

besought him to be a father to me. He spoke kindly to me. I raised my eyes to his face. It is a handsome one, as you know, but I was struck with the dead coldness of his eye, and the fearful twitch which sometimes convulsed his features. And then he presented the prince to me."

Madame de Moldau paused, hid her face in her hands, whilst tears fell like rain through her slender fingers.

"It is too much for you," exclaimed d'Auban, "too painful, too agitating to go through such a narrative—to speak of that man who was—"

"Who *is* my husband—the father of my child—my persecutor, my enemy, and yet—Oh! sometimes, since I have had time to look back upon the past, since in profound self-abasement I have sunk at our Lord's feet and felt my own need of mercy, I have pitied *him*, and felt that others will have to answer for much of his guilt. Yes, that great man, his father, has dealt cruelly with a nature that was not altogether bad. He cut down the wheat with the tares in a heart as full of wild passion and as fierce as his own, but of a far different stamp. It is impossible to imagine two beings brought up in a more different manner than the Czarovitch and myself. Darkness and gloom had overshadowed his cradle; the rancour which was fostered in his soul from the earliest dawn of reason was joined to a passionate attachment to the customs, manners, religion, and language of the Muscovite nation. Early in life he had felt a burning resentment at the banishment and disgrace of his unhappy mother, Empress Eudoxia. In the visits he obliged me to pay to 'Sister Helen,' the pale wild-looking recluse of the monastic prison of Isdal, I saw that the same passions which influenced him were eating her heart away in that horrible solitude; and what a fatal effect they had upon his character! Yet I was glad; yes, it was a relief to see that he loved her, that he loved anyone. His detestation of the Empress Catharine was as vehement as his sense of his mother's wrongs."

"There is something very fearful," d'Auban said, "in a child's hatred. It is almost always founded on a secret or acknowledged consciousness of injustice, on the feeling that some great injury has been done to itself or to another. Nothing destroys so effectually youthfulness of heart."

"And the prince's hatred extended also in some measure to his father: he looked upon him as an oppressor whose will it was all but hopeless to withstand, but a sort of infatuation urged him on to the unequal struggle. There was not one subject on which the son did not abhor his father's policy. He detested foreign manners and foreign languages, and, above all, foreign innovations. He loathed the sight of the new capital, which had risen up in a day, and taken the place of the beautiful city of his birth—the Queen of the old Muscovite empire. The Emperor's assumption of supremacy in ecclesiastical matters, and the suppression of the patriarchate, were in his eyes acts of audacious impiety. His attachment to theological studies in his youth was a singular trait in his character. He had twice written out the whole of the Bible in his own hand, and was by no means an unlearned man. But at the time of our marriage he was surrounded alternately by his drunken companions and by the clergy of the Russian Church. From a child he was taught to conspire, and urged to carry on a fruitless contest with a master mind and a despotic will which crushed him and raised him up again with contemptuous ease. He was always lifting up his arm against the giant who despised him. Defeated, but not subdued, he maddened in the conflict, and vented his rage on those within his reach. M. d'Auban, do you remember the Indian legend that Therese repeated to us on the eve of New Year's Day?"

"The story of Hiawatha? I noticed at the time that some parts of it seemed to strike you very much."

"It made me think of the struggle I am speaking of. Those stanzas particularly which describe how Hiawatha fought with his father, the ruler of the west wind, to avenge the wrongs of his mother, the lily of the prairie, the beautiful Wenonah. How he hurled at the giant the fragments of jutting rocks:

For his heart was hot within him,
Like a living coal his heart was;
But the ruler of the west wind
Blew the fragments backward from him
With the breathing of his nostrils,
With the tempest of his anger.

Yes, those words made me think of the Czarovitch's struggle against his iron-hearted father, who never loved him, but