

## The Ingle Nook.



Alexandra Feodorovna of Russia.

### The Empress of Russia.

"The happiest woman, like the happiest nation," observed George Eliot, "is (the one without a history." Judged by this standard, the most unhappy woman of all, perhaps, is she who has "history" thrust upon her. Of such is the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna of Russia. She is still young, very young, and very beautiful, but there is a look of pensive sadness about her face that speaks of many heartaches since she left her quiet German home to become the first lady of the largest and most wretched monarchy on earth.

Prior to her marriage, perhaps, no princess in Europe was happier than the Princess "Alix." Her childhood was spent in the quiet Duchy of Hesse, where her father, then a somewhat obscure German nobleman, and her mother, the much-loved Princess Alice of England, lived an almost ideal life. There was no great pomp and show about the palace in the little Duchy—Princess Alice, in writing to her mother, the queen, often spoke of being obliged to forego things on account of the expense—but there was enough wealth for happiness, and there were freedom and peace. Princess Alice delighted in her children, and among them all there was none more winning than the little Alix, who, because of her smiling face, was usually called "Sunny."

Then the inevitable up-breaking that comes to the castles of the great as well as to the homes of the humble, broke in upon the serenity of the quiet life. Princess Alice died, and her children married as soon as they grew up, the elder sister of the Princess Alix becoming the wife of the ill-fated Grand Duke Sergius of Russia, who was so terribly assassinated about a year ago. When she was sixteen years of age, Princess Alix went to visit this sister during the gay winter season at St. Petersburg. At that time there were also four other princesses in the capital, and there was much speculation as to which of all these royal young ladies should command the affections of the young Tzarevitch. The Princess Alix proved to be the one, and before the end of the season she had promised to be the future Empress of the Russian Empire.

Not long afterwards, the Emperor, Alexander III., lay dying in the Crimea. The Princess Alix was summoned to his deathbed, and journeyed thither, then back to St. Petersburg again with the funeral train. Before a week, her marriage with the young Czar took place, a preliminary ceremony being that by which she became a member of the Eastern Catholic Church.

From the first, the Emperor Alexandra Feodorovna, as she was now called, giving up the pretty "Alix" forever, was not a favorite with the Russian people. The keen questions which she asked when called upon to embrace the new faith, did not recommend her; her English blood was a further stumbling-block; moreover, she was exceedingly shy, and in cloaking over her shyness adopted a dignity which was readily mistaken for coldness. As the immediate successor of the brilliant, genial, popular Dowager Empress, she was adversely criticized, and it is not to be supposed that the too evident dislike of the people gave her no heartaches, nor that it in any

way tended to lessen the reserve which she continually drew closer and closer about her.

Then came the troublous times on Russia, and added danger to the Czar—times in which the Emperor and Empress dared not stir beyond the palace gates, and in which every servant within might be suspected of treachery. Little wonder was it that the fair face grew sad, the more especially if there was no foundation for the bitter report that the owner of it was an enemy of the people, and that she persistently urged her husband to uphold the autocracy.

Alexandra Feodorovna has, perhaps, "achieved" nothing in the popular sense of the term. Yet, in her retreat at the palace of Tsarko Selo, she has proved an ideal mother to her five children—surely, under the pressure and anxiety of her life, no small achievement.

### A Letter from the North.

Dear Dame Durden,—Like many others, I have long been a silent, interested member, but having seen your kind invitation to help us, I would like if you, or any subscribers of "The Farmer's Advocate," could tell me how to use the garden huckleberry, or preserve them.

Last spring I saw the seed of huckleberry advertised in the seed catalogue, and thought I would like to try them. I have had great success in growing them. Parry Sound, Ont. ALPHA.

I am not sure whether the huckleberries you refer to are of the same nature as the wild huckleberries or not, but presume that they are. A very good plan for keeping the commercial kind for winter use, and a very simple one, is to keep them in molasses. Pick the berries over, rejecting the poor and broken berries. Rinse carefully, put in sealers, cover with molasses, and seal. Keep in a cool place, and when needed for use, rinse the molasses off, and use like fresh berries. Blueberries, which have a more tender skin, do not keep in this way as well as the huckleberries. I should think the species to which you refer, like the commercial kind, might be canned, made into pies, etc., by stewing and adding a little sugar. It is quite interesting to know that you had such success in growing them. You'll be starting all the Ingle Nookers at a similar experiment, I'm thinking.

### From an Autumn Daisy.

Dear Dame Durden and Chatterers,—May I join your happy circle and chat for a few minutes? I think this corner is one of the most interesting parts of "The Farmer's Advocate," and that a great deal of credit is due to Dame Durden for conducting it in such an able manner.

I especially enjoyed the letters of Sept. 20th. I wonder if Forget-me-not ever had day-dreams of being an authoress? I think she would be successful in that as well as teaching. I can sympathize with Helponabit in her illness. I have had tonsillitis twice, so know what it is like. I hope you have better luck with roses next year, Helponabit.

Have any of you chatterers any little nieces or nephews? I have a little nephew who is almost seven months old; his name is Glen. He has deep blue eyes, and the dearest little dimpled chin! Sometimes when he tries to be very loving, he puts up his hands and strokes our cheeks and cooes. Don't you wish you could see him, Dame Durden? Are we taking up so much space with our letters that you have no room for the long, cheerful talks you used to give us, Dame Durden? I am sure we all miss you. Please find room for another talk as soon as possible.

If Helponabit would like a good recipe for Chili sauce, I could give her one that we all like.

I must close now, as I am a newcomer, and should not take up too much space. If I am welcome, I may come again.

Recipe for Chili sauce: Nine ripe tomatoes, 4 large onions, 1 tablespoonful of cinnamon, cloves, allspice, nutmeg and ginger, 2 tablespoons of salt, 4 cups of sugar, 4 cups of vinegar, 3 red peppers. Chop peppers and onions together, and boil one hour. This pickle is very good, and will keep for a long time. HILLSIDE DAISY.

Oxford Co., Ont.

Certainly, Daisy, come again, and bring your little nephew with you. Am glad

you like the Ingle Nook. I'll be giving you another lecture some of these days; but, as a rule, I like best to stand by and listen, while the rest of you "have a crack."

### A Sensible Letter.

Dear Dame Durden,—How the cool evenings attract us to the Ingle Nook, and we find it a restful change to have the longer evenings and more time to read and chat. I am interested in your sketches on "Successful Women." I have often thought that some mothers are heroines. Some may spend all their time striving to keep their house up-to-date and ready for company, or in making cakes and pies, while very little thought is given to the training of the children. I heard a mother say once that if you just let the children train up themselves, they will turn out as good as other children. Do you think so? There are the puzzling times when one does not know just the best method of punishment. It is certain that the best method will not be found when you are "mad." A little girl, who was to be whipped for being cross, said to her mother, "Wait, now, you are just every bit as angry as I am this minute." Dr. Babcock says, "Think twice, and pray three times before punishing a child." But, there, now, I must stop, or this Ingle Nook will become a mother's parliament, and you will be puzzling your brain how to punish me for writing such a long letter.

By the way, where is Trix? Is she so busy with her Ladies' Aid, she has not time to peep into the Nook. And the "shut-ins," how patient they are! I wonder if they would like some Sunday-school papers, etc., to read this winter. I would be glad to send them some.

Do the Ingle Nookers know that steaming the pumpkin for pies, instead of boiling it, is much better, and the same with custard? I mean a common custard made of eggs, sugar, milk, a pinch of salt and nutmeg. Try steaming instead of baking it, and if you watch to have it done "just right," you will be pleased with the result. I am anxious for some ideas for inexpensive Christmas boxes. RUBY.

Middlesex Co., Ont.

I haven't the slightest objection to our Nook being turned into a "Mother's Parliament" once in a while; in fact, should quite welcome the innovation. Your appeal to me re the training of children struck me as rather funny. However, notwithstanding the sarcasm of the old saw, that "No one can tell so well how to bring up children as those who never had any," I will dare to say that I do think children need a great deal of guiding. Without it I am afraid the most of them might turn out to be a lot of little harum-scarums, like Topsy, who "just grewed." Of course, there is to be found, occasionally, the child of angelic disposition, who never did, and never could do much wrong, and who, therefore, might be left to her own sweet will.

Has it ever struck you that some parents need training too? That has impressed me lots of times, but, perhaps, there I was being "bumptious" again. To refer to a case in mind, have you never known a parent to threaten a child with the doctor? "Here, take this," she says, in administering a dose of some simple medicine. "If you don't, we'll have to send for the doctor, and, oh . . . ! ! ! ! ! " no end to the things he'll do. By-and-bye, there may come a day when the doctor really must be sent for, and, then, think of the terror of the little child-mind, and the consequent harm done to the already weak system by the nervousness and dread brought on by those foolish threatenings. I could mention a few more things, but I'll not, for fear some of you might be asking "What do you know about it, Dame Durden?"

However, I certainly think many mothers are heroines. Wasn't it odd that we just happened to have planned for telling about the Russian Queen-mother to-day?

An Irish editor, reviewing a new schoolbook, says, "The work is chokefull of omissions."

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