

**THE KNOUT AND THE
RUSSIANS; OR, THE
MUSCOVITE EMPIRE, THE
CZAR, AND HIS PEOPLE**

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The Knout and the Russians; Or, The Muscovite Empire, the Czar, and His People by Germain de Lagny & John Bridgeman

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GERMAIN DE LAGNY & JOHN BRIDGEMAN

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THE KNOT.—Page 154

THE KNOT AND THE RUSSIANS.



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THE RUSSIANS;

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MUSCOVITE EMPIRE, THE CZAR, AND HIS PEOPLE.

By GERMAIN DE LAGNY.

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Le Knot et les Russes,

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

By JOHN BRIDGEMAN.

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THE KNOUT AND THE RUSSIANS.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

RUSSIA, which has always engrossed, in a high degree, the attention of Europe, is now playing a part which has spread uneasiness on all sides, and is exciting a feeling of curiosity, which we believe it is in our power to satisfy.

There exists, with regard to this country, a profound state of ignorance, kept up by books written in a spirit of complaisance, and in which fiction has almost invariably usurped the place of truth.

The national historians do not possess the power of writing according to the dictates of their consciences; it is the gold of the government that determines the conclusions at which they arrive.

As to foreign travellers, they are watched with such strictness that, in respect of the impressions produced on them during their travels, they can hardly be sup-

posed to bring back with them any more than just so much as the Russian police is kindly pleased to allow. Indeed, it is quite sufficient for us to know with what suspicious care the said police stops the traveller and questions him at the frontier. Permission to enter the country is only granted him, after he has undergone a searching examination as to his conduct, his opinions, and, above all, the object of his visit. He is required to explain his connections and social position. Does he belong to any association? Is he a freemason? What has he come to the country for? Are his resources sufficient to maintain him, during the period that his business or his pleasure will keep him there?†

Should he let fall the slightest intimation that he is desirous of making observations upon or devoting himself to the study of the manners or state of society of the country, he is inexorably turned back.

This explains why people know so little concerning this colossus.

In Germany, more than in any other country, the Russian name is abhorred. It is looked upon as the most complete expression of all that is barbarous and savage; and, for the greater proportion of the other nations of Europe, the Russian is still the wandering Tartar of Gengis-Khan and Tamerlane. There is some truth in this opinion, but, at the same time, it must be allowed that though Russia is a nation that stands alone in history, by the singularity of its customs and the

† See Appendix, A.