

PRINCESS CATHERINE ROMANOVNA DASHKOVA:

AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY RUSSIAN

INTELLECTUAL

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Master of Arts in the Graduate
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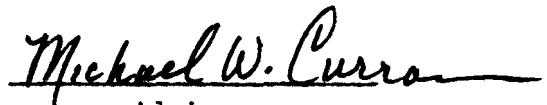
by

Mary Kathryn Gomilar, B.A.

The Ohio State University

1967

Approved by



Adviser

Department of History

PREFACE

The aim of this work is to establish Princess Catherine Dashkova as a member of the intellectual community of eighteenth century Russia. The basic source on the life of Princess Dashkova has been the most recent edition of her Memoirs as translated and edited by Kyril Fitzylon [1957]. These Memoirs were originally dictated by the Princess in French [1803-08], to Martha Wilmot, a young Irish friend. The first published edition appeared in an English translation in 1840, as a two volume work edited by Mrs. W. Bradford, née Wilmot. The editor had applied her own censorship and had deleted or summarized parts of the original document. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century an original copy of Princess Dashkova's manuscript was discovered among the Vorontsov family papers and subsequently published as volume XXI of the Arkhib Kniazia Vorontsova. The Fitzylon edition of the Memoirs has attempted to synthesize these two sources.

Dashkova's own literary works published in contemporary journals like Sobesednik and Rossiiskii Teatr have been consulted. In analyzing the Princess's personality and relationship with her contemporaries, collections of personal correspondences and memoirs have been researched, including those of Voltaire, Diderot, Walpole, the Earl of Buckinghamshire, David Garrick, as well as

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various letters found in Sbornik imperatorskago russkago istoricheskago obshchestvo [1867-74].

The genuine interest and generous help of Professor Michael Curran have made possible the completion of this work.

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INTRODUCTION

Russia in the eighteenth century witnessed an astounding transformation due to the program of modernization begun by Peter I. The reforms of Peter the Great were radical innovations often applied by force, affecting primarily two areas. The first was the modernization of Russia's institutions, and especially the state obligations of the military and service nobility; and the second was the Europeanization of the upper classes. There had been indirect contact with Europe, mainly through trade, throughout the seventeenth century, but Peter the Great made this connection with the West more direct.

By the time of Peter's death two attitudes towards his work were developing. The converts to Peter's ideas enthusiastically embraced the concept of the Russian need for complete westernization. These men were Peter's creations and they saw him as a "superhuman hero" who had transformed Russia into a great and powerful nation. As a result, they were avidly pro-Peter, pro-modernization and pro-West.

The second group either rejected, or more often, criticized Peter's accomplishments. They blamed the Emperor's idiosyncrasies for all the evils that had befallen Russia. These evils consisted in the loss of Russia's personal identity by the unquestioning imitation of Western European ways, in costume, speech, behavior,

and education. Recognizing the harmful effects this dominance of a foreign culture had on their own Russian traditions, this group began to search for a reincarnation of the national identity from the Russian past. This developing national consciousness was carried by the aristocracy of the educated and intellectuals in Russia, who themselves had been influenced by the West. The introduction, therefore, of national elements was itself a by-product of Russia's foreign contacts.

The great intellectuals of eighteenth century Russia were deeply concerned with the problem of a Western versus a Russian culture for their country. The majority of literary works of this time vocalized the ideas on this subject. Outstanding among Russian patriots was Mikhail Lomonosov [1711-65], scientist, writer and historian, among other interests. He admitted the need for modernization in Russia, and therefore accepted the adoption of foreign techniques, but he favored a process of selective borrowing from the West. He used his diversified capabilities to promote a national culture. In his work he strove to develop a native Russian language with Church Slavonic as a basis. The elimination of foreign words was necessary to guarantee the purity of the Russian tongue. His historical accounts of ancient Russia were designed to praise his country's contributions to civilization as they existed even before the influence of Western culture.

The period was imbued with the beginnings of the spirit of nationalism, frequently manifested in the historical views on the glories of Russia's past. Mikhail Shcherbatov [1733-90] wrote a

six volume history defending the virtues of pre-Petrine Russia. He felt that since Peter's reforms, the country had lost its vitality for its people had replaced their own national traditions with the mores of a foreign nation.

Many of the eighteenth century productions in literature, especially in the last fifty years, were written to expose the vices of the Russian society because of its wholesale adoption of an alien culture, and to proclaim the need for the development of national virtue. In particular, this didactic style was used to point out the immorality of the younger generation who were so excessively devoted to French clothes and manners. Denis Fonvizin [1745-92], in satirical plays like Nedorosl (The Minor) and Brigadier, expressed his opposition to those who blindly copied foreign ways, neglecting the qualities of their own national heritage. Nikolai Novikov [1744-1818], in his numerous publishing activities, preached a philosophy of moral self-improvement as a protest against the materialistic attitude of French rationalism.

These were but a few of the educated individuals in Russia at this time who concerned themselves with an appraisal of the contemporary scene. They belonged to one of two groups of Russian intellectuals concerned with the preservation of Russian values in the face of westernization. Princess Catherine Romanovna Vorontsova Dashkova was among this number of Russian intellectuals.

CHAPTER I

FAMILY, BACKGROUND AND PERSONALITY

The Vorontsovs were not an old Russian noble family, but their ascent in the Table of Ranks¹ was amazingly rapid. Michael Ilarionovich Vorontsov was the first member of the family to become prominent in public affairs. As a reward for helping the Empress Elizabeth seize the throne from Regent Anna Leopoldovna in 1741, he was given the high court appointment as Chamberlain, a military rank and extensive estates. In 1742, he had the good fortune to marry the Empress's cousin, Anna Skavronskii, and not long after that he received the title of Count and the position of Vice-Chancellor. He succeeded to the post of Imperial Chancellor, the highest civil rank, in 1758.² His brother, Roman Vorontsov,³

¹The Table of Ranks was instituted by Emperor Peter I in 1722. It provided for a hierarchical scale of ranks of service performance. Every responsible military or civil position was classified in one of fourteen established ranks. Each man added to the service nobility was to enter in the lowest rank, from which he could rise by merit to the top.

²Michael Vorontsov [1714-67], held the post of Imperial Chancellor from 1758, through the short reign of Peter III, and even briefly into the reign of Catherine II.

³Roman Vorontsov [1707-83], Governor of Vladimir and Yaroslavl. His civil career was far from brilliant due to his unbridled love of pleasure. He often misappropriated the funds of his provinces, and lived with various mistresses after his wife's death in 1745.

also received the title of Count and owed this honor to the influence of the Grand Chancellor. In addition, Roman was given the rank of Lieutenant-General, the third highest position in the military hierarchy. Roman Vorontsov married Martha Ivanovna Surmina, the daughter of a wealthy Astrakhan merchant, and they had five children. The youngest of their three daughters, Catherine Romanovna, was born in St. Petersburg on March 17, 1744.⁴ The Empress Elizabeth and the Grand Duke Peter acted as the child's god-parents at her christening. This was a gesture demonstrating the importance and prestige of the Vorontsov family within the imperial court.

Martha Vorontsova died in 1745, and Catherine was cared for by her grandmother for the next two years. At the age of four, she went to live with her uncle Michael, the Imperial Chancellor, for her father was a man of pleasure and found little time to devote to the upbringing of his children. In her new home, the young countess shared in the same training as her cousin, the Grand Chancellor's daughter. Catherine Romanovna recorded in her Memoirs:

"My uncle spared nothing to give us the best masters, and according to the ideas of the time we received the very best education; for we had a perfect knowledge of four languages, particularly French; we danced well and drew a little; a State Councillor taught us Italian, and Mr. Bekhteyev gave us

⁴This is the date as recorded by Dashkova in her Memoirs, but several authorities, notably Harford Montgomery Hyde, have claimed this to be a slip of pen, and perhaps memory, and have placed that year as 1743.

Russian lessons whenever we felt like it; we were attractive to look at and our manners were lady-like. Everyone had to agree that our education left nothing to be desired."⁵

This very basic educational foundation also included some history, geography, arithmetic and the dogmas of the Greek Church.⁶

The typical education for a nobleman in the eighteenth century consisted of an encyclopedic knowledge of facts, with a facility in modern foreign languages, for these would provide a direct access to Western European knowledge and culture which took first place in the court life. However, most noblewomen of the time "were, as a rule, quite ignorant, even illiterate. Their interests were very limited and simple, their minds and manners uncouth. . . ."⁷ There were no institutions for formal schooling open to them until the Smolny institute was begun in 1764. Yet noble girls were expected to take their place in fashionable society, and so Count Vorontsov provided a training for his daughter and niece which could be considered an exceptional opportunity. In their curriculum the elements of gracious living were included, along with languages. Dashkova painted a little,

⁵Kyryl Fitzylon (ed.), The Memoirs of Princess Dashkov [London, 1958], p. 24.

⁶Letter from Princess Dashkova to Mrs. Hamilton in Mrs. W. Bradford (ed.), The Memoirs of Princess Dashkov written by Herself [London, 1840] II, 151.

⁷Marc Raeff, Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia; the Eighteenth Century Nobility [New York, 1966], pp. 122-3.

was accomplished in music⁸ and acquired the manners of a refined lady. Her basic education prepared her to shine in society and to take her part in the court social life.

However, Catherine had a native intelligence and insatiable curiosity. A suspicion grew up in her mind that after all it might be desirable, even for a woman, to know things other than those which were geared for a social life, and she resolved to become all she could by her own efforts. This might not have been possible if she had not lived in her uncle's home, where the atmosphere was conducive to a wide variety of intellectual pursuits. Before long political affairs and foreign policy entered the life of the young countess:

"Politics have always interested me, ever since my earliest years. When still a child, I obtained my uncle's permission to rummage among the papers which were in his safekeeping as Chancellor, in search of treaties, negotiations, etc., with other courts."⁹

She found numerous anecdotes among the variety of old records which she was able to recall even in her old age. In addition, there were frequent visits from artists, men of letters and foreign

⁸The Princess herself felt that of all qualities, she possessed a "portion of genius" in her musical talents, and a "real tact for music." [Bradford, Memoirs, vol. II, in a Letter to Mrs. Hamilton, p. 150]. Dashkova composed a hymn at the request of Lady Arabella Denny, which was performed at the Magdalen hospital's church, an asylum for fallen women and a foundling hospital for children in Dublin. Among her other compositions, Dashkova wrote a musical score for a production of the English playwright David Garrick. He was quite pleased with the music and sent the Princess a letter [May 3, 1778] commenting on her talent and expressing his desire for English composers to do equally as well.

⁹Fitzylon, Memoirs, p. 26.

ministers. They were all subjected to Catherine's inquisitiveness as she plied them with questions on their native countries, customs and forms of government. The young countess made comparisons to her own country, and this enkindled in her an ardent desire to travel.¹⁰ This atmosphere, too, inspired her with brave thoughts on some kind of remarkable deed that would make her famous.

Count Michael Vorontsov was interested in literature and antiquities and permitted his niece the use of the volumes in his library. At the age of thirteen, Catherine was quarantined with the measles and during her hibernation she began an intensive reading program to preserve herself from boredom. She was not satisfied with light reading, but preferred serious matters discussed in the works of the classical authors and French writers like Montesqueiu, Voltaire and Boileau. Count Ivan Shuvalov,¹¹ learning of the young lady's passion for reading, acted as her book agent, supplying her with the latest books from France. She soon amassed a library of well over nine hundred volumes. The young teenager became acquainted with the works of the best contemporary writers, and with the main thoughts of the Enlightenment.

¹⁰Ibid., 27.

¹¹Count Ivan Shuvalov [1727-97], a favorite figure during the reign of Empress Elizabeth. His main achievement was the creation, along with Mikhail Lomonosov, of the first Russian university (Moscow). He also founded the Russian Academy of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg. He was an enthusiastic and efficient patron of literature and education and an admirer of France. He was the first to introduce French as the language of the Court and polite society.

Catherine Romanovna was married in February, 1759.

Prince Michael Dashkov¹² at the time of his marriage to the young countess, was a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Preobrazhenskii guards regiment, an attractive young man with no intellectual pretensions. The Princess Dashkova discovered two glaring faults in her husband: he was still submissive to his mother, and a poor administrator of his estates and funds. As a result, the Princess often took control of affairs, and so dominated her spouse. However, their short married life was a happy one, for Dashkova, nevertheless, loved her husband deeply. From their union came three children: Natalya, born 1760; Michael [1761-62]; and Paul, born 1763.

As a young wife and mother, Dashkova continued her self-education. When Catherine moved to Moscow with her husband in 1759, she set to work to master her native tongue, for her mother-in-law spoke only Russian. She also attended a course in mathematics at the University of Moscow, and continued to spend all her "pocket money" on the purchase of books from the wellstocked bookshops of Moscow. Through her own efforts she extended her education well beyond the norms of women of the upper classes of her time. This accomplishment may be credited to her natural

¹²Prince Kodrat (Michael) Dashkov [1736-64] was a Russian soldier. His mother was a niece of Peter the Great's wife, Natalya Narishkin. He was nominated as Russian Ambassador to Turkey during the reign of Peter III. When Catherine II came to power he was sent as regimental head to support the election of Stanislas Poniatowski to the Polish throne. He died suddenly while on this mission.

curiosity, intelligence, extensive reading, and zealous ambition.

Princess Dashkova and the Grand Duchess Catherine met for the first time in 1759 at the former's engagement party. They became close friends, in spite of the fifteen year difference in ages. The older woman was a German princess from Anhalt-Zerbst who had been invited to Russia by the Empress Elizabeth and betrothed to the Grand Duke Peter, heir to the Russian throne. She had changed her name from Sophie to Catherine and had been required to adopt the Russian Orthodox faith as well. She had cleverly adapted herself to Russia and things Russian. Catherine busied herself with various intellectual interests, favoring the culture dictated by French ideas. The Grand Duchess knew well how to cultivate friendships with people who might be of use to her at some future time. Her blandishments even worked miracles on the young Catherine Romanovna. "Little Catherine", as Dashkova called herself, was soon enveloped in a naive admiration for the Grand Duchess who paid so much attention to such a young girl.

Dashkova explained why they were attracted to one another:

"The rather prejudiced description which strangers had given her of me and her conviction that I spent all my time studying and reading, earned me her esteem. . . . I could argue, perhaps, that as there were no other two women of the time, apart from the Grand Duchess and myself, who did any serious reading, we were mutually drawn towards each other. . . ." ¹³

This account is undoubtedly an exaggeration of fact. Certainly there were other noble women as educated as the two Catherine's,

¹³ Fitzylon, Memoirs, p. 28.

but whose capabilities were not so prominently displayed. Since Dashkova's Memoirs were written in her old age, her inflated ego emerged as a means of enhancing her own prestige. As a teenager, however, she did not realize that her intimacy with the Grand Duchess would never have been had not the Great Catherine intended this friendship. In any case, it was a notable relationship. When Dashkova returned to St. Petersburg from Moscow in 1761, the two women renewed their acquaintance. There were frequent visits to the Grand Ducal palace at Oranienbaum for dinners and tête à têtes on the happenings of the day, literature and politics. The Princess became increasingly attached to the remarkable Grand Duchess, an admiration which lasted through her lifetime. They corresponded almost daily, and Dashkova's literary activities began with her exchange of letters with Catherine the Great. Mixed in these correspondences were many Russian and French verses written by the Princess and dedicated to the future Empress. Although these letters were never published,¹⁴ Dashkova's first attempt at poetical composition has become famous as the engraved caption under the portrait of Catherine the Great by Chemesov.¹⁵

"La nature, en travaillant à te former,
Épuiser sur toi seule tous ses dons, pour

¹⁴This author has been unable to discover the whereabouts of these letters. They have not been published among the many volumes of correspondences of Catherine II and curiously, receive but scant mention in Dashkova's Memoirs.

¹⁵The poem was later published in the journal Sobesednik Liubitelei Rossiiskago Slova, I [1783], 14.

T'élever à la majesté du trône, en
 Faisant tout pour toi, elle a tout fait
 pour nous."

In this poem, Dashkova clearly expressed her almost "school-girl" admiration for the Grand Duchess, making allusions to the fact that she was destined to be Empress. Nature had endowed her with all its gifts and the special privileges given to Catherine the Great would serve to be blessings for all of Russia. This was a sincere worship for the Grand Duchess. However, it may also be conjectured that Dashkova wrote this flattering verse, knowing that one day Catherine would be Empress, wife of the Emperor Peter III, and in a position to exert her influence in favor of her close friend, the Princess. As for the Grand Duchess, she marveled at the production of so poetically correct a quatrain by a girl not yet seventeen years of age. Catherine encouraged the Princess not to neglect this singular talent for writing verses,¹⁶ and Dashkova accepted this affection at its face value. In their letters the two companions confided other literary ambitions to one another. Dashkova translated Voltaire's essay on epic poetry¹⁷ and the Grand Duchess showed her friend her own treatise on legislation, a composition which prefigured the Nakaz (Instructions) which in 1767 became the guiding principles for the reform of the Law Code.

¹⁶Letter from Catherine to Dashkova found in N. Firsov, "Kniâginia Ekaterina Romanovna Dashkova," Razsvet, V [1860], 213.

¹⁷This translation was published under the title of "Opita ob epicheskoi poezii" in Nevinnoye Uprazhnenie, 1763.

Politics was another magnet that drew the two women together. When Empress Elizabeth died in 1762, her nephew began his rule as Peter III. Peter had been the only son of the Russian Empress Anna and the Duke of Holstein. He had come under the protection of his aunt, the Empress Elizabeth, in 1742 and was selected as the legitimate heir to the throne. Peter married Catherine, the princess of Anhalt-Zerbst, in 1745. Their union was an unhappy one, and the Grand Duke made no secret of his liaison with Elizabeth Vorontsov, Dashkova's sister. When he became Emperor, he proposed to divorce his wife and make his mistress the Russian empress. Dashkova, perhaps, resented the important position of her sister, and as a result, turned to a closer relationship with Catherine. The Emperor Peter III, her god-father, considered Princess Dashkova too proud, bold, and a fool for her friendship with his wife. He admonished her to pay more attention to her own sister, but this Dashkova would not do. She considered Peter a weak-minded, sadistic man, and therefore, she despised him as did many of the courtiers.

Peter had had an adequate education and was a passionate lover of music, but he possessed several eccentricities of conduct. He enjoyed sadistic practical jokes and lacked respect for the Orthodox Church and ritual. He avowed contempt for all things Russian and admired Frederick of Prussia, spending much of his time drilling a brigade of Holstein soldiers. In his domestic policies Peter was surprisingly liberal. In 1762 he issued a manifesto putting service on a voluntary basis, but this did not

counterbalance his other unpopular actions. St. Petersburg society was disappointed with the Emperor's termination of Russia's participation in the Seven Years' War, with the abandonment of the Austrian alliance and substitution for it of one with Prussia. Subsequently, Peter began a war with Denmark to recover the Prussian province of Shleswig-Holstein, and reformed the army along Prussian lines. This unconventional behavior created opposition, disaffection and dangerous enemies for the Emperor among the military and courtiers.

Catherine, meanwhile, spared no efforts to win over the circles whose support was necessary for a successful palace revolution. A conspiracy was formed with men like Nikita Panin¹⁸ and Count Kyril Razumovsky.¹⁹ Support of the guards was assured largely through the efforts of Gregory Orlov and his brothers,²⁰ popular with officers and men. Dashkova joined the ranks of the conspirators a month prior to the coup d'état, although her Memoir account recorded a more extended participation. Her particular task was to give encouragement to the other members of the secret organization. She bolstered the determination of the Orlov brothers who seemed to waver at the last moment. Indirectly, she

¹⁸Nikita Panin [1718-83], diplomat and tutor of the Grand Duke Paul.

¹⁹Count Kyril Razumovsky [1729-1803], Russian Field-Marshal and Hetman of the Ukraine.

²⁰Prince Gregory Orlov [1743-83], third in the succession of Catherine II's lovers; he wielded immense influence in the court. His brothers were Alexei, Theodor and Vladimir.

exerted influence on Nikita Panin²¹ and through him, on a wide circle of key personalities in the country. Also, she fostered and encouraged ideas for a palace revolt against Peter III among her husband's friends and military associates.²² On June 28, 1762, the conspiracy proclaimed Catherine the ruler of Russia. The new Empress and Dashkova, dramatically rode side by side through the streets, both women dressed in the guards' uniforms of the Preobrazhenskii regiment.²³

Catherine II rewarded the Princess for her help in the coup. Dashkova received 24,000 rubles, was presented with the Empress's own Order of St. Catherine, and became a lady-in-waiting. When her husband returned to St. Petersburg, the Prince and Princess Dashkov were given residence in palace apartments. The nineteen year old Princess was very proud of the part she had played in the coup. The rewards and marks of favor she had received from the Empress were evidence of the importance of her role in the revolt. Convinced of the closeness of her relationship with the Empress, she vociferously credited herself with a lion's share in its success. But Catherine the Great had no desire to share the glory of her achievement with anyone else, and the Empress was forced

²¹The Panins were Dashkova's husband's cousins, once removed.

²²Prince Dashkov was in Constantinople at the time of the coup.

²³Peter III was put under arrest at the country estate of Ropsha. He was assassinated on July 6, 1762 by his guards. Details of the murder were never fully revealed, and Catherine II's role remains uncertain.

to denounce the Princess's exaggerated opinion of herself. In a private letter to Count Stanislas Poniatowski [Aug. 2, 1762], Catherine II ordered him to write to Voltaire to correct the erroneous rumor concerning the Princess Dashkova. She wrote:

"... she (Dashkova) wishes to arrogate to herself all the honour of this revolution, and pretends that everything passed through her to reach me, though I was in communication with all the chiefs for six months before she even knew one of their names. . . . It was necessary to conceal from her the channels through which others reached me, five months before she knew anything; and during the last four weeks no more was told her than was absolutely necessary."²⁴

The Empress recognized the young lady's intelligence and talents, but she found her spoiled by an excessive ostentation, and a naturally quarrelsome disposition. The Princess herself admitted she had a proud, but sensitive nature,²⁵ yet there were other disagreeable facets to her personality--a strain of conceit, impetuosity, excessive energy and sometimes imprudence--which made her a truly insufferable prig. As an unforeseen result, she lost the favor of her idol, Catherine II.

There are numerous contemporaries who commented on Dashkova's personality, especially its effect on her relationship with the Empress. The Earl of Buckinghamshire, English Ambassador to St. Petersburg, observed:

"That young lady's disappointed vanity and restless ambitions seem in some sort to have

²⁴Fitzgerald Molloy, The Russian Court in the Eighteenth Century [New York, 1905], II, 320-1.

²⁵Fitzylon, Memoirs, p. 25.

affected her senses; had she been contented with a moderate share of authority she might have continued till this time the first favourite of the Empress."²⁶

Losing Her Majesty's favor, Dashkova received the suggestion from the Empress that she get a "change of air" in Moscow. Sir George Macartney, successor to the post of English Ambassador, commented on Dashkova's move from the capital as follows:

"The Princess Dashkoff . . . has at last taken the resolution of quitting this Capital, and going to reside in Moscow. . . . Everybody seems pleased that she is no longer here. . . . She is a woman of uncommon strength of mind, bold beyond the most manly courage and of a spirit capable of undertaking impossibilities to gratify any predominant passion; a character highly dangerous in a country like this, especially when joined to an engaging behavior and a beautiful person. . . ."²⁷

Even before the palace revolution her associates recognized Dashkova as a haughty, often quarrelsome young lady, but the reputation of her family and her intimacy with the Grand Duchess acted to soften the complaints against the Princess. After the coup, Dashkova might have continued to exert great influence in the court circles, but her outspoken ways only brought her contempt and suspicions from all around now that she had lost favor with the Empress. Since there was so much conniving constantly going on within court circles no one would risk the association

²⁶ Earl of Buckinghamshire to the Earl of Sandwich, [July 3, 1764] in the Despatches and Correspondence of John, Second Earl of Buckinghamshire, vol. II [London, 1900], II, 197.

²⁷ Letter from Sir George Macartney to the Earl of Sandwich, [March 1, 1765], in Sbornik, XII [1873], 199-200.

with such a dangerous character. In addition, Dashkova angered her own family by her participation in the revolt against Peter III. The Vorontsov's, especially the Imperial Chancellor, were loyal to Peter as the legitimate successor to the throne, and Dashkova's support for a usurper could be harmful for the family reputation and wealth.

Yet here was a young lady who as a teenager had become an intimate friend of Catherine II, and had even assisted her in ascending the throne. In addition, through her own efforts she had extended her intellectual capabilities beyond most women of Russian society at the time. Is it any wonder she had an inflated idea of her own worth? But it is undeniable that Dashkova was not mature enough as yet to control her zeal, her youthful enthusiasm, and her haughty nature. As a result, she found herself an outcast, not only excluded from the court society but from her family as well. Added to this was the fact that she had become a widow with little money to support herself, her son and daughter. She now entered into a new phase of her life in which frugality, tact and modernation were the keys. She attempted to reinstate herself and her children into the court circles, and this would be done by education and by building up of a new reputation.

CHAPTER II

DASHKOVA ABROAD

Even as a child, Princess Dashkova dreamed of travelling, but it was not until 1769 that she was granted permission to visit Western Europe. Her first trip abroad lasted almost three years. There were numerous reasons for this extended stay. The unfavorable manner of the Empress towards her due to Dashkova's "exaggerated role" in 1762 was a primary motive. In removing herself entirely from the royal social life, the antagonistic attitude against her would have a chance to diminish in intensity. Also, by her behavior with famous personages in Western Europe she could build up a new reputation for herself. Now that she was a widow and a voluntary exile from her native country, Dashkova sought to refresh herself by seeing new countries and acquainting herself with the order of things there. In addition, she could continue her own education through her observations in these foreign lands and by sharing the thoughts of the notable personages with which she undoubtedly would come in contact. Finally, travelling to resort areas in Europe would be beneficial to her poor health. Dashkova suffered frequently from fevers, colds, and other such ailments throughout her lifetime. Either she was constantly anemic or she was a hypochondriac, and it seems her

sicknesses were sometimes a means for gaining attention, or for gracefully maneuvering herself out of a precarious position. However, at this time, Dashkova believed that the warmer, sunnier climate of Western Europe would help her condition and that of her children who suffered from rickets.²⁸

The Princess left for Riga in December, 1769, and travelled under the assumed name of Madame Mikhalkov.²⁹ Touring incognito Princess Dashkova could cover up her disgraced reputation in her homeland, and preserve her family name from further notoriety. In addition, because of her rank as a princess, a pseudonym would save her the expenses of being presented at the royal European courts, since she was in a poor financial state. Dashkova was accompanied by her two children--Nastasia and Paul--her companion, Miss Kamenski and her cousin, Mr. Vorontsov. But, in spite of her attempts to conceal her identity, Princess Dashkova attracted people of consequence to herself wherever she went in Europe. She made the acquaintance of nobility, scholars and intellectuals, and while abroad, she behaved with consummate tact and diplomacy. Her remarks concerning her empress were always complimentary, and she often took the opportunity of defending her fatherland against erroneous rumors. As a result, she favorably impressed those she met.

²⁸ Fitzylon, Memoirs, p. 113.

²⁹ The name is taken from a little property near Moscow belonging to Dashkova's children.

While in Paris, Dashkova had the opportunity to spend some time with Diderot³⁰ and he subsequently wrote a lengthy éloge manifesting his esteem for the Princess [1770].

"Madame the Princess Dashkova spent fifteen days here, during which time I saw her four times. . . . I had the honor to dine and have supper with her, and I am nearly the only Frenchman from whom she has accepted visits."

"She is Russian, intus et in cute; she has a great admiration for the qualities of the Empress, of whom she always speaks with the most profound respect and the most sincere veneration. . . ." ³¹

Diderot was a renowned savant, yet the Princess Dashkova and he spent many hours together in serious discussion on a wide variety of subjects. Here the young woman gave concrete evidence of her exceptional educational training. Diderot and Dashkova passed little time in idle conversation or polite small-talk. Truly interested in learning, Dashkova absorbed all she could from the French scholar.

"Mme. Dashkova leaves her house at nine in the morning. . . . She does not return until dinner time. All her time is used in instructing herself in all that one can know through observation: paintings, statues, structures, factories; and beginning in the evening, I chat with her on those points she does not understand: laws, customs, administration, finances, politics, morals, arts, sciences, literature. I tell her all that I know." ³²

³⁰Diderot [1713-84], French philosopher and editor of the Encyclopédie.

³¹J. Assezat (ed.) Oeuvres Complètes de Diderot [Paris, 1875], "Sur La Princesse Dashkoff," XVII, 487.

³²Ibid.

In commenting on the Princess's personality Diderot wrote:

"Her character is grave. She speaks our language fluently. All that she knows and thinks she does not say; but what she says, she says simply and forcibly, and with the tone of truth. She has a heart rent with misfortune. Her ideas are firm and grand. She has boldness and haughtiness, but I am convinced, also a profound spirit of right and dignity. She is a lover of the arts. She understands both the men and the interests of her nation."³³

The Princess and the French philosophe corresponded for many years. Their friendship proved advantageous for Dashkova, for he not only taught her, but also recommended her to the Empress Catherine. He informed the Russian sovereign of the Princess's great affection for her Empress, and of his own esteem for the remarkable young woman.

In her pursuit of learning, Dashkova sought the acquaintance of Voltaire.³⁴ She met him in Geneva, Switzerland, and added him to her record of conquests. While visiting the "old invalid of Ferney" (as Voltaire called himself) Dashkova immediately recognized a portrait of the Russian Empress in his salon. He was amazed to see tears come to her eyes as she viewed the painting, and he reported this incident to the Empress herself. He continued to boast of the Princess to the Russian ruler, telling her of the excellent translation Dashkova had made of the Archbishop of Tver's

³³Ibid., p. 490.

³⁴Voltaire [1694-1778], French satirist, dramatist, philosopher and historian.

sermon in 1771.³⁵ Once again the Princess had concealed her great selflove and revealed her intellectual capabilities to win the admiration of a noted European scholar. Voltaire, in turn, sent back laudatory reports to the Russian sovereign.

Because of her natural intellectual curiosity Dashkova had sought out the acquaintance of the European scholars she most admired, men like Voltaire and Diderot. There does not seem to have been a well--thought--out plan in the Princess's mind to use these people as a means to regain Catherine II's favor. She recorded in her Memoirs that she had not known beforehand that these famous men would reveal their personal opinions of the Princess to the Russian ruler.³⁶ However, after realizing the impact she could make on Western Europe and indirectly, on Russia, she did take advantage of the situation, especially while abroad the second time.

Dashkova had returned to Russia in 1772. At this time Catherine the Great gave her a generous gift of 60,000 rubles for the purpose of purchasing a country home. However, the Princess had not yet been accepted into the Empress's high favor, and within two years she again went abroad. This time the Princess stayed in Western Europe for a duration of almost eight years in

³⁵Letter from Voltaire to Princess Dashkov [May 12, 1771], The French philosopher informed the Princess of his intention to write Catherine II about her excellent translation. The letter is found in Theodore Besterman (ed.) Voltaire's Correspondance [Geneva, 1953], LXXIX, 70-1.

³⁶Fitzylon, Memoirs, p. 126.

order that her major concern and duty, her son's education, might be completed.

"My son's education had been my dearest aim; I had wanted to preserve his principles intact and keep him away from the innumerable temptations which always lie in wait for a young man in his own country. After much thought I decided to take him abroad. My choice of country had not been difficult: I believed his happiness would best be served by giving him an English education."³⁷

Dashkova wrote to Dr. William Robertson, principal of the University of Edinburgh, requesting admission for her son Paul, to this institution. At the end of the eighteenth century Scotland enjoyed a notable scholarly reputation, and as a person well-acquainted with contemporary Europe, Dashkova could not but turn her attention to this country's educational institutions. Also, her selection of the British Isles as the training grounds for her son could be interpreted as an attempt to assail the French influence which dominated such education as there was in Russia, and which had given rise to so much artificiality in the social life of the nobility. In an article she wrote in 1783 discussing education, Dashkova denounced those noblemen who went to France to be educated and who returned to their homeland "uncorrected." These Parisian Russians would never be able to apply their French schooling to their daily Russian lives.³⁸ In essence this was an attack on all foreign training and alien

³⁷Ibid., 27.

³⁸E. R. Dashkova, "O smisle slova vospitanie," Sobesednik, I [1783], 18-21.

influences within Russia. But Russia's educational system had not as yet advanced to the level of the Western European institutions, and as a result, a western education was a characteristic mark of the Russian nobility. This was the dilemma which Dashkova and other nobles of the time had to face. Although they did not want to give up their national traditions, they were forced to acknowledge Russia's need for modernization, and therefore, a foreign education. Dashkova could do nothing but provide a foreign training for her son, and she subsequently decided on an English education for him.

Since the changes made by Peter the Great, service grades of the Table of Ranks were not hereditary. Theoretically, the status of one's ancestors and the distinguished service of one's family did not determine directly an individual's position in Russian society. Every man was expected to start, in principle, at the bottom of the hierarchical ladder of ranks, and expected to work his way up to the highest position. A nobleman was considered nothing without at least the lowest commissioned rank. In addition, a western education had become the criteria for noble status.

Princess Dashkova's son was only thirteen when she proposed to enroll him in the university of Edinburgh. Schoolmaster Robertson considered Paul too young, and therefore, probably unprepared to begin his formal schooling, and suggested they postpone his entrance to the institution for a time. In her reply, the proud mother assured the rector that her son had been given

more than a sound background with which to begin courses. It was important to her that he commence his education as soon as possible.

"It is necessary, I should observe, that the method of arriving at promotion in my country is a very honourable one, and differs in a great measure from that of most others, where court favour and intrigue so universally prevail as the sole means of advancement. With us, it is indispensable for each individual who would rise to any station of eminence to commence his career of service at a very early period of life."³⁹

This explains Dashkova's great efforts to enroll her child at such a young age. An early beginning was advantageous in order to give her son a head start in his future career, for without a formal rank he would not really be a member of the privileged elite. In theory, Peter III had freed the nobility from the obligation of service, but in practice, the worship of rank as a basis for one's place in society continued after 1762. The Princess hoped to see Paul enter on the duties of a profession in which, by honorable exertions and by virtue of his educational background, he would rise to the same heights in which his ancestors (notably Chancellor Michael Vorontsov) had distinguished themselves. At least her son would have a respectable reputation, even if she herself had lost hers.

Princess Dashkova could proudly brag to Dr. Robertson that Paul, prior to becoming a student at the university, was already remarkably accomplished for his age, for she herself had been her

³⁹Letter from Dashkova to Dr. Robertson in Bradford, Memoirs, II, 119.

son's tutor. She had seen to it that he knew Latin, German, French, Russian and could read English. He was proficient in literature, mathematics, history and geography. With this formidable background, Dr. Robertson made an exception, and the young boy was accepted as a student in the school. As a course of study for her son, Dashkova proposed he learn algebra, civil and military architecture, logic, chemistry, experimental physics, philosophy, law, ethics, politics and several other subjects. This was a typical curricula for an enlightened education with an emphasis on practical sciences and reason. It was a demanding order, and it is questionable as to how much of this diversified and voluminous knowledge the student actually absorbed and could put into practice in his later life. However, in addition to the courses her son took, the Princess took care that he be provided with entertainment and amusement in the form of dances, riding school and fencing. These were aimed at preserving his health and developing a vigorous and strong body.

With her own son, Dashkova had attempted to implement her personal ideas on education. She divided education into three aspects: physical, by which a person developed his body; moral, in which reasoning, good conduct and the laws of nature were acquired; and classical learning, which emphasized languages as the tools to literature and science. Dashkova felt that education did not consist in learning only foreign language nor science. Neither was it meant to develop merely the finer talents like

dancing, singing, painting, etc. All of these capabilities would be only puppetry without acquiring the means to develop and beautify the mind and heart. This "culture of the heart" demanded the qualities of human love, justice and virtue to be firmly entrenched.⁴⁰ This concept of education, stressing the mind, heart and body, was characteristic of the enlightened philosophy of Europe.

Dashkova put forth several axioms concerning education. The educational process began earlier and was completed later than was generally thought, for education was to be carried on throughout one's lifetime by a continuous vigilance. Observation, collection and reflection were the keys. True education was acquired more through examples than formal instructions.⁴¹ These precepts were part of the advice the Princess gave to her son when he completed his schooling and received his Master of Arts degree in May, 1779, from the university of Edinburgh.

Catherine Romanovna encouraged Paul to continue his education in everyday life. She, her son, and their retinue extended their travels through Western Europe in order that Paul might profit from all that he could observe. "A traveler should be a

⁴⁰ Dashkova, "O smisle. . . ," Sobesednik, I, 21-26. The views Dashkova puts forth in this article agree with the concepts of Nikolai Novikov as expressed in his essay "On the Upbringing and Instruction of Children." (see Marc Raeff, Russian Intellectual History, An Anthology [New York; 1966] p. 73).

⁴¹ Dashkova, "O smisle. . . ," Sobesednik, I, 21.

spectator with his eyes continually open. . . , " she wrote her son when he completed his schooling in Scotland.⁴² Dashkova's own energy was unflagging, and her interest in all subjects was keen. She therefore advised her son to take advantage of his European travels by studying the manners, characters and institutions of other nations, at the same time, learning to appreciate them. Extending the meaning of "service" to include not merely service to the state and monarch, but also to society and the country, she hoped her son would assume a cultural and intellectual leadership.

"You can hardly fail also to become a useful member of the society in which you live; for in comparing what you have observed in other countries with what you see at home, and in endeavoring to correct what you may thus find defective, and to propose and establish that which is conducive to the public good, you may render yourself a friend and benefactor to the community."⁴³

Dashkova also assured her son that, independent of all exterior circumstances, his education was something no one could take from him. She advocated learning for its own sake, for an education made a person valuable. She agreed with the philosophes that knowledge gave a person his humanity. Therefore Dashkova guaranteed her son that his education would be a source of personal and perpetual gain in domestic life, and even in the infirmity of old age. In spite of the good advice, warnings sacrifices and good intentions of his mother, and although the Prince had been

⁴²Bradford, Memoirs, II, 126 (Letter from Dashkova to her son).

quick to learn, he forgot everything the minute he returned to his homeland. Paul's military career was far from brilliant; he married a merchant's daughter out of necessity and otherwise led an uneventful life. Dashkova was never reconciled with the disappointing outcome of all she had done for her son. She had hoped he would do justice to the family names of Dashkov and Vorontsov. In the future, when he had attained a high rank, perhaps he would influence the high court dignitaries to reinstate his mother. All these ambitions were frustrated, and Dashkova was left to build her own reputation.

While Prince Paul Dashkov wasted his European tour, his mother continued to profit by her travels. She spent much of her time visiting galleries and churches, observing customs and governmental systems, and gathering specimens for her natural history collection.⁴⁴ Dashkova renewed her acquaintance with several notable Europeans, including Diderot, and was introduced to a host of other personages. Among her encounters with royalty, the Princess was presented to the British king George III, the French Empress Marie Antoinette, Pope Pius VI, and the Austrian Emperor Joseph.

While in Vienna, Dashkova was invited to dinner by Prince Kaunitz, the Emperor's First Minister. During supper their

⁴⁴ Dashkova's natural history collection consisted of some 15,000 curios gathered from all the countries she visited. It was valued at 50,000 rubles and presented to the University of Moscow in 1807, but perished in the Great Fire of 1812.

topic of conversation turned to the Russian Tsar Peter I and his reforms. All of the Princess's chauvinism and slavophilism came to the fore in the discussion. The Prince had credited Peter the Great with being the creator of the Russian nation. In retaliation, Dashkova defended the traditions of pre-Petrine Russia, condemning Peter I for his forced introduction of Western reforms in Russia. She acknowledged the benefits brought to the country by these innovations, but mourned the subsequent loss of vitality by which the Russian mores, traditions and national culture were destroyed.

" . . . I am not in the least prejudiced against the Emperor Peter I. . . . He had a genius, energy and zeal for improvement, but his total lack of education had left him with unbridled passions which completely swayed his reason. . . ; his ignorance did not allow him to see that many reforms introduced by him through violence, were being introduced quietly and peacefully by trade, exchange, the passage of time and the example of other nations. He would not have destroyed that priceless heritage which was our ancestors' character if he had not valued foreigners so much above Russians. . . ." ⁴⁵

She proclaimed the glories of Russia's past and the high degree of its civilization even before Peter I. Peter was not the creator of the Russian imperium, for the Russians had captured the kingdoms of Kazan, Astrakhan and Siberia and had conquered the Golden Horde to form an empire before Peter's ascent to the throne. Russia could not be considered a backward nation because the arts had long flourished there. The ancient monasteries and churches of the nation were covered with priceless masterpieces in mosaic

⁴⁵Fitzylon, Memoirs, p. 184.

and iconography. In addition, Russian chroniclers had left more manuscripts than the combined historical sources of Western Europe. In this way, Dashkova defended Russia's defamed past. These pro-Russian ideas were to become a dominant theme in Dashkova's activities upon her return to her native land in 1782.

CHAPTER III

DIRECTOR OF THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

While Dashkova was abroad hob-nobbing with the cultural élite of Western Europe she had become something of a public figure. She had, in addition, continually exalted Catherine II and publicized the Russian nation. Although the Empress might still mistrust the Princess's energetic, headstrong nature, she could not but appreciate her loyalty to the Crown and to her Fatherland. The Empress had received many letters from European dignitaries praising the Princess, and being aware of foreign opinion, she could no longer banish Dashkova from the court. Upon her return, in July 1782, Catherine Romanovna was lavished with attention from her monarch, and former intimate. Indeed, now a new "closeness" seemed to spring up between the two women. The high favor in which Dashkova now found herself was manifested in several gestures. Her son was appointed to the Semeonovskii guards regiment, and she herself was given an estate, Krugloye, in White Russia with 2,500 serfs, as well as a house in St. Petersburg.

The most startling mark of favor was made evident later in the year. At a ball given by the Empress in December, to which

all the members of the court were invited, Catherine II told Princess Dashkova of her intention of appointing her to the Directorship of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences.⁴⁶ The Princess was struck dumb with astonishment, and diffidently hesitated to accept the honor. However, the Empress would not take "no" for an answer, and Dashkova immediately received a copy of the imperial decree naming her Director of the Academy.

There may be questions as to the motives behind the Empress's appointment of a woman she once had denounced so emphatically for her arrogance and excessive energies. The consideration of foreign opinion has already been mentioned. But Catherine also feared Dashkova's penchant for publicity and perhaps was jealous of her abilities and potential political intrigues. From the consideration of political expediency then, Catherine II sought to channel the Princess's activities elsewhere, but in an area where they would be useful. She expressed this in a comment to Grimm: "Elle n'a plus le temps de chipoter, ayant un gros morceau dans la bouche qui tient ses mâchoires en respect."⁴⁷ In addition, Catherine had created the office of Director of the Academy in 1766 to be personally responsible to the Empress. Appointing Dashkova to this position would keep her under the tight reins of

⁴⁶The Academy of Sciences had been planned by Peter the Great but it did not begin to function until the reign of Catherine I in 1725. It was an institution of higher learning that combined the advancement of science with educational activities. Until the time of Dashkova's Directorship it had faltered under poor management and the lack of native Russian talent.

⁴⁷Kazimierz Waliszewski, Autour d'une Trône; Catherine II de Russie, ses collaborateurs-ses amis-ses favoris [4th ed; Paris, 1894], 388.

the Crown. As a final assurance, Dashkova was required to swear an oath of loyalty to Her Majesty and her country before the Senate. Dashkova recorded in her Memoirs that this was customary procedure when taking employment under the Crown.⁴⁸ Even though the Empress needed no assurances of her fealty, the Princess explained that Catherine felt the ceremony would be pleasing to her and would give sanction and publicity to her appointment.

Dashkova may have had her misgivings about accepting the directorship, but she submitted to her monarch's wishes. In obeying the Empress, she felt she would prove to Catherine II the regard, devotion and unlimited affection in which she had always held her sovereign. She assured her ruler that she had never aspired to the post which had excluded, for so long, members of her sex.⁴⁹ However, it was true that Dashkova was now given the opportunity to fulfill her childhood desire of performing some outstanding service. Also, then she would be in the position to implement some of the ideas she had been formulating these many years away from Russia, and it would afford her full scope for the expression of her literary abilities. With the matter settled, Dashkova threw herself zealously into her task, acquainting herself, down to the smallest detail, of the workings of the Academy and of her responsibilities as its Director.

⁴⁸Fitzylon, Memoirs, p. 210.

⁴⁹Letter from Dashkova to Catherine II on her appointment to the Academy of Sciences, found in "Cherti iz zhizni E. R. Dashkovoi," Russkii Arkhiv, [1864], p. 574.

Although Dashkova was no scientist herself, her education had given her enough of a background in the field to respect its accomplishments and its men.⁵⁰ Self-conscious about being a woman in such an unusual post, she hoped to establish a rapport with the academicians in order to gain their confidence. One of her first actions was to pay a visit to Leonard Euler,⁵¹ inviting him to attend Academy functions once again. She was able to convince him to introduce her to the Academy for her first appearance before its members. Although Euler was a foreigner by birth, he had been in Russia a long time. Dashkova recognized that he could make valuable contributions to Russia's scientific progress, both in his original theories, and as a teacher for the Russians themselves. Since all the academicians held Euler in the highest esteem, Dashkova had made a triumphant beginning. By handling the men with tact, she quickly enlisted their support in carrying out her plans for the Academy of Sciences.

In her first speech before the Academy members, Dashkova stated that once the sciences had taken deep root in the Academy, it would be the academicians' responsibility to see that it would

⁵⁰As a child, her uncle could not understand Dashkova's love for science, and wrote to his cousin A. R. Vorontsov that in spite of his niece's high intelligence, she passed her time "in science and frivolousness." (Letter from Michael Vorontsov to A. R. Vorontsov [Aug. 21, 1762] in V. I. Semevski, "Kniâginiâ Ekaterina Romanovna Dashkova: kharaktiristicheskiâ svedeniâ o nei," Russkaia Starina, IX [1874], 410).

⁵¹Leonard Euler [1707-83], one of the foremost mathematicians of the eighteenth century. A Swiss by birth, he came to Russia on the invitation of Catherine I. Disgusted with the Academy's management under Dashkova's predecessor, Domashnev, he had ceased participating in it.

spread from there over all of the fatherland. Only when science became the common property of the Russian people would there be an assurance for the future development of scientific thought in their nation.⁵² Another goal she set for the Academy was to give Russian society the capability of reading in their native language, not only translations of foreign literature and publications, but also original Russian productions. During Dashkova's directorship all the work of the Academy in some way revolved around this dual objective.

Of first importance were the pecuniary affairs of the establishment. The Academy finances had been disrupted during the tenure of Catherine Romanovna's predecessors. Dashkova was an astute businesswoman, having demonstrated her economic capabilities through the years by the frugality with which she handled her own estates. To redress the abuses, the Princess determined on a short and efficient method. She declared it the common duty of all to squander nothing and to cease all misappropriations. She herself vowed not to enrich herself personally at the expense of the Academy and would prohibit her subordinates from doing the same. For their sacrifices, she promised to reward the zealous by raising their salaries. She reinvested the capital of the Academy and put the profits in the bank to accrue a four per cent interest. She disentangled the accounts of the two Academy

⁵² Mikhail Ivan Sukhomlinov, Istoriia Rossiiskoi Akademii, vol. I. in Akademiia Nauk. Sbornik otdeleniia russkago iazyka i slovesnosti. [St. Petersburg, 1875], p. 29.

funds: the Administrative, which was the sole responsibility of the Director; and the State, which the State Treasurer oversaw. In a short time she was able to report to the Empress that she had so increased the funds of the Academy that she was in a position to make plans for a pension program for the disabled academicians, for new school buildings, for supporting gymnasium students, and for supplementing the wages of the Russian professors. By increasing the number of Academy publications and at the same time diminishing their sale-price by thirty per cent, the institution received a great profit. This not only liquidated the debts incurred to booksellers in Russia, Paris and Holland, but also guaranteed a brisk trade in the books, now that they were more accessible to the general public.⁵³

As evidence of Dashkova's concern for the popularization of science and the encouragement of knowledge of the Russian language, she attempted to revive the Academy school and institute a series of public lectures delivered in the Slavic tongue. She used Academy funds to support the students of the gymnasium school and thereby raised their number from seventeen to fifty.⁵⁴ From those students who distinguished themselves in scholarly activities she selected several to be sent abroad to complete their education. Those chosen were given certain subjects in which they were to

⁵³Report on the Academy Finances in Arkhiiv Kniãziã Vorontsova [Moscow, 1881], XXI, 386-8.

⁵⁴Fitzylon, Memoirs, p. 212.

concentrate their studies. Two such students, Severgin⁵⁵ and Zakharov,⁵⁶ were designated to study mineralogy and chemistry respectively. When they returned to their homeland they were expected to teach in the Academy's secondary school.⁵⁷ Since social status was determined by service rank, no profession could attract the nobility unless it also led to a place in the Table of Ranks. In eighteenth century Russia, the academic profession guaranteed no such status and therefore, had little appeal for the Russian nobility. Consequently, an obligatory teaching term in payment for being sent abroad to study was one way Dashkova could assure a native teaching force.

Another means to attract teachers was to raise the stipends of the professors. This was done in the hopes that this financial reward would compensate for the arduous, long and often unrewarding work, and give the native force an incentive to compete against the foreign scholars who dominated the academic circles. In this way, Dashkova was able to invite several native professors and post-graduates to give lectures in Russian, as part of the free public courses she instituted. They were paid two hundred rubles out of the Administration fund at the end of each series.

⁵⁵V. I. Severgin [1765-1826], Academician of the Academy of Sciences, specializing in mineralogy, and a member of many learned societies. He wrote a "Chemical Dictionary" [1810-13].

⁵⁶J. D. Zakharov [1765-1836], professor of chemistry and member of the Academy of Sciences. He lectured on chemistry and natural sciences at the public courses for four summers.

⁵⁷Sukhomlinov, I, p. 36.

Kotel'nikov⁵⁸ read mathematics, including algebra, geometry and mechanics; Ozeretskovskii⁵⁹ lectured on natural history. Chemistry was taught by Sokolov⁶⁰ and Zakharov, the first men since Lomonosov to deliver such lectures in the Russian language. Severgin read mineralogy, and physics was given by Kononov⁶¹ and Gur'ev.⁶² Dashkova often attended these lectures and took an active part in their presentation. She offered suggestions for altering the courses, and supplied the lecture-halls with the necessary scientific equipment for demonstrations.⁶³ By these means Dashkova hoped to wrest the educational system from the hands of foreigners and institute a native force for continued control in the future.⁶⁴

⁵⁸S. K. Kotel'nikov [1723-1806], Academician and specialist in physics. He was singled out by Dashkova in 1783 to become a member of the Russian Academy.

⁵⁹N. I. Ozeretskovskii [1750-1827], doctor of medicine, member of the Academy of Sciences and writer. He was especially chosen by Dashkova to read public lectures in zoology, and entomology.

⁶⁰N. P. Sokolov [1748-95], Academician and author of many scholarly works. In 1787 he was made a full professor in chemistry at the university of the Academy of Sciences.

⁶¹A. K. Kononov [1766-95], member of the Academy of Sciences; his fields were physics and mathematics.

⁶²S. E. Gur'ev [1762-1813], Academy of Sciences member in physics and mathematics. He had also been a professor in engineering and ship architecture.

⁶³Sukhomlinov, I, pp. 29-36.

⁶⁴In this respect Dashkova implemented the appeal made by Novikov in his essay "On the Upbringing and Instruction of Children" [1783]. In it he asked: "Is it not possible to educate worthy private teachers and tutors here in our own nation? Do we want to abandon the upbringing of our children to foreigners for evermore?" [Raeff, Anthology, p. 84].

As Director of the Academy of Sciences Dashkova promoted an intensification of the Academy role in Russian literature for the duration of the eighteenth century. Concerned with the stimulation and support of learned and literary activities in Russia and with the spread of enlightenment throughout the fatherland, the Princess worked to equip scholarly publications. One of her earliest accomplishments was the reactivation of the Academy Bulletin, which previously had suspended publication. A new series of the Academy memoirs under the title of Nova acta academiae scientiarum petropolitanae were issued, for the most part being supplied with articles by Euler.⁶⁵ Dashkova reorganized the "translating department" of the Academy so that Russian society would have the opportunity of reading foreign productions in the native Russian tongue. The department was headed by Protasov⁶⁶ and consisted of alumni of the gymnasium who had accepted the obligation of translating the foreign works. All publications from abroad were sent directly to the Academy to be translated by Protasov's crew, thus eliminating the need for foreign translators who were politically and culturally unprepared to interpret these articles correctly in a language alien to their own.⁶⁷

⁶⁵Sukhomlinov, I. p. 30.

⁶⁶A. P. Protasov [1725-], member of the Academy of Sciences, doctor of medicine, writer and translator. He was chosen by Dashkova to head the Academy "translating department" in 1790.

⁶⁷Sukhomlinov, I, p. 37.

All her activities to reorganize the academy financially, set up printing presses, enlarge the library, attract new members, etc., did not satisfy Dashkova. She wanted to participate directly in the dissemination of useful knowledge and enlightened ideas among society, and to promote the native language. Towards this goal, just three months after her acceptance of the duties as Director, the Princess conceived of a literary journal which came to be published as the Sobesednik Liubitelei Rossiiskago Slova (Interlocuteur of the Friends of the Russian Tongue). Its sixteen issues were printed by the Academy of Sciences under the editorship of Princess Dashkova.

There were several objectives revealed in the editions of the Sobesednik. The first was the spread of knowledge, and for this it was necessary to develop the Russian language and literature. As editor, Dashkova wrote in the Forward to the first volume [May 20, 1783] that only original Russian compositions would be printed; no translations of foreign works would be featured. The Princess considered the essential aim of the publication as "the purification and glorification of the Russian language".⁶⁸ Implied in this was the protection of the Russian language from the invasion of unnecessary foreign words, a clarification of the meaning of Slavic words, and a development of a love for the Russian nationality and the Russian historical past.

The secondary objective was to see that enlightened ideas

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 11.

would be carried into life itself, making them useful for others. As eventually came to be revealed in the pages of the periodical, this aim was expressed in numerous articles concerned with social questions. A majority of the bitter attacks on the prevalence of foreign influences was directed at the French culture, especially in education. There was a group of intellectuals at that time, including Dashkova and men like Shcherbatov, Novikov, Fonvizin and Boltin, who could not but be indignant when they saw their contemporaries, who also were familiar with the literature and morals of France, slavishly imitating these empty, foolish and worthless ways, while neglecting the improvement of their own persons. Discontent with the present naturally lead to a sympathy for the past as a substitute. As a result, many of the articles that discredited the foreign influences in Russia, also exalted the virtues of the Russian past.

All the talented writers of the time collaborated in the journal, including outstanding authors like Derzhavin, Fonvizin and Kniazhnin, but more often than not, their articles appeared unsigned for the writers feared repercussions from the censors. The Empress Catherine herself contributed to the publication, two serials: "Byli i Nebylitsi" (Fact and Fiction), in which she criticized the society of the day by means of satirical discussions; and "Zapiski kasatel'no rossiiskoi istorii" (Notes on Russian History). However, even the Empress's close interest in the journal did not exempt its contents from severe censorship,

but rather made the publication more susceptible to her personal scrutiny.

Princess Dashkova had attempted to enact a liberal policy for her journal. In the first issue she asked all lovers of the Russian language and all the reading public to send any criticisms of the magazine directly to her, and she would have them printed. In the course of this experiment, a set of questions was formulated by Fonvizin. They appeared in the third issue but were published anonymously. Several of these questions challenged the Empress's personal life and court procedure. For example, there was an inquiry as to why buffoons, wags and harlequins, who were formerly employed to amuse the public, were now given palaces and honors. Catherine II considered this a thrust at Naryshkin, her intimate friend, and she forbade the publication of these questions. However, later she permitted them to be printed along with her own set of answers, hoping thereby to counterbalance the impact of the inquiries on the reading public.⁶⁹ Dashkova, as editor of the journal, was suspected of collusion with the author of the questions, and as a result, an uncomfortable relationship developed between the directress and her august collaborator, Catherine II. The Empress's enthusiastic support for the publication dwindled for she no longer found the humorous, bantering tone of the articles agreeable. Censorship of the journal became even more

⁶⁹IA. Grot, "Sotrudnichestvo Ekaterini II v Sobesednike Kniâgini Dashkovoi," Sbornik, XX [1877], 532-3.

stringent and it eventually led to the dissolution of the publication.

The Sobesednik had been short-lived: it ceased publication in October 1784 after sixteen issues. However, it had been an important contribution to the development of Russian journalism. It was the first to attempt to print only original Russian works and was, as a result, a spokesman for national consciousness. Its editor had hoped the journal would assist in the growth of a national literary language and the development of native writing talent. By inviting criticism, Dashkova had made the publication an open forum for controversy, but society and the censors were not ready yet to accept such liberalism. The articles of the journal often exposed the moral corruption in society and in this regard the publication made a contribution to the growth of constructive social protest by a sensitive group of intellectuals. These accomplishments gave Sobesednik an important place in the history of Russian literary development.

CHAPTER IV

DASHKOVA'S LITERARY CAREER

After the death of Peter I, the borrowing of foreign ways continued but it lacked the Emperor's spirit and dedication to the State and nation. The veneer of foreign culture was readily assimilated and the Russians accepted a foreign speech, custom, behavior and education as their own. However, underlying these superficial aspects of the alien civilization imposed on the Russian nation was a certain immorality among its adherents. This breakdown of morality in society was traced to the abandonment of all inherited moral precepts and standards without replacing them with a new set of principles.

Although German influence in the Russian court had been dominant for a time after Peter I's death, the French culture took firm hold during the reigns of Anna, Elizabeth and Catherine II. The years 1755-75 were the highpoint of the all-pervading Francomania. The young people of the capital, encouraged by the examples set by the Empresses Elizabeth and Catherine II, submerged themselves in a passionate interest for things French. For them, to be French was to be European. As its service obligations became less demanding, the gentry welcomed French culture

as a mark of social distinction at the court and in society. However, the wasteful luxury of this infatuation with foreign fashion saw the corruption of the morality in the noble class. They lost their ideas of civic virtue and personal integrity, and their lazy indifference to the welfare of their own country led to a contempt for all things Russian. The theme of corruption through foreign influence was belabored in comedies, satirical writings and other literary productions after the beginning of the 1760's. Among the small group of Russian intellectuals composing these moralistic and ridiculing works was Princess Dashkova. From her high position in the Academy of Sciences she was able to promote many programs encouraging improvement of morals and a development of national consciousness. She was a force behind the Academy publications, but more important were her own literary contributions to these journals.

Dashkova's articles generally were concerned with social questions and expressed the prevailing intellectual trends of her time. She believed the mission of the Russian writer was the spread of enlightenment and the improvement of the morals of society. Her writings, therefore, constantly repeated the basic theme of the corruption of Russian society through the influence of foreign cultures, especially French. She did not object to the Western civilization as much as she opposed the loss of identity on the part of the Russians who mistook their thoughtless imitation for Europeanization. As a result, Dashkova encouraged her misled compatriots to look to Russia's historical past for

lost virtues, as the source for a sense of their own worth. These were the ideas the Princess brought forth in her articles.

One of Dashkova's better known works was the composition entitled "Poslanie k slovu tak" (Message to the word tak), published in the first volume of the Sobesednik.⁷⁰ In a mixture of prose and verse the Princess made a play on the word tak (meaning among other things: it is so, this way), using this device to express her contempt for those Russians who were so hopelessly entwined in the web of the French culture. Dashkova pointedly ridiculed those in society who were adept at fawning and groveling in order to win praise, glory, a higher rank in service or a more prominent status in society. These people were servile sycophants who had long before lost their sense of personal integrity. They would say "yes" or tak to every suggestion or opinion offered by a superior. In order that their selfish desires for fame and fortune be satisfied, they willingly suppressed the qualities of courage to criticize an injustice, love for their country's welfare and devotion to their sovereign, and replaced these with flattery, hypocrisy and favoritism. Dashkova saw the upper Russian society reduced to a community of spineless creatures having the appearance of human beings but who were actually puppets with no soul, no character, no self-dignity.

Dashkova cited several examples of this type of weak-willed representative of Russian society. There was the man who was afraid to question the justice of his superior's actions. The

⁷⁰Sobesednik, I [1873], part 1, pp. 15-23.

Princess related this instance.--A sovereign castigated one of his subjects, and although those witnessing the deed had no idea as to why this person was being punished, nonetheless they encouraged their lord by saying: "it is so, my lord, tak." No one of those standing by would risk his favorite position with the sovereign in order to stand up for his own convictions, or defend the rights of a fellow citizen. Another case in point was the man who was willing to deny his friends or an obvious truth for the benefit of his personal success. Dashkova exemplified this type in a situation where a man with great influence openly denounced Lomonosov as stupid and an insignificant person, notwithstanding the great scholar's contributions that glorified and honored the Russian language. This influential person would find many who would agree with him on his opinion of Lomonosov, saying: "certainly, sir, this is so," because they hoped to win some special favor from the dignitary.

The highest ranks in service and society often testified most obviously to the presence of the "animated doll" within the community. Dashkova warned against mistaking rank or position at court for intrinsic merit. It was often the case, she said, that the man of simplicity, honesty and intelligence did not qualify for a high position on the social ladder or in the Table of Ranks. Rather, these honors and titles would go to the fool who knew how to gamble at cards and understood how to flatter his superiors by saying tak to gratify all their whims.

The foreign influence had not only corrupted the moral fibers of society, but it had also contaminated the purity of the Russian language. The language of the Court and polite society in Russia was French, and as a result many of the upper class were either totally ignorant of their native language or were so poorly trained in Russian that they did not know the proper grammatical rules, and the syntax of words. Dashkova lashed out against these adulterators of the Russian language in her poem on the work tak. She gave the example of those who were so unfamiliar with their native tongue and yet boldly inserted the word tak whenever they did not know the proper Russian word and thereby distorted their Russian speech. These people were destroying the genuine meaning of this word. The use of tak as a hasty substitute for such short words as nyet (no, not) or vash (your) was also harmful for the language. The Princess feared the Russian language was liable to be corrupted if such important monosyllabic words were lost.

Princess Dashkova was also concerned with the destruction of the beauty of the native tongue because so many French words had been interspersed in it. With this mixture of two languages, the Russian had lost its identity: it was neither French nor Russian. She cited the example of a pretentious young woman whose great wish was to appear fashionable. As a result, she freely blended French and Russian words while tenderly caressing her husband, saying to him: "mon coeur ili zhizn' moya". (my heart and my life). Her foolish husband also indulged in the worship

of the French way of life, and he made no attempt to correct his wife's speech pattern. Rather he encouraged her in denationalizing her own language and said to her: "this is the way, my dear one, tak-tak".

Dashkova frequently criticized the Gallomania which had swept through Russian society. Her targets were the capital's young people who willingly assimilated all the superficial aspects of the French culture. This generation had been subjected to a French education and they had mastered the adornments of polite society, i.e. the French society. They were so completely preoccupied with the looks and pleasures of the fashionable world that they had no time to realize they were neglecting the fundamental precepts of ethics. These francophils renounced the Russian past and the virtues and morals of the earlier generations were flaunted as the cosmopolitan generation adopted France's nihilistic disregard for conventional morality. This antinational behavior tore down the bases of personal and social morality. Dashkova discussed these effects of French education in an article entitled "O smisle slova vospitanie," published in the second part of the 1783 Sobesednik.⁷¹ The Princess saw only one solution to this problem of the senseless denationalization of custom which was uprooting Russian virtues. This answer was to be sought in the cultivation of the values as found in the purer, simpler period of Russian history. She advised her contemporaries to

⁷¹Ibid., part 2, pp. 12-23.

discover these native virtues and uphold them for the renewal of Russian society. A sound education with a basis in national consciousness was the key to the intellectual and moral development of the community.

In this article on education, Princess Dashkova outlined four periods in Russian social and educational history, corresponding to four generations of Russian society. The "great-grandfathers" of Russia had conceived of education as the ability to sing psalms and to count by numbers. This was not much of an intellectual foundation, but they encouraged their sons to lead virtuous lives, and taught them loyalty to the tsar, obedience to the laws and constancy in their promises. The succeeding generation, "grandfathers," had encouraged their children to learn the rules of law and to master computation by arithmetic. But, Dashkova said, although they may not have received the fullness of education, people of this era were not ashamed to be true to their own national character and way of life. They were Russians, and they considered the changing of their speech or appearance to be an alteration of their own nationality.

This native pride was destroyed by the "fathers." They held Russia in contempt and separated themselves from their native soil. They hid their Russian nationality under the veneer of French culture and had thus become foreigners in their own land. Dashkova saw this as the great evil which foreign influence had brought to Russia. French tutors were employed in

almost every home to train children to speak French. The youngsters were taught to dance, to draw, to perform on the stage, to fence; and they also learned to drink French wines to wear French clothes and hairstyles, to behave with French manners--in short, to be French Russians. But to Dashkova this kind of education was worthless and impractical, for these products of French training were not prepared to live a Russian life. They could not be loyal citizens of their land for they were hardly acquainted with anything Russian; nor could they, as parents, teach their children to be sincere to their Russian way of life.

This situation had become even worse, proclaimed Dashkova, in the contemporary generation where the "children" were led even further astray in their concepts of education. They demanded that their offspring travel to Europe, for they equated learning with going abroad. The Princess mourned the fate of these young travellers who lacked a mature mind and firm principles grounded in the laws and morals of their fatherland and who, as a result, fell prey to the vices, prejudices, passions and weaknesses of the Western civilization. They had never been trained to be serious students, and their trips to Paris and Strasbourg were filled with festivities and games. They returned home and were totally unrecognizable for they were neither Russians nor Europeans.

The Princess questioned what the outcome was of this type of education? It was of no practical use in Russia for all that these people had learned while abroad was not applicable to the

situation in their native land. They could contribute little to the good of Russian society. More likely, they were a danger to the welfare of the community for they returned to Russia with western attitudes that were liable to jeopardize society's moral foundations. Dashkova used the prime example of the "light-headed Parisian Russians" who refused to marry because it was not in vogue. They were caught up in the whirl of the fashionable and amassed considerable debts by their lavish, stylish French existence. For them marriage would mean only a multiplication of these financial obligations and they were too egotistical to sacrifice pleasure for the legal union with the opposite sex. Dashkova asserted that this attitude would bring about the destruction of the sanctity of the marriage vow and the dissolution of the family bonds within society. Before the time that foreign cultures had begun to filter into Russia the greatest enemy to goodness and truth had been merely ignorance, a vice which could be easily overcome. Dashkova observed that in her own lifetime, society's greatest evil was the moral depravity that had been imported with the alien cultures, and such debauchery was more harmful to the population than ignorance, and more difficult to correct.

Princess Dashkova's articles in the Sobesednik had echoed the ideas of other writers who analyzed the situation of contemporary Russia. But these attempts at social criticism had put the journal in a perilous situation with the Russian censors,

and the printing of the periodical had been terminated in 1783. Within two years the Academy of Sciences began the simultaneous publication of three new journals which fared better than their predecessor. Noviia Ezhmesiachniiia Sochineniia (the New Monthly Essays) was a literary-scientific periodical, issued by the Academy uninterruptedly for ten years [1786-96]. The work of the Sobesednik was carried on in its pages, encouraging a national literary language and fostering moral improvement and education of society through the spread of enlightenment and science. The historical journal, Prodolzhenie Drevnei Rossiiskoi Bibliotiki (Sequel to the Ancient Russian Library), appeared in ten editions until 1795. Its objective was to assert the pride in and value of Russia's historical heritage in retaliation to the foreign denunciations of Russia's backwardness. Rossiiskii Teatr (Russian Theatre) was a forty-three volume collection of contemporary plays, published from 1786 to 1794. This collection encouraged the development of national creativity in the fields of drama and comedy to take the place of the French theatrical productions which dominated the Russian stage. As the Director of the Academy, Dashkova's influence on these publications was undeniably felt. She actively supported the suggestions for their establishment, but she herself did not manage the publications, leaving this work to the academicians. However, her most valuable contributions to these periodicals were her own articles.

The Metropolitan Evgenie, in his dictionary of Russian

writers, attested to the fact that Dashkova was an active contributor to the journal Noviia Ezhmesiachnii Sochineniia.⁷² These articles mirrored her earlier literary compositions in the Sobesednik as to the reiteration of the basic theme condemning the evil effects of French influence on the Russian way of life. In general her essays were in the form of "letters to the editors". She signed herself "an obedient servant", a popular pseudonym for eighteenth century Russian writers. She preferred an indirect approach and often spoke through another person, sometimes that of an "aunt".⁷³ Primarily, these accounts consisted of fragmentary phrases having the character of aphorisms, and were generally characterized by a moralizing tone.⁷⁴ Dashkova found this literary style the most useful device for appraising the Russian contemporary scene.

For certain Russians, including Catherine Romanovna the events of French political history, especially after 1792, seemed to confirm their prejudices about the baneful consequences of

⁷²Metropolita Evgenie, Slovar' Russkikh Svetskikh Pisatelei. Sootechnestvennikov i chuzhestrantsev, Pisavshikh v Rossii [Moscow, 1845], pp. 157-9.

⁷³In the first issue of the periodical was included a letter from an obedient servant: "K gospodam izdateliam Novikh Ezhemesiachnikh Sochinenii." This article, attributed to Dashkova, was composed of six chapters of "Zapiski tetushki" (an aunt's notes) in which the author's own thoughts and observations were reflected in the aunt's words.

⁷⁴V. P. Semennikov, Materialy dlia istorii russkoi literaturi i dlia slovari pisatelei epokhi Ekaterini II [St. Petersburg, 1914], pp. 31-2.

French education. The events of the French education. The events of the French Revolution reinforced the trend of opinion which asked Russians to be true to themselves and their country. When the full impact of the French uprising had become evident in Russia, Princess Dashkova's assaults against the French culture became most indignant. She wrote to the gentlemen editors of the journal Noviia in 1792 and proclaimed her patriotic slogan: Let the Russians be Russian.⁷⁵ Dashkova denounced her fellow countrymen who always marveled at the foreign achievements, who emulated the European models. She condemned the Russian nobility for their servile adoption of the French fashions, for this stylish way of dressing was only enriching the French merchants, tailors and valets. She asked, could the Russians not see that they were being taken advantage of by these French triflers, swindlers and adventurers who, having made their fortune in Russia, returned to their nativeland, laughing at the foolishness of their Russian imitators? Dashkova saw her people being converted to a breed of lazy and ignorant individuals who would never use their own strength or test their own skills.

Dashkova's generation considered Paris, rather than St. Petersburg, as their capital, but the Princess hoped her article would enlighten her friends as to the true situation in this foreign city they gave their allegiance to. At this time of the French Revolution Dashkova saw France as a depraved nation

⁷⁵The article appeared in the journal Noviia, LXXVII [1792] and is quoted in full in V. P. Semennikov, pp. 32-4.

which was raging towards more evil by the expulsion of all holiness from its land. The inhuman activities of the revolutionaries were endangering the very soul of mankind. These impertinent Frenchmen impudently rejected laws, scorned the beliefs of Christianity and flouted the authority of the monarchical government. The Princess made reference to a comment made by her one-time acquaintance, Voltaire. Many years before he had written of his countrymen: "we are a nation of tigers and monkeys." Dashkova warned her people of the savagery and fierceness of tigers and the contemptuousness and worthlessness of monkeys. The Russians could see the situation as it was in France, but they still insisted upon aping all things French. Dashkova wrote: "But in spite of all this we loved the French, we adopted their customs, their attire, and made monkeys of the monkeys."⁷⁶ The Princess expressed her impatience with those Russians who strove to copy this nation of brigands, convicts and insurgents. Are these the type of people worthy of emulation? she asked, and concluded with the following patriotic adjurations:

"-let the Russians be Russians, and not imitators
 of foolish innovations;
 -let us always be patriots;
 -let us preserve the customs of our forefathers
 who were always steadfast in their Christian
 beliefs, and loyalty to their sovereign;
 -and let us love Russia and Russians, all the more
 so for our peculiarities."⁷⁷

The years 1792 and 1793 were productive years for Dashkova for

⁷⁶Semennikov, p. 34.

⁷⁷Ibid.

she wrote several articles repeatedly castigating the Russian Francomania. Reminiscent of her essay on education in Sobesednik, the Princess again questioned the value of French influence in an editorial letter to the journal Noviia [LXXII, 1793]. Since the French Revolution she had become even more convinced of the Frenchmen's frivolousness, for they had overturned so easily the political arrangements held sacred for centuries. Dashkova implored her fellow countrymen to step back a moment and take an objective look at the French education and its influence in Russia. She asked them to ponder the following questions:

1) Is it proper that a wellborn Russian nobleman be educated by French tutors who, for the most part, did not possess even the minimum qualifications of a teacher? These foreigners had been imported by the Russian gentry, and these Frenchmen, some of them peasants, some criminals who wanted to escape from an unhappy situation in their own land, willingly came to Russia to earn a substantial salary. 2) Does the French language of itself constitute all that is necessary for the upbringing of a nobleman? In other words, Dashkova was attacking all the superficial aspects of the French culture that were so readily assimilated by the Russians. However, education was more than a worship for French fashion for it also demanded the cultivation of morals and virtues, and these were to be found only in the goodness, simplicity and uprightness of the native Russian character. 3) Of what practical use was the French training children received from a tutor who lacked morality, truthfulness and erudition? The French monsieur

simply instilled in his charge a dissatisfaction with the Russian way of life. This training, Dashkova felt, could only lead to the dissolution of the ties of conscious loyalty binding children to parents, friend to friend, and every Russian to his sovereign and fatherland.⁷⁸

In two verses printed by the Academy of Sciences between 1792 and 1793, Dashkova expressed, most vehemently, her indignation at the French uprising, and her own patriotic loyalties. Both poems contained ideas she had outlined in other publications. Catherine Romanovna referred to Paris as a den of thieves, the home of brigands, criminals and insurgents in "Pravilo Rossiianina" (A Russian's Maxim).⁷⁹ She compared old Russia with France in the poem entitled "Mnenie nekoego Rossiianina o edinonachalii" (The opinion of a certain Russian concerning one-man rule). She lambasted France for reproaching Russia's backwardness and superstition, for the France that had thought itself the queen of civilizations had now been reduced to a lamentable shame by the angry uproar of its people. This country now was worth nothing, for all its enlightened science, its rare temples of incomparable art, had been sacrificed at the hands of robbers. Dashkova felt that France had brought infamy to itself by its religious skepticism and riotous brutality against the State. The French had shown contempt for royal authority and had trampled the most sacred laws of God and man underfoot. The

⁷⁸Ibid., 36.

⁷⁹Ibid., 37-8.

Princess characterized France at that time as the embodiment of malice, destruction, dissension, murder, corruption and complete chaos.

In contrast there was Russia with its glorious heritage. Dashkova saw the old native virtues worthy of praise which her country exemplified. Russia stood honorably for it was united under one power on the throne. The Russian people were loyal to their monarch and respected sovereign power. In return for this support, said Dashkova, the Empress Catherine the Great, ruled her lands wisely and as a "loyal mother of Russia". The Princess entreated her compatriots to be proud and to rejoice in the fact the Providence had entrusted the sceptre to such a great woman as Catherine II. But the Russians possessed another quality which made them worthy of admiration and emulation. This was their faith in Orthodoxy, their piety. In a truly nationalistic expression, Dashkova proclaimed the glories of "Holy Russia":

"Blessed are we now! We have one kingdom;
One Pastor and one flock have been given to
us."⁸⁰

The Princess Dashkova was concerned with a search for native Russian virtues as a means for improving the state of society's morals after having been corrupted by the foreign influences. She formulated ten truths which she put forth in an aphoristic manner in a letter to the editors entitled: "Istiny, kotoriâ knat' i pomnit' nadobno, daby sleduiâ onym izbezhat' nes'shchastii"

⁸⁰Ibid., 37-9.

(Necessary truths to know and remember so that, by following them, one may avoid misfortune).⁸¹ By following these precepts, Dashkova hoped the people would overcome the idleness and drunkenness which had resulted from the foreign influences and which were perniciously disturbing the general welfare. Dashkova felt the population had been immersed in the French nihilism and that the young generation flaunted virtue. But the Princess assured the young people that there were natural laws which directed men's lives and she expressed this in the following maxim: Man has a God-given faculty of reason so that he may understand and distinguish good from evil, and may foresee the consequences of one and the other.

Dashkova recognized that among fashionable Russian noblemen there was a flagrant disregard for honest work, and an obvious dissatisfaction with their situation. This had led to a constant and impatient striving for a status for which they were unworthy. She put forth this axiom concerning the problem: All people are bound to accept their state in life and fulfill their post and duty with patience. Being true to one's God-given vocation in life would provide a more generous reward than would any gratification of a selfish desire for fame and fortune. People should be concerned, the Princess stated, with realizing their obligations of obedience and loyalty to the sovereign, landlord and their superiors. One of the most prominent evils within Russian society

⁸¹This article was printed in the journal Noviia, CXIV [1795] and summarized in Semennikov, pp. 34-5.

was idleness, and the ancient teachers had considered sloth as the mother of vice. Dashkova suggested that the best way to avoid idleness was to occupy one's leisure hours with reading or some other useful activity. These were but a few of the ten commandments the Princess suggested as guiding principles for society.

Princess Dashkova, as a Russian intellectual and writer, saw her mission to be a critical appraisal of her country's way of life. She considered society to be infested with evils which had penetrated from Western Europe. There was only one way to overcome the immorality of Russian life, and this demanded a reactivation of the native soul, a rediscovery of the national identity. A cultivation of virtue was necessary for a return to genuine civilization. In many instances, therefore, Dashkova wrote about abstract qualities like goodness, truth, loyalty, steadfastness, as the bases for morality. The Princess wrote an essay on this theme for the journal Noviia in 1790: "Otryvok zapisnoi knizhki" (A notebook excerpt). For Dashkova, "virtue was no different from equity; it was doing justice, and therefore doing good, to God, to one's fellow men, and to oneself. She advised her readers never to be ashamed of performing a good deed, for a virtuous act was its own reward. Pleasure was derived from the knowledge that such a worthy action had been performed. The virtuous man, she said, was guaranteed his reward if he fulfilled his obligations in all situations. In this way his conscience

would possess the interior evidence of the goodness of his life and this was a treasure that could not be affected by external circumstances. Here Dashkova was advocating the principle of enlightened self-interest.

She continued with similar axioms. Dashkova wrote that it was necessary to develop moderation in one's desires in order to attain independence. Here she spoke out against the excesses of those who were tied to fashionable life. It was necessary to avoid these extremes of luxury and to have proper regard for sincerity, friendship, probity and honest service. Man could be truly free only by leading a genuinely good life. Dashkova also put forth some maxims for the relationship between master and servant. A successful manager, she stated, had to acquire the love and confidence of his subordinates before he could begin to direct them. In return, his workers would be loyal to him and would respect his authority. The laborers were directed by the manager not for the profit of the master. Rather their subordination was for their own good and for the more efficient application of their services and skills to benefit the general welfare of the community. Dashkova felt that if this type of relationship would be established between superior and inferior, then man's humanity would be guaranteed.⁸²

The dominant interests of the nobility in the latter part of the eighteenth century were chiefly cultural. The nobles had

⁸²Semennikov, 35.

been freed from compulsory service and thereby had been given the leisure in which to be occupied with culture. Also, now that the French civilization had taken such deep root among the upper classes, they turned their attention to a development of a native culture to compete with the foreign model. They were primarily concerned with literature and theatre, and many of the fashions were set by the Empress herself. Catherine II, in particular, fostered the theatre in Russia, and she often encouraged playwrights to produce works for the native theatre. The Empress asked Princess Dashkova to write a play for performance in Catherine II's private theatre in the Hermitage. Among her contemporaries Dashkova enjoyed a definite reputation as a writer, and as early as 1772 Novikov had included her in his dictionary of Russian authors.⁸³ However, of her separately published works, the Princess is best known for the satirical comedy entitled Toisîôkov (Mr. This and That) which she wrote at the Empress's request. The five act play appeared in Rossiiskii Teatr in 1788.⁸⁴

The play was a satire on St. Petersburg society; it typified the haut-monde of the capital. Dashkova recorded in her Memoirs

⁸³ Nikolai Novikov, Opit' Istoricheskago Slovariâ o rossiiskikh pisateliakh [St. Petersburg, 1772], p. 55. A short paragraph is written about the Princess: "Dashkova, Princess Catherine Romanovna, of the court of her Imperial Highness; Lady-in-Waiting, and order of St. Catherine; she wrote verses; of them several of fair quality were published among the monthly compositions in Nevinnoye Uprazhnenie (Innocent exercises) in 1763 in Moscow. She is esteemed as one of the most learned of Russian women and a lover of free scholarship."

⁸⁴ Rossiiskii Teatr, XIX [1788], 239-317.

that the main character was taken straight from real life in order to point out what this type of person was really like and so that others could avoid the snares set for them in the fashionable world.⁸⁵ Her hero, Mr. Toisiokov (so named as not to offend anyone in particular), was portrayed as the typical court functionary, extremely indecisiveness, completely empty and incapable of serious work. Dashkova fit Toisiokov's name to his personality, for as the character Dvoretzkoi described him: "My gentleman was bored in service and now is bored in retirement; he wants this and that, and orders this and that, and again changes his mind." The old lady Reshimova condemned her nephew for his constant oscillations and she blamed this indecisiveness on the lack of free will. Toisiokov was completely happy when people flattered and played up to him. But Dashkova did not portray Toisiokov as a foolish man, for his hesitations were prompted by philosophical considerations. He feared having to repent once a deed had been done if he did not properly reflect on the consequences beforehand. Often the hero expressed intelligent and sharp-witted ideas, but in these instances, Reshimova detected, he was merely reiterating completely undigested thoughts taken wholly from foreign books. Here Dashkova criticized those in society who had absorbed foreign ideas, but who never stopped to reflect on their true meaning nor to apply them to their own lives. As a result, the Princess characterized Toisiokov as a young blood lacking a soul. Reshimova denounced her relative as a puppet, for although

⁸⁵Fitzylon, Memoirs, pp. 239-40.

he had the appearance of a human being, in reality he was merely an artfully constructed animated doll. With these qualities, Dashkova said, Russian society was but a class of worthless milk-sops which resembled toys that talked.

Dashkova's comedy made a psychological study of another personality, completely contrary to Toisiokov. This person was his wife's aunt, Reshimova, whose name in itself echoed her dominant characteristic: decisiveness.⁸⁶ Reshimova personified the purity and honesty of a less corrupted age. She was an elderly widow and loved the old ways. The language she spoke was a remarkably pure Russian, full of Russian proverbs and expressions. In contrast, her nephew spoke the fashionable mixture of French and Russian. The old woman was a powerful personality with a head on her shoulders. In summarizing her life, Reshimova admitted that she had married at the age of fifteen, and although her husband had been an intelligent man, she had dominated him completely. This situation was strangely reminiscent of Dashkova's own relationship with her husband. However, it seems the years had led her to a realization that this had been wrong, for through Reshimova she declared that husbands should decide all important matters. Wives were obliged to obey their spouses, she stated, but they should also be permitted the freedom of their own opinions, if only in trifles. Dashkova had once again assumed the guise of an aunt through whom she indirectly expressed her own convictions. But even more, in this play, Reshimova emerged as

⁸⁶The Russian root for the name is the verb reshat'--reshit' meaning to make up one's mind.

an autobiographical figure. Either deliberately, or unintentionally, several of Dashkova's own personality traits had been portrayed in the person of Reshimova. Among others, she was a domineering woman who liked to assume leadership in a situation. Reshimova was adept at financial matters for she straightened out her nephew's tangled affairs as Dashkova had disentangled her own estates and the finances of the Academy.

The main action of the play revolved around the two persons of Toisiokov and Reshimova, but there were several bordering plots and minor characters. Worthy of mention was the valet Lafler. He was pictured by Dashkova as a scoundrel who had swindled Toisiokov out of his money, and had scandalously destroyed the family by his intrigues. Lafler was, of course, a Frenchman who revealed his maliciousness in his soliloquy: "There is not a trick in the bag that Monsieur Lafler will not use to get hold of the wealth that has been accumulated by this family. . . . A blessing has revealed itself to me; I will weave a plot that will bring me profit; then I will return to Paris and will laugh at this family." Once again the Princess had returned to the theme that the Russians were being made fools of by their undying devotion to the French culture.

All of Dashkova's writings professed her profound patriotism. Her overriding concern had been the search for a national identity. She had criticized the evil effects of the foreign influences, especially French, on the Russian way of life, and she had found

a solution to the problem of the weakening of society's moral fibers in the strength of Russia's native virtues. Her writing mission had consisted of first, informing her readers of the dangers they were exposed to by their thoughtless, fashionable lives; and second, advising them on a road to correction through the renewal of a genuinely Russian existence.

CHAPTER V

PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN ACADEMY

The year 1783 brought still another honor and mark of favor to Princess Dashkova. As the Empress and Catherine Romanovna were strolling through the garden at Tsarskoe Selo one day, they conversed on the topic of the Russian language. They both agreed on the richness and beauty of the Slavic tongue, and Dashkova expressed her surprise that the Empress had not as yet established a Russian Academy for the development of the native language and literature. The Empress confided that she had wanted such an Academy for years, and although the necessary orders had been issued, she did not know why they had not been acted upon. In reply Dashkova said that since models for such an institution already existed, it would be an easy matter to found this type of establishment. Catherine II immediately insisted that the Princess herself sketch out a plan. In obedience, Dashkova drew up a short, imperfect draft for an Academy of the Russian language, submitting it to her sovereign the next day. Within a short time, the outline was returned to the Princess, confirmed with the monarch's signature, and accompanied by an Order-in-Council appointing Dashkova as President of the newly established Russian Academy. Once again, her attempts to prevail on the Empress to

select another President went unheard, and Dashkova submissively assumed the dual role of head of the two Academies.

The short plan for the Russian Academy was based on several models, among others that of the Académie Française founded by Richelieu in 1635. This Academy was a literary society dedicated to the promotion of national languages and literature. Among its tasks were the following: to establish the canons of literary taste, to facilitate the correct growth of the vernacular, to inspire criticism of an author's work, and to compile a French dictionary. In her outline Dashkova proposed similar tasks for the Russian Academy. Specifically, she saw its aims as the purification and enrichment of the Russian language, the settlement of the word usage and the peculiarities of the language in oratory and versification.⁸⁷

Due to several drawbacks there had been a slow maturation of the native Russian literary language. For centuries Church Slavonic had served as the written language, but since the beginning of the seventeenth century there had been an increasing disparity between Church Slavonic and the written Russian used for secular purposes. Russian writers had become excessively dependent on European models, and many foreign idioms had been incorporated into the Slavic tongue. Earlier in the eighteenth century Mikhail Lomonosov had been concerned with this problem. He saw the necessity of transforming Slavonic into a modern Russian literary language. The best way to protect the Russian

⁸⁷Sukhomlinov, I, p. 14.

tongue from the intrusion of foreign elements, and to guarantee the development of the language along national lines, was to retain the best and most widely used expression of Church Slavonic as a base. Slavonic would be the fund from which new words could be coined, and the foundation for rules of grammar. In 1757 Lomonosov produced a Russian grammar which was an important contribution to the evolution of a modern Russian language. He was a legislator of literary style as well. He divided the styles of writing into three, each demanding the use of a different vehicle of expression. The High style employed pure Church Slavonic for its odes, epics, public speeches, etc. A mixture of Church Slavonic and the contemporary colloquial Russian was appropriate for dramas, satires, tragedies and historical writing in the Medium style. Finally, the Low style of comedies, songs and personal correspondences found the use of pure Russian words proper to it. In 1748, Lomonosov produced a text on rhetoric and poetry. He elucidated some rules of versification by adopting the heavy-handed classical style.

Princess Dashkova was familiar with Lomonosov's innovations, and realized their great value and importance. However, she was also aware of the fact that in 1783 there was still a need for alterations in the Russian language. As a creator of the Russian Academy and as its President, she set as her goals as the following: 1) the compilation of a dictionary of the Russian language and a Russian grammar and rhetoric; 2) the establishment of a

theory of prose and poetry; 3) the enrichment of the Russian language through translations of the outstanding productions of foreign writers. Dashkova's inaugural address before the members of the Imperial Russian Academy [Oct. 21, 1783], reflected her concern over the forging of a Russian literary language and her sincere belief in the wealth of the Slavic language.

"The riches and copiousness of our language are well known to you. They are such as will render justice to the various treasures of antiquity. . . . But with such resources we have to lament the want of determinate rules--rules for the inflexions of words, as well as an authorized definition and limitation of their meaning. Hence have arisen those varieties of construction, those improprieties of imitation and foreign idiom which have hitherto disfigured and debased our language. The object of the establishment of the Imperial Russian Academy is to render it perfect, to raise it to the standard of elevation suitable to the glorious age of Catherine II.

"But, gentlemen, the first fruits of our endeavors, the first offering to be laid at the feet of our immortal Sovereign, is a grammar of our language, exact and methodical, and a rich and copious dictionary."⁸⁸

In her speech Dashkova enlarged the scope of the Academy, saying its members must also occupy themselves with the historical monuments of the motherland. She extolled the virtues of the Russian past in the following words:

"The different memorials of antiquity spread over the vast surface of the Russian Empire, our numerous chronicles, those precious records of the great actions of our ancestors, of which few of the nations of Europe now existing can boast an equal number, present a vast field for our exertions. . . . The

⁸⁸Harford Montgomery Hyde, The Empress Catherine and Princess Dashkov [London, 1935], pp. 182-3.

lofty deeds of our princes, the exploits of the past and the present ever memorable age, present an almost boundless range of subjects worthy of our labour."⁸⁹

In essence, the Russian Academy, devoted to the study and development of the Russian language and literature, was not a new conception. Indeed, it may be considered an offspring of the Sobesednik for there is a close proximity of the two in terms of fundamental aims. They appeared on account of one and the same enlightened aspiration: to raise the level of the native literary language and consequently, the Russian literature in order to disseminate education in society. For some time prior to the publication of the Sobesednik several Russian literary figures like Fonvizin, Kniazhnin and Derzhavin, had begun to agitate for the popularization of a new poetical style to replace the solemn odes and dull verses that were so unbearable. They favored substituting these with something more lively and candid, tinged with deft joking. One of these poets, Derzhavin, attempted to give his poetry this new direction and produced the ode entitled Felits. Here he expressed his high thoughts with warm feelings and a refined form that was colored by good-natured satire. Dashkova recognized in these verses a basis on which a modern Russian literary style could be developed. She featured this poem in the first edition of Sobesednik.⁹⁰ Now, with the establishment of the Russian Academy, the work on linguistics,

⁸⁹Ibid., 183.

⁹⁰IA. Grot, "Sotrudnichestvo Ekaterini II v Sobesednike Kniagini Dashkovoi," Sbornik, XX [1877], 525-6.

versification, rhetoric, etc., could be expanded to an even greater degree.

Before Dashkova could begin to actuate her program for the Academy, she had to insure a stable organizational structure and a group of competent members willing to work for the institution's goals. The Academy cost the empire little in comparison to its potential value. The Empress already graciously contributed an annual sum for the translation of classics, and Dashkova was able to cover almost all the necessary costs of the maintenance of the Russian Academy from this government subsidy. The Crown was bound to pay only an additional 1,250 rubles for casts and medals which Dashkova used to reward the services of her subordinates. Having the finances settled, the Princess chose the men she felt would be capable members of the Academy. They were, for the most part, from the upper classes of society, educated in literature and science and, of course, well-versed in the Russian language. Among the original academicians were Ivan Shuvalov, Fonvizin, Derzhavin, Kniazhnin and Boltin.

Although the Empress was in favor of encouraging native Russian literature, she did not want to see the cessation of the translations of foreign works. The Empress had donated in the past much money for this project, but this was usually pocketed by the translators and the work left undone. Dashkova suggested that an organized institution like the Russian Academy could continue effectively the work of translation. The members were

commissioned to do the job, and they enlisted the assistance of the gymnasium students at the Academy of Sciences.

The academicians were deeply concerned with the intricacies of Russian grammar, especially orthography. As a definite starting point to be steadfastly adhered to, Dashkova suggested taking the rules of spelling established in Lomonosov's grammar. In addition, they could refer to the separately published rules in the book by the translator Svetov.⁹¹ All decisions would have to be ratified at Academy meetings. Going deeper into the properties and peculiarities of the Russian language, Dashkova turned the attention of the Academy members to the introduction of two new letters to the alphabet. There was a need for letters expressing the sounds corresponding to the Latin or German "g", and for the sound of "ë" (iö) in words like folka. These new letters were not the personal inventions of the Princess, but she encouraged the linguistics specialists of the Academy to create them. In a short time the academicians declared the establishment and legality of these innovations.⁹²

By far the most important undertaking of the Russian Academy was the compilation of the first Russian dictionary. Dashkova considered this work to be of first priority, and she quickly got it underway. The academicians agreed on the format of the voluminous work: "the first dictionary of the language had to be

⁹¹Vasili Svetov's book entitled Brief Rules for the Study of Russian [1790].

⁹²Sukhomlinov, I, p. 42.

etymological in order to show, and even find, the roots of words."⁹³ Tracing the origin and development of a word was the only sure way of authenticating its true meaning, and especially its native Slavic beginnings. The derivative system was diversified and complicated and demanded an orderly division of labor. Dashkova organized three departments: grammatical, explanatory, and editorial. Her fellow members were distributed among these departments by election to office. There was a special section assembled by the Princess for the explanation of technical words used in science, art, handicrafts, industry and similar areas of specialization. Under her chairmanship, this section met at her home in Kirianovo, outside of St. Petersburg. The results of their labors were presented weekly at the general meeting of the Academy, for confirmation and ratification. In all the work on the dictionary, Dashkova insisted on a systematic compilation, with work evenly distributed among the members, and prompt delivery of assignments.

The President gave room for little dissent or deviation from her plans for the dictionary. There were some members of the explanatory division who felt it unnecessary to include words of uncommon usage and of such meanings that they were difficult to explain with exactness. In Dashkova's opinion, these words were not only valuable as comparisons to contemporary words, but also as clues to expressions found in various spheres of ancient

⁹³Fitzylon, Memoirs, p. 220.

Russian history, legislative monuments, etc.⁹⁴ Her paramount concern was to establish a genuinely Russian language, and the suggestion to omit any truly Slavic words was completely unacceptable to her.

Dashkova's heavy-handed direction proved profitable, for the work progressed so rapidly that the first volume of the great undertaking was published in 1789. In all, the Slovar' Rossiiskoi Akademii, raspolozhennii po slovoproizvodnomu poriadku (Dictionary of the Russian Academy, arranged in etymological order) consisted of six volumes containing more than 43,000 words and published over the period from 1789 to 1794. The swiftness with which the work appeared, and Dashkova's zealousness, were the object of mockery by some of her contemporaries, and the etymological order of the dictionary brought her unpleasantness from the courtiers who found its use inconvenient. A fellow countryman wrote the following derisive verse, sneering at Catherine Romanovna's role as President of the Russian Academy:

"The French dictionary is composed of two volumes
And forty people worked on it for half a century.
The Russian dictionary ripens in two years
And only two people are working on it.
A Russian woman and a Polish man
Have produced two stone volumes in a year."⁹⁵

The Empress herself congratulated the Academy members and their President for "the stupendous work which the Russian Academy

⁹⁴ Sukhomlinov, I, p. 41.

⁹⁵ V. I. Semevski, "Kniāginiā Ekaterina Romanovna Dashkova: kharakteristicheskiā svedeniā o nei," Russkaia Starina, IX [1874], 420.

has just sent forth into the world."⁹⁶ Her felicitations were tempered by pointing out several pitiable errors which appeared in the preface to the work, and in general, Catherine was displeased with the dictionary. There were several reasons for her displeasure. First, the order was not alphabetical, but etymological, and the Empress found this a cumbersome arrangement. Secondly, there was her equivocal attitude to the Russian Academy itself. Although she had, at its inception, taken interest in the Academy and its projects, her enthusiasm waned as she became more and more involved in foreign affairs. The most obvious reason for her unhappiness with the production of the Academy dictionary was because the Empress herself was involved in a comparative dictionary (The Comparison of all the Languages in the World) to be published under her direct supervision. This dictionary was begun in 1784 and was in direct competition for recognition abroad with the dictionary produced by the Academy.⁹⁷ This seems to reflect an undercurrent of jealousy between the Empress and her devoted servant, Princess Dashkova.

The Princess was not phased by these criticisms. She felt it would be better that the Russian Academy dissolve than to succumb to the mockery of those compatriots who, for the most part, were ignorant of their own language and thus did not realize

⁹⁶Letter from Catherine II to Dashkova [July 21, 1789], in Bradford, Memoirs, II, p. 87.

⁹⁷Fitzylon, Memoirs, p. 221.

that there was a need for improvement. She encouraged her subordinates to continue their undertaking diligently, for the benefit and glory of their language.⁹⁸ As a result, the Academy's dictionary was not a failure. To correct the main criticism of the dictionary, an alphabetical listing of words was begun, and between 1806 and 1822, six new volumes appeared.

Dashkova deserves much of the credit for this outstanding accomplishment of the Russian Academy. She took part in the compilation of the dictionary, and in all the preliminary work for its publication. She examined the lists of words submitted, sending these collections back with her own comments appended. As the work for the series had been distributed, she herself assumed the task of assembling all words under three letters of the alphabet (А, В, С). This collection numbered more than 700 words that were featured in the dictionary under these letters. Also, Dashkova reported on many expressions concerned with politics, government and morals, listed under various letters of the alphabet.⁹⁹

The Princess's definitions of terms designating moral qualities were received with gratitude and acclamation by the academicians. It seems only natural that she would be involved in work of this nature since she was often concerned with the immorality of society and strove in several ways to correct the

⁹⁸Sukhomlinov, I, pp. 41-2.

⁹⁹Fitzylon, Memoirs, p. 235.

situation. Among Dashkova's definitions included in the dictionary were the explanations of the words "virtue," "friend" and "friendship." She defined "virtue" as the quality contradictory to vice. It was that capability of the soul to deal equitably with natural laws and the principles of faith. This obliged man to fulfill his duty in relation to God, as to himself and those near him. Here, as in her article "Otryvok zapisnoi knizhki," Dashkova equated virtue with justice.¹⁰⁰

In Dashkova's terms a "friend" was a person of one soul with another. He was a faithful partner in good luck and misfortune. Friends were united by similar morals, and even more so, by comparable rules of honesty. She defined "friendship" as: "reciprocal love, founded on respect and confidence; it is generated by an emotional experience and involves honesty towards another person."¹⁰¹ Those bound in friendship possessed similar dispositions. There could be no limitations placed on the confidence and respect they felt for one another, and these two virtues conceived the love and affection they shared. A true friend, said Dashkova, was sincerely concerned about all the happiness or sorrow experienced by his associate, and sometimes he even felt these emotions stronger than the friend himself. Once again, Dashkova returned to berate hypocrisy, duplicity and ignorance. She mentioned how some people "spoke of friendship and bowed with

¹⁰⁰ Sukhomlinov, I, p. 47.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 44.

friendship" but they did not really feel comfortable in this emotion. They were not prepared to make the sacrifices which genuine friendship sometimes required. Nor were they prepared to be firm and constant in a sincere relationship. Often, out of misunderstanding, people took the qualities of partiality and haughtiness as friendship. But, Dashkova asserted, a truly friendly love was unselfish; it was founded in virtue and was independent of circumstances like differences in age or sex. This type of honest friendship would withstand all time and trials.¹⁰² In all her works, as in this more than adequate definition, Dashkova had recalled not only that which she had read elsewhere, but also those things she herself had felt and experienced.

The last piece of Academy protocol to which Dashkova's signature was ascribed was dated March 3, 1796. After the death of Catherine II, the Princess received an imperial decree [Nov. 12, 1796] relieving her of all her official duties. Undeniably, she had done a good job, as her last report to the Empress of her accomplishments while President of the Russian Academy showed. She had directed the construction of the Academy building, and had added a considerable sum to the annual income of the Institution. Some of this profit had been invested in a Foundling Hospital. The Academy now had a sizeable library, and the dictionary had been completed and published. "All this in a

¹⁰²Ibid., pp. 44-5.

matter of eleven years."¹⁰³ During her tenure of office, there had been 364 meetings of the Academy, out of which Dashkova personally attended 263. To those at which she was not present the Princess sent messages and instructions for carrying on business. Her zeal for the goals of the Academy did not diminish, even though she was no longer in St. Petersburg. When the work for the compilation of the alphabetical dictionary was undertaken, she assisted by researching the meanings of words for two letters, and did editing and corrections for the new project. A note from the Russian Academy members was sent to the Princess on May 11, 1801. They remembered the intelligence, talent, energy and respect for science and human dignity with which Dashkova had administered the Academy, and asked her to resume her post as head of the institution: ". . . giving testimony to your exemplary zeal for the Russian language and earnest care for the prosperity of the academy, become once again its head."¹⁰⁴ However, Dashkova declined the honor, preferring to live the rest of her life in the quiet of her country home.

¹⁰³ Fitzylon, Memoirs, p. 219.

¹⁰⁴ Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Polovtsov, Russkii Biograficheskii Slovar' [New York, 1962], VI 128.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Princess Dashkova permitted the posthumous publication of a tragedy by the playwright Kniazhnin entitled Vadim Novgorodskii, in the 1793 edition of Rossiiskii Teatr. The Empress Catherine saw in this work a subtle attack on the monarchical institution. As a result the production of the play was prohibited, all copies in circulation were seized, and Dashkova received a severe reprimand for directing its printing. It was not long after this incident that Dashkova withdrew from active participation in the Academy of Sciences. In 1794 the Princess was granted a two year leave of absence by the Empress. After the death of Catherine II [Nov. 6, 1796], Dashkova was dismissed formally from her dual posts in the Academies by the new Emperor, Paul I. Subsequently she was exiled to Korotovo, a village in the Novgorod province. This punishment was later mitigated, and by 1801, with the accession of Alexander I to the Russian throne, Dashkova was once again received at the court and permitted to live without restriction. She spent the remainder of her life at Troitskoe, her favorite estate outside of Moscow. In her last years she busied herself with the writing of her

memoirs. Princess Dashkova died in 1810 and was buried in the village church at Troitskoe.

Throughout her life Princess Catherine Dashkova had drawn attention to herself. As an infant she had been held at the baptismal font by the Russian Empress and Grand Duke. As the niece of the Imperial Chancellor, her adopted father, she received a remarkable education. She had had a handsome figure and a natural aptitude for learning, and through her own ambitious efforts she had become one of the most accomplished young women at the imperial court. At the age of fifteen she had entered into an intimate relationship with the Grand Duchess Catherine. In 1762, the teenaged Catherine Romanovna had played a conspicuous role in the coup which brought the great Catherine to the Russian throne. However, her conceit, uncontrollable energies and lack of tact had obliged the young Princess to retire from public life by the age of twenty-one.

Princess Dashkova had then determined to build a new reputation for herself. The next fifteen years had been spent in improving her landed estates and traveling through Western Europe for the benefit of her health and her own education. While abroad she had visited the principal European courts and had mingled with the most outstanding representatives of the Western intellectual world. Having been exposed so directly to a foreign culture, a certain sense of Russian national pride and consciousness had developed within her. This new emotion she had carried

home with her to be later implemented in her Academy and publishing activities.

Dashkova's remarkable personality had won her renown in the foreign capitals and she had returned to Russia a celebrity not to be ignored. At the age of thirty-seven she had become the first woman Director of the Academy of Sciences and had done an excellent job in revitalizing the almost defunct institution. The same year she had been appointed President of the Russian Academy of Languages and Literature, the establishment of which she herself had initiated. During her dual tenures of office she had worked to encourage a Russian national spirit and the spread of enlightened ideas in her fatherland. Dashkova had supported scientific research, promoted the first dictionary of the Russian language, and added considerably to the number of Russian publications in circulation. Her own literary contributions had vocalized her ideas on enlightenment, education, morals, Russian national consciousness. Her writings were not always independent and original, but they had significant value because they helped to express the opinions of a small group of patriotic thinking intellectuals at that time. Considering the yoke and prohibitions placed on women in that era, both socially and educationally, Dashkova had been able to tear away from the barriers and assert her own capabilities. Princess Catherine Dashkova had possessed the energy, mettle and intelligence with which to make her own place within the ranks of the Russian intellectuals of the eighteenth century.

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