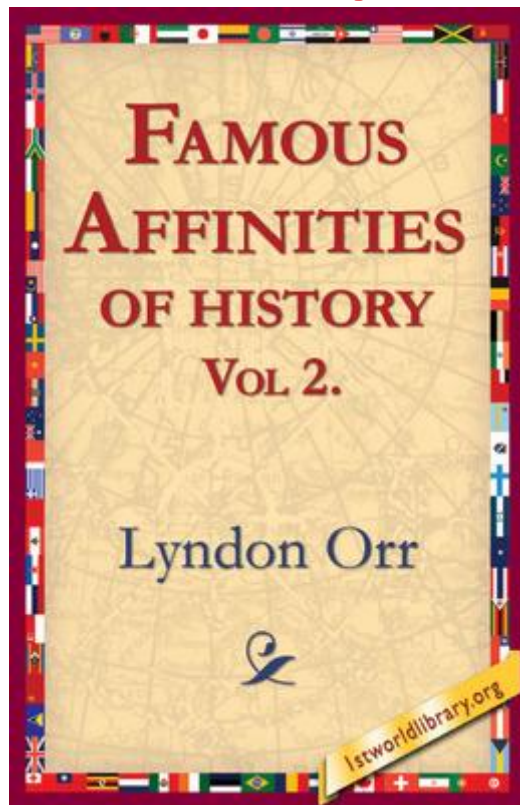


Famous Affinities Of History, Vol 2 - Lyndon Orr



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It has often been said that the greatest Frenchman who ever lived was in reality an Italian. It might with equal truth be asserted that the greatest Russian woman who ever lived was in reality a German. But the Emperor Napoleon and the Empress Catharine II. resemble each other in something else. Napoleon, though Italian in blood and lineage, made himself so French in sympathy and understanding as to be able to play upon the imagination of all France as a great musician plays upon a splendid instrument, with absolute sureness of touch and an ability to extract from it every one of its varied harmonies. So the Empress Catharine of Russia - perhaps the greatest woman who ever ruled a nation - though born of German parents, became Russian to the core and made herself the embodiment of Russian feeling and Russian aspiration. At the middle of the eighteenth century Russia was governed by the Empress Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the Great. In her own time, and for a long while afterward, her real capacity was obscured by her apparent indolence, her fondness for display, and her seeming vacillation; but now a very high place is accorded her in the history of Russian rulers. She softened the brutality that had reigned supreme in Russia. She patronized the arts. Her armies twice defeated Frederick the Great and

raided his capital, Berlin. Had Elizabeth lived, she would probably have crushed him. Author: Orr, Lyndon
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