

bore with him ; and with a great patience, in which there was not one atom of feeling or of kindness, sought to make him a fit successor to his throne.

“Now, M. d’Auban, you can imagine with what feelings that rebellious spirit, that resentful son, that wild and weak young man, must have looked upon the bride which his father had chosen for him—the German bride, who could not speak one word of the Russian language, and who, with childlike imprudence, showed her aversion to many of the customs of Russia, some of them the very ones which Alexis would almost have died to uphold ; who spoke with enthusiasm of the Czar ; who babbled, God forgive her ! of philosophy and free thinking, but loathed the sight of his vices and excesses. In those first days of marriage, of complete ignorance of all that surrounded me, how I rushed, like a fool, where angels, as the English poet said, would have feared to tread ! How I unconsciously sported with the elements of future misery, and thought I could tame, by playful looks and words, the fierce nature of my husband !

“It was a few days after we had arrived at the palace at St. Petersburg, that I received my first lesson in the Greek religion ; and in the evening, whilst conversing with General Apraxin, I laughed at the pains which my instructor had taken to explain to me that the Czar could not be Antichrist, as the number 666 was not to be found in his name. I saw my husband’s eyes fixed upon me with a look of hatred which curdled the blood in my veins. Another time I was listening with a smile to the ridiculous account which one of the Czar’s favorite French officers was giving of the discipline to which the Russian peasants subjected their wives, and of the pride which a true Muscovite woman took in the chastisements inflicted by her lord and master. The word “barbarians” escaped my lips. The Czarovitch started up in a fury, and dealing me a heavy blow, exclaimed—“This will teach you, madame, to turn into ridicule the ancient customs of this nation.”

“I turned away from him with a cry of terror, and from that day I never was free from fear in his presence. When the Czar was in reach I felt sure of his protection, but he was seldom at St. Petersburg or at Moscow for any length of time,

and I was left to the tender mercies of my husband.

“Oh what that life was ; what that life became—every part of it, every moment of it ! I had not one human being about me whom I could trust, except my faithful M. de Sasse—M. de Chambelle, as we called him here—who alone had been suffered to accompany me to Russia. He was of Russian parentage himself, and obtained permission to enter my household. The Countess of Konigsmark was very kind to me, and there was one other person in that great empire who also felt for the Czarovitch’s wife ; one whom many speak against ; one whose life has been as extraordinary, though a very different one from mine ; one who may have been guilty towards others, God only knows, but to me a friend to more than royal friendship true. Never, as long as life and memory last, can I forget the kindness of the Empress Catharine.

“The first day I saw her—it was just after the Czar had recognized her as his wife—my heart was very sore. Disenchantment, that sickness of the soul—a still more hopeless one than that of hope deferred—had come over me. No one had said a word of tenderness to me since I had left my home. The Countess of Konigsmark was not yet in Russia. I had no feeling for or against the new empress. My husband detested her ; but I had espoused none of his hatreds, and was more inclined towards those whom his friends opposed than those whom they favored. When I saw her handsome face beaming upon me with the sunshiny look which, it is said, made her fortune, it seemed as if a ray of real sunshine had, for a moment, shone upon me. I suppose I must have looked very miserable. She had not yet learnt the cold reserve which royalty enforces. The womanly heart of the Lithuanian warmed towards the desolate princess ; she clasped me to her breast, and I felt hot tears falling on my brow. She doubtless guessed what I had already suffered, and the doom that was reserved for me ; for she knew what it was to be wedded to a Komanoff—to live in fear and trembling with a hand on the lion’s mane. She knew how fierce a thing was even the love of one of that race : well might she divine what their hatred must be. Our meetings were not frequent—our interviews short. The