THE TRAVELS OF Olearius
IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY RUSSIA

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CHAPTER TWO

The Russian People

We will first examine the external features of the Muscovites, that is, their appearance, their build, and their clothing; and then we will turn to their internal or spiritual qualities, their capabilities, and their customs.

Russian men, in the main, are tall, stout, strong people, and their skin is of the same color as that of other Europeans. They place great store by long beards and large stomachs, and those who have them are held in high regard. (His Tsarist Majesty designates merchants who are well endowed in these respects to attend public audiences given ambassadors, supposing that his dignity is thereby enhanced.) Their mustaches droop down over their mouths. The priests wear their hair long, so that it hangs down onto their shoulders; all the others are close cropped. The magnates even have their heads shaved, imagining this to be an ornament. [Saint] Ambrose does not share this opinion. He says: "From trees we may judge wherein the beauty of the human head consists. Take the leaves away from a tree and the whole tree becomes unpleasant to the eye." Perhaps this idea was taken from Ovid, who wrote, "A head without hair is as repulsive/As a bull without horns, a tree without leaves, a field without grass."

However, when anyone transgresses somehow against His Tsarist Majesty or learns that he has fallen into disgrace, he allows his hair to grow long and in disorder for as long as the disgrace endures. They may have adopted this custom from the Greeks, whom they generally strive to imitate. For Plutarch tells (Quaestiones Romanae, XIV, 267) that when a great misfortune befell them they went with long, disheveled hair; women in such circumstances sheared their heads.

The women are of average height, are generally well built, and are delicate in face and body. In the towns, however, they all paint and powder themselves so cruelly and obviously that they look as though someone had thrown a handful of flour at their faces and colored their cheeks with a paintbrush. They also color their eyebrows black, or sometimes brown.

Some women who are naturally prettier than rouge can make them are persuaded by neighbors, or others whose company they keep, to paint themselves in this fashion, so that their natural beauty should not give offense to those who require artificial embellishment. Something of the kind occurred while we were there. The wife of one of the foremost magnates and boyars, Prince Ivan Borisovich Cherkasski, who had a lovely face, at first declined to rouge herself. However, the wives of other boyars began to harass her for being scornful of the customs and habits of the country and for shaming other women by her conduct. They also worked through their husbands and (eventually) brought it about that this naturally beautiful woman was obliged to powder and rouge herself and, so to speak, to light a candle in bright sunshine. Since powdering and rouging is done openly, a box of rouge is usually among the presents the groom sends his bride on the eve of the marriage.

Married women roll their hair up under their hats; young ladies leave it hanging down their backs, plaited into a braid, from the bottom of which hangs a red silk tassel. They cut off the hair of children under ten years of age, girls as well as boys, leaving only long locks on either side. To distinguish girls from boys, they hang large silver or bronze rings in the girls' ears.

The men's clothing is much like the Greeks'. Their shirts are wide, but short, scarcely covering the seat; the collar is flat and smooth, without pleats; and the back, from the shoulder down, is covered with a triangular [piece of cloth] and sewn with red silk. Some have gussets under the armpits, and also on the sides, made very skillfully of red satin. The wealthy have their shirt collars (a good thumb in width), as well as a strip in the front (from top to bottom), and the places around the cuffs, embroidered with multicolored tied silk, and sometimes with gold and pearls; such decorative collars extend out over the cloaks; they are fastened with two large pearls, or with gold or silver clasps. Their trousers, which are broad at the top, may be drawn in or opened out by strings. Over the shirt and trousers, they

3 George Turbervile, an English visitor to Russia in 1558, wrote a poetic description of this custom: "It is their common use to shave or els to sheare/Their heads, for none in all the land long tolling locks doth wear, / Unless perhaps he have his sovereign prince displeas'd, / For then he never cut his hairs, until he appear'd." Hakluyt, II, 104.
wears tight cloaks called “kaftans,” which are like our jerkins; but theirs hang to the knees, and have long sleeves, which are gathered into folds at the wrists. The collar, which rises behind the head, is a fourth of an ell long and broad, lined on the underside with velvet, and with gold brocade among the wealthy. Over the kaftans some people wear still another garment which reaches down to the calf or below and is called a feriaz. Both of these garments are made of cotton, calico (kindiak), taffeta, damask, or satin, depending upon what the wearer can afford. The feriaz is lined with cotton. When they go out, over all these they don ankle-length cloaks, which in most cases are made of violet-blue, brown (the color of tanned leather), or dark green cloth, but sometimes many-colored damask, satin, or gold brocade. Luxurious robes, kept in the Grand Prince's treasury, are distributed among the men who attend public audiences, to increase their splendor.

These outer kaftans, or cloaks, have wide collars; and, in front, from top to bottom, and on the sides, they are drawn together with strings embroidered with gold or with pearls. Sometimes long tassels hang from the strings. The sleeves are of almost the same length as those of the kaftans, but very narrow. They are gathered at the wrists into many folds, so that [in putting one on] one is hardly able to push his hands through. Sometimes when walking, they allow the sleeves to hang free below the hand. Some slaves and rogues carry stones and bludgeons in them, which are difficult to detect. Frequently, especially at night, they attack and murder people with these weapons.

All Russian men wear hats. During public ceremonies the princes, boyars, and state counselors wear hats of black fox or sable, an ell high. Otherwise they wear velvet hats like ours, lined and trimmed with black fox and sable; however, not much fur protrudes. These hats are sewn on both sides with gold or strings of pearls. Ordinary citizens wear hats of white felt in summer and of cloth, lined with some plain fur, in winter.

For the most part, like the Poles, they wear short shoes, made of either ordinary or Persian Morocco leather and pointed in front. They know nothing of cordovan. Women, particularly young women, wear shoes with very high heels, some of them one-fourth of an ell high. The lower part of the backs of these heels are nailed all about with fine nails. In such footwear they cannot run much, because the toes of the slippers hardly reach the ground.

The ladies' attire is much like the men's, except that the outer garment is wider, though of the same cloth. The garments of wealthy women are trimmed in front with fringed braid and other golden laces; others are decorated with strings and tassels, and sometimes with large silver and pewter buttons. The sleeve is not fully sewn above, so that they may thrust their hands through and allow the sleeves to hang. However, they don't wear kaftans, much less square ones that rise up around the back of the neck. The sleeves of their blouses are six, eight, or ten ells long, and, if of light cotton, even longer, but narrow; when worn, these are drawn into small folds. On their heads they wear broad and loose hats of gold brocade, satin, or damask, with gold laces sometimes sewn with gold and pearls, and embellished with beaver fur. They wear these hats so that their hair hangs smoothly halfway down the forehead. Grown women wear large hats of fox fur.

Formerly the Germans, the Dutch, the French, and other foreigners who had come to live among them, either in the service of the Grand Prince or for trade, affected Russian clothes and styles. They were even constrained to do so in order to avoid being insulted and set upon by malicious scoundrels. However, a year ago [1652 or 1653] the present Patriarch put an end to this, on the basis of the following incident. Once during a great procession in the city, in which he himself participated, the Patriarch as usual bestowed a blessing upon the people arrayed about him. Some of the Germans standing among the Russians were not willing to bow and make the sign of the cross to the Patriarch, which he noted with indignation. Upon learning that they were Germans, he said, "It is not right that the unworthy foreigners should thus receive a blessing not intended for them." So that he might thenceforth recognize and distinguish them from the Russians, an order was issued to all the foreigners to divest themselves of Russian clothes forthwith, and to dress, in the future, in the garb of their own country.

Although it appeared dangerous not to obey, some of the foreigners

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2 Although mention is made of this decree in other contemporary accounts, I have not found it in any collection of published documents.
were hard put to fulfill the order right away. Many of them could not
obtain new clothes at once, not so much because of want of cloth and
trimmings as for lack of tailors. Yet, since they were supposed to be
present at court daily, they could not absent themselves without dam-
age to their standing. Therefore each made use of whatever he had.
While some borrowed clothes from friends, others donned the cloth-
ing of their fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers, which had
lain in trunks since the time the tyrant had taken many Livonian
captive and brought them to Moscow. These clothes occasioned no
little laughter, not only because of the antiquated and diverse styles
but also because the garments were too big for some and too small for
others. Now all foreigners, no matter what their country, must always
dress in the clothing of their native land so that they may be dis-
gnished from the Russians.

In Moscow lives a certain prince named Nikita Ivanovich Romanov,
who is the foremost and wealthiest person [in the realm], after the
Tsar, as well as a close relative [a cousin] of the Tsar. This gay blade
is fond of German music, and he not only admires the foreigners, es-
specially the Germans, but is greatly taken also with their dress.
Accordingly, he ordered Polish and German clothes made for himself,
and sometimes for pleasure went hunting in them, despite the Patri-
arch’s objections to such attire. This boyar also angered the patriarch
on occasion over religious questions, by answering him curtly and
impertinently. Finally, however, the Patriarch tricked him out of his
[foreign] clothes and secured his renunciation of them.  

When you observe the spirit, the mores, and the way of life of the
Russians, you are bound to number them among the barbarians. Al-
though they prate themselves on their connection with the Greeks,
they have adopted neither their language nor their art. Indeed, they
have little in common with the Greeks, of whom it was said in ancient

6 On science in pre-Petrine Russia, see Vucinich, Chap. 1.
7 An Englishman in Peter the Great’s service reported the case of a foreigner who, about
a hundred years before, had predicted an eclipse: when it occurred, a mob demanded his execu-
tion as a sorcerer, and he had to be ushered out of the country under government protec-
tion. See Perry, pp. 209–10. Since I have not found this story elsewhere, I suspect that it is a legendary
invented by Olearium’s own experience and remarks, but distorted almost beyond recognition.
8 Olearium was invited into the Tsar’s service in 1659. The invitation (Sorbinius, Vol. III,
No. 110) refers to reports that “you are very learned and skilled in astronomy and geography,
and the movement of the heavens, and the measurement of the earth, and [that you have] other
useful skills and knowledge; and such skilled men are wanted by us, the Great Sovereign.”
9 Olearium’s reasoning is interesting because it casts doubt on the authenticity of one of the
rare instances in Matrosevich times when the state seemed to share a concern for learning for its
own sake. Other instances also appear to have been connected with utilitarian motives. For
example, when Gudonov sent a number of Russians abroad to study foreign languages, he
evidently intended to use them as translators in the Polish/Prussian. See Golitzen, Part 3,
p. 4. When the same ruler asked the well-known English mathematician, John Dee, to enter
the Russian service, the invitation was prompted by Dee’s reputation for knowledge of naviga-

During the Livonian Wars, Ivan IV ordered that Livonian captives no longer be sold
but instead be transported to Russia, which might then take advantage of their skills. The decree
appears in Depoluchie, Vol. I, No. 102. See also Tvetatsc, Prostatische i protestancy, pp.
33–46.

Tvetatsc (Prostatische i protestancy, p. 761) questions Olearium’s contention, arguing
that Nikita was too wealthy and powerful to be done out of his clothes by a ruse and that some
other, unknown consideration must have figured.
the street opposite the window. The chancellor, who came in on me just then, crossed himself and said, “This is truly sorcery, especially since the horses and people are going along upside down.”

Although they admire and value physicians and their art, nevertheless they will not employ the means of learning better cures that are generally resorted to in Germany and other countries, such as the dissection of human corpses and the study of skeletons. To everything of the kind they are extremely hostile. Some years ago an experienced barber, a Dutchman of jovial disposition, named Quirinus, was in the Tsar’s service. He had a human skeleton hanging on the wall above a table in his room. Once he was sitting before the table playing the lute, as was his habit, when the streltsi who then always guarded the foreign quarter came toward the sound of the music and looked in through the doorway. When they saw the bones hanging on the wall, they were frightened, and especially since they saw the skeleton stir. Accordingly, they left and let it be known that the German barber had a skeleton hanging on his wall, that moved when he played the lute. The rumor reached the Grand Prince and the Patriarch, who sent others with instructions to look into the matter attentively. These people not only confirmed the testimony already given, but added that the corpse danced on the wall to the sound of the lute.

Very astonished at this, the Russians took counsel and decided that the barber must surely be a sorcerer; he and his skeleton would therefore have to be consigned to the flames. When Quirinus learned that such a dreadful end was being planned for him, he sent a leading German merchant who enjoyed the favor of the magnates to Prince Ivan Borisovich Cherkasskii, to give a veracious report and frustrate the design. The merchant said to the boyar: “The barber certainly ought not to be accused of sorcery on account of the skeleton, for in Germany the best doctors and barbers use them. Then, if some living person breaks a leg or is wounded in some part of the body or other, it is easier to know how to go about curing him. The bones moved because the wind blew through the open window and not because the lute was played.” After this the sentence was rescinded. However, Quirinus had to leave the country, and the skeleton was dragged out beyond the Moscow River and burned.

Later on they proposed to work a similar tragedy on a German painter named Johann Deterson. Four years ago, when a great fire broke out in Moscow, the streltsi came to tear down the neighboring houses to extinguish it. In so doing, they came upon an old skull in the painter’s house, and would have cast it and the painter both into the fire, had not some of those present declared that German painters customarily used skulls to draw from.

With regard to intelligence, the Russians are indeed distinguished by cleverness and shrewdness. However, they use these qualities not to strive for virtue and glory, but to seek advantage and profit and to indulge their appetites. Therefore, as Jakob [Ulfeldt] says: “They are crafty and clever, stubborn, unbridled, hostile and perverse, not to say shameless, inclined to every sort of wickedness, disposed to place might above right, and divorced—believe me—from all virtue.”

Their cleverness and shrewdness are manifested in their commerce, among other activities; when buying and selling for profit, they resort to any expedient they can think of to cheat a neighbor. And anyone who wants to deceive them has to have a good head. For they shun truth and are so given to lying that they themselves rarely believe anyone else. Anyone who succeeds in deceiving them, they praise and consider a master. To cite an instance, some Moscow merchants invited a certain Dutchman who, in a transaction, had mulcted them of a large sum, to join their company and become their partner in trade; since he was such a master of deception, they hoped through him to have advantageous trade. It is strange that although they do not regard deception as a matter of conscience, but more as a wise and

9 Krizhanich, the Croatian priest who came to Russia in the 1660’s, wrote a defense of his fellow Slavs against the charges of foreign writers like Olearius, whom he mentions by name. He labels Olearius a slanderer (lizier) for, among other things, endorsing Ulfeldt’s sweeping denunciation. In a chapter entitled “On the Nature of the Germans,” Krizhanich launches a vigorous counterattack. Interestingly enough, he cannot suppress his admiration for certain qualities and attainments of the Germans, but overriding that is his conviction that they are a people steeped in repudiant vices, trafficers with the devil, and seducers of other peoples. Fittingly enough, he calls for their expulsion from Rus. Krizhanich 1, 158; 2, 253b. and 271.

10 Herbertstein (I, 112-114) describes some of the tricks the Russians resorted to in his time. It is worth noting that, according to Kilburger (Kurtz, Schedelieve Kilturgeria, p. 83), Russia’s inhabitants “from the highest to the lowest, love to traffic, which is why there are more shops in the city of Moscow than in Amsterdam or in some entire kingdom.” He conceded, however, that many Russian shops were very small. In view of this great propensity for trade, one is moved to wonder why capitalism failed to develop in Russia—question of great moment for Russian cultural history. Kilburger himself presents some interesting thoughts on the matter (ibid., pp. 89—99). Additional light is provided in the interesting article by Kirchner, “Western Businessmen in Russia.” It would be incorrect to assume that the foreign merchants were exemplars of honest dealing, as Kostomarov shows (Otechestv, especially pp. 29—31, 75—77).
Deception and malice

[Chapter 6

praiseworthy mode of conduct, nevertheless, many of them consider it a sin not to return the excess portion when a person has mistakenly paid too much for something. They say that in such a case the money is given unknowingly against the will, so that to keep it is theft; whereas the participant in an [ordinary] deal pays voluntarily and in full consciousness of what he is doing. In their opinion, one should trade with intelligence and wit, or not at all.

To demonstrate their craftiness, deceitfulness, and malice to neighbors who have aroused their anger and hate, the following is set forth. As theft is a vice seriously punished among them, they seek an occasion to accuse the other party of it. Thus they may go to a neighbor's to borrow money, leaving in exchange some clothing, bagage, or other things for security; and sometimes they stealthily leave something else in the house or in the neighbor's shoes, where letters, money, knives, and other small articles are usually kept. Then they make an accusation, charging that the things were stolen; when the things are found and recognized, the accused is punished. Because such deceptions and falsehoods became so widespread and generally known, however, on New Year's Day, 1634, while we were there, the Grand Prince had a new order publicly proclaimed: "no one, not even father and son, can lend money to another, give security, or enter into any obligations, without the drawing up of a paper signed by both parties. In the opposite case, all claimants will be considered suspect and may be made to pay damages to the accused."23 Corrupt judges sometimes secretly instigate their neighbors to commit scoundrelly acts, hoping to gain advantage thereby. We shall explain more of this below.

False witness and deception are so prevalent among them that they threaten not only strangers and neighbors but also brothers and spouses. Plenty of examples of this are known. In the time of Boris Godunov (as the Narva pastor, Mr. Martin Baeo, 11 who then lived in Moscow, told us), it once happened that the Grand Prince, extremely afflicted by gout, proclaimed that anyone who could deliver him from

pp. 186-88] A wife's revenge

this ailment, no matter what his station or creed, would receive great favor and wealth. When a certain boyar's wife whose husband was mistreating her learned of this, she saw an opportunity to avenge herself. She went and reported that her husband had an effective way to help the Grand Prince but chose not to grant him this favor. The boyar was called in to the Grand Prince and questioned, but claimed to be ignorant of medical science, whereupon he was mercilessly knouted and thrown into prison. When he said that his wife had prepared this trap for him to secure revenge, and that he intended to repay her, he was beaten still more severely, and was even threatened with the loss of his life.

They promised to carry out the threat if he failed to cure the Grand Prince in short order. The good boyar was so frightened that he knew not where to begin. Nevertheless, he requested a 14-day delay in order to collect some herbs, with the aid of which he thought to seek his salvation. He wished to prolong his life at least that long, in hopes that something else might meanwhile turn up. When the reprieve was granted, he sent to Serpukhov, two days journey from Moscow on the Oka River, for a whole wagonload of assorted herbs and grasses, which grew luxuriously and abundantly there. He made a bath of these for the Grand Prince, and to the boyar's great joy, the patient's ailment passed, though perhaps not so much from the bath as of itself. The boyar was then whipped still more severely for having possessed such skill and having withheld it from the Grand Prince. At the same time he was rewarded with new clothes, 200 rubles, and 18 peasants as perpetual and hereditary property. He was strictly warned against taking revenge on his wife, and it is said that the two lived peacefully together thereafter.

Formerly, in such cases of hostile and spiteful informing, especially in cases concerning offense to His Majesty, the accused, without inquiry, argument, or reply, was sentenced to punishment and reduced to poverty, or was executed. Not only the lowly suffered, but also persons of high estate, both foreigners and natives. Cases of this sort

11 Baeo came to Russia in 1601 as a church-school teacher and lived there 12 years, becoming a pastor in 1605. Various historians attributed to him a valuable account of Russia from 1524 to 1613, which constitutes Vol. 1 of Ustrialov, Shemosata vserossiichiya a samonavita. A new edition, Baeo, Moskovskaya khronika, 1524-1613, was published in Moscow in 1901. Konrad Busov (Busov), Baeo's father-in-law, was in the Russian service for many years. The introductory essay in the new edition demonstrates conclusively that the accounthas fundamentally Busesov's, although Baeo assisted him in preparing it for publication, and added certain materials. See Ustrialov's Introduction, and Tsvetov, Protestants i prot- estantsy, pp. 72-74, 201-11. Tsvetov suggests that Baeo, who was very hostile to the Russians, also predisposed Olearius to view them unsympathetically. Petrius, whose work Olearius frequently cites, drew heavily on the Busov-Baeo account, although making no acknowledge-
among the Russians are countless. Nor were ambassadors of foreign sovereigns spared. This sort of summary trial was given an ambassador of the Holy Roman Emperor, who was convicted and exiled to a far-off region. Later, in despair and in hope of better treatment, he adopted the Russian faith. He was in Moscow while we were there. Something of the kind happened also to the King of France's ambassador, Charles Talleyrand, Prince of Chales [Chalais], against whom secret testimony was given, as is the Russian custom, by his malicious colleague, Jacob Rouelle [Roussel].

When, however, the authorities recognized that many would unashamedly and groundlessly inform on others solely out of hatred and enmity, it was decided to proceed more cautiously in such cases. It was ordered that henceforth in criminal cases the accuser or informer was also to be put to torture, and to reiterate the complaint under extreme pain. If he adhered to his initial testimony and information, it would then be the turn of the accused [to be tortured]; although sometimes, when the case is very clear, the punishment is prescribed with no further trial. Thus, for example, when we were there, a spiteful wife informed on [her husband] a cavalryman, to the effect that he intended to poison the Grand Prince's horses and, if an opportunity presented itself, the Grand Prince himself. The wife was put to torture, but since she bore the pain and held fast to her testimony, the husband was pronounced guilty and exiled to Siberia. The wife remained in Moscow and received half her husband's annual pay for her support.

12 The reference is to Adam Dorn, whom Olearius later refers to by name as the translator of a Latin cosmography into Russian. Dorn's arrest was not quite as groundless as Olearius portrays it. He came to Russia ostensibly en route to Persia on a diplomatic mission, but actually to conduct clandestine talks looking to the occupation of the Russian throne by a member of the Houseberg family. See Vainshtein, pp. 26-27. On Dorn's baptism, see Tvetnev, Protocols i protestants, p. 444.

13 Olearius referred to this affair in a section of Book I that I have omitted. Although both were Frenchmen, Roussel and Talleyrand actually were employed by Sweden's King, Gustavus Adolphus, in an incredibly complex diplomatic intrigue directed against the Houseberg. In this scheme, Russia was encouraged to wage war against Poland, a de facto ally of the Houseberg. Roussel, who enjoyed Patriarch Filaret's favor, secured Tallyrand's arrest and exile on the charge that he was a Polish spy, when Talleyrand, officially his subordinate, endeavored to act independently in the negotiations with Russia. In spite of the French government's intervention on his behalf, Talleyrand was obliged to spend three years in Siberian exile, and was released only after Filaret's death. On this affair, which long baffled diplomatic historians, see Vainshtein, pp. 121-125, 192-207, 135-151, and passim; and Rambaud, pp. 55-56.

14 A student of judicial procedures in Muscovy has shown that Olearius here overstated the case. While torture was frequently resorted to in the investigative process, it was not "a constant and indispensable feature." This writer cites five situations in which torture was employed, all of them cases in which there was reason to doubt the trustworthiness of the witness. See Tcherep, pp. 144-48.

Since the Russians resort to craftiness and treachery in many things, and do not keep faith with one another, it may be imagined how they feel about foreigners, and how difficult it is to trust them. If they offer friendship, they do so not out of love of virtue (which they do not respect, even though the philosopher says that it ought to be our cynosure and goal) but for advantage and profit. Therefore, one can justly say of them, "The rabble befriend you only in expectation of gain."

The Russians, and particularly those who through fortune, wealth, offices, or honors have risen above the station of the common people, are very arrogant. Far from concealing this, they openly demonstrate it by their facial expressions, words, and deeds, especially in their relations with foreigners. Just as they have less regard for foreigners than their own countrymen, similarly they consider no ruler in the world comparable to theirs in wealth, power, greatness, distinction, and virtue. They refuse any letter addressed to His Tsarist Majesty if the slightest detail of his title is omitted, or [if anything included] is strange to them.

When, a year ago, two Russian ambassadors were sent to the government of Holstein, it was laughable to see how they declined to accept His Principly Excellence's letter to His Tsarist Majesty because of the superscription "uncle and brother-in-law"—the customary address to prior grand princes—until these words were eliminated. They said that they would have to answer with their lives for it, since they consider His Tsarist Majesty too lofty to be called brother-in-law by any foreign ruler. Great pains were taken to inform them of Duke Magnus of Holstein's (my most gracious Sovereign's cousin) relationship with the Tsar's forebears, in justification of the inclusion of these words. Their attitude was rather like that of the Persians with respect to Ali, their great saint and patron, of whom they say that "although not God, he is a very close relative."

The Russians are crudely self-regarding and ready to speak sharply if anyone fails to respect and treat them as they wish. The privates whom His Tsarist Majesty sends as his agents to receive foreign am-
bassadors are not ashamed openly to ask the ambassadors to remove their hats and dismount before the Russians. They push themselves forward in order to ride or walk ahead of the ambassadors, and perpetrate many other rude violations of courtesy. They contend that it would entail great damage to their ruler and the whole nation if they showed any civility and deference to foreign guests and the ambassadors of great sovereigns. Yet, in the words of Frederick de Merseler, in his work *Legatos*, these ambassadors “are in the image of their sovereigns and must be considered worthy of the honor accorded sovereigns.”

Even the foremost Russians use crude and indiscreet terms in their letters to foreigners, but they are quite put out if we respond in kind. Nevertheless, we met some few who treated us with courtesy and kindness. It is said that formerly they were even more impolite but have been somewhat softened as a result of communication with foreigners. The above-mentioned Nikita [Romanov] surpassed them all not only in intelligence but in honesty and urbanity. He is a most valuable person and an ornament that the Russians should treasure, as will be seen from the anecdotes below.

So arrogant are the Russians that they yield nothing even to one another; they constantly strive for place and, on that account, often become involved in altercation. Something of the kind occurred once in the course of our journey, at Nizhni Novgorod. On July 14th the state chancellor’s major domo in Moscow, a notable man, came to have a look at our newly constructed ship and to greet the ambassadors. When he was invited to dinner along with the pristav, there began a bitter quarrel over precedence. *Bledilin syn, svinin syn, butzfi matir* [son of a whore, son of a bitch, fuck your mother] and other vile words were the choice terms with which they vehemently belabored each other. The major domo said that since he was a nobleman and the other was of the common people, he had the right to sit in the superior place. The pristav replied that he was an official of the Grand Prince, and in deference to his master, the better place by right belonged to him. We got fed up with this and embarrassed to hear such swearing and abuse, which went on for almost half an hour; but they continued uninhibited until the ambassadors interfered and said, “We thought you came as friends, bringing comradeship, not trouble, and we request you to refrain from dishonoring each other in our presence.” They asked the guests to be friendly and cheerful, so that their presence would be more pleasing to us. After that they quieted down and, when they had drunk amply, even became confidential with each other.

The Russians are in general a very quarrelsome people who assail each other like dogs, with fierce, harsh words. Again and again on the streets one sees such quarrels; the old women shout with such fury that he who is unaccustomed to it expects them at any moment to seize each other’s hair. They very rarely come to blows, however; but when they do, they strike with their fists, beating one another with all their might on the sides and genitals. No one has ever seen Russians challenge one another to an exchange of saber blows or bullets, as Germans and other Europeans do. Still, there are cases when the foremost magnates, and even princes, fiercely lash at one another with knouts, while mounted on horses. We heard reliable testimony of this, and we ourselves saw two noblemen so engaged at the entry of the Turkish ambassador.

When their indignation flares and they use swearwords, they do not resort to imprecations involving the sacraments—as unfortunately is often the case with us—consigning to the devil, abusing as a scoundrel, etc. Instead they use many vile and loathsome words, which, if the historical record did not demand it, I should not impart to chaste ears. They have nothing on their tongue more often than “son of a whore,” “son of a bitch,” “cur,” “I fuck your mother,” to which they add “into the grave,” and similar scandalous speech. Not only adults and old people behave thus, but also little children who do not yet know the name of God, or father, or mother, already have on their lips “fuck you,” and say it as well to their parents as their parents to them.

Recently, by a public order, this foul and shameful swearing and abuse was severely and strictly forbidden, upon pain of knouting. Certain secretly appointed people were sent to mix with the crowd on the streets and in the markets and, with the help of streists and executioners assigned to them, were to seize swears and punish them on the spot by beating, as an object of public disgust. This habitual and deeply rooted swearing demanded more surveillance than could be provided,
however, and caused the observers, judges, and executioners such an intolerable burden of work that they tired of spying out and punishing that which they themselves could not refrain from, and gave it up as a bad job.

However, so that swearing, abuse, and dishonor might not be leveled indiscriminately at the notables and commoners alike, the authorities ordered that anyone, Russian or foreign, who strikes or otherwise dishonors a notable or his wife, or one of the Grand Prince's aides, must pay a very heavy fine, which they call "paying for dishonor" (zaplatit' beschest'e). The amount of the beschest'e varies according to the quality, office, or title of the person dishonored and is called oblad. In accordance with a special census, everyone is assigned a particular oblad. Depending upon his ancestry and worth, a boyar who has been reviled is paid 2,000, 1,500, or 1,000 thalers, or less. An official of the Tsar is awarded the amount of his annual salary. Thus, for example, since a physician earns 600 thalers (not counting his additional weekly allowance), a calumniator, on being sentenced by the court, must pay him that amount. If the physician's wife and children are insulted, the wife must be paid double, each daughter 1,800 thalers, and each son 600 thalers. If, further, the slanderer also abuses his victim's parents, grandparents, and grandmothers—as often happens when some frivolous rascal is in a rage—he is obliged to pay equally for dishonoring them, even though they may be long since dead. If it is impossible for the offender to pay what is due with all the money or proper-

10 The concept of beschest'e goes back at least as far as Kievian times, when it was invoked in cases both of physical and of verbal abuse. Grekov, Kiie Ruk, p. 162. In the law code of 1649, the Ulohenie, a large number of the articles of Chapter Ten are devoted to beschest'e. A good recent edition of the 1649 code is Tikhonov and Epifanov.

11 In the Ulohenie, as in old Russian usage generally, the word oblad does not have this connotation, but refers instead to monetary and land compensation for services. The fine itself frequently was called a beschest'e; sometimes it was simply stipulated that a given sum be paid for a beschest'e. Olearius's error can doubtless be explained by the fact that the amount of the fine, as he himself points out below, was often stated in terms of the annual salary (oblad) of the offended party.

12 An examination of the Ulohenie shows the beschest'e system to be more complex than Olearius makes it, although his description is essentially correct. In certain cases, prison terms and corporal punishment were prescribed, rather than fines in others, the fine was to be set by the Tsar; and in still others, the fine was not based on annual salary. Art. 69, Chap. Ten, which deals with insults to wives and children, stipulates for offended daughters a fine not three but four times that for the father. In view of the inferior position of women in Russian society, it is curious that the protection of their honor was taken more seriously than that of their husbands and fathers. There seems to be no ground for Olearius's assertion concerning payment for dishonor of deceased persons.

13 Certain articles of the Ulohenie applied to foreigners as well as Russians. One of the distinctive features of the Ulohenie was in its comparison with its predecessor, the Sudebnik of 1550, in its frequent reference to foreigners, a circumstance that points up the increasing prominence of these people in the seventeenth century.

14 According to a Soviet writer, S. K. Bogatylevskii (p. 231), the foreigners had frequent recourse to the courts. But it may well be that they were only rarely involved in beschest'e suits, and almost never among themselves.

15 The Frenchman is more commonly known by the name Jean rather than Anton, and his last name is sometimes spelled Gren. A brother came to Russia with him and was also baptized. Jean submitted to the government a grandiose scheme for economic development, which probably influenced the rise of mercantilism in Russia. See Kurrik, Svetiante Rossi, pp. 67-68, 69, 79-81; and Bakanova. Although neither Kurrik nor Bakanova is aware of it, De Gron's scheme was published, though wrongly identified, in Viskovatov, pp. 155-70.
conversation is directed to the side of things toward which their nature and base way of life incline: they speak of debauchery, of vile depravity, of lasciviousness, and of immoral conduct committed by themselves and by others. They tell all sorts of shameless fables, and he who can relate the coarsest obscenities and indecencies, accompanied by the most wanton mimicry, is accounted the best companion and is the most sought after. Their dances have the same character, often including voluptuous movements of the body. They say that roving comedians bare their backsides, and I know not what else. The Danish ambassador [Ulfeldt] was entertained by such shameless dances when he was there. He tells in his *Hodoeporicou* (p. 17) of seeing Russian women assume strange poses and make strange signs at the windows of their houses.

So given are they to the lusts of the flesh and fornication that some are addicted to the vile depravity we call sodomy; and not only with boys (as Curtius [*De Robus Gestis*] tells) but also with men and horses. Such antics provide matter for conversation at their carouses. People caught in such obscene acts are not severely punished. Tavern musicians often sing of such loathsome things, too, in the open streets, while some show them to young people in puppet shows. Their dancing-bear impresarios have comedians with them, who, among other things, arrange farces employing puppets. These comedians tie a blanket around their bodies and spread it above their heads, thus creating a portable theater or stage with which they can run about the streets, and on top of which they can give puppet shows.

"They have divested themselves of every trace of shame and restraint," says Jakob [Ulfeldt]. In Moscow we ourselves several times saw men and women come out of public baths to cool off, and, as naked as God created them, approach us and call obscenely in broken German to our young people. Idleness strongly prompts them to this kind of dissolute behavior. Daily you can see hundreds of idlers standing about or strolling in the market place or in the Kremlin. And they are more addicted to drunkenness than any nation in the world. Hieronymus [St. Jerome] said, "A stomach filled with wine craves immediate sexual satisfaction." After drinking wine to excess they are like unbridled animals, following wherever their passions lead. I recall in this connection what the Grand Prince's interpreter told me at Great Novgorod: "Every year there is a great pilgrimage to Novgorod to the Khutynskii Monastery. At that time a tavern keeper, for a consideration given the Metropolitan, is permitted to set up several tents around the tavern; beginning at daybreak, the pilgrim brothers and sisters, as well as the local people, gather to toss off several cups of vodka before the service of worship. Many of them stay all day and drown their pilgrimage devotion in wine. On one such day it happened that a drunken woman came out of the tavern, collapsed in the street nearby, and fell asleep. Another drunken Russian came by, and seeing the partly exposed woman lying there, was inflamed with passion, and lay down with her to quench it, caring not that it was broad daylight and on a well-peopled street. He remained lying by her and fell asleep there. Many youngsters gathered in a circle around this bestial pair and laughed and joked about them for a long time, until an old man came up and threw a robe over them to cover their shame."

The vice of drunkenness is prevalent among this people in all classes, both secular and ecclesiastical, high and low, men and women, young and old. To see them lying here and there in the streets, wallowing in filth, is so common that no notice is taken of it. If a coachman comes across any such drunken swine whom he knows, he throws them aboard his wagon and takes them home, where he is paid for the trip. None of them anywhere, anytime, or under any circumstance lets pass an opportunity to have a draught or a drinking bout. They drink mainly vodka, and at get-togethers, or when one person visits another, respect is rendered by serving one or two "cups of wine," that is, vodka. The common people, slaves, and peasants are so faithful to the custom that if one of them receives a third cup and a fourth, or even more, from the hand of a gentleman, he continues to drink up, believing that he dare not refuse, until he falls to the ground—and sometimes the soul is given up with the draught. We met with such situations while

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22 Samuel Collins (p. 24), an Englishman who served as physician to Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich for nine years, remarked that drunkenness was "the epidemic disease not only of Russia but of England also." Montaigne (p. 42) observed that French envoys to Germany found it necessary to get drunk, i.e., to honor the native custom, if they were to get their business done. These observations provide some needed perspective for the student of seventeenth-century Russia. Nevertheless, the fact that foreigners were impelled to dwell so much on drunkenness among the Russians suggests that they conspicuously outstripped others in this regard.
we were there, for our people were very generous and obliging to the Russians. Not only the common people, I affirm, but also the leading lords—even the Tsar’s Grand Ambassadors, who are bound to uphold the honor of their sovereign in foreign countries—are without restraint when strong drink is offered them. If something they rather like is put before them, they pour it out like water, until they begin to behave like people robbed of reason, and finally must be picked up as though they were dead. A case of this sort involving the Grand Ambassador sent to His Majesty King Charles IX of Sweden occurred in 1608. He became so intoxicated by the strongest vodka—even though he had been warned of its fiery power—that on the day he was to have been brought to an audience he was found dead in bed.

While we were there, taverns and porthouses were everywhere, and anyone who cared to could go in and sit and drink his fill. The common people would bring all their earnings into the tavern and sit there until, having emptied their purses, they gave away their clothing, and even their nightshirts, to the keeper, and then went home as naked as they had come into the world. When, in 1643, I stopped at the Lübeck house in Novgorod, I saw such besotted and naked brethren come out of the nearby tavern, some bareheaded, some barefooted, and others only in their nightshirts. One of them had drunk away his cloak and emerged from the tavern in his nightshirt; when he met a friend who was on his way to the same tavern, he went in again. Several hours later he came out without his nightshirt, wearing only a pair of underdrawers. I had him called to ask what had become of his nightshirt, who had stolen it? He answered, with the customary “Fuck your mother,” that it was the tavern keeper, and that the drawers might as well go where the cloak and nightshirt had gone. With that, he returned to the tavern, and later came out entirely naked. Taking a handful of dog fennel that grew near the tavern, he held it over his private parts, and went home singing gaily.

It is true that recently these public taverns, some of which belonged to the Tsar and some to the boyars, have been abolished, because they drew people away from work and gave them an opportunity to drink up their earnings. Now one can no longer buy two or three kopeks worth of vodka. Instead, His Tsarist Majesty ordered that each town have one kruzhchnyi dvor, which sells vodka only by the jug or tankard.23 The people who are appointed managers of these establishments have taken a special oath, and they annually supply an unbelievable sum of money to His Tsarist Majesty’s treasury. However, daily drunkenness has hardly diminished as a result of this measure, for several neighbors pool their funds to buy a tankard or more, and do not disperse until they have emptied it to the dregs. Some of them also buy up large quantities and secretly sell it by the cup. It is true that now fewer people are seen naked, although the number of drunkards wandering about and wallowing in the gutters is not much reduced.

Women do not consider it disgraceful to themselves to get intoxicated and collapse along with the men. From my inn in Narva, the Neihoff House, I saw an amusing spectacle. Several women came with their husbands to a carouse, sat with them, and drank amply. When the men had got drunk, they wanted to go home. The women demurred, and though their ears were boxed, nevertheless, they declined to get up. When at last the men fell to the ground and went to sleep, the women sat astride them and continued toasting one another with vodka until they, too, became dead drunk. Our host in Narva, Jakob von Köllen, related that just such a comedy took place at his wedding. After they got drunk, the men struck their wives for the pleasure of it, and then proceeded to tipple with them again. Finally the women, sitting astride their sleeping husbands, drank to each other until they toppled over alongside them and slept. One may easily imagine the peril to honor and modesty, and its frequent ruin, under such conditions of life.

I said that the clergy is not anxious to rid itself of this vice either. One is as apt to meet a drunken priest or monk as a layman or peasant. It is true that in the monasteries they drink no wine, vodka, mead, or

23 The private operation of taverns was banned, and a single kruzhchnyi dvor per town authorized, in 1651 and 1652—not in 1654, as Oleinik asserts farther on. The decrees were not obeyed, however, and presently the government gave way and tolerated the existence of something rather like the old system. See Pryshchov, Chap. 12. It has been plausibly argued that the reduction of the number of taverns was chiefly motivated by fiscal considerations, for the Russian government profited more from the sale of grain abroad than from its conversion into alcohol for sale in taverns. Baskinovich, "Elementy merkantilizma," pp. 14-15. However, this view is inadequate taken by itself, for numerous regulations emanating from the church in the 1640's and 1650's expressed a genuine movement for reform of pernicious practices among both laymen and clergy.
strong beer, but only kvas, that is weak beer or small beer. Nevertheless, when the monks go out and are guests of good friends, they not only feel that they cannot refuse a good draught, but even demand it; and they drink greedily, taking such delight in it that they may be distinguished from lay drunkards by nothing but their clothing.

When we passed through Novgorod, during the second embassy, I saw a priest in a robe or underwear (he had undoubtedly pawned his cloak in a tavern) staggering along the streets. When he came opposite my inn, he wanted to bestow the customary blessing upon the streltzi who were standing guard. When he extended his hand while endeavoring to bow over somewhat, his head proved too heavy, and he pitched over into the mud. After the streltzi picked him up, he blessed them anyway with his besmeared fingers. Since such spectacles may be seen daily, none of the Russians are astonished by them.

The Russians also greatly love tobacco, and formerly everyone carried some with him. The poor man gave his kopeck as readily for tobacco as for bread. However, it was presently remarked that people got no good whatever from it, but, on the contrary, appreciable ill. Servants and slaves lost much time from their work; many houses went up in smoke because of carelessness with the flame and sparks; and before the ikons, which were supposed to be honored during church services with reverence and pleasant-scented things, the worshippers emitted an evil odor. Therefore, in 1634, at the suggestion of the Patriarch, the Grand Prince banned the sale and use of tobacco along with the sale by private taverns of vodka and beer. Offenders are punished very severely—by slitting of the nostrils, and the knout. We saw marks of such punishment on both men and women, of which more when we discuss their system of justice.

24 Olearius was misinformed on this, as is apparent from the numerous decrees banning intoxicating liquors in the monasteries. See for examples dňdy sobranye, Vol. IV, Nos. 17, 324, 355, 328. These and other, similar decrees also disprove Olearius's allegation regarding lack of concern about drunkenness among the clergy. Like his predecessor, Josif, in whose patriarchate these decrees were published, Nikolai was an implacable foe of this ill. He assigned agents to apprehend culprits, who were severely punished. Paul of Aleppo, p. 410; Paschal, pp. 369–65 and passim.

25 In the Ulebnieki, Art. 19–21 of the last chapter deal with the sale and use of tobacco. The laws of 1634, and Art. 11 of the Ulebnieki after it, prescribed even the death penalty. Tikhomirov and Epifanov, p. 298. In practice, however, tobacco was made available to Russian soldiers, and enforcement of the ban, in general, became increasingly lax. Kurts, Sechenov Ili'burgschee, pp. 322–23. Peter the Great later repealed the ban, when he sold a monopoly of the tobacco trade with Russia to an English nobleman. See Schuyler, J., 303.

Since the Russians are by nature cruel and fit only for slavery, they must constantly be kept under a cruel and harsh yoke of restraint, and be driven to work with cudgels and whips. They scarcely show displeasure with this, since their condition requires it and they are accustomed to it. Now and then young bastards get together and strike each other, in order to make such treatment a habit—part of their second nature—so that they may bear it more easily.

They are all serfs and slaves. It is their custom and manner to be servile and to make a show of their servile disposition. They bow to the ground to notables, and even throw themselves at their feet. They give thanks for beatings and punishments. All subjects, whether of high or low condition, call themselves and must count themselves the Tsar's kholopi, that is slaves and serfs. Just as the magnates and nobles have their own slaves, serfs, and peasants, the princes and the magnates are obliged to acknowledge their slavery and their insignificance in relation to the Tsar. They sign their letters and petitions with the diminutive form of their names, such as Ivashka instead of Ivan, or "Petrushka, tvoi kholop [your slave]." Also, when the Grand Prince speaks to anyone, he employs diminutive names. One can judge of the boyars' slavery, too, by the barbaric punishments meted out to them for offenses. The Russians [appropriately] declare that everything they have belongs to God and the Grand Prince. Foreigners in the Grand Prince's service must also acknowledge their servility and accept whatever pleasure and pain goes with it. Although the Tsar has a gracious eye for the most important of them, they can very easily make a mistake and fall into disgrace.

It was formerly very dangerous to be the Tsar's physician, for if some medicine did not produce the desired effect, or if the patient died while under care, the doctors fell into the greatest disfavor and were treated as slaves. The story of Grand Prince Boris Godunov and his

26 As Kluchevski (Shemosi inostrantsye, pp. 73–77, 81–92) remarks, foreign observers were deeply impressed by the Russian nobility's subservience to the Tsar; since many were themselves members of the upper classes, they were especially sensitive to the contrast between their own status and that of the Russians who were ostensibly their counterparts. The Great Kriotsevich also was outraged by the indignities suffered by the Russian nobles. Perovich, p. 81.

27 They, too, in addressing the sovereign, called themselves his slaves. For example, the Tsar's physician, Dr. Betou, spoke of himself as "Ivashka, thy slave." See dňdy sobranye, Vol. III, No. 225.

28 The situation had been even worse than Olearius portrays it. Lachin (pp. 8–9) states that the first two pioneers of rational medicine in Russia were slain when their royal patients died.
doctors is well known. When in 1602 Duke Johann, brother of King Christian IV of Denmark, came to marry the Grand Prince's daughter, and suddenly fell ill, the Grand Prince demanded, with harsh threats, that the doctors demonstrate their greatest skill on the Duke and not permit him to die. When no medicine helped, and the Duke died, the doctors were forced to hide and not show themselves for a long time. In 1602 Duke Johann, brother of King Christian IV of Denmark, came to marry the Grand Prince's daughter, and suddenly fell ill, the Grand Prince demanded, with harsh threats, that the doctors demonstrate their greatest skill on the Duke and not permit him to die. When no medicine helped, and the Duke died, the doctors were forced to hide and not show themselves for a long time. This Grand Prince had among his physicians one from northern Germany whom he himself had made a doctor. When the latter once asked leave to enroll in a German university and take a doctor's degree, the Grand Prince asked him what it meant to obtain a degree and how it was done. He was told that one had to pass an examination in the art of healing, to determine whether he was qualified; if he passed, he was declared a doctor and given a certificate with the medical faculty's signature and seal. To that the Grand Prince objected: "You can save the trip and the expense. I have recognized your skill (not long before, this physician had in fact relieved him of the pain he suffered from gout), and I myself will make you a doctor and give you a certificate larger than any you would receive abroad!" And so it was done.

After the death of Duke Johann, the Grand Prince had this Moscovite doctor called when he again had an attack of gout. The doctor, believing his life to be in danger, appeared in torn, cut-up, old clothing, with his hair hanging shaggily and in disorder around his head and face. He crawled in through the door on all fours, saying that so long as he was in disgrace he was not fit to live, much less to see the bright eyes of His Tsarist Majesty. A boyar standing nearby, thinking to earn the Tsar's love, kicked the doctor with the end of his shoe, wounding him in the head, and called him a dog. However, the doctor, observing a kind expression on the Tsar's face, sought to make capital of this insult, and continued in a lamenting voice: "Oh great Tsar, I am your slave and no other's. I have gravely offended you, and deserve death, and would gladly die by your hand. But I am insulted that this slave of yours reviles me; for I know that you do not wish another to

perpetrate violence upon me, your servant." This meek speech turned the anger of the Grand Prince into mercy. The physician received 500 rubles as a gift, the other physicians were delivered from disgrace, and corporal punishment was inflicted on the boyar.

The slaves and servants of the magnates and other lords are countless. Many have more than fifty, and some even more than a hundred, on their estates or in their households. Most of those in Moscow, instead of being fed in the households, are given a subsistence allowance, though it is so small as hardly to sustain life. That is why there are so many thieves and murderers in Moscow. When we were there, scarcely a night went by that houses were not broken into and robbed. Moreover, often the master of the house was barricaded in his room and obliged to watch passively, if he were not strong enough to deal with the thieves or did not wish to put his life in danger and have the house burned down around him. For that reason, special guards are hired at the households of notables, who are supposed to make their presence known every hour by striking a hanging board—like a drum—with a baton. However, it often happened that such hirelings kept guard not so much for the lords as for the thieves, arranged a safe path for the latter, helped them to rob the place, and then ran off. Therefore, no one is hired nowadays either as a guard or servant (for, besides slaves, hired servants may be had) without references from well-known inhabitants. Especially in Moscow, slaves make the streets very unsafe, so that unless one has good weapons and companions he cannot escape attack, as we had occasion to learn. Returning late at night from a party at a good friend's, one of our members who advanced far ahead of the rest of us was assailed by two Russian street robbers. When he cried out to signal that he was in danger, we sped to his assistance, whereupon one of the thieves hid himself, and the other was beaten so severely that he could hardly drag himself away.

On another occasion, when our ambassadors and their suite were returning from a notable's house where they had been guests, our cook, who lagged behind and was accompanied home by the host's cook, was

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29 An extended and moving account of the Duke's death is given in Tsinets, Prototestantsa i protestantsa, pp. 237-8, 641-64.
30 This may have been the first case of the sort, but it was not the last. See Lakhita, pp. 27-28.

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31 One contemporary account asserts that a boyar might possess from 200 to 1,000 serfs. See Kaikhishkin, p. 131. Magnates such as Nikita Romanov and Boris Morozov undoubtedly had even more.
shot. One night shortly afterward some robbers slew the steward of the Swedish ambassador Arend Spiring when he was on his way home from a good friend's. His waistcoat, still smeared with blood, was put up for sale eight days later. The same thing happened to our Lieutenant Johann Kit. After we returned from Persia, he attended a German wedding in my company. While returning home alone a little before me, he was so badly beaten by Russian bandits that, after lying unconscious for a day and a night, he gave up the ghost.

Other cases, involving the Russians alone, are legion. Not a night went by without leaving assorted dead, who were discovered on the streets the following morning. Murders were numerous on their great holidays, but especially during Butter-week, a period of eight days before Ash Wednesday, when they get drunk daily. On December 11th while we were there, 15 dead were counted before the Zemski Door, the place to which the slain are dragged in the morning so that people whose relatives had failed to come home at night may seek them out. Those who are not recognized and taken away are buried without ceremony. The slaves and robbers were not even afraid in broad daylight to fall upon His Tzarist Majesty's physician, Mr. Hartmann Grammann. Several of them forced him to the ground and wanted to cut off the finger on which he wore a signet ring. It would have been done had not a good friend of the doctor, a prince near whose gate this occurred, sent his servants out to seize him from the hands of the brigands.

In the face of such danger at night, the burghers showed no pity. If they heard someone suffering at the hands of robbers and murderers beneath their window, they would not even look out, much less come to his assistance. I am told that a better regime has now been introduced, involving the posting at night of a strong guard of streltsi and soldiers at all crossings. And no one, whether on foot, on a horse, or in a carriage, is permitted to appear on the streets without a lantern or other light. Everyone is also questioned about why he is on the street. Those who are caught without a light are detained and brought to the Streltskiy Prikaz, where, on the following day, they are inter-

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22 Grammann, a German from Thuringia, studied medicine at Jena, Leipzig, and Wittenberg, and practiced in Halle. In 1633 he was engaged as the Holstein embassy's doctor. He entered the Tzar's service in 1639 and remained in Russia for many years after. See Rikhter, 11, 67–72.
rogated; after the matter has been clarified, they are either freed or put to torture.

In August, the haymaking season, the slaves make the road 20 leagues this side of Moscow extremely dangerous. The boyars have their own hayfields, and they send the servants there to work. In this place is an eminence from which they can detect travelers far off, and here many have been plundered, and even murdered and buried in the sand. Although complaints were registered against these rogues, their masters, who scarcely provide covering for their people's skins, looked between their fingers at the matter.

When, as a consequence of the death or generosity of their master, the slaves and servants of some lord receive their freedom, they soon sell themselves again. Since they have no way to support themselves, they neither value freedom nor know how to use it. Their nature is such that, as the wise Aristotle said of the barbarians, "they cannot and shall not live other than in slavery." To them applies also what Aristotle said of the peoples of Asia Minor, who are called Ionians because they derived from the Greeks: "They are miserable in freedom and comfortable in slavery."

A lord is completely free to sell or give his slaves to another. The relation of fathers and children to slavery that prevails is as follows. Fathers are forbidden to sell their sons, and no one does it. They are even unwilling to give a son as a servant to a notable, preferring to put up with hunger at home. They so comport themselves both because they are magnanimous and because they consider such an arrangement shameful. However, when someone falls into debt and is unable to pay, he has the right to mortgage his children or give them into the service of the creditor for a certain term of years to discharge the debt. A son is delivered for five rubles a year, a daughter for four, until they have served out the debt, after which the creditor must set them free. If a son or daughter is unwilling to be mortgaged and the father is taken to court for not being able to pay, then, according to Russian law, the children must pay the debts of the parents. In that case the children may give the father's creditor a khabal, or certificate of obligation, binding them to become his serfs.\footnote{The contracting of debts and punishment for non-payment are covered in the Ulozhenie, Chap. Ten, Art. 254ff. Art. 266 orders debtors who cannot pay to become the servants of their masters.}
As a result of slavery and their crude, grim way of life, the Russians are the more easily brought to war and employed in it. When it comes to that, they are sometimes brave and bold soldiers. The ancient Romans, in keeping with the laws of Emperors Gratian/Valentinian and Theodosius, would not permit bondsmen, dissolute scamps, and persons of uncertain origin or character to serve in their wars. But in those days, men who enlisted and were used as soldiers had a different aim (that is, glory and worldly happiness) than most have today (plunder, robbery, and enrichment). Nowadays it is commonly said, as [Coroebus] did in Virgil: “Craet or courage are equally acceptable when a foe must be beaten.” Why then trouble, as the Romans did, to pick and choose among those who wish to enlist?

Yet the Russian slaves are steadfastly loyal to their lords and military commanders; if they have good, well-trained foreign colonels and leaders (of whom they are short), then they show great manliness and courage. But they are much better suited to the defense of fortresses than to the field, as the example cited of the two Russians at the surrender of Nöteburg shows. A similar conclusion may be drawn from the campaign of 1579 against the Poles. At the Suckol castle, which the Poles put to the torch, they did not quit opposing the enemy before them even when the clothes on their backs began to burn. One may read of this in Henning’s *Lieglickische Chronika* in the same place, mention is made of the surrender of the Padis Abbey in Livonia [1580], where the Russians besieged in the fortress were so weakened by hunger that they were unable to come out to meet the conquering Swedes at the gates. And Henning adds in wonder, “In a fortress give me soldiers like these, who are ready to venture whatever their commander asks of them.”

But in field engagements and in the siege of cities and fortresses, the Russians do not fare as well, although they do what is asked of them. Usually they came off second best in clashes with the Poles, Lithuanians, and Swedes, and they sometimes proved more ready to flee than to pursue the enemy. The fact that in the past year they occupied the city of Smolensk with an army numbering more than 200,000 men can no more be attributed to their great bravery than their full retreat from Smolensk with great losses and dishonor in 1632 can be considered a mark of cowardice. For on both occasions suspicious circumstances were involved. The first time it was a matter of General Shein; this time there were some extraneous factors, unknown before.

Although the Russians, especially the common people, in their slavery and with their heavy yoke, can bear a great deal for love of their ruler, if matters go beyond a certain point, it may be said of them: “Try patience often enough, and madness at last ensues.” Then the affair ends with a dangerous mutiny, the fury of which is aimed not so much against the topmost officials as against the lower. This is most apt to occur if the inhabitants are subjected to severe persecution by their fellow citizens and obtain no relief from the authorities. Once they are aroused, they are difficult to pacify; notwithstanding the danger that may threaten them, they resort to every kind of violence, and rage like madmen.

Grand Prince Mikhail Feodorovich knew this very well. When the soldiers, returning in miserable condition from Smolensk, began to complain bitterly about the treachery of General Shein (regarding whom a superior official was also suspicious, and not without cause), the court was dilatory about taking strong measures against the accused. But when the authorities perceived that a general uprising threatened, to appease the people they ordered that Shein be beheaded. So that he should submit, and thus spare danger to others, the following stratagem was resorted to. Shein was persuaded that he was being taken out only for show, only to let the people see the Grand Prince’s intention, and that he would not be executed; as soon as he had lain down, a stay would come, followed by clemency, and the people would be satisfied.

*As Herberstein (I, 97) put it, their motto in the field seemed to be, *"If you do not flee, we must."*  
*In 1654, during the war between Russia and Poland over the Ukraine, Russia gained control of Smolensk for the first time since having lost it in the Time of Troubles.*  
*Nineteenth-century historians were not of one mind in regard to Shein’s alleged treachery. After examining the matter closely, the Soviet historian Vainstein (pp. 169–80) finds Shein guilty of mismanagement of the Smolensk campaign, but exonerates him of treason against the Tsar.*
Comforted, and full of hope that was reinforced by the assurances from the Patriarch, Shein came forward and lay prostrate on the ground. The executioner was then given the signal to strike forthwith, which he did, and with several blows, he cut off Shein’s head.

Later in the same day, Shein’s son, who also had been at Smolensk, was beaten to death with the knout, at the people’s demand. The general’s friends were speedily exiled to Siberia. With that the people were satisfied, and the mutiny ended. These events occurred in June 1633.

[Paul] Piasecki described this war with Poland in his Chronica memorabilium in Europæ, but not with full details. One may find it in his account of the years 1633 and 1634.

Further examples of the Russian people’s disposition to be extremely long-suffering and then to become infuriated and to mutiny will be presented below. In the description of their police administration, we will adduce two frightful mutinies and rebellions that occurred in Russia a few years ago.

Households and Social Life

The domestic arrangements of the Russians vary according to their station. Generally they live meagerly and spend little on their homes. The magnates and the rich merchants, it is true, now live in costly palaces. These were built only in the last thirty years, however, and before that they too lived in wretched dwellings. The majority, and especially the common people, live on extremely little. Their houses are shoddy and cheap, and the interiors have few furnishings and utensils. Most have not more than three or four earthen pots and as many clay and wooden dishes. Few pewter and even fewer silver dishes, let alone cups for vodka or mead, are seen. These people are not in the habit of expending much effort on cleaning and polishing their vessels. Even the Grand Prince’s pewter and silver plate, with which the ambassadors were entertained, was black and repulsive, as were some of our lazy hosts’ tankards, which had not been washed for a year or more. None of the houses, whether rich or poor, display vessels as ornaments; the walls are bare, except in the houses of the wealthy, where they are hung with mats and some icons. Very few people have feather beds, in lieu of which they lie on benches covered with cushions, straw, mats, or their clothes; in winter they sleep on flat-topped stoves, like bake-ovens, as the non-German people in Livonia do. Side by side lie men, women, and children, as well as servants, both male and female. In some places, we found chickens and pigs under the benches and stoves.

They are not accustomed to tender dishes and dainty morsels. Their daily food consists of groats, beets, cabbages, cucumbers, and fresh or salt fish. In Moscow, they use coarse salt fish, which sometimes stinks
because they are thrifty with the salt. Nevertheless, they like to eat it. One can detect a fish market by the odor well before he sees or comes upon it. Because of their excellent pastures, they have good lamb, veal, and pork, but they spend little on meat; for their religion prescribes as many fast days as meat-eating days, and therefore they have become used to coarse and wretched food. They know how to prepare so many dishes of fish, pastry, and vegetables that one may forget about meat. As I have already mentioned, on one fast day the Tsar granted us 40 such dishes. They have a special kind of pastry, much eaten in Butter-week, which they call \textit{pirog}. It is like a pie or, more exactly, a fritter, though somewhat longer; it is filled with minced fish or meat and onion, and is baked in butter, or during fasts, in vegetable oil. The taste is not unpleasant. Everyone treats a guest with these, if he means to receive him well.

They have a very common food which they call \textit{ikra}, made of the roe of large fish, especially sturgeon and whitefish. They expel the roe from the membrane in which it is contained, salt it, and after it has stood for six to eight days, mix it with pepper and finely chopped onions. Some also add vinegar and country butter before serving it. It is not a bad dish. If one pours a bit of lemon juice over it, instead of vinegar, it gives a good appetite, and has a restorative effect. Ikra is salted on the Volga, chiefly at Astrakhan. Some of it is dried in the sun. They fill hundreds of barrels with it and then send it to other countries, especially to Italy, where it is considered a delicacy and is called \textit{caviar}. Certain people lease the trade from the Grand Prince for a certain sum of money.

The Russians prepare a special dish when they have a hangover or feel uncomfortable. They cut cold baked lamb into small pieces, like cubes, but thinner and broader, mix them with peppers and cucumbers similarly cut, and pour over them a mixture of equal parts of vinegar and cucumber juice. They eat this with a spoon, and afterwards a drink tastes good again. They generally prepare their food with garlic and

3 Stym by this charge, Krishnamurti repeated that he himself had seen the Germans eat warm-wridded cheese with relish. See Petrovich, p. 85.

4 Many grants of monopoly trade rights were made to foreigners in the seventeenth century. In 1669 a certain John Osborne held a six-year caviar concession. In 1675, it was granted to a Hamburg merchant named Belkin. Jakubov, p. 450; \textit{Palace sobornie sbornov}, Vol. 1, No. 596.
makes a very pleasant drink. Since the vodka is counteracted by the raspberry juice, they say that its taste is no longer sensed in this drink.

They sometimes arrange banquets, at which they demonstrate their grandeur by the variety of food and drink served. However, when the magnates have feasts and invite people beneath them in rank, it is certain that they are seeking something other than their good company. Their largess serves as a baited hook, with which they gain more than they expend. For, according to their custom, guests are supposed to bring the host valuable gifts. Formerly, when a German merchant received such attentions and an invitation, he was already sensible of what this honor would cost him. It is said that the voevodas in the cities, especially those where a lively trade is carried on, show their liberality once, twice, or three times a year, by inviting the rich merchants to banquets of this sort.

The highest mark of respect and friendship they show a guest at a feast or in the course of a visit, to convey that he is welcome and that they approve of him, is as follows. After the guest has been fed, the Russian has his wife, richly dressed, brought out to the guest to present him with a cup of vodka from her own hand. Occasionally, as a mark of particular favor to the guest, he is permitted to kiss her on the mouth. This great honor was rendered me personally by Count Lev Aleksandrovich Shliakhovskii, when I was last in Moscow, in 1643.

After a sumptuous dinner he called me away from the table and the other guests. He ushered me into another room and said that the greatest honor and favor anyone can be given in Russia is for the mistress of the house to come out and render homage to the guest as to the master. Since I, as an aide of His Excellency the Prince of Holstein, was dear to him, to show his respect and reverence for the many kindnesses the prince had extended him at the time of his persecution and migration (of which more below), he wanted to do me this honor. Then his wife came forth. She had a very lovely, but berouged face, and was dressed in her wedding costume. She was accompanied by a maid who carried a bottle of vodka and a cup. Upon her entry she bowed her head first to her husband and then to me. Then she ordered a cup of vodka poured out, took a sip, and handed it to me to drink, repeating this procedure three times. Then the count invited me to kiss her. Since I was unaccustomed to such honors, I kissed only her hand, but he insisted that I kiss her mouth. Accordingly, out of respect to a higher ranking personage, I was obliged to adapt myself to their custom and accept this honor. Finally, she handed me a white satin handkerchief, embroidered with gold and silver, and embellished with a long fringe. The wives and daughters of the magnates present such handkerchiefs to a bride on her wedding day. Attached to the one given me was a little paper on which was inscribed the name of Streshnev, the uncle of the Grand Princess.

The boyars and magnates, of course, spend large sums to support their luxurious and extensive households. This they can do because they receive large salaries and have great estates worked by peasants, which provide them with large annual incomes. The merchants and artisans obtain their daily bread and income from the practice of their occupations. The merchants are shrewd and eager for profit. Within the country they trade in all varieties of goods essential for daily life. Those who have the Tsar's permission travel to neighboring countries, like Livonia, Sweden, Poland, and Persia, where they trade principally in sables and other furs, linen, flax, and Russian leather. They often buy cloth from English merchants, who carry on a great commerce in Moscow, at four thalers per ell, and resell it, unchanged, for three or three and a half thalers, and still make a profit. It is done in this way. They buy one or several pieces of cloth at the quoted price, engaging to pay in six months or a year. Then they sell the cloth to shopkeepers (who measure out the cloth), for cash, with which they then purchase other

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2 Tsvetov (Protestantstvo i protestantscy, p. 416) implies that the guest's obligation to kiss his host's wife was an invention of Shliakhovskii. However, a contemporary Russian account supports Olearius's contention that the embrace was an established custom. See Kotsishchik, pp. 122, 21.

4 Most of Russia's foreign trade was carried on on Russian soil, particularly in border towns—Novgorod, Pskov, Archangel, and Astrakhan—and in Moscow. Russian merchants were rarely seen abroad, but foreign merchants were conspicuous in Russia. Some of them acted as the Tsar's commercial agents for his trade with Western European countries.

5 Even in 1643, when Olearius's first edition was published, this would have put the matter too strongly. In 1596, when the second edition appeared, it was simply untrue. From the time of Chancellor's discovery of the northern route to Russia in 1553, English commerce in Russia prospered. But during and after the Time of Troubles, the English steadily lost ground, and the Dutch gained the upper hand. In 1649 the English merchants were forbidden henceforth to trade in Moscow. A convenient pretext was found in the beholding of King Charles II of England, but the pressure came from Russian merchants, who persistently sought to minimize or destroy foreign competition in the Russian market. On the history of the English Muscovy Company, see Lubimenko, Les Relations commerciales, and Willian. On Russian mercantilism, see Basilevitch, "Elements mercantiliens." The order expelling the English merchants from Moscow to Archangel appears in Poltve sixante salses, No. 9.
goods. And thus they can profit, on the average, three times or more from the turnover of their money.  

Since they require little for their wretched existence, in such a large community the artisans can earn enough with the labor of their hands for their food and vodka and the support of their relatives. They are very receptive and can readily imitate what they see the Germans do. In just a few years they have learned and adopted from them a great deal of which they were formerly ignorant. With such technological improvement, they sell their manufactured goods at higher prices than before. I was especially astonished by the goldsmiths, who can now produce a silver vessel as deep and tall, and quite as well shaped, as any German can make.

He who wishes to retain for himself any special knowledge or technique does not allow the Russians to observe him at work. Hans Falck, the famous gun caster, at first managed things in this way: when he made the moulds for or cast his finest weapons, his Russian assistants had to leave. But it is said that now they themselves know how to cast large guns and bells. I was told by several Germans from Moscow and some Russians that in the past year, in the Kremlin near the tower of Ivan the Great, an apprentice designated by Hans Falck cast a great bell, which, after being cleaned, weighed 7,700 pud, that is [277,200] pounds. However, after this bell had been hung in an especially prepared housing and was rung, it cracked. They say that before this happened, it had an excellent tone. Now it has been broken up, and His Tsarist Majesty wants another great bell cast at the same spot and

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8 The economic historian Basilevich credits Olearius with correctly representing the relationship between the foreign merchants and the small Russian traders. By these dealings, foreign merchants were able to evade the government restriction that forbade them to engage in retail selling. The small Russian merchants, whose livelihood depended upon foreign credit, also frequently acted as agents of foreign merchants in forestalling goods from small producers for shipment abroad. The relationship that foreign merchants thus established with small and medium Russian merchants benefited both, but militated against the interests of the large Russian merchants. The latter repeatedly sent petitions to the government, ostensibly on behalf of the whole merchant class, designed to destroy or reduce the power of the foreign merchants by forbidding them to trade within the country. These representations eventually culminated in the enactment of the New Trade Charter of 1667, which, with some exceptions, expelled the foreign merchants to the country’s periphery. See Basilevich, “Kollektivnye chelobit’ia” and “Novotorgovyi ustav”, and Malachin, Ocherki, Chap. 3.

7 Foreign artisans who entered the Russian service were usually bound by contract to teach their skills to their Russian siders. Tveretsky (Prestestnico i prestestny, pp. 397-401) advances evidence that Morell and Aleem, for whom Falck worked, conspired to conceal the arts of metallurgy from the Russians, thus violating the terms of their contract.

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hung as an eternal monument to his name. It is said that the works for the casting and the mold have already been built, at great expense.

Russians of high and low estate are in the habit of resting and sleeping after the noon meal. Accordingly, most of the best shops are closed at noon, and the shopkeepers and their young helpers lie down to sleep outside them. This midday rest rules out conversations with any of the magnates or merchants at that time.

The Russians determined that False Dmitri was not the Grand Prince’s son, nor even a Russian by birth, because he did not take an afternoon nap like other Russians. They inferred the same from the fact that he did not often go to the bath, as the Russians do. For they attach great importance to bathing, considering it—especially at the time of marriage, after the first night—an indispensable practice. Therefore, in all towns and villages, they have many public and private baths, in which they may often be found.

To see personally how they bathe, I went incognito into a bath in Astrakhan. The bath was partitioned by planks, so that the men and women could sit separately; but they entered and left through the same door, and they wore no aprons. Some held a birch branch in front of them until they sat down in their places, others nothing at all. The women sometimes came out naked, with no timidity before others, to talk to their husbands.

They can stand great heat, for they lie on the sweating-benches and drive the heat onto their bodies with branches and leafy twigs (which was unbearable for me). When they have turned completely red and are so weakened by the heat that they can no longer bear it, they dash out, naked, and pour cold water on themselves—or in winter, wallow in the snow and rub their skins with it, exactly as if it were soap—and then go back into the warm bath. As the bathhouses are usually located at water sites and near brooks, they are able to rush from the hot bath into the cold. If some German youth plunged into the water with the women to bathe, they were not so dismayed and indignant, as were

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8 The Russian passion for building great bells continued unabated for some time. The largest bell in the world, cast between 1753 and 1755, is still on exhibition in the Kremlin.

9 Olearius’s description of the Russian bath may be compared with the shorter but equally vivid account attributed in the ancient chronicle to the apostle St. Andrew. See Cross, The Russian Primary Chronicle, p. 139.
Diana and her playmates, as to splash water on him and transform him into a deer—even if they had the power to do so. In Astrakhan it once happened that four young women came out of a bath to cool off, and plunged into an inlet of the Volga that has a flat bottom and forms a pleasant place for cold bathing. When one of our soldiers also dived into the water, they began jokingly to splash water on one another. One of them who went out too deep stepped into quicksand and began to sink. When her friends became aware of the danger, they cried out and rushed to the soldier, who was swimming by himself, and begged him to save her. Easily persuaded, the soldier sped toward her, seized her around the waist and raised her up so that she could take hold of him, and swam in with her. The women showered praise on the German and said that an angel had sent him.

We saw bathing of this kind not only in Russia but also in Livonia and Ingermanland, where the common people, and especially the Finns, in the most severe winter weather, dashed from the bathhouses into the street, rubbed themselves with snow, and then ran back again into the heat. This rapid change from hot to cold was not dangerous for them since they had been conditioned to it from their youth. Therefore, the Finns and Latvians, as well as the Russians, are people of toughness, strength, and endurance, who can bear well extremes of heat and cold. In Narva I saw with amazement how Russian and Finnish boys eight, nine, or ten years of age, dressed in their plain, light, linen cloaks, walked and stood barefooted in the snow, for half an hour, just like geese, as if they were unaware of the unbearable frost.

In general, people in Russia are healthy and long-lived. They are rarely sick, but if someone is confined to bed, the best cure among the common people, even if there is high fever, is vodka and garlic. It should be added that nowadays the great lords sometimes ask the German doctors for advice and proper medicines.  

We encountered good baths built inside dwellings among the Germans in Moscow, as well as among the Livonians. In these baths there were arched stone ovens in which, on an elevated grill, lie many stones.

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10 Ordinarily they could not apply directly to the doctors, all of whom were in the Tsar's service, under the direction of a department of the government, the Aptekarskiee Prichas. They were obliged, instead, to petition the Tsar for the privilege of obtaining professional medical attention.
Although the unseemly game of Venus is very widespread among the Russians, nevertheless they do not have public houses with prostitutes, from which the authorities receive income, as they unfortunately do in Persia and some other countries. They have ordinary marriages, and a man is permitted to have just one wife. If his wife dies, he may take another, and may even wed a third time, but he may not obtain permission for a fourth. If a priest weds people who have no right to marry, he must abandon his calling. Priests who serve at the altar absolutely must be married; but if the wife of such a priest dies, he may not remarry unless he renounces his priestly office, discards his head-dress, and takes up trade or some other occupation. In arranging marriages they take into account the degree of consanguinity and do not allow weddings of close blood relatives. They also avoid connections between relatives by marriage, and do not permit the wedding of two brothers to two sisters, or even of two godparents of the same child. Their marriages are conducted in public churches with special ceremonies, and at the wedding they observe the following customs.

Young men and women are not permitted to become acquainted on their own, much less to discuss marriage together or to become engaged. Rather, in most cases, when parents have grown children whom they wish to be married, the father of the girl approaches someone whom he considers appropriate for his child, speaks either to him personally or to his parents and friends, and expresses his disposition, intention, and opinion concerning the marriage. If the offer is well received and someone wishes to see the daughter, the request is not refused, especially if the daughter is pretty. The mother or a female friend of the groom is given permission to see her. If she has no visible blemish, that is if she is neither blind nor lame, then final negotiations between the parents and friends of the two young people are initiated concerning the dowry, or bridewealth, as they call it, and the celebration of the marriage.

Generally, even the lesser notables raise their daughters in closed-off rooms, hidden from other people, and the groom does not see the bride before he receives her in the marriage bedroom. Thus some are deceived, and instead of a beautiful bride are given an ugly and sickly one; sometimes, instead of the daughter, some friend, or even a maid-

Servant is substituted.\footnote{One interesting case was reported in which the prospective groom was permitted a look at the young lady from a hidden room. Taking advantage of his limited visibility, the parents exposed the sound side of their one-eyed daughter to view, after which the marriage papers were drawn up. See Collins, p. 37.} Such cases are known [even] among high-ranking personages. Under the circumstances, one should not be surprised that husbands and wives often live together like cats and dogs, and that wife-beating is so common in Russia.

Their weddings are elaborate, and the bride is conveyed to her new home with special pageantry. Among the progeny of leading princes and boyars these ceremonies are performed in the following manner. Two women (called svakhi) are assigned to the bride and groom. They serve as stewardesses, who arrange one thing and another in the wedding house. On the wedding day, the bride's svakhi prepares the marriage bed in the groom's house. She is accompanied by about one hundred servants dressed in kaftans, each carrying on his head something required for the marriage bed or for decorating the wedding room. The marriage bed is prepared on 40 sheaves of rye, laid alongside of each other and interlaced. The groom must arrange these in advance, and set near them some vessels or casks full of wheat, barley, and oats. These are supposed to symbolize bountifulness and assist in assuring that the pair will have abundant food and provisions during their wedded life.

Late in the evening, when everything is in readiness and order, the groom and his friends set out for the bride's house. The priest who has been engaged to perform the marriage ceremony rides in the lead. The bride's friends have already gathered and they cordially receive the groom and his companions. The groom's best and closest friends are invited to the table, which bears three dishes of food, but no one eats. The head of the table is reserved for the groom; but while he remains standing, talking to the bride's friends, the place is occupied by a boy. The groom must persuade him to yield it with a gift. When the groom has taken his place, the veiled bride, magnificently dressed, is seated beside him. To prevent their seeing one another, a piece of red satin is stretched between them and held by two boys. Then the bride's svakhi comes, combs her hair, parts it, plait it into two braids, places a crown and other ornaments on her head, and then allows her to sit...
of the bride and groom, and they are blessed. The priest then takes into his hands the groom's right hand and the bride's left, and thrice asks them if they wish to have one another and to live together [in peace]. When they answer "Yes," he leads them around in a circle, while singing the 128th Psalm. They sing the verses after him and dance. After the dance, pretty garlands are placed on their heads. If they are a widower and a widow, the garlands are placed not on their heads but on their shoulders. Then the priest says, "Be fruitful and multiply," and unite them with the words, "Whom God has joined together let no man part," and so forth. Throughout this ceremony all the guests in the church burn small candles. The priest is given a gilded wooden cup or a drinking glass of red wine. He drinks some of it in honor of the married couple, and the groom and bride must drink three draughts. Then the groom throws the glass to the ground and he and the bride trample it into little bits, saying, "Thus let any who wish to arouse enmity and hatred between us fall under our feet and be trampled." The women then shower them with flax and hemp seed and wish them happiness. They also pull and push the newly married bride, as if to separate her from the groom, but the two hold fast to each other. When these ceremonies are over, the groom escorts the bride to the sleigh and mounts his horse again. Six wax candles are carried alongside the sleigh, as it proceeds to the bride's new home, and again coarse jokes are told.

When they come to the wedding house, that is, to the bridegroom's house, the groom and the guests sit down at the table to eat, drink, and be merry. Meanwhile the bride quickly undresses down to her shift and gets into bed. The groom scarcely has begun to eat when he is summoned to the bride. Before him go six or eight boys with burning torches. When she learns of the groom's arrival, the bride gets out of bed, puts on a fur coat lined with sable, and welcomes her beloved with a bow of her head. The boys insert the burning torches into the casks of wheat and barley placed there earlier by the groom; then each is given a pair of sables, and they depart. The groom sits down at a covered table with the bride, whose face he now sees for the first time. They are served, among other foods, a roasted hen. The groom tears it apart, throws over his shoulder whatever breaks off first, be it a leg or a wing, and eats the rest. After the meal, which does not last long,
he gets into bed with the bride. No one else is present, except for an
old attendant who walks back and forth outside the room. Meanwhile
the parents and friends busy themselves with all manner of
tricks and charms to ensure the couple a happy wedded life. The atten-
Dant who guards the room must ask from time to time whether the
deed is done. When the groom replies affirmatively, it is announced
to all with trumpets and drums. The drumsticks have been poised
above the drums, and now the musicians play gaily. A bathroom is
then heated, wherein the bride and groom bathe in turn a few hours
later. Here they are washed with water, honey, and wine; and then
the groom receives as a gift from the young wife a bathrobe, embo-
dered at the collar with pearls, and a complete set of new and costly
clothes.

The next two days are spent in great and extravagant eating, drink-
ing, dancing, and every manner of amusement they can think of. They
also have all sorts of music, employing among other instruments one
called a psalter, which is very like a dulcimer. It is held on the lap and,
like a harp, is plucked with the fingers. Inasmuch as many of the
women, when unguarded by their drunken husbands, are apt to permit
considerable liberties to the young men and the husbands of others, the
men take advantage of such occasions to amuse themselves freely. This
is our account of the marriage ceremonies and customs among the pres-
ent-day boyars in Moscow.

When common people and burghers wish to celebrate a marriage,
a day before the wedding the groom sends his bride new clothing, a
hat, and a pair of shoes, as well as a little box containing rouge, a comb,
and a mirror. On the next day, when the marriage is to take place, the
priest comes with a silver cross, accompanied by two boys carrying
burning wax candles. The priest blesses the boys, and then the guests,
with the cross. The bride and groom then sit down at the table, and a
red satin cloth is held between them. When the bride has been all pre-
pared by the svakha, she presses her cheek to the bridegroom's, while
both look into a single mirror and smile cordially to each other. Mean-
while, the svakhi approach and shower them and the guests with hops.
After these ceremonies they set off for the church, where the wedding
is performed in the manner described above.

After the wedding, the women are secluded in their chambers and
rarely appear in company. They are more often visited by their friends
than permitted to visit them.

Since the daughters of the magnates and merchants receive little
or no training in housekeeping, when they are married they occupy
themselves with it scarcely at all. Instead, they merely sit and sew
beautiful handkerchiefs of white satin and pure linen, embroidering
them with gold and silver, and make little purses for money, and the
like. They may not take part in the slaughter or cooking of chickens or
other animals, for they suppose that this would defile them. Therefore,
they leave all such work to the servants. Because they are mistrusted,
they are rarely allowed out of the house, even to go to church. These
customs, however, are not strictly observed among the common people.
At home the women go poorly attired except when they appear, at the
order of their husbands, to render honor to a strange guest by sipping
a cup of vodka to him, or when they go through the streets, to church,
for example; then they are supposed to be dressed gorgeously, with
their faces and throats heavily made up.

The wives of princes, boyars, and the foremost people ride in the
summer in closed carriages lined with red satin, with which they also
decorate their sleighs in the winter. They sit pompously in their sleighs,
as if they were goddesses, with a slave girl at their feet. Alongside of
it run many servants and slaves, sometimes as many as 30 or 40. The
horse that draws the carriage or sleigh, like that which conveys a bride,
is hung with long foxtails, producing an extremely odd sight. We saw
similar ornaments on the sleighs of the great magnates, indeed even on
the Grand Prince's sleigh, which sometimes displays fine black sables
instead of foxtails.

Since they so rarely appear in company and are little involved in
housework, young wives are idle much of the time. Occasionally they
arrange recreation with their maids, for example riding on swings,
which they especially like. Sometimes they lay a board over a block,
and one person stands on each end; then they rock and propel one
another high into the air. Sometimes they use ropes, by which they
can swing themselves very high. The common people in the suburbs
and villages often play such games in the streets. They also have public
swings [primitive Ferris wheels], which are built in the form of a
gallows, with moving parts perpendicular to it, on which two, three,
or more people can ride simultaneously. They indulge in such amusements especially on holidays. Then certain youths keep seats and other essential parts in readiness and lend them out for several kopeks to anyone who wants to swing. Husbands are very willing to allow their wives such pleasures, and sometimes even help them at it.

The animosity and brawls that often arise between spouses are caused by indecent or abusive words—which come easily to their lips—addressed by the wife to the husband; or because she gets drunk more often than the husband; or because she arouses his suspicion by unusual friendliness with other married men and young swains. Often all three provocations occur at once. When, as a result, the wife is beaten with the knout or a stick, she does not take it too ill, for she is aware of her guilt, and also she sees that her neighbors and sisters who indulge in the same vices get off no better. However, I did not find that Russian wives regard frequent blows and beatings as a sign of intense love and their absence as a mark of their husbands' indifference and dissatisfaction with them, as is contended by some writers who follow Petrejus's Russian Chronicle (and Petrejus undoubtedly borrowed this from Herberstein or from Barclajus's work, Icon Animorum). Indeed, I cannot imagine their wanting what every creature naturally dreads, or their taking as a mark of love what is in fact a mark of anger and hostility. In my opinion, the well-known proverb, "Blows do not make friends," applies as well to them as to others. No person in his right mind will hate and torment his own flesh without reason. Perhaps some wives said to their husbands in jest [such things as Herberstein wrote of]...  

They do not punish adultery by death; indeed they do not even call it adultery but simply fornication if a married man spends a night with another's wife. They only call him an adulterer who takes another's wife in marriage. If a married woman commits fornication, and it is reported and proved, she is punished with the knout and must spend several days in a monastery living on bread and water. Then she is sent home, where the master of the house beats her again for having neglected the housework.

22 Olesniius finally concludes that although what Herberstein wrote might have been true in some cases, it can hardly be made the basis of a sound generalization.
had adopted the Orthodox faith and married a beautiful young Russian. When he had to go off on urgent business and stayed away more than a year, the good woman, probably because her bed was cold, shared it with another, and presently delivered a baby. Hearing of her husband's impending return, she felt uncertain that she could give a satisfactory account of her housekeeping, fled to a monastery, and was scorned. When her husband arrived home and learned what had occurred, he was aggrieved most of all by the fact that his wife had let herself be consecrated a nun. He would willingly have forgiven her and taken her back, and she would have returned to him, but they could not be reunited no matter how much they wished it. In the eyes of the Patriarch and the nuns, it would have been a sin against the Holy Ghost that could never be forgiven.

Although the Russians are greatly addicted to sexual intercourse, both in and out of wedlock, still they consider it sinful and defiling. Therefore, during coitus they temporarily lay aside the little cross that they are given upon baptism and that they wear around the neck. Moreover, since coitus is not supposed to take place in the presence of holy ikons, they are carefully covered. One who has engaged in sexual intercourse is not supposed to enter the church on that day unless he has washed himself well and put on clean clothes. The very pious even then will not enter the church but instead remain in the porch to pray. After a priest has been with his wife, he must wash well above and below the navel before he may enter the church, and he may not go to the altar. Women are considered more unclean than men; accordingly, they are not fully admitted when mass is celebrated, and usually stay at the rear, near the doors of the church.

16 According to a contemporary account, The Reports of a Blended and Terrible Massacre in the City of Moscow (London, 1667), p. 21, one of the charges against False Dmitry was that he had had intimate relations with his wife in the presence of an uncovered ikon of the Virgin Mary. The author of this account, which was published anonymously, is identified in the British Museum as William Rustell.

17 Rushchinski (p. 102) writes that a couple was not admitted to church after having had sexual intercourse, but had to wait outside until given absolution by the priest.

The Tsar and His Powers

The Russian system of government, as the preceding chapters suggest, is what the political thinkers call "a dominating and despotic monarchy." After he inherits the crown, the Tsar, or Grand Prince, alone rules the whole country; all his subjects, the noblemen and princes as well as the common people, townsmen, and peasants, are his serfs and slaves, whom he treats as the master of the house does his servants. This mode of rule is very like that which Aristotle describes in the following words: "There is also another kind of monarchy, found in the kingdoms of some of the barbarian peoples, which stands closest of all to tyranny." If one keeps in mind the basic distinction between a legitimate and a tyrannical order, that the first subserves the welfare of the subjects and the second the personal wants of the sovereign, then the Russian government must be considered closely related to tyranny.

In addressing the Tsar the magnates must unashamedly not only write their names in the diminutive form, but also call themselves slaves, and they are treated as such. Formerly the gosti and magnates, who were supposed to turn out at public audiences in sumptuous dress, were beaten on the bare back with the knout, like slaves, if they failed to appear without good reason. Now, however, they get off with a two- or three-day confinement in prison, depending upon [the influence of] their patrons and intercessors at court.

1 West European visitors to Muscovite Russia often described it as an oriental despotism. Comparisons with the government of the Ottoman Empire were especially frequent. Klenovskii, Slavostsi insigniistrove, p. 81. See also Wittfogel and Baron. Though there was much truth in their characterization of Russia's governmental system, Western observers were apt to exaggerate the Tsar's power somewhat. Olearius was no exception, as subsequent notes will show. For a critique of Fletcher's account of the Muscovite government, which has some relevance for Olearius, see Sedovnaia, especially pp. 217-26.