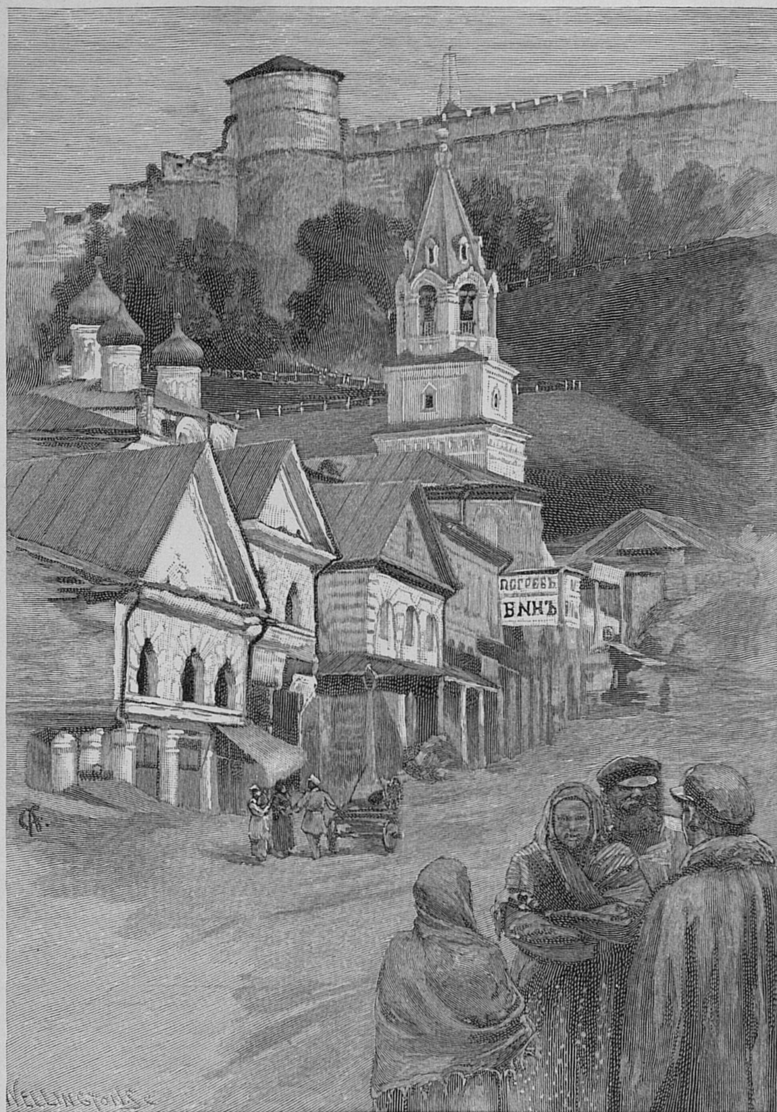
The view that one gets of the old fortified city of Nízhni Nóvgorod while crossing the Óka from the fair is both striking and picturesque. The long steep bluff upon which it is situated rises abruptly almost from the water's edge to the height of four hundred feet, notched at intervals by deep V-shaped cuts through which run the ascending roads to the upper plateau, and broken here and there by narrow terraces upon which stand white-walled and golden-domed cathedrals and monasteries half buried in groves of trees. In the warm, bright sunshine of a June day the snowy walls of the Byzantine churches scattered along the crest of the bluff; the countless domes of blue, green, silver, and gold

[2] The value of the Russian *rúble* is about half a dollar.

rising out of dark masses of foliage on the terraces; the smooth, grassy slopes which descend here and there almost to the water's edge; and the river front, lined with steamers and bright with flags—all make up a picture that is hardly surpassed in northern Russia. Fronting the Vólga, near what seems to be the eastern end of the ridge, stands the ancient *krémlin*,[3] or stronghold of the city, whose high, crenelated walls descend the steep face of the bluff toward the river in a series of titanic steps, and whose arched gateways and massive round towers carry the imagination back to the Middle Ages. Three hundred and fifty years ago this great walled enclosure was regarded as an absolutely impregnable fortress, and for more than a century it served as a secure place of refuge for the people of the city when the fierce Tatárs of Kazán invaded the territories of the Grand Dukes. With the complete subjugation of the Tatár khanate, however, in the sixteenth century, it lost its importance as a defensive fortification, and soon began to fall into decay. Its thirteen towers, which were originally almost a hundred feet in height, are now half in ruins; and its walls, which have a circuit of about a mile and a quarter, would probably have fallen long ago had they not been extraordinarily thick, massive, and deeply founded. They make upon one an impression of even greater solidity and strength than do the walls of the famous *krémlin* in Moscow.

Upon landing from the ferry-boat in the old town of Nízhni Nóvgorod, we drove to a hotel in the upper part of the city, and after securing rooms and sending our passports to the chief of police, we walked down past the *krémlin* to

3 A *krémlin*, or, to use the Russian form of the word, a *kreml*, is merely a walled enclosure with towers at the corners, situated in a commanding position near the center of a city, and intended to serve as a stronghold, or place of refuge, for the inhabitants in time of war. It differs from a castle or fortress in that it generally incloses a larger area, and contains a number of buildings, such as churches, palaces, treasuries, etc., which are merely protected by it. It is popularly supposed that the only *krémlin* in Russia is that of Moscow; but this is a mistake. Nízhni Nóvgorod, Kazán, and several other towns in the part of Russia that was subject to Tatár invasion, had strongholds of this kind.



A PART OF THE OLD TOWN OF NÍZHNI NÓVGOROD.

the river front. Under the long bluff upon which the city and the *krémlin* stand, and between the steep escarpment and the river, there is a narrow strip of level ground which is now given up almost wholly to commerce and is known as the "lower bazar." Upon this strip of land are huddled together in picturesque confusion a multitude of buildings of the most heterogeneous character and appearance. Pretentious modern stores, with gilded signs and plate-glass windows, stand in neighborly proximity to wretched hucksters' stalls of rough, unpainted boards; banks, hotels, and steamship offices are sandwiched in among ship-chandlers' shops, old-clothes stalls, and *traktírs*;[1] fantastic, highly colored churches of the last century appear in the most unexpected places, and give an air of sanctity to the most disreputable neighborhoods; and the entire region, from the river to the bluff, is crowded with wholesale, retail, and second-hand shops, where one can buy anything and everything—from a paper of pins, a wooden comb, or a string of dried mushrooms, to a ship's anchor, a church bell, or a steam-engine. In a single shop of the lower bazar I saw exposed for sale a set of parlor chairs, two wicker-work baby-carriages, a rustic garden seat, two cross-cut log saws, half a dozen battered *samovárs*, a child's cradle, a steam-engine, one half of a pair of elk horns, three old boilers, a collection of telescopes, an iron church-cross four feet in height, six or eight watches, a dilapidated carriage-top, feather dusters, opera-glasses, log chains, watch charms, two blacksmith's anvils, measuring tapes, old boots, stove covers, a Caucasian dagger, turning lathes, sleigh bells, pulleys and blocks from a ship's rigging, fire-engine nozzles, horse collars, an officer's sword, axe helves, carriage cushions, gilt bracelets, iron barrel-hoops, trunks, accordions, three or four soup plates filled with old nails and screws, carving-knives, vises, hinges, revolvers, old harnesses, half a dozen odd lengths of rusty stove-pipe, a tin can of "mixed biscuits" from London, and a six-foot

[1] A *traktír* is a public tea-house.