

one that touches you nearly. He paused a minute, and then quietly added, "The Czarovitch is dead." She did not start, or faint, or weep. For several minutes she sat still, not knowing what was the kind of feeling which tightened her heart, oppressed her brain, and kept her silent and motionless as a statue.

"Dead!" she slowly repeated. "How did he die?"

"It is a mournful story," the Father answered. "The Prince came back to Russia, as you know, on a promise of pardon; but fresh accusations were brought against him since his return. He was tried, and found guilty."

"Oh! do not tell me that his father put him to death."

"The account given in this paper from Russian sources is, that his sentence was read to him, and that the shock proved fatal to a constitution weakened by excesses. It says he fell ill and never rallied again. It also mentioned that he received the last sacraments before the whole court; that he requested to see his father before his death, and that they embraced with many tears. The French editor, however, throws great doubts on the correctness of this statement, and hints at the prince having been poisoned by his father."

"Oh! surely this must be false. I cannot, cannot believe it. . . . Is it not too horrible to be true? And yet, after what I have seen. . . . Oh! why did I ever belong to them? Why was my fate cast with theirs?"

"You are not obliged; you had better not, Princess, form a judgment on these conflicting statements. Leave the doubtful, the dreadful past in God's hands. Think of it only when you pray, that your husband's soul may find mercy, and that this terrible event may have changed his father's heart."

"He may have repented, poor Prince! He had some kind of faith, and loved his mother. If he had had a wife who had prayed for him then. . . . Oh! my God, forgive me." She sank down on her knees—then suddenly lifting up her head, she asked, "How did this news come? Is it certainly true?"

"Perfectly certain—the poor girl who brought the newspaper from New Orleans also brought a letter from M. Perrier to M. d'Auban, which places the matter be-

yond all doubt. Will you read it, Princess?" "Read it to me," she answered, her eyes filling with tears. "I cannot see." Father Maret read as follows:—

"MY DEAR M. D'AUBAN,—

"A young woman, who says she is your servant, has made a very earnest request that I should state to you in writing that the news contained in the last number of the '*Gazette de France*,' relative to the death of the Czarovitch of Russia, is perfectly authentic. It is most undoubtedly so; notice of this Prince's demise has been received at the Court of France, and their Majesties have gone into mourning. I do not know on what account, nor would your servant tell me why, this intelligence is important to you. I conjecture that it may have something to do with a robbery of jewels belonging to the late Prince's wife, which are said to have been sold in the colony. If any information on that subject should come to your notice, I should feel obliged to you to let me know of it. But I am inclined to believe it an idle story. Wishing you every happiness, I remain, my dear M. d'Auban,

"Your attached and obedient servant,
PERRIER."

"Poor Simonette!" exclaimed Madame de Moldau. "These are then the papers she gave M. d'Auban. This was what she was pointing to when she touched her breast, whilst lying half unconscious on my knees. But what, reverend father, do you suppose was exactly her object?"

Madame de Moldau blushed deeply as she put this question, and as Father Maret hesitated a little before answering it, she said: "Had she, as M. d'Auban, thought overheard our conversation on the night before she went away? Do you think she knew who I am?"

"No doubt that she did, Princess. She told us that she had intended to go to New Orleans to accuse you of possessing stolen jewels, but that having discovered who you are, she went, but with a different purpose. She wished to find out if you were free, thinking, I suppose, that this knowledge might greatly influence yours and M. d'Auban's fate."

"Poor girl, poor Simonette, for his sake, then; but I do not see, I do not know, that it can make any difference. . . . I