

subdued tones and behind closed doors. Sometimes one would read aloud an article not wholly favorable to the Czar, or recite a poem by Pushkin or Chamikon. Those were the days of the terrible Czar Nicholas. Nobody dared to say a word against him in public, but the nobles condemned him in secret. Then came the Crimean War, and the great siege of Sebastopol; and those same nobles freely offered the Czar regiments of serfs gathered from their estates. Thousands of peasants wearing red girdles and red hatbands were torn from their families, armed with guns and axes, and sent forth to do or die, in the name of God and the Czar. These contradictions between men's thoughts and their actions grated on the young girl's feelings, and made her wonder.

Another acquaintance of the Verigos was a Duchess Galitzin, living on a grand estate near Lugovetz in the Starodubov district, in a palace that an emperor might have envied. She was a member of the highest aristocracy, as intimate with the Czar's family as with her own. When Katya was still very young, the Duchess invited Constantine Verigo to take charge of her vast estate as her steward, and Verigo, having but little to do, consented.

He rode to Lugovetz, taking his family with him. Katya now had a chance to see what was considered the highest society; and when they afterwards went to Petrograd, she found herself among the very flower of the aristocracy. The old Duchess had ladies in waiting of various degrees, and innumerable servants and attendants, all graded and classified. Before any one entered her august presence, it was necessary to go through a long series of scrutinies and cross-examina-