

## CHAPTER II

The documents published in the first chapter extend from the reign of the Empress Ann to the commencement of the reign of the Emperor Paul, thus encompassing the greater part of the 18th century. At the end of that century it had become, as stated by the Rev. Mr. Pitt, the openly professed and orthodox dogma of English diplomacy, "*that the ties which bind Great Britain to the Russian Empire are formed by nature, and inviolable.*"

In perusing these documents, there is something that startles us even more than their contents--viz., their form. All these letters are "confidential," "private," "secret," "most secret"; but in spite of secrecy, privacy, and confidence, the English statesmen converse among each other about Russia and her rulers in a tone of awful reserve, abject servility, and cynical submission, which would strike us even in the public despatches of Russian statesmen. To conceal intrigues against foreign nations secrecy is resorted to by Russian diplomatists. The same method is adopted by English diplomatists freely to express their devotion to a foreign Court. The secret despatches of Russian diplomatists are fumigated with some equivocal perfume. It is one part the *fumée de fausseté*, as the Duke of St. Simon has it, and the other part that coquettish display of one's own superiority and cunning which stamps upon the reports of the French Secret Police their indelible character. Even the master despatches of Pozzo di Borgo are tainted with this common blot of the *littérature de mauvais lieu*. In this point the English secret despatches prove much superior. They do not affect superiority but silliness. For instance, can there be anything more silly than Mr. Rondeau informing Horace Walpole that he has betrayed to the Russian Minister the letters addressed by the Turkish Grand Vizier to the King of England, but that he had told "at the same time those gentlemen that as there were several hard reflections on the Russian Court he should not have communicated them, *if they had not been so anxious to see them,*" and then told their excellencies not to tell the Porte that they had seen them (those letters)! At first view the infamy of the act is drowned in the silliness of the man. Or, take Sir George Macartney. Can there be anything more silly than his happiness that Russia seemed "reasonable" enough not to expect that England "should pay the WHOLE EXPENSES" for Russia's "choosing to take the lead at Stockholm"; or his "flattering himself" that he had "persuaded the Russian Court" not to be so "unreasonable" as to ask from England, in a time of peace, subsidies for a time of war against Turkey (then the ally of England); or his warning the Earl of Sandwich "not to mention" to the Russian Ambassador at London the secrets mentioned to himself by the Russian Chancellor at St. Petersburg? Or can there be anything more silly than Sir James Harris confidentially whispering into the ear of Lord Grantham that Catherine II. was devoid of "judgment, precision of idea, reflection, and *l'esprit de combinaison*"?[20]

On the other hand, take the cool impudence with which Sir George Macartney informs his minister that because the Swedes were extremely jealous of, and mortified at, their dependence on Russia, England was directed by the Court of St. Petersburg to do its work at Stockholm, under the British colours of liberty and independence! Or Sir James Harris advising England to surrender to Russia Minorca and the right of search, and the monopoly of mediation in the affairs of the world--not in order to gain any material advantage, or even a formal engagement on the part of Russia, but only "a strong glow of friendship" from the Empress, and the transfer to France of her "ill humour."

The secret Russian despatches proceed on the very plain line that Russia knows herself to have no common interests whatever with other nations, but that every nation must be persuaded separately to have common interests with Russia to the exclusion of every other nation. The English despatches, on the contrary, never dare so much as hint that Russia has common interests with England, but only endeavour to convince England that she has Russian interests. The English diplomatists themselves tell us that this was the single argument they pleaded, when placed face to face with Russian potentates.

If the English despatches we have laid before the public were addressed to private friends, they would only brand with infamy the ambassadors who wrote them. Secretly addressed as they are to the British Government itself, they nail it for ever to the pillory of history; and, instinctively, this seems to have been felt, even by

Whig writers, because none has dared to publish them.

The question naturally arises from which epoch this Russian character of English diplomacy, become traditional in the course of the 18th century, does date its origin. To clear up this point we must go back to the time of Peter the Great, which, consequently, will form the principal subject of our researches. We propose to enter upon this task by reprinting some English pamphlets, written at the time of Peter I., and which have either escaped the attention of modern historians, or appeared to them to merit none. However, they will suffice for refuting the prejudice common to Continental and English writers, that the designs of Russia were not understood or suspected in England until at a later, and too late, epoch; that the diplomatic relations between England and Russia were but the natural offspring of the mutual material interests of the two countries; and that, therefore, in accusing the British statesmen of the 18th century of Russianism we should commit an unpardonable hysteron-proteron. If we have shown by the English despatches that, at the time of the Empress Ann, England already betrayed her own allies to Russia, it will be seen from the pamphlets we are now about to reprint that, even before the epoch of Ann, at the very epoch of Russian ascendancy in Europe, springing up at the time of Peter I., the plans of Russia were understood, and the connivance of British statesmen at these plans was denounced by English writers.

The first pamphlet we lay before the public is called *The Northern Crisis*. It was printed in London in 1716, and relates to the intended Dano-Anglo-Russian *invasion of Skana* (Schonen).

During the year 1715 a northern alliance for the partition, not of Sweden proper, but of what we may call the Swedish Empire, had been concluded between Russia, Denmark, Poland, Prussia, and Hanover. That partition forms the first grand act of modern diplomacy--the logical premiss to the partition of Poland. The partition treaties relating to Spain have engrossed the interest of posterity because they were the forerunners of the War of Succession, and the partition of Poland drew even a larger audience because its last act was played upon a contemporary stage. However, it cannot be denied that it was the partition of the Swedish Empire which inaugurated the modern era of international policy. The partition treaty not even pretended to have a pretext, save the misfortune of its intended victim. For the first time in Europe the violation of all treaties was not only made, but proclaimed the common basis of a new treaty. Poland herself, in the drag of Russia, and personated by that commonplace of immorality, Augustus II., Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, was pushed into the foreground of the conspiracy, thus signing her own death-warrant, and not even enjoying the privilege reserved by Polyphemus to Odysseus--to be last eaten. Charles XII. predicted her fate in the manifesto flung against King Augustus and the Czar, from his voluntary exile at Bender. The manifesto is dated January 28, 1711.

The participation in this partition treaty threw England within the orbit of Russia, towards whom, since the days of the "Glorious Revolution," she had more and more gravitated. George I., as King of England, was bound to a defensive alliance with Sweden by the treaty of 1700. Not only as King of England, but as Elector of Hanover, he was one of the guarantees, and even of the direct parties to the treaty of Travendal, which secured to Sweden what the partition treaty intended stripping her of. Even his German electoral dignity he partly owed to that treaty. However, as Elector of Hanover he declared war against Sweden, which he waged as King of England.

In 1715 the confederates had divested Sweden of her German provinces, and to effect that end introduced the Muscovite on the German soil. In 1716 they agreed to invade Sweden Proper--to attempt an armed descent upon Schonen--the southern extremity of Sweden now constituting the districts of Malmoe and Christianstadt. Consequently Peter of Russia brought with him from Germany a Muscovite army, which was scattered over Zealand, thence to be conveyed to Schonen, under the protection of the English and Dutch fleets sent into the Baltic, on the false pretext of protecting trade and navigation. Already in 1715, when Charles XII. was besieged in Stralsund, eight English men-of-war, lent by England to Hanover, and by Hanover to Denmark, had openly reinforced the Danish navy, and even hoisted the Danish flag. In 1716 the British navy was commanded by his Czarish Majesty in person.

Everything being ready for the invasion of Schonen, there arose a difficulty from a side where it was least expected. Although the treaty stipulated only for 30,000 Muscovites, Peter, in his magnanimity, had landed 40,000 on Zealand; but now that he was to send them on the errand to Schonen, he all at once discovered that out of the 40,000 he could spare but 15,000. This declaration not only paralysed the military plan of the confederates, it seemed to threaten the security of Denmark and of Frederick IV., its king, as great part of the Muscovite army, supported by the Russian fleet, occupied Copenhagen. One of the generals of Frederick proposed suddenly to fall with the Danish cavalry upon the Muscovites and to exterminate them, while the English men-of-war should burn the Russian fleet. Averse to any perfidy which required some greatness of will, some force of character, and some contempt of personal danger, Frederick IV. rejected the bold proposal, and limited himself to assuming an attitude of defence. He then wrote a begging letter to the Czar, intimating that he had given up his Schonen fancy, and requested the Czar to do the same and find his way home: a request the latter could not but comply with. When Peter at last left Denmark with his army, the Danish Court thought fit to communicate to the Courts of Europe a public account of the incidents and transactions which had frustrated the intended descent upon Schonen--and this document forms the starting point of *The Northern Crisis*.

In a letter addressed to Baron Görtz, dated from London, January 23, 1717, by Count Gyllenborg, there occur some passages in which the latter, the then Swedish ambassador at the Court of St. James's, seems to profess himself the author of *The Northern Crisis*, the title of which he does not, however, quote. Yet any idea of his having written that powerful pamphlet will disappear before the slightest perusal of the Count's authenticated writings, such as his letters to Görtz.

"THE NORTHERN CRISIS; OR IMPARTIAL REFLECTIONS ON THE POLICIES OF THE CZAR; OCCASIONED BY MYNHEER VON STOCKEN'S REASONS FOR DELAYING THE DESCENT UPON SCHONEN. A TRUE COPY OF WHICH IS PREFIXED, VERBALLY TRANSLATED AFTER THE TENOR OF THAT IN THE GERMAN SECRETARY'S OFFICE IN COPENHAGEN, OCTOBER 10, 1716. LONDON, 1716.

1.--*Preface*--- ... 'Tis (the present pamphlet) not fit for lawyers' clerks, but it is highly convenient to be read by those who are proper students in the laws of nations; 'twill be but lost time for any stock-jobbing, trifling dealer in Exchange-Alley to look beyond the preface on't, but every merchant in England (more especially those who trade to the Baltic) will find his account in it. The Dutch (as the courants and postboys have more than once told us) are about to mend their hands, if they can, in several articles of trade with the Czar, and they have been a long time about it to little purpose. Inasmuch as they are such a frugal people, they are good examples for the imitation of our traders; but if we can outdo them for once, in the means of projecting a better and more expeditious footing to go upon, for the emolument of us both, let us, for once, be wise enough to set the example, and let them, for once, be our imitators. This little treatise will show a pretty plain way how we may do it, as to our trade in the Baltic, at this juncture. I desire no little *coffee-house politician* to meddle with it; but to give him even a disrelish for my company. I must let him know that he is not fit for mine. Those who are even proficient in state science, will find in it matter highly fit to employ all their powers of speculation, which they ever before past negligently by, and thought (too cursorily) were not worth the regarding. No outrageous party-man will find it at all for his purpose; but every *honest Whig* and every *honest Tory* may each of them read it, not only without either of their disgusts, but with the satisfaction of them both.... 'Tis not fit, in fine, for a mad, hectoring, Presbyterian Whig, or a raving, fretful, dissatisfied, Jacobite Tory."

2.--THE REASONS HANDED ABOUT BY MYNHEER VON STOCKEN FOR DELAYING THE DESCENT UPON SCHONEN.

"There being no doubt, but most courts will be surprised that the descent upon Schonen has not been put into execution, notwithstanding the great preparations made for that purpose; and that all his Czarish Majesty's troops, who were in Germany, were transported to Zealand, not without great trouble and danger, partly by his

own galleys, and partly by his Danish Majesty's and other vessels; and that the said descent is deferred till another time. His Danish Majesty hath therefore, in order to clear himself of all imputation and reproach, thought fit to order, that the following true account of this affair should be given to all impartial persons. Since the Swedes were entirely driven out of their *German* dominions, there was, according to all the rules of policy, and reasons of war, no other way left, than vigorously to attack the still obstinate King of Sweden, in the very heart of his country; thereby, with God's assistance, to force him to a lasting, good and advantageous peace for the allies. The King of Denmark and his Czarish Majesty were both of this opinion, and did, in order to put so good a design in execution, agree upon an interview, which at last (notwithstanding his Danish Majesty's presence, upon the account of Norway's being invaded, was most necessary in his own capital, and that the Muscovite ambassador, M. Dolgorouky, had given quite other assurances) was held at Ham and Horn, near Hamburgh, after his Danish Majesty had stayed there six weeks for the Czar. In this conference it was, on the 3rd of June, agreed between both their Majesties, after several debates, that the descent upon Schonen should positively be undertaken this year, and everything relating to the forwarding the same was entirely consented to. Hereupon his Danish Majesty made all haste for his return to his dominions, and gave orders to work day and night to get his fleet ready to put to sea. The transport ships were also gathered from all parts of his dominions, both with inexpressible charges and great prejudice to his subjects' trade. Thus, his Majesty (as the Czar himself upon his arrival at Copenhagen owned) did his utmost to provide all necessaries, and to forward the descent, upon whose success everything depended. It happened, however, in the meanwhile, and before the descent was agreed upon in the conference at Ham and Horn, that his Danish Majesty was obliged to secure his invaded and much oppressed kingdom of Norway, by sending thither a considerable squadron out of his fleet, under the command of Vice-Admiral Gabel, which squadron could not be recalled before the enemy had left that kingdom, without endangering a great part thereof; so that out of necessity the said Vice-Admiral was forced to tarry there till the 12th of July, when his Danish Majesty sent him express orders to return with all possible speed, wind and weather permitting; but this blowing for some time contrary, he was detained.... The Swedes were all the while powerful at sea, and his Czarish Majesty himself did not think it advisable that the remainder of the Danish, in conjunction with the men-of-war then at Copenhagen, should go to convoy the Russian troops from Rostock, before the above-mentioned squadron under Vice-Admiral Gabel was arrived. This happening at last in the month of August, the confederate fleet put to sea; and the transporting of the said troops hither to Zealand was put in execution, though with a great deal of trouble and danger, but it took up so much time that the descent could not be ready till September following. Now, when all these preparations, as well for the descent as the embarking the armies, were entirely ready, his Danish Majesty assured himself that the descent should be made within a few days, at farthest by the 21st of September. The Russian Generals and Ministers first raised some difficulties to those of Denmark, and afterwards, on the 17th September, declared in an appointed conference, that his Czarish Majesty, considering the present situation of affairs, was of opinion that neither forage nor provision could be had in Schonen, and that consequently the descent was not advisable to be attempted this year, but ought to be put off till next spring. It may easily be imagined how much his Danish Majesty was surprised at this; especially seeing the Czar, if he had altered his opinion, as to this design so solemnly concerted, might have declared it sooner, and thereby saved his Danish Majesty several tons of gold, spent upon the necessary preparations. His Danish Majesty did, however, in a letter dated the 20th of September, amply represent to the Czar, that although the season was very much advanced, the descent might, nevertheless, easily be undertaken with such a superior force, as to get a footing in Schonen, where being assured there had been a very plentiful harvest, he did not doubt but subsistence might be found; besides, that having an open communication with his own countries, it might easily be transported from thence. His Danish Majesty alleged also several weighty reasons why the descent was either to be made this year, or the thoughts of making it next spring entirely be laid aside. *Nor did he alone make these moving remonstrances to the Czar; BUT HIS BRITISH MAJESTY'S MINISTER RESIDING HERE, AS WELL AS ADMIRAL NORRIS, seconded the same also in a very pressing manner; AND BY EXPRESS ORDER OF THE KING, THEIR MASTER, endeavoured to bring the Czar into their opinion, and to persuade him to go on with the descent; but his Czarish Majesty declared by his answer, that he would adhere to the resolution that he had once taken concerning this delay of making the descent; but if his Danish Majesty was resolved to venture on the descent, that he then, according to the treaty made near Straelsund, would assist him only with the 15 battalions and 1,000 horse therein stipulated; that next spring he*

would comply with everything else, and neither could or would declare himself farther in this affair. Since then, his Danish Majesty could not, without running so great a hazard, undertake so great a work alone with his own army and the said 15 battalions; he desired, in another letter of the 23rd September, his Czarish Majesty would be pleased to add 13 battalions of his troops, in which case his Danish Majesty would still this year attempt the descent; but even this could not be obtained from his Czarish Majesty, who absolutely refused it by his ambassador on the 24th ditto: whereupon his Danish Majesty, in his letter of the 26th, declared to the Czar, that since things stood thus, he desired none of his troops, but that they might be all speedily transported out of his dominions; that so the transport, whose freight stood him in 40,000 rix dollars per month, might be discharged, and his subjects eased of the intolerable contributions they now underwent. This he could not do less than agree to; and accordingly, all the Russian troops are already embarked, and intend for certain to go from here with the first favourable wind. It must be left to Providence and time, to discover what may have induced the Czar to a resolution so prejudicial to the Northern Alliance, and most advantageous to the common enemy.

If we would take a true survey of men, and lay them open in a proper light to the eye of our intellects, *we must first consider their natures* and then *their ends*; and by this method of examination, though their conduct is, seemingly, full of intricate mazes and perplexities, and winding round with infinite meanders of state-craft, we shall be able to dive into the deepest recesses, make our way through the most puzzling labyrinths, and at length come to the most abstruse means of bringing about the master secrets of their minds, and to unriddle their utmost mysteries.... The Czar ... is, by nature, of a great and enterprising spirit, and of a genius thoroughly politic; and as for his ends, the manner of his own Government, where he sways arbitrary lord over the estates and honours of his people, must make him, if all the policies in the world could by far-distant aims promise him accession and accumulation of empire and wealth, be everlastingly laying schemes for the achieving of both with the extremest cupidity and ambition. Whatever ends an insatiate desire of opulency, and a boundless thirst for dominion, can ever put him upon, to satisfy their craving and voracious appetites, those must, most undoubtedly, be his.

The next questions we are to put to ourselves are these three:

1. By what means can he gain these ends?
2. How far from him, and in what place, can these ends be best obtained?
3. And by what time, using all proper methods and succeeding in them, may he obtain these ends?

The possessions of the Czar were prodigious, vast in extent; the people all at his nod, all his downright arrant slaves, and all the wealth of the country his own at a word's command. But then the country, though large in ground, was not quite so in produce. Every vassal had his gun, and was to be a soldier upon call; but there was never a soldier among them, nor a man that understood the calling; and though he had all their wealth, they had no commerce of consequence, and little ready money; and consequently his treasury, when he had amassed all he could, very bare and empty. He was then but in an indifferent condition to satisfy those two natural appetites, when he had neither wealth to support a soldiery, nor a soldiery trained in the art of war. The first token this Prince gave of an aspiring genius, and of an ambition that is noble and necessary in a monarch who has a mind to flourish, was to believe none of his subjects more wise than himself, or more fit to govern. He did so, and looked upon his own proper person as the most fit to travel out among the other realms of the world and study politics for the advancing of his dominions. He then seldom pretended to any warlike dispositions against those who were instructed in the science of arms; his military dealings lay mostly with the Turks and Tartars, who, as they had numbers as well as he, had them likewise composed, as well as his, of a rude, uncultivated mob, and they appeared in the field like a raw, undisciplined militia. In this his Christian neighbours liked him well, insomuch as he was a kind of stay or stopgap to the infidels. But when he came to look into the more polished parts of the Christian world, he set out towards it, from the very threshold, like a natural-born politician. He was not for learning the game by trying chances and venturing losses in the field so

soon; no, he went upon the maxim *that it was, at that time of day, expedient and necessary for him to carry, like Samson, his strength in his head, and not in his arms*. He had then, he knew, but very few commodious places for commerce of his own, and those all situated in the *White Sea*, too remote, frozen up the most part of the year, and not at all fit for a fleet of men-of-war; but he knew of many more commodious ones of his neighbours in the Baltic, and within his reach whenever he could strengthen his hands to lay hold of them. He had a longing eye towards them; but with prudence seemingly turned his head another way, and secretly entertained the pleasant thought that he should come at them all in good time. Not to give any jealousy, he endeavours for no help from his neighbours to instruct his men in arms. That was like asking a skilful person, one intended to fight a duel with, to teach him first how to fence. *He went over to Great Britain*, where he knew that potent kingdom could, as yet, have no jealousies of his growth of power, and in the eye of which his vast extent of nation lay neglected and unconsidered and overlooked, as I am afraid it is to this very day. He was present at all our exercises, looked into all our laws, inspected our military, civil, and ecclesiastical regimen of affairs; yet this was the least he then wanted; this was the slightest part of his errand. But by degrees, when he grew familiar with our people, he visited our docks, pretending not to have any prospect of profit, but only to take a huge delight (the effect of curiosity only) to see our manner of building ships. He kept his court, as one may say, in our shipyard, so industrious was he in affording them his continual Czarish presence, and to his immortal glory for art and industry be it spoken, that the great Czar, by stooping often to the employ, could handle an axe with the best artificer of them all; and the monarch having a good mathematical head of his own, grew in some time a very expert royal shipwright. A ship or two for his diversion made and sent him, and then two or three more, and after that two or three more, would signify just nothing at all, if they were granted to be sold to him by the *Maritime Powers*, that could, at will, lord it over the sea. It would be a puny inconsiderable matter, and not worth the regarding. Well, but then, over and above this, he had artfully insinuated himself into the goodwill of many of our best workmen, and won their hearts by his good-natured familiarities and condescension among them. To turn this to his service, he offered many very large premiums and advantages to go and settle in his country, which they gladly accepted of. A little after he sends over some private ministers and officers to negotiate for more workmen, for land officers, and likewise for picked and chosen good seamen, who might be advanced and promoted to offices by going there. Nay, even to this day, any expert seaman that is upon our traffic to the port of Archangel, if he has the least spark of ambition and any ardent desire to be in office, he need but offer himself to the sea-service of the Czar, and he is a lieutenant immediately. Over and above this, that Prince has even found the way to take by force into his service out of our merchant ships as many of their ablest seamen as he pleased, giving the masters the same number of raw Muscovites in their place, whom they afterwards were forced in their own defence to make fit for their own use. Neither is this all; he had, during the last war, many hundreds of his subjects, both noblemen and common sailors, on board *ours, the French and the Dutch fleets*; and he has all along maintained, and still maintains numbers of them in *ours and the Dutch yards*.

But seeing he looked all along upon all these endeavours towards improving himself and his subjects as superfluous, whilst a seaport was wanting, where he might build a fleet of his own, and from whence he might himself export the products of his country, and import those of others; and finding the King of Sweden possessed of the most convenient ones, I mean Narva and Revel, which he knew that Prince never could nor would amicably part with, he at last resolved to wrest them out of his hands by force. His *Swedish Majesty's* tender youth seemed the fittest time for this enterprise, but even then he would not run the hazard alone. He drew in other princes to divide the spoil with him. And the *Kings of Denmark and Poland* were weak enough to serve as instruments to forward the great and ambitious views of the Czar. It is true, he met with a mighty hard rub at his very first setting out; his whole army being entirely defeated by a handful of Swedes at Narva. But it was his good luck that his *Swedish Majesty*, instead of improving so great a victory against him, turned immediately his arms against the King of Poland, against whom he was personally piqued, and that so much the more, inasmuch as he had taken that Prince for one of his best friends, and was just upon the point of concluding with him the strictest alliance when he unexpectedly invaded the *Swedish Livonia*, and besieged Riga. This was, in all respects, what the Czar could most have wished for; and foreseeing that the longer the war in Poland lasted, the more time should he have both to retrieve his first loss, and to gain Narva, he took care it should be spun out to as great a length as possible; for which end he never sent the King of Poland

succour enough to make him too strong for the King of Sweden; who, on the other hand, though he gained one signal victory after the other, yet never could subdue his enemy as long as he received continual reinforcements from his hereditary country. And had not his Swedish Majesty, contrary to most people's expectations, marched directly into Saxony itself, and thereby forced the King of Poland to peace, the Czar would have had leisure enough in all conscience to bring his designs to greater maturity. This peace was one of the greatest disappointments the Czar ever met with, whereby he became singly engaged in the war. He had, however, the comfort of having beforehand taken *Narva*, and laid a foundation to his favourite town *Petersburg*, and to the seaport, the docks, and the vast magazines there; all which works, to what perfection they are now brought, let them tell who, with surprise, have seen them.

He (Peter) used all endeavours to bring matters to an accommodation. He proffered very advantageous conditions; *Petersburg* only, a trifle as he pretended, which he had set his heart upon, he would retain; and even for that he was willing some other way to give satisfaction. But the King of Sweden was too well acquainted with the importance of that place to leave it in the hands of an ambitious prince, and thereby to give him an inlet into the Baltic. This was the only time since the defeat at *Narva* that the Czar's arms had no other end than that of self-defence. They might, perhaps, even have fallen short therein, had not the King of Sweden (through whose persuasion is still a mystery), instead of marching the shortest way to *Novgorod* and to *Moscow*, turned towards *Ukrain*, where his army, after great losses and sufferings, was at last entirely defeated at *Pultowa*. As this was a fatal period to the Swedish successes, so how great a deliverance it was to the *Muscovites*, may be gathered from the Czar's celebrating every year, with great solemnity, the anniversary of that day, from which his ambitious thoughts began to soar still higher. The whole of *Livonia*, *Estland*, and the best and greatest part of *Finland* was now what he demanded, after which, though he might for the present condescend to give peace to the remaining part of Sweden, he knew he could easily even add that to his conquests whenever he pleased. The only obstacle he had to fear in these his projects was from his northern neighbours; but as the *Maritime Powers*, and even the neighbouring princes in Germany, were then so intent upon their war against France, that they seemed entirely neglectful of that of the North, so there remained only Denmark and Poland to be jealous of. The former of these kingdoms had, ever since King William, of glorious memory, compelled it to make peace with *Holstein* and, consequently, with Sweden, enjoyed an uninterrupted tranquillity, during which it had time, by a free trade and considerable subsidies from the maritime powers to enrich itself, and was in a condition, by joining itself to Sweden, as it was its interest to do, to stop the Czar's progresses, and timely to prevent its own danger from them. The other, I mean Poland, was now quietly under the government of King Stanislaus, who, owing in a manner his crown to the King of Sweden, could not, out of gratitude, as well as real concern for the interest of his country, fail opposing the designs of a too aspiring neighbour. The Czar was too cunning not to find out a remedy for all this: he represented to the King of Denmark how low the King of Sweden was now brought, and how fair an opportunity he had, during that Prince's long absence, to clip entirely his wings, and to aggrandize himself at his expense. In King Augustus he raised the long-hid resentment for the loss of the Polish Crown, which he told him he might now recover without the least difficulty. Thus both these Princes were immediately caught. The Danes declared war against Sweden without so much as a tolerable pretence, and made a descent upon *Schonen*, where they were soundly beaten for their pains. King Augustus re-entered Poland, where everything has ever since continued in the greatest disorder, and *that in a great measure owing to Muscovite intrigues*. It happened, indeed, that these new confederates, whom the Czar had only drawn in to serve his ambition, became at first more necessary to his preservation than he had thought; for the Turks having declared a war against him, they hindered the Swedish arms from joining with them to attack him; but that storm being soon over, through the Czar's wise behaviour and the avarice and folly of the Grand Vizier, he then made the intended use both of these his friends, as well as of them he afterwards, through hopes of gain, persuaded into his alliance, which was to lay all the burthen and hazard of the war upon them, in order entirely to weaken them, together with Sweden, whilst *he was preparing himself to swallow the one after the other*. He has put them on one difficult attempt after the other; their armies have been considerably lessened by battles and long sieges, whilst his own were either employed in easier conquests, and more profitable to him, or kept at the vast expense of neutral princes--near enough at hand to come up to demand a share of the booty without having struck a blow in getting it. His behaviour has been as cunning at sea, where his fleet has always kept

out of harm's way and at a great distance whenever there was any likelihood of an engagement between the Danes and the Swedes. He hoped that when these two nations had ruined one another's fleets, his might then ride master in the Baltic. All this while he had taken care to make his men improve, by the example of foreigners and under their command, in the art of war.... His fleets will soon considerably outnumber the Swedish and the Danish ones joined together. He need not fear their being a hindrance from his giving a finishing stroke to this great and glorious undertaking. Which done, *let us look to ourselves; he will then most certainly become our rival, and as dangerous to us as he is now neglected.* We then may, perhaps, though too late, call to mind what our own ministers and merchants have told us of his designs of carrying on alone all the northern trade, and of getting all that from Turkey and Persia into his hands through the rivers which he is joining and making navigable from the Caspian, or the Black Sea, to his Petersburg. *We shall then wonder at our blindness that we did not suspect his designs* when we heard the prodigious works he has done at Petersburg and Revel; of which last place, the *Daily Courant*, dated November 23, says:

"HAGUE, Nov. 17.

"The captains of the men-of-war of the States, who have been at Revel, advise that the Czar has put that port and the fortifications of the place into such a condition of defence that it may pass for one of the most considerable fortresses, not only of the Baltic, but even of Europe."

Leave we him now, as to his sea affairs, commerce and manufactures, and other works both of his policy and power, and let us view him in regard to his proceedings in this last campaign, especially as to that so much talked of descent, he, in conjunction with his allies, was to make upon Schonen, and we shall find that even therein he has acted with his usual cunning. There is no doubt but the King of Denmark was the first that proposed this descent. He found that nothing but a speedy end to a war he had so rashly and unjustly begun, could save his country from ruin and from the bold attempts of the King of Sweden, either against Norway, or against Zealand and Copenhagen. To treat separately with that prince was a thing he could not do, as foreseeing that he would not part with an inch of ground to so unfair an enemy; and he was afraid that a Congress for a general peace, supposing the King of Sweden would consent to it upon the terms proposed by his enemies, would draw the negotiations out beyond what the situation of his affairs could bear. He invites, therefore, all his confederates to make a home thrust at the King of Sweden, by a descent into his country, where, having defeated him, as by the superiority of the forces to be employed in that design he hoped they should, they might force him to an immediate peace on such terms as they themselves pleased. I don't know how far the rest of his confederates came into that project; but neither the *Prussian* nor the *Hanoverian* Court appeared *openly* in that project, *and how far our English fleet, under Sir John Norris, was to have forwarded it, I have nothing to say, but leave others to judge out of the King of Denmark's own declaration:* but the Czar came readily into it. He got thereby a new pretence to carry the war one campaign more at other people's expense; to march his troops into the Empire again, and to have them quartered and maintained, first in Mecklenburg and then in Zealand. In the meantime he had his eyes upon *Wismar*, and upon a Swedish island called *Gotland*. If, by surprise, he could get the first out of the hands of his confederates, he then had a good seaport, whither to transport his troops when he pleased into *Germany*, without asking the King of *Prussia's* leave for a free passage through his territories; and if, by a sudden descent, he could dislodge the *Swedes* out of the other, he then became master of the best port in the Baltic. He miscarried, however, in both these projects; for *Wismar* was too well guarded to be surprised; and he found his confederates would not give him a helping hand towards conquering *Gotland*. After this he began to look with another eye upon the descent to be made upon Schonen. He found it equally contrary to his interest, whether it succeeded or not. For if he did, and the King was thereby forced to a general peace, he knew his interests therein would be least regarded; having already notice enough of his confederates being ready to sacrifice them, provided they got their own terms. If he did not succeed, then, besides the loss of the flower of an army he had trained and disciplined with so much care, as he very well foresaw that the English fleet would hinder the King of Sweden from attempting anything against Denmark; so he justly feared the whole shock would fall upon him, and he be thereby forced to surrender all he had taken from Sweden. These considerations made him entirely resolved not to make one of the descent; but he did not care to declare it till as late as possible: first, that he might the longer have his



troops maintained at the Danish expense; secondly, that it might be too late for the King of Denmark to demand the necessary troops from his other confederates, and to make the descent without him; and, lastly, that by putting the Dane to a vast expense in making necessary preparations, he might still weaken him more, and, therefore, make him now the more dependent on him, and hereafter a more easy prey.

Thus he very carefully dissembles his real thoughts, till just when the descent was to be made, and then he, all of a sudden, refuses joining it, and defers it till next spring, with this averment, *that he will then be as good as his word*. But mark him, as some of our newspapers tell us, under this restriction, *unless he can get an advantageous peace of Sweden*. This passage, together with the common report we now have of his treating a separate peace with the King of Sweden, is a new instance of his cunning and policy. He has there two strings to his bow, of which one must serve his turn. There is no doubt but the Czar knows that an accommodation between him and the King of Sweden must be very difficult to bring about. For as he, on the one side, should never consent to part with those seaports, for the getting of which he began this war, and which are absolutely necessary towards carrying on his great and vast designs; so the King of Sweden would look upon it as directly contrary to his interest to yield up these same seaports, if possibly he could hinder it. But then again, the Czar is so well acquainted with the great and heroic spirit of his Swedish Majesty, that he does not question his yielding, rather in point of interest than nicety of honour. From hence it is, he rightly judges, that his Swedish Majesty must be less exasperated against him who, though he began an unjust war, has very often paid dearly for it, and carried it on all along through various successes than against some confederates; that taking an opportunity of his Swedish Majesty's misfortunes, fell upon him in an ungenerous manner, and made a partition treaty of his provinces. The Czar, still more to accommodate himself to the genius of his great enemy, unlike his confederates, who, upon all occasions, spared no reflections and even very unbecoming ones (bullying memorials and hectoring manifestoes), spoke all along with the utmost civility of his brother Charles as he calls him, maintains him to be the greatest general in Europe, and even publicly avers, he will more trust a word from him than the greatest assurances, oaths, nay, even treaties with his confederates. These kind of civilities may, perhaps, make a deeper impression upon the noble mind of the King of Sweden, and he be persuaded rather to sacrifice a real interest to a generous enemy, than to gratify, in things of less moment, those by whom he has been ill, and even inhumanly used. But if this should not succeed, the Czar is still a gainer by having made his confederates uneasy at these his separate negotiations; and as we find by the newspapers, the more solicitous to keep him ready to their confederacy, which must cost them very large proffers and promises. In the meantime he leaves the Dane and the Swede securely bound up together in war, and weakening one another as fast as they can, and he turns towards the Empire and views the Protestant Princes there; and, under many specious pretences, not only marches and counter-marches about their several territories his troops that came back from Denmark, but makes also slowly advance towards Germany those whom he has kept this great while in Poland, under pretence to help the King against his dissatisfied subjects, whose commotions all the while he was the greatest fomenter of. He considers the Emperor is in war with the Turks, and therefore has found, by too successful experience, how little his Imperial Majesty is able to show his authority in protecting the members of the Empire. His troops remain in Mecklenburg, notwithstanding their departure is highly insisted upon. His replies to all the demands on that subject are filled with such reasons as if he would give new laws to the Empire.

Now let us suppose that the King of Sweden should think it more honourable to make a peace with the Czar, and to carry the force of his resentment against his less generous enemies, what a stand will then the princes of the empire, even those that unadvisedly drew in 40,000 Muscovites, to secure the tranquillity of that empire against 10,000 or 12,000 Swedes,--I say what stand will they be able to make against him while the Emperor is already engaged in war with the Turks? and the Poles, when they are once in peace among themselves (if after the miseries of so long a war they are in a condition to undertake anything) are by treaty obliged to join their aids against that common enemy of Christianity.

Some will say I make great and sudden rises from very small beginnings. My answer is, that I would have such an objector look back and reflect why I show him, from such a speck of entity, at his first origin, growing, through more improbable and almost insuperable difficulties, to such a bulk as he has already

attained to, and *whereby, as his advocates, the Dutch themselves own, he is grown too formidable for the repose, not only of his neighbours, but of Europe in general.*

But then, again, they will say he has no pretence either to make a peace with the Swede separately from the Dane or to make war upon other princes, some of whom he is bound in alliance with. Whoever thinks these objections not answered must have considered the Czar neither as to his nature or to his ends. The Dutch own further, *that he made war against Sweden without any specious pretence.* He that made war without any specious pretence may make a peace without any specious pretence, and make a new war without any specious pretence for it too. His Imperial Majesty (of Austria), like a wise Prince, when he was obliged to make war with the Ottomans, made it, as in policy, he should, powerfully. But, in the meantime, may not the Czar, who is a wise and potent Prince too, follow the example upon the neighbouring Princes round him that are Protestants? If he should, I tremble to speak it, it is not impossible, but in this age of Christianity *the Protestant religion should, in a great measure, be abolished;* and that among the Christians, the *Greeks and Romans* may once more come to be the only Pretenders for Universal Empire. The pure possibility carries with it warning enough for the Maritime Powers, and all the other Protestant Princes, to mediate a peace for Sweden, and strengthen his arms again, without which no preparations can put them sufficiently upon their guard; and this must be done early and betimes, *before the King of Sweden, either out of despair or revenge, throws himself into the Czar's hands.* For 'tis a certain maxim (which all Princes ought, and the Czar seems at this time to observe too much for the repose of Christendom) that a wise man must not stand for ceremony, and only *turn* with opportunities. No, he must even *run* with them. For the Czar's part, I will venture to say so much in his commendation, that he will hardly suffer himself to be overtaken that way. He seems to act just as the tide serves. There is nothing which contributes more to the making our undertakings prosperous than the taking of times and opportunities; for time carrieth with it the seasons of opportunities of business. If you let them slip, all your designs are rendered unsuccessful.

In short, things seem now come to that *crisis* that peace should as soon as possible be procured to the Swede, with such advantageous articles as are consistent with the nicety of his honour to accept, and with the safety of the Protestant interest, that he should have offered to him, which can be scarce less than all the possessions which he formerly had in the Empire. As in all other things, so in politics, a long-tried certainty must be preferred before an uncertainty, tho' grounded on ever so probable suppositions. Now can there be anything more certain, than that the provinces Sweden has had in the Empire, were given to it to make it the nearer at hand and the better able to secure the Protestant interest, which, together with the liberties of the Empire it just then had saved? Can there be anything more certain than that that kingdom has, by those means, upon all occasions, secured that said interest now near fourscore years? Can there be anything more certain than, as to his present Swedish Majesty, that I may use the words of a letter her late Majesty, Queen Anne, wrote to him (Charles XII.), and *in the time of a Whig Ministry too, viz.:* "That, as a true Prince, hero and Christian, the chief end of his endeavours has been the promotion of the fear of God among men: and that without insisting on his own particular interest."

On the other hand, is it not very uncertain whether those princes, who, by sharing among them the Swedish provinces in the Empire, are now going to set up as protectors of the Protestant interests there, exclusive of the Swedes, will be able to do it? *Denmark* is already so low, and will in all appearance be so much lower still before the end of the war, that very little assistance can be expected from it in a great many years. In *Saxony*, the prospect is but too dismal under a Popish prince, so that there remain only the two illustrious houses of Hanover and Brandenburg of all the Protestant princes, powerful enough to lead the rest. Let us therefore only make a parallel between what now happens in the Duchy of Mecklenburg, and what may happen to the Protestant interest, and we shall soon find how we may be mistaken in our reckoning. That said poor Duchy has been most miserably ruined by the Muscovite troops, and it is still so; the Electors of Brandenburg and Hanover are obliged, both as directors of the circle of Lower Saxony, as neighbours, and Protestant Princes, to rescue a fellow state of the Empire, and a Protestant country, from so cruel an oppression of a foreign Power. But, pray, what have they done? The Elector of Brandenburg, cautious lest the Muscovites might on one side invade his electorate, and on the other side from Livonia and Poland, his kingdom of Prussia; and the Elector

of Hanover having the same wise caution as to his hereditary countries, have not upon this, though very pressing occasion, thought it for their interest, to use any other means than representations. But pray with what success? The Muscovites are still in Mecklenburg, and if at last they march out of it, it will be when the country is so ruined that they cannot there subsist any longer.

It seems the King of Sweden should be restored to all that he has lost on the side of the Czar; and this appears the *joint interest of both the Maritime Powers*. This may they please to undertake: *Holland*, because it is a maxim there "that the Czar grows too great, and must not be suffered to settle in the Baltic, and that Sweden must not be abandoned"; *Great Britain*, because, if the Czar compasses his vast and prodigious views, he will, by the ruin and conquest of Sweden, become our nearer and more dreadful neighbour. Besides, we are bound to it by a treaty concluded in the year 1700, between King William and the present King of Sweden, by virtue of which King William assisted the King of Sweden, when in more powerful circumstances, with all that he desired, with great sums of money, several hundred pieces of cloth, and considerable quantities of gunpowder.

But *some Politicians* (whom nothing can make jealous of the growing strength and abilities of the Czar) though they are even foxes and vulpones in the art, either will not see or pretend they cannot see how the Czar can ever be able to make so great a progress in power as to hurt us here in our island. To them it is easy to repeat the same answer a hundred times over, if they would be so kind as to take it at last, viz., *that what has been may be again*; and that they did not see how he could reach the height of power, which he has already arrived at, after, I must confess, a very incredible manner. Let those *incredulous* people look narrowly into the *nature* and the *ends* and the *designs* of this great monarch; they will find that they are laid very deep, and that his plans carry in them a prodigious deal of prudence and foresight, and his ends are at the long run brought about by a kind of magic in policy; and will they not after that own that we ought to fear everything from him? As he desires that the designs with which he labours may not prove abortive, so he does not assign them a certain day of their birth, but leaves them to the natural productions of fit times and occasions, like those curious artists in China, who temper the mould this day of which a vessel may be made a hundred years hence.

There is another sort of short-sighted politicians among us, who have more of cunning court intrigue and immediate statecraft in them than of true policy and concern for their country's interest. These gentlemen pin entirely their faith upon other people's sleeves; ask as to everything that is proposed to them, how it is liked at Court? what the opinion of their party is concerning it? and if the contrary party is for or against it? Hereby they rule their judgment, and it is enough for their cunning leaders to brand anything with *Whiggism* or *Jacobitism*, for to make these people, without any further inquiry into the matter, blindly espouse it or oppose it. This, it seems, is at present the case of the subject we are upon. Anything said or written in favour of Sweden and the King thereof, is immediately said to come from a *Jacobite* pen, and thus reviled and rejected, without being read or considered. Nay, I have heard gentlemen go so far as to maintain publicly, and with all the vehemence in the world, that the King of Sweden was a Roman Catholic, and that the Czar was a good Protestant. This, indeed, is one of the greatest misfortunes our country labours under, and till we begin to see with our own eyes, and inquire ourselves into the truth of things, we shall be led away, God knows whither, at last. The serving of Sweden according to our treaties and real interest has nothing to do with our party causes. Instead of seeking for and taking hold of any pretence to undo Sweden, we ought openly to assist it. Could our Protestant succession have a better friend or a bolder champion?

I shall conclude this by thus shortly recapitulating what I have said. That since the Czar has not only replied to the King of Denmark entreating the contrary, but also answered our Admiral Norris, that he would persist in his resolution to delay the descent upon Schonen, and is said by other newspapers to resolve not to make it then, if he can have peace with Sweden; every Prince, and we more particularly, ought to be jealous of his having some such design as I mention in view, and consult how to prevent them, and to clip, in time, his too aspiring wings, which cannot be effectually done, first, without the Maritime Powers please to begin to keep him in some check and awe, and 'tis to be hoped a certain potent nation, that has helped him forward, can, in some measure, bring him back, and may then speak to this great enterpriser in the language of a countryman

in Spain, who coming to an image enshrined, the first making whereof he could well remember, and not finding all the respectful usage he expected,--"You need not," quoth he, "be so proud, for we have known you from a plum-tree." The next only way is to restore, by a peace, to the King of Sweden what he has lost; that checks his (the Czar's) power immediately, and on that side nothing else can. I wish it may not at last be found true, that those who have been fighting against that King have, in the main, been fighting against themselves. If the Swede ever has his dominions again, and lowers the high spirit of the Czar, still he may say by his neighbours, as an old Greek hero did, whom his countrymen constantly sent into exile whenever he had done them a service, but were forced to call him back to their aid, whenever they wanted success. "These people," quoth he, "are always using me like the palm-tree. They will be breaking my branches continually, and yet, if there comes a storm, they run to me, and can't find a better place for shelter." But if he has them not, I shall only exclaim a phrase out of Terence's "Andria":

"Hoccine credibile est aut memorabile Tanta vecordia innata cuiquam ut siet, Ut malis gaudeant?"

4. POSTSCRIPT.--I flatter myself that this little history is of that curious nature, and on matters hitherto so unobserved, that I consider it, with pride, as a valuable New Year's gift to the present world; and that posterity will accept it, as the like, for many years after, and read it over on that anniversary, and call it their *Warning Piece*. I must have my *Exegi-Monumentum* as well as others.

FOOTNOTE:

[20] Or, to follow this affectation of silliness into more recent times, is there anything in diplomatic history that could match Lord Palmerston's proposal made to Marshal Soult (in 1839), to storm the Dardanelles, in order to afford the Sultan the support of the Anglo-French fleet against Russia?