

never saw them either pray or work. Singing obscene songs, calling each other the vilest names, quarrelling and fighting, were there daily occupation. Such scenes were generally brought to a close by the abess, or Igumena, appearing on the scene with a kind of crosier in her hand, and condemning both parties to numerous prostrations before her, and to a fine, destined to purchase brandy, of which all drank to intoxication. These daily orgies ended by songs and *hurrahs* in honour of the Emperor Nicolas. This is the way in which the Czernices discharged their obligation to pray for the Emperor and his family, in return for the pension of 7 rubbles a month they received from government.

Such were the Czernices we found at Witebsk, in the convent of the Basilian nuns, whose persecution had commenced six months before our own. Driven from their convent, our dear Sisters had been huddled together into a cold, damp out-house, in the cattle-yard, where they were despoiled of everything, and condemned to the vilest labor in the service of the Czernices. At the time of this catastrophe, the Basilian Community of Witebsk was composed of eighteen Mothers and Sisters, under a holy abess, named *Eusebia Tyminska*, already advanced in years. We did not find her on our arrival; she had already succumbed with four of her sisters under the torments and cruel treatment they were subjected to.

When we entered this abode of sorrow, the commanding officer, in delivering us into the hands of the protopope, who promised to fulfil Siemasko's instructions punctually, offered him also what remained of the little money that had been given us near Minsk, and of which he had made himself the administrator; but the protopope told him to keep it for himself. "God reward you with it, he added, for the fidelity with which you have accompanied these prisoners." They then relieved us of the manacles that bound us two by two; but only to fetter us with chains, which we bore night and day, during the seven long years of our captivity. When we were within the apartment that was to be our prison, the thirteen Basilian nuns we found therein threw themselves at my feet in tears, exclaiming: "We have lost our mother, we are now orphans."

