This attractively-presented volume is yet another instance of the work of publishers in making available in a more accessible form primary sources which it was hitherto necessary to seek among dusty collections of the Hakluyt Society publications. Here we have in a single volume accounts of the travels of Richard Chancellor, Anthony Jenkinson and Thomas Randolph, together with the better-known and more extensive narrative contained in Giles Fletcher's Of the Russe Commonwealth and Sir Jerome Horsey's Travels. The most entertaining component of this volume is certainly the series of descriptions culled from George Turberville's Tragicall Tales, all written to various friends in rhyming couplets. This was apparently the sixteenth-century equivalent of the picture postcard, through apparently Turberville was not having a wonderful time! English merchants evidently enjoyed high favour at the court of Ivan IV, but Horsey's account reflects the change of policy brought about by the accession to power of Boris Godunov.

Although the English travellers were very astute observers, naturally there are many inaccuracies in their accounts. Horsey, for instance, mistook the Volkhov for the Volga, and most of these good Anglicans came away from Russia with weird ideas about the Orthodox Church. The editors have, by their introductions and footnotes, provided an invaluable service. However, in the introduction to the text of Chancellor's account it is stated that his observation of the practice of debt-bondage is interesting in that "the practice of bondage by loan contract did not reach its full development until the economic collapse at the end of the century and the civil wars that followed". My own researches in the fifteenth century have indicated that, although no official cognizance was taken of it until the 1550 Sudebnik, debt-bondage (Kabalyne kholopstvo) was already well developed at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

This volume is a welcome addition to similar work done elsewhere; Frank Cass & Co. are currently publishing their "Russia through European eyes" series, and an attractive facsimile edition of Giles Fletcher's work has been issued by the Harvard University Press. Now we have the accounts of the principal English travellers to reach the courts of the sixteenth-century tsars in this very convenient format.

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The process by which Russia became a multi-national and colonial empire has been a much neglected subject in both Russian and Western historiography. In the 19th century a few accounts of the military conquest of some areas (mainly the Caucasus) were published; Soviet historians have dealt (more or less adequately) with some features of the economic incorporation and exploitation of non-Russian peoples by the Russian ruling classes and their government. But all the accounts are uncritical, biased, and too frequently resting on
inadequate documentation. As long as access to the archival sources on this aspect of Russia's past remains restricted for both Russian and foreign historians, the definitive study of the process of empire building and colonization may not be written.

It is, however, possible not only to write a fairly complete account of military and diplomatic moves involved in the conquest, but also to formulate the broader issues and identify the problems which arose as a consequence of building a multi-national empire. In the last few years several works have been written dealing with the conquest and incorporation of Central Asia; the role played by national minorities and issues in the formation of the Soviet Union has also received its due attention; finally there is a rather impressive body of literature on the history of Poland, Finland, the Baltic states, and the Ukraine under Russian rule. But there has been almost nothing on the conquest of the Eastern and Southeastern borderlands—i.e., the vast steppes beyond the Volga.

In view of this situation it was a good idea of Mr. Donelly to write in English a complete and objective account of the gradual absorption of the territory between the Volga, the southern slopes of the Ural Mountains, and the Caspian Sea and of the reaction on this produced on the part of the indigenous population, mainly the Bashkirs. Candor, however, compels one to say that his efforts have fallen far short of success. The book has a limited use as a clear description of the relationships between the several nomadic peoples involved (albeit based on readily accessible literature) and as a straightforward chronicle of the gradual establishment of Russian control in the first half of the 18th century. But it is a source of much irritation and exasperation that Mr. Donnelly avoids all significant issues, even as the chronicle of military and diplomatic events and the suppression of revolts raises some questions of wider import for our understanding of the nature of the Russian empire.

In the first place, one does wonder why the book stops abruptly in 1740. The excuse given by the author is that he did not wish to repeat Vitevskii's full account of the seminal governorship of I. I. Nepliuev. But would he have only to repeat it? Anyway, for those unable to read Russian even a summary of Vitevskii's hard-to-get-by account would have been valuable. Or take the correct contrast drawn on page 170 between the Anglo-American expansion in the Western hemisphere and that of the Russians into Asia. The difference of principles (and its reflection in military strategy) is barely noted, but its multiple consequences are left out of consideration altogether. Little effort is made to put the incorporation of Bashkiria into its proper chronological and geographical perspective. In the early chapters Donnelly describes the political, military, and diplomatic traditions prevailing in the Southeastern frontier regions before the Russian conquest. Notice is also taken of the rivalries between the nomadic peoples and of Moscow's success in using them for its own advantages. It would have been useful however to consider the situation as an example of the "politics of the steppe" which shaped the actions of all successor states of the Golden Horde, including Muscovy. All this simply means that Mr. Donnelly's book is nothing but an outline sketch of the background to the truly significant problems of the period of the incorporation of the nomadic world into the Russian bodies social and politic. A complete discussion would have also meant dealing with the equally important question of how the methods used for the conquest influenced the patterns of social and cultural assimilation, as well as those of economic and social transformation.

Some minor technical blemishes need to be pointed out. It should have been made clear from the very start that the Ural (river and Cossacks) was identical with the Iaik (river and Cossacks), the latter name having been eradicated by Catherine II because of its association with Pugachev's rebellion.