

ever left in such helpless abandonment as the Czarovitch's wife. They carried away my infant. They kept him out of my sight. They left me alone shivering, shuddering, pining in solitude, conjuring up visions of terror during the long interminable nights, and nervous fancies without end. Hating to live, fearing to die, trembling at every sound, weary, weary unto death, I lay their thinking of my child in the hands of strangers, deeming that the poison I had been threatened with might be even then destined for him, and the while cannons were firing, and bells ringing, and men carousing for joy that an heir was born to the house of Romanoff. Forty days elapsed and I was at last permitted to see my son. The Czar had returned, and the Empress Catharine brought him in her arms to my bedside. . . . I looked at the little face all the time. She was very patient with me (the Empress), she did not try to stop my weeping. She laid the baby one moment on my bosom, but it was not to stay with its mother. The Czar would not allow his son the possession of the heir to the throne. I was allowed to see him sometimes, not often. That same day I was churched in my bed-chamber, in the presence of the Emperor and Empress. The patriarch performed the ceremony. I went through it with a heart of stone. There was no thanksgiving on my lips, and no gratitude in my heart. I felt as if I was an atheist, and wished myself dead."

"Are you very tired?" anxiously asked d'Auban, frightened at Madame de Moldau's paleness, as she leant back in her chair, and closed her eyes for a moment.

"No; I was thinking of the visits I used to pay to my child at stated times only. How I used to stand by the cradle, covered with ermine, gazing on my sleeping baby, and how when he awoke he turned away crying at the sight of a stranger—of his mother. And on my return to my detested home, what wild dreams I had of escape, of freedom! What vain schemes would flit at those times across my fevered brain of a flight to my own land with my infant in my arms, of hiding in some lone wood, amidst the green hills of my native land, where for one hour I might sit with my child upon my knees, gazing into his eyes. I have heard you pity the slave whose child is sold from her bosom. Alas! I

was almost as much deprived of mine as the poor negress in the slave market of New Orleans. And I dream sometimes even now of soft lips against my cheek, and little hands about my neck, which I never felt, which I shall never feel—Not even as a stranger shall I ever look again on—"

"The Czarovitch's son," said d'Auban, with a strong rising in his heart. It was almost more than he could endure to hearken to this story in silence. He was more deeply moved than she could know. What it was a relief for her to tell, it was agony to him to hear. There are records of human iniquity and human suffering which fill the soul with a burning indignation, which wring it with an intolerable pity, which make us bless God that we have never been tempted beyond what we could bear; that we have never been, like poor Charlotte Corday, for instance, maddened into one of those crimes which almost look like virtue.

D'Auban was thankful that day that the wide Atlantic rolled between him and the royal miscreant who had done such deeds of shame.

"A few more words, and then you will have heard all," Madame de Moldau said, "all that I can tell of the closing scene of that long agony of fear and suffering. I was continually warned of my danger: continually received messages to put me on my guard against eating certain food, or speaking alone to some particular person. The Czarovitch himself had often uttered dark threats, in which I clearly perceived the doom I had to expect at his hands. His hatred of me seemed to grow every day more intense. At last I discovered that a conspiracy against his father was on foot. Evidence of it fell into my hands. His mother, his sister, and his friends, as well as a large number of the Greek clergy, were engaged in it. I was thrown into strange perplexities. Whatever kindness I had received in Russia was from the Czar and his consort, and my soul revolted at the idea of being implicated in my husband's unnatural conduct.

"One day I took courage. We were alone together which was not often the case. I told him of my suspicions, my more than suspicions of the plot he was engaged in. Oh! the look of his face at that moment! I dare not fix my thoughts