

~~M. B. ...~~  
DOLGORUCKI

AND

*Library Report - 1927*  
M E N Z I K O F.

A Russian Tale.

1088  
IN TWO VOLUMES.

FROM THE GERMAN OF

AUGUSTUS LA FONTAINE.

From thirst of rule what dire disasters flow!  
How flames that guilt ambition taught to glow!  
Wish gains on wish, desire surmounts desire,  
Hope fans the blaze, and Envy feeds the fire:  
Till Heav'n at length awakes, supremely just,  
And levels all its tow'ring schemes in dust.

SMOLLETT.

VOL. I.

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DOLGORUCKI

AND

516

MENZIKOFF.



LETTER I.

*Fedor Dolgorucki to Gustavus R——.*

Petersburg, 1725.

AT last I am at home, amidst the ice and snows of my native land; but think not, my dear Gustavus, that ambition hurried me from thee. Think not so, I conjure thee, by the recollection of the

VOL. I.

B

happy

happy days of our youth, by the remembrance of all those sublime reveries which so often filled our souls, and elevated us far above this earth, and all the vain projects of its inhabitants.—Reveries!—Thus does the slave of ambition denominate, with a smile of pity, the generous transports of a virtuous soul, which finds sources of happiness within itself. He proceeds obliquely towards his object, and that he calls raising himself in the world. Modest virtue, and the noblest hope of man, that of perfecting himself by his own resources, he regards as an idle dream.

No, my Gustavus, it was not ambition which enticed away thy friend, which tore him from the eternal spring of thy beautiful country, from thy plains enamelled with flowers, from thy woods enlivened by the song of the nightingale, and refreshed by the balmy whisperings of the western breeze :—it is not ambition which  
chains

chains him to this frigid soil, which its scanty herbage cannot cover, where all the sweets of spring are unknown, and where the intense cold of a long dreary winter succeeds to a short burning summer.

The revolutions of this Empire pass before my eyes; but interest me no more than the ordinary events of life. My only wish is for the general happiness of my country; I have no anxiety respecting myself. The Court does not suit me:—what should I do there with a feeling and benevolent heart? That heart would be continually shocked and disgusted amongst souls as cold and obdurate as the ice of the Neva; it would be filled with indignation at the sight of base intriguers practising the worst of means to obtain power, not for the sake of doing good, but that they may overthrow those they dislike, and crush them with the weight of their false grandeur. Only one man of our Court,

Peter the Great, was disposed to benevolence, for his ambition had for its object the public good;—but he is no more: those who have survived him, think only on themselves, and forget the duties they owe to their country. Oh my dear Gustavus! the spectacle I have before my eyes, of unceasing intrigue—of an active and perfidious curiosity exercised over the conduct of others—of that fear and hatred which the courtier tries in vain to dissemble—of those restless anxieties, those tormenting cares, those devouring jealousies, and all the vile passions which are painted in frightful traits on the countenances of their victims—this spectacle has for ever cured me of ambition.

But I must confess, Gustavus, that the love of my country made me forsake you; the feelings of patriotism overcame those of friendship. It is not the climate, it is not the soil where we are born, that constitutes our country. This idea is formed  
by

by the looks full of tenderness, and the affectionate attentions bestowed on us from the moment of our birth, by the voices of our relatives, which make an impression the moment we are capable of distinguishing sound, and which still thrill in our ears at every distance of time and place.

You will smile when you read this, Gustavus—you, who have so often rallied me on the harshness and rudeness of my mother tongue. That it may appear such to you, I can easily imagine; but to me it is the language of eternal friendship, of parental and filial affection, of holy love and piety. If I would pray with respect and fervour, I must employ those accents which to you appear so barbarous, but with which I connect the idea of the first sentiments that animated my existence. Oh, if ever an adored female say to me—"I love thee," may she speak

in that *barbarous* tongue with which my mother blessed me in my infancy!

Your soft sonorous language, Gustavus, will always be foreign to me:—though I know it as well as you do, still it formed not the prattle of my infancy—it was not even the interpreter of our friendship; for in the moment when the sacred enthusiasm of that sublime sentiment inspired us, tears, a clasp of the hand, an expressive look were our only language—we were silent! No, Gustavus, in those moments, when I felt how much I loved you, I could only have expressed my feelings in the language of my mother; for who can love like a mother?—You, my dear Gustavus, may readily comprehend how a single word pronounced in our native tongue, must excite a lively interest for the most insignificant of our countrymen in a foreign land!—The loved accent which we hear, was that which we spoke in our  
infancy;

infancy; it vibrates to the heart, and instantly awakens a thousand endearing recollections. Such, my dear Gustavus, were the recollections which made me abandon the paradise you inhabit, and irresistibly impelled me to revisit this cold and distant region.

I frequently visit my respectable grand-uncle, the old Field-Marshal Prince Basil Dolgorucki. He is the chief of our family, still more by his virtues than by his age. He has the reputation of being morose and severe in his censures, yet every one loves and respects him: he is the comforter of the unfortunate, the refuge of those who are beat down by the storm.

“Why have you returned, my nephew?” said he to me, laying his trembling hand on my shoulder, when I was presented to him before a great assembly at my father’s house. “Do you pant after vain honours, after power and riches? Is your heart  
B 4 already



already tired of love or friendship? Does it cease to beat in unison with the simple pleasures of mild gaiety and cheerful innocence? Are you satiated with the enchanting dreams of youth?"

He remained for some moments in pensive silence, but resumed his discourse in a serious and solemn tone.

"My dear Fedor, I am afraid that the name you bear, will too soon plunge you into the stormy sea of ambition, to be wrecked among its dangerous quicksands. You see here around you all the Grandees of your country; you see in the midst of them, he who is the most powerful of all," pointing to Menzikof. "Ah, Fedor! believe me the brilliant star that decorates his breast, covers a heart full of care and anguish; that ribbon, the insignia of that order which he wears with so much pride, form the only reward of chagrin and unhappiness."

In the evening, after the company withdrew, my father pointed out to me, one after the other, all the family pictures in the hall. For the first time in my life, I contemplated the traits of my ancestors with a lively interest.

“The great name of Dolgorucki\*,” said my father, “requires that you should only live to augment the glory and grandeur of our house. You see here all your ancestors, from the venerable Alexis down to us; they have all done honour to our name; they have all shewn themselves worthy of the sceptre.”

The Marshal smiled, and said to my father—

“Lukisch †, shew him, I beseech you, the only Dolgorucki who lived peaceably,

\* Dolgorucki, in old Russian, signifies the hand of the Sovereign.

† Lukisch, or son of Luke. It is a mark of affection in Russia to address a man thus by the name of his father.

and died tranquilly, without having experienced any of the vicissitudes of Fortune."

He then led me himself to a portrait hung apart, and in a corner.

"He was called Fedor, like you," continued he; "he spent his life in retirement, and thus they have placed his picture. You perceive around him none of the decorations that belong to greatness: all that can be said of him is, that he was happy."

"And there," said my father, somewhat hurt, "is your portrait, Prince Basil; that Marshal's staff does not ill become your hands."

The Field-Marshal turned quickly round to him—

"It is now eight years, nephew Lukisch, since we left Moscow.—One night, we  
were

were obliged to stop in the cabin of a poor peasant. I think I still see that honest man, seated beside his wife, viewing, with emotions of affection and joy, five children, who played around them. His brother entered the hut, having just arrived from the capital: he recounted the dreadful events which had just happened in the Imperial family, and the death of the Czarowitz. Our host turned pale; his wife, trembling, pressed her children to her bosom, and shed a torrent of tears.

‘What do you fear?’ said her husband, embracing her and the children. ‘Are not we *happy and tranquil?*’

‘Ah, uncle!’ you then exclaimed, Luskisch, ‘this man is indeed happy. He may be a husband, a father, and a brother, which the great men of the Court dare not venture to be.’

“When the peasant learned that we were likewise among the proscribed, he said, shaking his head, with an expression of pity—

‘You must be thankful that you are

now free; and will never surely return to the Court.'

"Lukisch, you then seized my hand, and exclaimed, in a feeling tone—

'Ah! never will I return to that abode of misery. I wish to be *happy and tranquil*, and a father, like this peasant.'

"Be so now, Lukisch—here is your son!"

Pronouncing these words, the respectable old man placed me in the arms of my father, and clasped us both in his. I was at last left alone with the Marshal, and before I took leave of him, he said—

"I have been twice precipitated into the abyss of misfortune. Fedor, there has as yet been only one happy Dolgorucki—be you the second."

"What must I do to be so?"

"Maintain yourself independent of the tyranny of ambition," replied he.

I kissed

I kissed his venerable hand, and vowed to follow his counsels, while I pressed to my bosom his noble heart, in which ambition has inflicted profound wounds, and which at last finds repose only on the brink of the tomb. Adieu, my dear Gustavus! adieu!

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## LETTER II.

*Fedor Dolgorucki to Gustavus R——.*

Posket, December, 1725.

READ, Gustavus, and know the happiness of your friend! I exist in a new world—a more blooming spring, a more serene

serene sky than that of your country delights my heart; a more brilliant and milder sun illuminates my life; a purer air surrounds the spot in which I breathe! Gustavus, what was I before? Every thing appears so new, so animated; Nature has no longer any bounds for me: I begin to feel and to understand what it is to live. Formerly, I only breathed, in order to preserve my existence; I vegetated like a plant: until now, I knew not that I possessed a soul.

I wish to explain my feelings, to describe my sensations:—but can you understand me?

My father was desirous that I should live at Court; my relations said a thousand flattering things on my personal accomplishments. I spoke of this to the respectable Marshal, who smiled to see the eagerness with which I sought to avoid honours.

“What

“What would you then, nephew?” said he.

“I wish to withdraw from this place; uncle; every thing disgusts my eyes, my heart, and my principles. It is impossible for me to express sentiments I do not feel; or, under the mask of friendship, to conceal feelings of hatred and contempt. I would combat the enemies of my country openly, and not attack in secret those, of whose faults I am ignorant. I am constantly told that Menzikof opposes our elevation; but let me ask you, my uncle, should we act otherwise, were we in his place?”

“I believe not, my young friend,” replied this candid man. “But you wish to make use of your sword;—be it so: the sentiment is worthy of a Dolgorucki.”

Next day, the Empress granted me permission to join General Matouskin, and to serve under his orders as a volunteer against the

the



the Schamachal\*. I flew to the army, and by the 20th of September, I reached the new fortress of St. Croix, where Matouskin received me like a son. Eight days after, we attacked the savage Tartar hordes. I fought by the side of the General; I rallied some squadrons which the enemy had routed; and making a charge at their head, penetrated into the very heart of the battle.

This violent attack threw the Tartars into confusion, and they were routed in their turn. The infantry followed my dragoons into the enemy's ranks, by which means the Tartars were completely beaten, and fled towards the mountains. The General embraced me in the front of our line, and attributed to me all the honour of the victory.

\* Schamachal, or Schemachal, was the title of the Princes of Dagestan, with whom Russia was then at war.

We pursued the enemy into his capital, Turchan, which we took, and thus terminated the war. Matouskin drew up a report of these transactions, and entrusted it to my care. I wished to avoid this employment; but the General ordered, and I was obliged to obey.

When I had arrived within a few days' journey of Petersburg, I passed two sledges, which were driven with almost as much rapidity as my own. In the afternoon, I arrived at the edge of a lake, which was formed by the overflowing of a river that had suddenly thawed. I stopped at the only hut I could discover in the country, and requested to be furnished with a boat; or, in case that could not be procured, with a guide to conduct me to the nearest bridge. The master of this wretched hovel informed me that the road which was overflowed, was the only one that led to Petersburg; that there was neither boat nor bridge by which this accidental lake could  
be

be passed; that the water would quickly subside, and that the only expedient was to await this event with patience. His wife added, that all the country round was covered in like manner with water, and that I should lose more time by taking a circuitous route, than by waiting until the river returned to its bed.

The sledges I had passed came up soon after me: three ladies occupied the first, and their servants the second. They appeared to be well acquainted with the country, and agreed with the peasant that we had no other alternative but to remain, for a day or two, until the water should subside.

The ladies alighted. They appeared to me to be a mother and two daughters; they were of a noble mien, but I could not discover their faces, as they were veiled. The rich pelisses which they wore, however, indicated them to be persons of distinction.

distinction. We wished to enter the peasant's cabin; but an insupportable odour, which issued from the door, stopped us at the threshold.

"It is impossible to go in here," observed the eldest lady.

"Rascal!" said one of the men in her suite, "find us other accommodation."

"How can he?" said the lady, in a tone of reprimand.

"It is fit he should," the domestic replied, with rudeness, and menaced the poor peasant with his stick.

I held his hand.

"I thank you, Sir," said the lady, with an inclination of her head.—"Will you never learn to be humane? Withdraw!"

The servant obeyed. The trembling peasant kept at a distance: the lady desired him to fear nothing. Her two daughters seated

seated themselves on the ground, beside two dirty children, whom they caressed, saying to their parents, in a sweet and encouraging voice, that they were little angels. In less than two minutes, they brought from their trunks, which remained in the second sledge with their women, a furred bonnet for the peasant's wife, and little silk handkerchiefs for each of the children, which they pinned on them with their own hands.

Having viewed with interest this affecting spectacle of benevolence and gratitude, I began to reflect on the embarrassment of our situation.

“What shall we do?” said I at last. “We cannot return, for our horses are too much fatigued.”

The peasant then informed us, that in the neighbouring forest, at a short distance from his cabin, there were some sheds  
built

built with trunks of trees, and covered with moss; that they were intended to serve as a temporary retreat for the hunters and woodcutters, and would afford us a dry shelter. We mounted our sledges, and were conducted by the peasant to the part of the forest he had mentioned, where we found some huts situated pretty closely to each other. I caused a fire to be lighted in one which appeared to be the best built, and which was furnished with a kind of chimney. I ordered a table, and some portable folding seats, which were in my sledge, to be removed to it, and I made my servants prepare some warm drink. Thither I led the ladies, who appeared to be extremely sensible of my attentions. The eldest daughter seemed to shiver with the cold.

“ Draw near the fire, Maria,” said her mother.

She obeyed, took off her bonnet and  
5 pelisse,

pelisse, and threw back over her fine fair hair, a green veil which before covered her face.—Gustavus, that moment decided the fate of your friend! I became motionless with admiration, while I gazed on this angelic figure! She displayed all the freshness and innocence of fifteen—large dark blue eyes, and a smile sweet as your fancy would assign to angels. I think I may have seen more beautiful women; but she before me could alone impress on my mind the idea of celestial intelligence. I never beheld a look or a smile that could be compared to her's. I was obliged, Gustavus, to pretend to stir the fire, in order to find some occupation that might make me withdraw my eyes from her for a few moments: my looks had already made her blush. I drank from the same goblet with her; there were only two, and her mother and her sister took the other.

Call me not childish in repeating to you all these circumstances. Since then I have drunk out of no other vessel than that  
which

which the lips of Maria touched. You know the impression produced by a fine voice:—it gives charms even to ugliness; and Maria joins that charm to all her other perfections. It produced in me the effect of the most delightful melody. She spoke little, but so well, and so sweetly, that I could have listened to her for ever. What she said was precisely that which was the most proper; and it was spoken without any effort, and expressed in the most appropriate phrases! You recollect, Gustavus, the charming music of flutes and hautboys which we heard one evening in the distance, and by which I was so much affected, that tears flowed from my eyes, and my respiration became interrupted. I felt a similar sensation at each inflexion of the voice of Maria. It would have been impossible to conceal the impression she made upon me, and I did not even attempt to conceal it; but either from her being in the habit of producing the same effects on her mother and sister, or  
for



for some other reason, she did not appear to remark it.

By degrees, we began to converse with less restraint, and very soon the two young ladies displayed such wit and good sense, so rarely met with at their age, that I could not help expressing my surprise, and telling them, with a smile, that they must have had an excellent instructor.

“Oh yes, without doubt, and one whom we dearly love,” said they, throwing themselves into the arms of their mother. “Here is our instructress; we have never had any other.”

Impelled by an involuntary sentiment of admiration, I could not resist. I threw myself at the feet of this admirable woman, seized her hand, and repeatedly kissed it with the most lively emotions of respect and transport.

“Where-

“Wherefore this foolery?” exclaimed she, endeavouring to conceal, under a forced smile, the tears of tenderness that trickled down her cheeks.

“Ah, Madam,” I replied, “it is not foolery to prostrate ourselves before what is the most estimable in nature—before a good mother!”

At these words, the tears flowed abundantly from all our eyes; the daughters clung still more closely to their mother, and I again kissed her hand with increased respect and admiration.

It was hinted, during the evening, that we should probably be able to pursue our journey the following day, and I went myself to inspect the inundation, which I found was considerably diminished. On my return, I was informed by one of their servants, that the ladies wished to procure a few hours' repose. I seated myself, therefore, before a blazing fire in another shed,

where I remained some time buried in my own reflections; then, hastily rising, I sought the servant, and enquired of him the name of his Lady: but he told me that both he and his fellow-servants were strictly enjoined not to reveal it.

When I was about to re-enter my shed, the same domestic came up, and informed me that there had been perceived in the forest, some very suspicious-looking people, who appeared to watch us, and that he thought it necessary to inform me of the circumstance. While he yet spoke, we heard signals given by a whistle on different sides; on which I immediately returned with him to the shed where the ladies reposed, and caused all our carriages to be arranged before its entrance. I also ordered several fires to be lighted round about us amongst the trees, and all the fire-arms in our possession, to be instantly loaded.

Notwithstanding the precautions I had  
taken,

taken, that these arrangements should be conducted with as little noise as possible, the ladies soon perceived them, and entreated I would come to them. They requested me to be seated at a fire round which they had placed themselves, and recount the dangers I apprehended. I expected that my narrative would produce among them confusion and dismay:—the two youngest did, in fact, display some symptoms of terror; but the mother enquired, with a degree of fortitude which astonished me, what means had been employed to secure us against surprise; and on my mentioning the mode I had adopted, she highly approved of it, and became perfectly tranquil.

I frequently left them, in order to visit my posts, that is, the individuals whom I had placed as sentinels. When I returned, room was made for me before the fire, which they stirred up, complaining of the cold—a sensation I did not, however, feel;

but, on the contrary, experienced a grateful warmth through my whole frame. We conversed together like old acquaintances. I recounted to them the motives of my journey; and whilst, at their desire, I gave some account of my intended route, they insensibly forgot I was a stranger, and related to me, in their turn, many particulars of their own history.

They appeared to regard me as a child, wholly guileless, and full of innocence; and the character they displayed, encouraged me to proceed. They were soon acquainted with the history of my life. I confided to them all my little faults; I described to them every thing remarkable I had experienced, particularly the premature death of my mother, of whose memory I spoke, as I always do, with enthusiasm.

Afterwards, Gustavus, I mentioned thee, and detailed how thy excellent mother had  
brought

brought us up together, how ardently she loved me, and how still more warmly we loved each other. When seated between Maria and her mother, I conceived myself, as formerly, in the presence of thy worthy parent; and, under this pleasing illusion, I seized her hand, as I was wont to do that of your revered mother, and pressing it to my heart, exclaimed with fervour—

“ Dear mamma !”

She was affected even to tears;—as for me, mine flowed without restraint.

I was frequently requested by the young ladies to proceed with my story; and, when it was finished, Maria, in her turn, related, in the most affecting strain, how she had been educated, along with her sister Alexandrina, under the superintendance of their mother, in the same manner as I had been brought up with thee.

“What an admirable woman must the mother of your friend have been!” said they to me. “How we would wish to know her!”

“We would have been worthy of her acquaintance,” said Maria; “we who know so well the value of a good mother.”

“What a happy family we would have been!” said the youngest daughter, ingenuously.

“The happiest in the world,” replied I, taking her hand, and holding out my other to Maria, as if supplicating her to confirm my assertion.

She took my hand, Gustavus, pressing it with an expression of friendship, whilst she repeated—

“Yes, indeed, the happiest family in the universe: two virtuous mothers—two daughters—two sons! Is it not so, my mother?”

Our feelings were in unison. We all three started up at the same instant, and the mother appeared as if she could have clasped us in her arms. Checking, however, her emotion, she regarded us with a look full of tenderness, and we again placed ourselves around her.

It was thus I spent the happiest night of my life. In the morning, the peasant came to inform us that the bridge was no longer overflowed, and that some carriages from Petersburg had already passed over it. Aware of the necessity of expedition, I was convinced that I ought to set out without delay; but I shuddered at the idea of separating myself from Maria, whom, perhaps, I might never again behold, and of whose name I was even ignorant. I ventured to solicit her address, which was refused with a sweet blush. I reurged my request with no better success.

“ I must depart,” said I, bowing on



the hand of the mother. "May my destiny be again equally propitious as it was yesterday! Perhaps the present may be the last period of my happiness; but the remembrance of the delightful moments I have passed in this forest, can never be effaced from my memory."

"Farewell, my son!" said the mother, interrupting me in broken accents; "my daughters and I will often think of you, and must ever feel a lively interest in your happiness."

I raised my eyes towards heaven, and leaning on the back of a chair, I gave a free vent to my tears.

"Worthy young man!" said the mother, with evident emotion, laying her hand on my shoulder, "the lively sorrow you experience on leaving strangers, can only proceed from the sympathetic attraction of virtue! I also feel the influence of this sympathy: a few hours have made us  
friends!

friends! Farewell! Take courage—we may, perhaps, again find you; but certainly we shall always continue to love you.”

I arose, and embraced her, without being able to articulate a single word. Alexandrina and Maria wept likewise. I saluted them in silence, and withdrew. They all followed me, and remained at the door until I had mounted my carriage. Maria, as a last adieu, waved her green veil, and I stretched out my arms towards this emblem of hope, exclaiming—“ No, we shall not be separated for ever!” as the carriage drove off with rapidity.

I arrived at Petersburg on the 17th of November, at eight o'clock in the evening; and I had previously prepared myself immediately to appear before the Empress. On alighting from my carriage, however, I was informed that Her Majesty had gone that morning to Vasili-Ostrow, the house of Prince Menzikof, to be present at the

celebration of his birthday; and thither I instantly followed her.

No sooner had I entered the palace, the interior of which was splendidly illuminated, than the Empress accorded me a private audience. I delivered into her hands the dispatches of my General; and her eyes sparkled with joy on perusing them.

“Matouskin informs me,” said she, very graciously, “that you had a principal share in the battle of the 26th of September. Recount to me what passed.”

I gave her all the details she required, and her joy was evidently augmented during the course of my narration. When I had finished, she ordered me to follow her, and we entered a saloon, wherein all the Court were assembled. At the same instant, the trumpets and kettle-drums announced the happy news of which I was  
the

the bearer. The Empress placed her hand on my shoulder, saying at the same time to my uncle, the venerable Field Marshal—

“ Behold the young hero to whom I owe the victory.”

She afterwards read aloud the letter of Matouskin. Menzikof alone seemed to take no share in the general joy. His countenance was gloomy; he endeavoured to suppress his sighs, and it was evidently with extreme violence to his feelings, that he could appear calm, and perform the honours of the *fête*. Unfortunate man! he every moment expected to hear news of the death of one of his daughters, whose life was despaired of from an accident which had befallen her on a journey.—Gustavus, how I pitied this unhappy father! His misfortune reconciled me to him:—how much I found myself interested by his sad and absent air, by the anxious looks he cast towards the door

every time it was opened! His lips were parched with grief; I frequently observed him carry the glass to his mouth, in order to moisten them, and again put it down without having drunk. He attempted to speak, but stammered, and could not finish a sentence. Thy compassion would also have been excited for this great man, who at this moment appeared only as an unfortunate father.

“He hates the Dolgorucki,” said I to one of my cousins who had informed me of the cause of his anxiety; “but the sorrow with which he is oppressed, evinces to what a degree he can love.”

“You name the most ambitious of men.”

“Ambition stifles,” rejoined I, “every other sentiment in the heart where it reigns; but you see that paternal love renders Menzikof indifferent to his dignities, to the presence of his Sovereign, and to the honours with which he is surrounded; and

that in his mind it triumphs over ambition. I am certain that, at this moment, he would gladly relinquish his titles, his riches, his power, and even the lustre of his blood, to restore the life of his child; he would even cast himself at the feet of a Dolgorucki, could he point out a remedy that would save this beloved daughter."

My relation smiled ironically.

"Ah," continued I, with increased warmth, "you hate Menzikof more on account of the rank which he occupies, than for his ambitious character; but never can I hate a man who displays such strength of mind, sincerity, and feeling, as not to conceal what he suffers, as not to assume an air of joy before his Sovereign, on a day of general rejoicing, when his paternal heart is lacerated with sorrow! An individual who dares to act so, in such circumstances, and in the midst of a Court, cannot be deemed ambitious. If he has  
acted

acted injuriously against us, neither are we wholly free from blame; and I believe, however immaculate may be the *Empress's First Minister*, we shall never cease to impeach his conduct."

My cousin replied, in an angry tone—

"We require from him only what strict justice prescribes—that he place no obstacle in our road to preferment."

"Justice!" replied I, sharply; "alas! what would have been the fate of Prince Menzikof, if he had not obstructed Dolgorucki's elevation? What would you have left him, had you possessed his power? However much your enmity against him may lead you to vindicate your own conduct, it is evident that his safety depends on defeating your projects: our elevation would be the signal of his destruction. Can you deny it?"

At this moment, we heard a confused noise in the adjoining hall, and observed

a con-

a considerable bustle. Menzikof became pale as death; he wished to go out, but such was his emotion, that it paralyzed all his faculties, and he was obliged to lean for support against the wainscot. I myself was equally agitated; doubtless, a messenger from his wife brought him the fatal news of his daughter's death!

Suddenly, after a momentary interval of silence, we heard the sound of trumpets and kettle-drums, the folding doors of the principal gate were thrown open, and the Empress entered, leading by the hand—— Oh Gustavus! I thought the earth was about to swallow me up; and I was forced, in my turn, to support myself against the chimney-piece. It was Maria herself, whom the Empress conducted to her father! Yes, Gustavus! this daughter whom he had already mourned as dead, and in whose fate I had taken so much interest! It was, doubtless, a presentiment! Was Maria the daughter of Menzikof, the implacable



implacable enemy of our house? I saw immediately the whole extent of my misfortune:—every thing, as it were, vanished from my sight; the noise of the different instruments, the exclamations of joy that resounded on all sides, produced such a contrast with my feelings, my heart was so oppressed with grief, and so agitated, that I wonder I did not fall into a swoon. I had no longer the faculty of distinguishing the objects which appeared to whirl around me; I heard only a confused noise; but my eyes were mechanically directed to the quarter where stood the happy father embracing his child, who had thrown herself at his feet! It seemed as if there was an immense gulf between us, and that Menzikof laid hold of Maria, in order to prevent her falling into it.

Fortunately, all eyes were directed towards this affecting group, of which the Empress made one; and the clangor of different instruments, all contributed to  
prevent

prevent my confusion, and the exclamation which escaped me, from being heard ; for I well recollect I uttered a mournful cry.

The salutations of Menzikof and his family continued for a sufficient length of time, to enable me to rally my scattered spirits, and in some measure to regain my tranquillity. I then learned that Maria had in reality been affected with a dangerous illness, at a very remote country seat, where she lived with her mother and her sister. It appeared that, for some time, her life had been despaired of; but a happy crisis having succeeded, her mother, instead of dispatching a messenger to inform the Prince of this agreeable intelligence, had preferred coming in person, with the view of agreeably surprising him by the presentation of his daughter on his birthday. They had, in fact, arrived an hour after me.

“ What

“What a happy day, Menzikof!” said the Empress, with that affectionate and maternal tone in which she spoke to her favourites. “You have gained a victory over death—I over my enemies: if mine be more glorious, your’s, however, is infinitely more delightful. Where, then, is my young hero?” continued she, looking about for me. “I wish to present these two messengers of good news to each other.”—On advancing, she presented me to Maria.—“This,” added she, “is Prince Fedor Dolgorucki, who has brought me the dispatches of a splendid victory, which I owe entirely to his valour. You must open the ball together.”

Maria raised her eyes, and blushed very deeply on recognising me; her mother and sister testified equal surprise. They believed me to be a common officer of the army, who had been sent as a courier to Petersburg; for the mother, not wishing to impart the address, lest the noise of approach

approach might reach the ears of her husband before arrival, she was too prudent to solicit mine. She related how we had met, and paid me many compliments. These would, at any other time, have irritated Menzikof; but the happiness he experienced on this occasion, made him forget even his hatred.

When the ball was about to begin, I took the hand of Maria, to lead her to the upper part of the saloon. That hand trembled in mine—I ventured gently to press it. Gustavus! how beautiful was Maria! The emotion she experienced, tended somewhat to heighten a fine complexion, rendered more pale than usual by her late illness; her eyes sparkled with a gentle animation, and her beauty was wholly unaided by dress, for she still wore that in which I had first beheld her in the forest. She likewise held in her hand the identical green veil which I had formerly considered as a presage of hope now realized.

realized. The Empress, having been immediately informed of their arrival, had gone to receive them, without giving them time to change their dress. Maria had only thrown aside her pelisse; and, adorned in her native loveliness, she eclipsed all the other beauties of the Court.

I gazed on her with rapture, without being able to utter a single word. She herself first broke silence.

“ My presentiments have not deceived me,” said she, in that enchanting tone of voice, of which I have already spoken; “ we see one another again.”

“ It is a fortunate accident,” said I, hesitating, without knowing what I said—I was so entirely absorbed by my own reflections, by the love which had already taken possession of my whole soul, and by the idea of the hatred subsisting between our two families.]

Regarding

Regarding me with an air of astonishment—

“ Prince Fedor,” said she, with an angelic smile, “ I was better pleased with your farewell, than by your congratulations on our reunion.”

When we began to dance, I observed she was incommoded by her green veil. I took it from her, and, placing it in my pocket, secretly vowed never to relinquish it.

We danced waltzes. I passed my arm around her, and ran through this large hall, filled with company, without, however, perceiving any one but herself. At this moment, Gustavus, I became sensible of all the charms of this dance, invented by love; I could no more conceive myself an inhabitant of this earth. It seemed as if, already disengaged from our terrestrial coverings,

coverings, we had taken our flight together towards the heavens. I believed I listened to the harmony of the angels who were to receive us into their celestial abodes. All my thoughts were in unison with this illusion—no human passion mingled itself with them. I forgot hatred; I experienced no desire; I felt only that I was the most happy of beings, entwined in the arms of Maria, surrounding her with mine, pressing her to my heart, respiring her sweet breath, feeling her heart palpitate against my breast, encountering her mild and gentle looks, which mingled themselves with mine;—I swear to you, Gustavus, I felt not a sentiment at which she might blush. Once, indeed, when I thought she pressed me more closely (and I was not mistaken—for, still feeble from her illness, the fatigue of the journey and the rapidity of the dance had rendered her giddy), I could not help exclaiming, as I strained her to my heart—

“ Dear

“ Dear, adorable Maria !”

She cast on me a glance full of expressing grief, at the same instant. I saw her eyes close; her cheeks became pale, her head fell on my shoulder; I felt the weight of her body, and had only time to prevent her falling to the ground.

We were immediately surrounded by the company. Her mother flew to us like lightning.

“ You are not well, Maria,” said she, seating herself on a bench near which we stood, and supporting her on her knee, where I myself had placed her.

Her hand remained in mine, and I felt that she was, from time to time, affected with a spasm, which alone assured me of her existence. In about a minute, she opened her eyes, and fixing her looks first on  
her



her mother, and afterwards on me, she again closed them, faintly observing—

“ It seems to me as if I were perfectly well.”

She fell back on the bosom of her mother, and I perceived she had fainted a second time. Her mother strained her to her heart, and wept. I wept also, Gustavus; I perceived the arms of Maria were wetted with my tears. They held salts to her nose, and rubbed her temples with aromatic essence; by these means, she suddenly recovered her consciousness, and said to her mother, sighing—

“ I have given you a great deal of uneasiness, my good mamma; but be not alarmed—I am now perfectly well.”

On making this declaration, she gently pressed my hand, which still held her's; and

and this pressure no longer proceeded from a spasm. She very soon retired, and a slight blush reappeared on her pale cheeks, which was heightened on perceiving that her arms were moistened by my tears. With what an expression of purity and tenderness did she regard me! Gustavus! I am—I am, I believe, the happiest of men!

“Are you better?” said her mother, with emotion.

“Yes, certainly, I am very well; but—but——”

The Princess turned her eyes upon me, as if she wished to divine what passed in our minds.

“Would you wish to be alone, my daughter?”

“Yes, alone with you, my dear mamma, my best friend.”

She slowly raised her eyes towards me, and said, with inexpressible sweetness—

“ Good night, Prince Fedor, and forgive your feeble partner.”

She immediately left the hall with her mother and sister ;—and I, Gustavus, I found myself, a few minutes afterwards, on the opposite bank of the Neva, over against the palace of Menzikof, without knowing how I had got thither. Wrapped up in my pelisse, I placed myself under the porch of the Lutheran Church, and attentively watched the illuminated palace, believing the least noise I heard, was the voice of Maria; and when I raised my eyes towards heaven, I thought I perceived her in every cloud. I remained in this situation until found by my servant, who conducted me to my lodgings. I, doubtless, required repose after the fatiguing journey I had performed; but I would a thousand times

times rather have preferred passing the night before the dwelling of Maria.

Next day, after ascertaining that she was perfectly recovered, but that she would neither receive nor pay any visits for a few days, I retired to my house in the country, in order to think of her without interruption;—in the city, it would have been impossible for me to have spoken, to have listened, or to have occupied myself with any other subject.

I gained, however, nothing by this step; as, in my retreat, I was continually besieged with letters or visits. My relations entreated me to return to Petersburg; the whole Court was astonished that I had set so little value upon the distinguished favours with which the Empress had honoured me. Ah, Gustavus! if they knew what I experience, and how much I despise these vain honours—if they knew that I would yield up the throne of the universe

for a grassy bank where I could be seated near Maria; that I would prefer the flower plucked by her hand, to the sceptre of the most powerful empire; that this veil, which once covered her fine hair and her beautiful countenance, is a thousand times more precious in my eyes, than the ribbons and stars with which they would decorate me:—if they knew, my proud relations, how I adore the daughter of him that they would destroy—they would be in despair, because they have destined me—(Great God! can I write it?)—yes, Gustavus! they have destined me to overthrow the idol of the moment, the favourite Menzikof. The Empress smiled upon me, say they.—Unfeeling men! they have seen the smile of a woman, of a Sovereign—but they have never seen that of an angel. Blind men!—but I, Gustavus, I have seen it, I have felt it; and the only good fortune your friend desires, is to again behold it.

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LETTER III.

*Maria Menzikof to Sophia Rocals, her  
Governess.*

I DISPATCHED, in conformity to her request, a long letter to my dear, my worthy Sophia; I related all the incidents that occurred during our journey, and on my arrival at my father's house:—and yet, my friend, you are still a stranger to my feelings, unless your heart can divine what passes in that of your pupil—that heart of which you unfolded the sensibility—which, though perhaps in excess, could I wish it less, Sophia?—Ah, no!

“ You often repeated to me that love was the recompence of virtue ;—you were mistaken—love is virtue itself. Yes, my friend, my second mother, since my father’s birthday, I am become more gentle, more kind, more generous, and, consequently, more happy ; in fine, I perceive all my faculties meliorated and improved in energy. Point out to me, my worthy Sophia, the most sublime action ever performed by man, the greatest sacrifice of which nature is capable, and rest assured it will not appal me. Death, for example: you know I approached the confines of the grave, and I confess to you, my friend, I viewed it with affright. On that day when I was so ill, when my life was despaired of, when I could think at all, I experienced only regret at being obliged so soon to quit this life, of which I then, alas ! knew not the value. But at present, Sophia—at present, when I perceive in my inmost soul, with how many charms it may, perhaps, be filled up, by a strange contrariety of feeling, I  
could

could resign it without complaint. To die——Great God! what is it to die?—To shut our eyes, to yield up our breath, to perceive the pulsation of the heart and the circulation of the blood stop a few minutes sooner or later; and how many troubles may we escape, of which men continually complain, and which cannot reach us in the bosom of our Heavenly Father, who has bestowed on us an immortal soul—a soul which longs for a pure and perfect happiness, which can never be found on earth? It is there only, Sophia, that I shall be permitted to love Fedor; it is there that our souls, united together, will form only one being; it is in these celestial regions, into which hatred cannot penetrate, that Fedor and Maria will find happiness—an eternity of happiness—an eternity of love!

I must tell you every thing, Sophia. Who but you, next to my mother, has a right to read my heart? And my mother



has already read in the heart of her daughter; she already knows that Fedor Dolgorucki is every thing to Maria. Dolgorucki!—my hand trembles in writing his name. Alexis Dolgorucki and his two sons, Ivan and Sergi, as well as Lukitsch, the father of Fedor, are the most bitter, the most implacable enemies of Menzikof. The Field-Marshal, grand-uncle to Fedor, must be excepted; his excellent heart is unsusceptible of hatred. But my father, Sophia—my father, so tender and affectionate to his children—ought he to indulge this malignant passion? And yet he detests, he abhors the family of Dolgorucki. You see, then, on the one side, our relatives, with their hearts filled with hatred and vengeance; and, on the other, Fedor and myself, with our's overflowing with love and fidelity. I am too well convinced that family quarrels, the source of which is ambition, are unextinguishable, and that their consequences are terrible.

I read

I read much, my dear Sophia, and my parents rejoice at the desire I evince for instruction: but do you know what I read? It is the history of the bloody wars carried on betwixt the Guelphs and the Gibelins, between the Red and the White Rose, the Montagues and the Capulets, &c. &c. In the narratives of these periods, I search with anxiety for a reconciliation, a word of peace; but I find only menaces, poniards, and the most atrocious and implacable hatred. It seems to me as if I beheld in each line the condemnation of Fedor and myself—as if I saw the dagger sharpened that was to pierce us to the heart. Great God! were it not better that we should be laid in the silent tomb, and that our souls had taken their flight to the regions of peace?—Ah! why is he called Dolgorucki? And why is the name of my father, Menzikof, since otherwise we might have loved each other?

My worthy mother flatters me with a vain hope in the future.

“ Perhaps,” says she sometimes, “ Fedor and you may be destined to form a tie, which will one day unite the families of Dolgorucki and Menzikof.”

I smile at this enchanting idea ; but she sighs, and the sweet illusion vanishes.

“ Dear mamma,” said I to her, “ if our love cannot overcome their hatred, our death may, perhaps, be able to do so.”

“ Whence that idea ?” rejoined she, with terror.

I sighed, and embracing her, said—

“ Sophia and you, my dear mamma, have taught me that death is no more than the entrance to repose, and that I ought to render it familiar to my thoughts.”

She

She remained silent, and our tears mingled together. I will henceforth conceal these mournful presentiments, because they afflict her maternal heart; but to you, who possess greater strength of mind, I may declare my conviction, that the tomb will be the altar at which Fedor and Maria shall be united. I write these words with the greatest calmness, as when I made the first confession of my love to my mother. I owed to her this mark of respect and affection, which was the reason I did not mention to you in my former letter, that I had loved Dolgorucki from the moment I beheld him in the forest. I scarcely, indeed, know at what time love for him took possession of my heart; it seems to me as if I had always loved him, from the first dawning of sensibility in my mind: for a long period of time, the image of a youth, such as I have found him, capable of performing all the great actions recorded in history, mingled itself in all my reveries of future happiness;—when I heard the

sound of his voice, it appeared to be perfectly familiar to me—it had, as it were, long resounded in my soul. When on his knees before my mother, bidding her adieu, with his face bathed in tears—when he departed, in order to traverse the forest—Sophia, I already loved him, as I will continue to love him for the remainder of my life. I would remain eternally near him, make him incessantly repeat how, during the heat of the battle, he threw himself into the midst of the Tartars of Dagestan—how he wept in his infancy over the tomb of his mother—how he loved his second mother, and his friend Gustavus.

You have often told me, my good, my worthy friend, that love should be founded on esteem; that esteem would gradually produce friendship, which would soon ripen into love, and in the end produce the most ardent affection. This did not happen in our case; our feelings did not follow this order: esteem, love, the most ardent

ardent passion, were felt all at once and confounded in our hearts. When he was informed of my name, he became uneasy; but immediately after, supported on his shoulder, pressed to his heart, carried forward by a pleasant and rapid motion, I thought I should expire. Sophia, this death was pleasant! Every thing disappeared from before my eyes; the music impressed me with the idea of a confused and delicious sound. The last words that I heard were—"Maria, dear Maria!"—the last object I perceived, was the looks of Fedor. When I recovered, I was upon my mother's knee, with my hand clasped in that of Fedor! Ah! good Sophia, it seemed to me that we were at the altar together, blessed by my mother: I could not help pressing his hand. Had I spoken a single word, I would have said that I adored him: but pleasure, grief, fear, and hope, all at once took possession of my soul; and too feeble to support the sensations

tions I experienced, I relapsed into a state of insensibility.

When I was able to walk, my mother herself conducted me to my own apartment. After we were alone, she anxiously requested an explanation of the scene she had witnessed.

“ Ah, my dear mother !” replied I, concealing my face in her bosom, “ Fedor— did you not observe how he regarded me ? Did you not hear him call me his dear Maria ?— Noble Dolgorucki ! yes, I love you !”

I wished to embrace my mamma, but she gently repressed me. She made me sit by her, and said to me, in a mild tone—

“ I flatter myself, my daughter, that at present you know not what you have said : collect your spirits, calm yourself, and  
you

you will very soon perceive that the child of Menzikof can never love a Dolgorucki."

I blushed, and for once involuntarily kissed the hand of the best of mothers. I remained silent.

"Ah, my daughter! you reply not."

"Ah, mamma, I dare not; I know that you condemn every species of enthusiasm, even that of virtue; that you expect all our actions should proceed from deliberate reflection, and will only admit us to be ardent in their execution."

"It is true, my child."

"Ah, my dear mother!" said I, in the calmest tone it was possible to assume, "I love the young Dolgorucki, and he feels for me a similar passion. I will never entertain a thought or sentiment I would wish to conceal from my mother."

She sighed.

"My



“ My child,” said she, “ what is it you call love? The momentary impulse of thy heart, loving and confiding in a moment, where you are not sure of a return—an illusion produced by an accidental meeting with an amiable young man—the surprise of again discovering him in the midst of the Court—and the emotion produced by the dance. Reflect, Maria—reason for a moment on this hasty sentiment, and you will be convinced that it is only an illusion of the heart.”

“ An illusion! dear mamma—ah! no, no; it is not an illusion. What could we depend on in life, could an illusion produce the lively and profound sentiment which I experience?—I should be much hurt, were it an illusion; I should then have a very bad opinion of myself: but I perceive, on the contrary, that my heart is elevated, and rendered better, by the sentiment which has taken possession of my soul. Doubtless, I am astonished at the rapidity of its approach. If it be a sympathy,

sympathy, an order of Heaven—if Fedor and Maria be predestined——”

She interrupted me with a kiss.

“ Poor child! it is well this idea is only an illusion. But, were I inclined to believe in the reality of your love, Maria, how know you that he also loves? What has he said to you? If a Dolgorucki has, on such a slight acquaintance, made a declaration of his passion to a daughter of Menzikof, he is unworthy of her affection.”

I calmly related what had passed between us. Her reply, though apparently cold, sufficiently depicted the uneasiness she experienced; and notwithstanding every thing she said, this word still remains engraven on my heart—*Maria, dear Maria!*

“ Ah! little fool,” said mamma, smiling,  
“ you believe you are adored, because he  
conversed

conversed with hesitation, and called you *dear Maria!*”

“ Ah! mamma, it was not the words; but the tone in which they were uttered—the look with which they were accompanied, and my heart, which told me I am loved.”

“ Wait at least to see how he will conduct himself. I agree with you that Prince Fedor is very interesting; but your name, your name alone, Maria, will suggest to him what must be done.”

“ Hate me, perhaps:—do you mean that, mamma? A Dolgorucki ought to experience only hatred towards any one bearing the name of Menzikof?”

“ No, Maria:—why hatred? But he ought to reflect that you can never be his.”

“ And I also, mamma, I ought to think so; I do think so—yet I love.”

“ Well, love, unsupported by hope, will very soon vanish, my child.”

“ Vanish!—that would soon, indeed, happen, mamma, were it only an illusion,

*a love*

*a love without hope.* I know not, my dear mother, how to-day, for the first time, I am unable to comprehend your meaning. Of what hope do you speak? It is true, our hands may, perhaps, never be united by the solemn rite of marriage—I may never be his wife; but neither Menzikof nor Dolgorucki can tear his image from my heart, can prevent my living for him alone, from thinking only of him, and from being united to him at least in the tomb. Have you not often said, good mamma, that the torrent of hatred is swallowed in the gulf of death, and that love alone is immortal? Oh mamma! you have said so, and I perceive its truth! Yes, my love is immortal as my soul!”

My mother was embarrassed. She could not contradict what she had so often advanced. What can you yourself say to me, my dear Sophia?—After a short silence, she endeavoured to overcome me in a different manner.

“ Well,

“ Well, Maria, admitting your love to be real, at least it is but yet in its infancy ; with a very few efforts, and the exertion of a little energy, you will be able to overcome it: you may yet be happy in the arms of another.”

“ With another than Fedor!—Happy with another!—If I could believe such a revolution in my sentiments possible, how culpable should I be to afflict you for a moment! But I can read your maternal heart, and am convinced that you would suffer infinitely more from the conviction that I was unfortunate and criminal; and I should become both, if I should vow, in the presence of God, to love another.—But, my dear mother, I believe we do not perfectly understand each other. I love Fedor—that is all I at present know; the future is enveloped in an obscurity which I cannot—which I wish not to penetrate: but never imagine that, in seeking happiness, I shall fail to remember that I am your child, or venture to brave parental authority.

authority. My father may continue to hate all the Dolgoruckis: I venture only to adore one of them, and silently to present ardent petitions to the God of Peace, for the termination of this hatred. Oh! if the sacrifice of all the happiness of my life—if the sacrifice of my life itself, could put an end to that animosity, with what joy would I not take the veil, or descend for ever to the silent tomb!—Mother, I have no hope of ever being united on this earth to Fedor; but I feel my heart full of eternal love to him, and the conviction that it never can belong to another.”

“Is this really your resolution?” said she to me, in a very serious tone.

“It is my firm, my irrevocable resolution, my dear mother.”

She then pressed me to her bosom, and bedewed me with her tears.

“Love him, then; love this amiable  
young

young man, Maria. I believe he loves you likewise: his looks, his tears in the forest, disclosed his passion. The voice of Heaven spoke in the prompt and deep sympathy you both displayed, in the lively sentiments of affection that pervaded your souls. I have just spoken to you as a mother; but now, Maria, I address you as your friend and confidant:—love Fedor, since fate has so decreed it; and may that all-wise and all-powerful Being who has willed your love, bless it, and render you, my dear Maria, more happy than your mother!”

We embraced with a tenderness which you only are capable of understanding. The consent of my mother infused a delicious balm into my heart; but her last words renewed its agonies. Alas! she has then never been happy!—She, the best of women, has not known happiness! She, however, loves my father; but that attachment is rendered a punishment by her  
constant

constant anxiety respecting her husband, by a dread of the misfortunes with which he has already been so often threatened, and by the anguish which his insatiable ambition creates. This is the cruel torment which devours the heart of my mother—a torment, my dear Sophia, accompanied by despair, which still follows us everywhere like an angry spectre. Oh my father!—Oh God! look down upon the tears of his wife, his virtuous companion and his innocent children! Inspire him with a salutary repentance, and inflict on his eldest daughter, on the wretched Maria, the punishment which may be necessary to expiate his errors!

My dear Sophia, I have prostrated myself before the Most High, and watered the earth with my tears. May Heaven hear my prayers! Oh may my father renounce this fatal ambition which costs so much! Oh, if he knew the burning tears which his grandeur causes to flow from the grief-torn



torn soul of my mother!—Sophia, you know all the secrets of our family; my mother has concealed nothing from you. Perhaps, throughout the whole extent of this vast empire, no human being sheds tears so painful as those which flow amidst the pompous decorations of our palace. Adieu, my Sophia! I go to prostrate myself again before the Almighty. Pray for us also, good Sophia. Adieu!

\* \* \* \* \*

I laid down my pen, dear Sophia, at a moment when my trembling hand could no longer guide it, and when my eyes, swimming with tears, were only capable of turning themselves towards heaven. More calm after my prayer, I return to you. My mother left me after the conversation I have repeated to you. Next day, while I breakfasted alone with her, she appeared to speak with less confidence than she did the evening before. She  
endea-

endeavoured to persuade me that Fedor did not love me, and that I was wrong to consider the words which had escaped him, when with me, as a declaration of love. She had learned that, the day after the ball, he had set off for his country seat.

“ If he loved you, Maria,” said she, “ would he have left you at the moment he had recovered you ? ”

I made no reply, but sighed heavily.— While she still spoke to me of the indifference of Fedor, a letter was brought to her. She read it with evident embarrassment, perused it a second time with emotions of tenderness, and frequently laid it down to wipe away her tears. She ran her eyes over it a third time, and then handed it to me, saying, with a sweet smile—

“ Here, Maria, this will make one heart beat with joy in this room, where so many painful sighs are stifled.”

I took the letter, and looking first for the signature, I found it was that of Fedor Dolgorucki.

“ Ah, Madam !” said I, and pressed the letter to my heart.

My emotions were so great, that it was some time before I was capable of reading it.

Dear Sophia, it is to my mother that Fedor avows his eternal and unconquerable love for the happy Maria ! He makes her the arbiter of his destiny ; he speaks to her of the obstacles which the enmity of our families may throw in the way of our happiness ; and he manifests a desire, rather than a hope, that our union might at last put an end to the dissensions which divide the two first houses of the Empire. He concludes his letter by saying :

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“ I adore

“ I adore Maria—I love and respect her excellent mother; and I am resolved to obey you in every thing which the happiness and tranquillity of your daughter can require of me, were it even to confine my passion to my own heart for ever, and to expire in silence. Maria is your daughter—you are to me the image of the Divinity! I must, however, venture to say (pardon my pride) that I believe myself worthy of being your son. Dare I interpret favourably for Fedor, your kindness towards the stranger in the forest—the looks of Maria—your words and her’s? Oh! decide my fate and her’s!”

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What were my emotions, Sophia, on reading this letter! I experienced an inconceivable mixture of pleasure and pain; my heart palpitated violently, and yet I was calm. I folded the letter, and returned

it to my mother without saying a word, and rose up for the purpose of leaving her alone. She stopped me with a look, and said, in a serious tone—

“ I am going to write an answer immediately.”

“ It is for that reason that I wish to leave you, my dear mother.”

“ Have you then nothing to say to me?”

“ No, mother; nothing more than that it is *for you to decide on his fate and mine.*”

“ But will my decision, Maria, be your's also?”

“ Oh, certainly,” said I, laying my hand on my heart.

She looked earnestly at me.

“ What! were I to order you to stifle your love?”

“ To conceal it, dear mother!—Yes, I would obey you; but I should— No,

no!”

no!" I exclaimed, throwing myself into her arms, " I would not die—I should be silent—I should endure the greatest torments; but I would live for my excellent mother. Oh, mother! say you love your Maria!"

" Yes, my child, I love you, and I admire your courage: but I also know my duty, and shall perform it. May God give us both strength!"

She embraced me.

She spoke to me no more of Fedor, until the *fête* in honour of the Empress's birth-day, which was celebrated with all possible pomp. On entering the grand saloon, my eyes sought only Fedor. Sophia, he was not there. All the other Dolgoruckis were present. I sat opposite the door; and every time it opened, I looked towards it with impatience. I was absent and melancholy: it was, however,

necessary to dance. Oh, my Sophia, how painful is this life of ceremony and restraint! How much are the ambitious to be pitied! But is the slave of love less an object of compassion? I am certain I have suffered more by looking in vain for Fedor, than any Courtier disappointed in his expectation of obtaining a smile from his Sovereign. I drew near to the Dolgoruckis, and I was surprised to find that they could speak of any thing but the absence of Fedor. The Empress, at the end of the *fête*, made my father the present of a considerable estate in the Ukraine and the town of Batierin. Every one congratulated me—I could not tell why. Alas! when the fortune of my father received this great augmentation, I felt myself poor. Fedor was not there! Ah! it is neither money nor land I should ask of the Empress: one word, a single word from her mouth, could render me so happy! Ah! could she read my heart!—But do these deities of the earth know that  
their

their subjects have hearts?—The Empress has enriched and aggrandized many persons: but has she made any happy?—Ah! even my father, whom she covers with her benefits, has not a moment of tranquillity; and my-poor mother lives in torment!

These reflections drew tears from my eyes: I seemed alone in the world, in the midst of useless heaps of gold.—A gentleman, I know not whom, came to congratulate me, with an air of humiliation, on the greatness of my father. I answered him only with tears. He looked at me with surprise, for he knew not that I would have given that estate—that town—the whole world for a single look of Fedor.

My mother withdrew early from the Court. When we were at home, she led me into her apartment.



“The Empress,” said she, “has this day rendered your father happy: let us see if I have not, as well as her, the power of giving happiness.”

She opened the door of her cabinet, and Fedor came forth.

Ah, Sophia, what a mother has Heaven given me!

“Prince,” said my mother, “I have already once named you my son: I now again address you by that dear name. Oh, my son!”——

He threw himself on his knees before her, and I also knelt at her feet. She laid her maternal hands on our foreheads, and, in the most affecting accents, said——

“Heaven bless you, my children, as your mother now blesses you!—Fedor, Maria loves you: I give you all I have in my power to bestow—my benediction, and my

my most ardent wishes for your happiness. Perhaps, I am too weak a mother; but I trust to your virtue, and my heart is anxious for your felicity.—Rise, my children!”

She placed my hand in Fedor’s, adding—

“ I approve your love; I wish to see you united. Maria will be your friend—you the faithful protector of her virtue. But can you ever be united?—Heaven, I hope, has still more happiness in store for you.”

“ More happiness!” we both exclaimed: “ that is impossible !”

“ No,” cried Fedor, “ not even in the arms of Maria, do I believe I could be more happy than at this moment !”

“ Perhaps,” replied my mother, “ but I fear that you may have many misfortunes to struggle with; a day may come when you shall be compelled, Maria, to give your hand to another; or even you, Fedor, you may be obliged——”

“Oblige me!” exclaimed he with vehemence, and instantly throwing his arm round me, he drew me towards him, pressed his lips to mine, and then, in a solemn tone, said—“Maria, in the presence of your mother and of Heaven, receive this kiss, as a pledge of my eternal constancy. It is the first kiss of the most pure and holy love. My fate is now for ever linked with your’s.—Oblige me!—I, doubtless, may be put to death; but none can oblige me to give my hand without my heart.”

“Prince,” said my mother, with a shade of severity, “you fail in your word—in the promise you made me.”

“No, no, my dear mother,” replied he; “I promised you that I would in silence see her delivered over to the arms of another husband, if your happiness, and the tranquillity of Maria, required such a sacrifice; but I pledged myself to nothing more. She may be bound by other ties than I am; but she has received my

my vows.—I have nothing more, I never shall have more to require of her.”

I interrupted him.

“ My heart has anticipated your’s, Fedor, and I shall endeavour to imitate you.”

“ You are about to leave Petersburg,” said my mother; “ you will not see my daughter again without my knowledge, but you will sometimes receive letters from her. Whither do you go, Fedor?”

“ To my country-house near Pozeck, on the banks of the Neva.”

“ Adieu, my son !” said my mother; and he threw himself with a sigh into her arms.

“ Fedor !”—“ Maria !” were the only words we could articulate.

I saw him depart, and retired to my cabinet to write to you. Oh, my dear

Sophia! he will be so near you at Pozeck:—  
will you not seek the acquaintance of the  
friend of your Maria?

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Several letters between Fédor and Maria,  
anterior to that which follows, are omitted,  
as they only contained repeated testimo-  
nies of their love, without having any re-  
lation to events.

LETTER

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LETTER IV.

*Maria to Fedor.*

Petersburg, December.

NO, my dear Fedor, no, we are not separate, since our minds can communicate, since your thoughts can reach me. My soul is constantly at Pozeck—your's is at Petersburg, and yet they are always together. I know not even whether we do not gain by this separation. Perhaps, it will not be easy for me to procure such an acknowledgement from you; but consider, my dear friend—is it not your greatest happiness

happiness to be able to read the heart of your Maria, to search all its folds, and to learn how much she loves you, and how happy your love makes her?—But, Fedor, were you here, instead of the paper with which I, with so much pleasure, paint all my feelings, perhaps I could not express to you one of my thoughts. Your voice, your looks, your hand, which has pressed mine, though so present to my memory, disturb me not. On the contrary, I reflect on them with a delightful tranquillity. It seems to me that, at this distance, you more particularly belong to me; I see no other eyes contemplating my Fedor; I am not obliged to cast down mine to avoid the ardour of his looks; I raise them, on the contrary, with confidence and pleasure; I salute with a kind smile the amiable figure my imagination represents to me, as if it were really before me. Yes, my dear Fedor, I seem still to see you, such as I beheld you in those happy moments we passed at the feet, or in the arms of the  
best

best of mothers. I still feel your hand locked in mine; I still hear your voice repeat—*Maria, dear Maria!* I see your expressive, your tender look; I follow you with my eyes over all the apartment through which you passed to depart, to leave your friend, Ah! yes—we are separate—I feel it now; I feel that the longest letter is not to be compared to a single look. Adieu!—Good night!

That night, after we parted, I could not sleep. Do you know what I thought of, Fedor?—I recalled to my mind all the history of my youth, and I wished to write it to you, in order that you might know me from the moment I began to think; but it appears to me now, that that period is only to be dated from our meeting in the woodcutter's shed of the forest: beyond that period I know nothing worth recollecting or repeating to you. I related to you that night, how my mother had educated us, and how she loved me. You spoke



spoke to me of your mother, of your friend, and of his mother. We became acquainted with each other's hearts, Fedor, and the objects of our affections; we knew that we loved, that we should even love all our lives:—what else have we occasion to know? My mother has said to me, that love is insatiable—that it always desires more than it obtains. I believe she deceives herself. I find, on the contrary, that love is content with little—with very little.

I have still, however, to make you acquainted with one of the objects of my attachment, of whom I regret that I did not before speak. It is a friend, a second mother. She is near you, for she lives at Ronneburg, on an estate belonging to my father, which joins to Pozeck, and from which we came when I met you. My Sophia is a Swiss, a native of the Pays de Vaud, and her name is Madame Rocales.

She

She educated me, in concert with my mother, and I love her as if she were my sister. Go and see her, Fedor; she loves me also: you will be heard when you speak to her of Maria.—Ah! had my father done nothing else for me than entrusting my education to this excellent woman, I should owe him an eternal debt of gratitude. She is the depository of all my secrets. Without her friendship, without her consolations, I am convinced that my poor mother would have long since sunk under the chagrin and anguish that oppress her. My father himself loves and esteems her. He places more confidence in her, than in any person in the world.—Visit her, Fedor, I pray you!

I send this letter by a particular messenger, that I may the sooner receive your answer.—Adieu!—Friend of my heart, adieu!

LETTER

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LETTER V.

*Maria to Fedor.*

Petersburg, January.

AH! why am I not still at my dear Ronneburg?—dear, more particularly at present, since it is near to Pozeck. I would a thousand times prefer the solitude of Ronneburg to my present life. Sophia, who knows mankind well, has often observed to me, that the pleasures and amusements of the world, nay even its follies, assume insensibly an ascendancy over the strongest head and most feeling hearts. Custom  
reconciles

reconciles us to an indolent dissipated life: one pleasure leads to another, and without any other interest than that of curiosity, without any other object than that of doing as those do among whom we exist: thus we are hurried away, and live in fancied security amidst the snares of the world, as the sailor sleeps soundly on the mast above the raging billows. Had it not been for you, my dear Fedor, I am convinced I should not have escaped this danger. I see the effect of it on my sister, who has no Fedor to fill her soul, and therefore she is occupied all day with those vain pleasures;—but I find myself, I, who can think only of you, forced to follow her through this insipid vortex of pompous folly, which becomes daily more insupportable to me. I have conjured my mother to hasten our departure; but she doubts whether my father will allow us to leave Petersburg so soon as she wishes. That good mother appears more anxious respecting

respecting my fate. Am I not every thing to Fedor, and Fedor to me? And are we not united for ever?—Of what consequence is it, though this union take place in the tomb; or whether we travel together through life, and arrive somewhat later at this peaceful asylum?

It is this idea which gives me courage to support the evils by which I am surrounded. Have I not already experienced sufficient happiness, and you also, Fedor? That moment when dancing together, you called me “your dear Maria,” and that, in which my mother placed her hand upon our foreheads, saying—“Love you, my children!”—How many individuals have passed through a long life without having felt the happiness of such delightful moments?—Yes, Fedor, we love each other: what could we say more? We could only repeat these three words at the termination of the longest existence?

It

It appears to me, sometimes, that I am upon the brink of the crater of a volcano, or upon land shaken by an earthquake. My father, it is true, is surrounded by flatterers; but his enemies are likewise numerous, and who, in his fall, will treat him without respect, in proportion to the adulation with which they approached him when in the time of his prosperity. Sophia impressed on my mind one day this important but melancholy truth, that a discarded favourite is less persecuted for his pride, and the wrongs he may have committed, than on account of the adulation and flattery that has been lavished upon him. The most supple and abject courtier is, in the period of adversity, the most implacable enemy.

The Empress, indeed, appears to be much attached to my father, and to see only with his eyes; but, on the tenth of this month, the Duchess of Courland arrived express, in order to present an accusation against him: and he himself is obliged

obliged to confess that he deserves her hatred. My uncle, Count Devier, has been nominated Imperial Commissioner to examine into this affair; and it would have been impossible to have selected a more bitter enemy of my father than his brother-in-law.

It was my mother who informed him that the Count was appointed one of his judges, and she embraced this opportunity to conjure him to be reconciled to his sister.

“ You formerly loved this sister,” said she to him, mildly.

“ Yes, in our infancy,” replied he, while a gloom overspread his visage; “ but I have overcome it; and it is because I once loved her, that we must henceforth be irreconcilable enemies. Her husband is the only being in the world that I hate  
——Him——or I——”

“ And

“ And if it be him,” interrupted my mother, “ will you not regret you had not taken my advice ?”

My father replied by an ironical smile. How could he smile ?

Many *fêtes* have been celebrated, both at Court and in my father's house ; one of them alone was truly a *fête* to your Maria : it was given by my mother, myself, and my sister. The poll-tax had been diminished at the request of my father. Ah, Fedor ! you cannot imagine with what a painful feeling I traverse the streets of Petersburg in our gilded equipage ; it appears to me as if I ought to solicit the pardon of every poor person I meet. But this day, I kept my head erect ; I was inspired by the most noble feelings. The joy was general. The name of Menzikof was repeated with benedictions. Ah ! may they ascend to Heaven, and appease it.

If



If it it were only the hatred of the great, that was directed against my father—if the people loved him, I could readily resign every thing, and stand prepared to encounter the most cruel fate. If, on the day of which I speak, he had been disgraced, and sent to Siberia, accompanied by the blessings of the people, to me this exile would have been a triumph; but this people—this same people, will very soon forget their benefactor, and will load him with their curses on the first occasion on which they conceive themselves aggrieved, or when they are offended by the munificence of our establishment. Fedor, it is more especially on the public festivals—it is when our palace is splendidly illuminated, and when we are arrayed in costly habits—it is then that my father exhibits the greatest degree of that grandeur and superiority, which I would wish to conceal from every eye.

Fedor,

Fedor, is it true?—My father said, a few minutes ago, that you were about to depart for Persia, with your father. No, that cannot be possible; you will not prefer a vain glory to your Maria! I became pale when my father pronounced your name. It was not for your life that I trembled, Fedor: I am certain I could not survive you a moment;—and what could be more desirable than to die together? Would it not be the day of our eternal re-union? I am daily more convinced that, on this earth, happiness can only be found in retirement, in the repose of private and domestic life. In all your letters, the opinions you have given on this subject coincide with mine: and wherefore would you exchange this life for the tumult of camps, far distant from your poor Maria?—Ah! my friend, tranquilize me.

I send this by a courier to Pozeck.

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LETTER VI.

*Fedor to Maria.*

Pozeck.

BE tranquil, my dear Maria;—I go not to Persia: my father, indeed, wished it. He arrived one day unexpectedly at Pozeck, and entered my chamber accompanied by my uncle, the venerable Field Marshal.

“What do you here, Fedor?” enquired he. “I cannot comprehend you.”

“I do,” replied I, in a tone of pleasantry, “what you hope also one day to do—I enjoy life.”

“ Fedor, I love not á young man destitute of ambition; you have made your entrance at Court in so brilliant a manner, as if to outstrip every competitor in the same career, and you now conceal yourself in an obscure retreat. How disgraceful!— Do you wish for the future to sink into oblivion?”

“ I wish, my dear father, to be, what I am already, your son, the nephew of this illustrious man, a Dolgorucki. I relish not the life to which you have destined me; I shrink from the dissipation of a Court. The misfortunes of my family terrify me.”

“ So much the better, Fedor; I desire not that you should lead the indolent life of a courtier. I am about to depart, in order to assume the command of the army in Persia; and you must accompany me, with the rank of a Captain.”

Maria, I confess to you that my heart beat high with the idea of gathering new laurels;

laurels; I would have listened to the call of glory, but love restrained me, and very soon obtained a victory.

“No, my father, I will not accompany you to Persia. In the last campaign, I exhibited sufficient proofs of my courage. My father, is not the glorious day which caused you to be advanced to the rank of Commander in Chief, more honourable to you than all your titles and offices at Court? Al Dolgorucki wishes, if it is possible, to be happy, in spite of that ambition which has rendered miserable the rest of his family.”

Although the Field Marshal was passionately attached to a military life, he took a decided part with me, on the present occasion, against my father, whose anger became ungovernable. You will readily conceive, Maria, how much it cost me to resist, with so much firmness, parental authority; but it was absolutely necessary to

assume

assume this firmness, of which I shall one day stand so much in need, in order to secure our happiness. They all hate your father; *his destruction or our's*, is the motto of all the Dolgoruckis: one of the two must yield. I am aware that, in order to unite my fate to that of the daughter of Menzikof, I must oppose to the anger of my family, all the firmness and energy which love can inspire.

Resolved then not to yield, I repeated with the greatest calmness—"I will not go to Persia."

"Wherefore?" replied my father. "It is necessary—I wish it; and the honour of your character likewise demands your compliance to my desire. Make me acquainted, at least, with the motives of your refusal."

"Because I desire to live, and to live according to my taste—happy and tranquil."

"You wish to live, coward!—Con-

temptible!—Is this the cause of your shameful refusal?”

I smiled. Excuse an emotion of pride in your friend, Maria: I recalled to mind the moment, when darting at the head of some brave dragoons into the midst of the Tartars, I put them to flight, and pursued them to their capital—I set no value on my life; but then, it is true, I existed only for myself—my existence was not connected with that of an angel. I remained silent; but my uncle spoke for me.

“Lukisch,” said he, in an indignant tone, “have you forgotten that we owe to this *coward* the conquest of Dagestan?”

“Let him come, then, to preserve this conquest.”

“My father,” said I, with dignity, “my resolution is irrevocable. I achieved also, on that day which my uncle has recalled to  
your

your remembrance, the conquest of my independence: it is that which I wish to preserve. I love not this glittering and turbulent career, marked by traces of blood, in which you wish me to precipitate myself: my inclinations lead me to prefer a retired and peaceable life. Do you believe the individual a coward who endeavours to avoid an enraged animal, or who turns aside from a building which threatens to crush him by its fall?"

"I have only a single word to add, Fedor:—your Sovereign commands you to set out for Persia."

"That is also another reason why I will not go, my father. The Empress may send me to Siberia; but she cannot force me to go to Persia."

The resolution I displayed, somewhat surprised my father, and rendered him more calm.

"What plan of life hast thou then  
formed



formed to thyself, Fedor?" said he to me, in a more gentle tone.

“That of belonging to myself; of obeying only my conscience; of never crawling like a reptile, while I can walk with my head erect; of regulating neither my friendship nor my hatred by the opinion of others; of admiring whatever is worthy to be beloved, and proudly avowing that admiration. Before I returned to my country, I had determined to maintain my independence in the midst of its despotism, and to be the creator of my own happiness: in order to do this, it was first, however, necessary to give the most convincing proofs of my courage;—I have done so. Escaped from the steel of the Tartars, I will never become the slave of ambition; then, indeed, I should be a coward;—but not by pursuing the road which my heart dictates, and my conscience approves. I am not calculated for the pursuits of ambition; for that course, where

where I must either overturn others, or be overturned myself—where it is necessary to hate those I might be inclined to love.”

“ God be praised ! I have another son,” cried my father, in a rage, “ It is well, Fedor ; vegetate then in an obscure poverty, since you despise riches and honours. Your brother alone shall inherit my fortune. Remain here : I give you Pozeck—it is the only inheritance you will ever receive from me, and I will never see you more.”

My uncle then endeavoured to persuade me to comply with my father's wishes ; but I opposed to his arguments, with the greatest tenderness and respect, my firm resolution to remain in retirement. They at last left me, and I go not to Persia. I belong now only to love and Maria.

And you also, Maria, you must detach yourself from all the ties of ambition ; already an obscure futurity opens to our

view, which we must enter with perseverance and courage. Our love took its rise under the most favourable auspices; it was as ardent in the commencement, as it will continue to be throughout our lives: our constancy can alone justify the suddenness of our attachment. Love, like our's, will always enable us to brave and support the storm by which we are menaced. Ah! why is your soul so pure and so gentle? And why does a hated rivalry prevail betwixt our families? I will always be to you, however, only Fedor, and not a Dolgorucki; and you will be to me only Maria, and not a Menzikof. Had I never seen you, no human power could have made me relinquish a private life, free from intrigue, hatred, and every other crime. Amidst the hatred of relatives, whose souls are filled with gall, I might have become a victim; but had they endeavoured to make me the instrument of their perfidies, I would have defended myself at the risk of my life. No, I am no  
more

more fitted to associate with them, than they are calculated to live with me.

Your Sophia, my dear Maria, whom I see every day, confirms me in those principles which were early impressed on my mind by the mother of my friend Gustavus. She educated her son and myself, for a better and a far different state of society than that in which we are placed; she inspired in our minds that true magnanimity, which could alone enable us to sacrifice every thing to the attainment of virtue.

Accustom yourself, dear Maria, to support, with strength and dignity, misfortunes which you have not drawn down upon yourself; for should even the power of your father remain unshaken, it will not be less inimical to your happiness than his fall. We have no other hope but in ourselves, in our love, and in the benedictions of our mother. I ardently desire to

say to this excellent mother, to your Sophia, to yourself, and to your sister—

“ Fly together, before the crimes and the misfortunes of others overwhelm you; and I know well where you will be able to fly.”

On the 9th of this month, it seems, the anniversary of your birthday was celebrated at Petersburg, with a magnificence worthy the daughter of the Empress's favourite. My cousin, Ivan, writes me that your beautiful hair was encircled by a diadem of precious stones; and that, adorned in a robe embroidered with gold, you moved with the air of a young deity. Ah, Maria! your plain white robe, your green veil, are better suited to my taste. And we likewise, Sophia and myself, commemorated your birthday. We gave to your father's slaves a day of rest, a plentiful dinner, and a dance in the evening. I distributed to those among them who were

poor

poor and sick, a sum of money, in the name of the Princess Maria; and when these poor unfortunate beings joined their hand, and blessed you, while tears of joy gushed from their eyes, Oh Maria! I also clasped my hands, and united my voice to their cries of joy and gratitude, to the repeated cries of—

“Live the Princess Maria!—God bless the good Princess Maria!”

I spent the remainder of the day with Madame Rocales, in the chamber you inhabited in your infancy, where hangs a portrait which bears even now a striking resemblance to your features. Sophia related to me how gentle and good you were during your early years, and I devoured each of her words without removing my eyes from the portrait. She shewed me likewise a small lace robe, which you wore when about five or six years old. I took possession of it, in order to increase my treasure,

sure, which only consisted of your green veil.

Oh Maria! call not this childish. Love, it is true, is always represented as a little child; but it is only justly so, when it is as pure, as innocent, and as constant as our's. I swear that when unquiet, melancholy, or agitated, I have only to look at your veil, to press it to my heart, and it beats more tranquilly: I continue calm—it acts as a talisman of happiness and hope, which I can, therefore, never resign.

On your next birthday, Maria, if you are with me, you shall be dressed in the same manner as you appear in this portrait: in white, with a garland of myrrh around your head. You will be more engaging than in your embroidered robe, and your diadem of diamonds. Ah! when shall we be able to celebrate it? Adieu, adieu, Maria!

LETTER

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LETTER VII.

*Maria to Fedor.*

Petersburg, February.

CAN you believe it, my dear Fedor, that one of your melancholy letters arrived during some of my most placid moments? Know you why?—It is because I frequently suffer myself to fall into a pleasant reverie, which has the power to produce an instant illusion in my mind. With my eyes shut, my head supported on my hand, I think of you with so much intensity as to conceive that I behold you, and  
listen



listen to your voice. Mamma opened my chamber-door.

“ A letter,” said she to me : “ the courier from Pozeck is arrived.”

Ah, Fedor ! is a messenger then necessary to enable us to communicate our thoughts to each other ? And this courier can, if he be so inclined, retard them !— The illusion ceased ; I opened my eyes— looked around me—but Fedor was not by my side. Ah ! yes, yes, he is still there ; these letters were traced by his hand ; his heart and his soul dictated these expressions, and joy and happiness returned to give a charm to my life as I read your letter. It is thus also, my dear friend, with the idea I have formed to myself of our future life : sometimes I view it with dismay and melancholy, sometimes it enchants me with delight ; at one time I contemplate it with extreme terror, and at another with the most lively impatience.

You

You have celebrated my birthday in the most delightful manner, and I myself enjoyed, on that day, a festival according to my own heart. My father gave me a purse of a thousand rubles; and each of them has, at least, produced a tear of thankfulness, or drawn down upon me a blessing from some unfortunate being. How my heart has been affected by the gratitude of my father's slaves! Ah, did it depend only on me, how frequently should they experience a renewal of their happiness! It seems to me, as if I heard you join in their cry of—"Long live the Princess Maria!" And I also, Fedor, I cry to Heaven—"Live the happy Maria!"—since she is beloved by Fedor.

I have shed the most delightful tears over your conversation with my Sophia, before the portrait of the little Maria, whose innocent heart is wholly your's; and this green veil, which you press to your heart—Ah, Fedor! one day you will also  
press

press your Maria to that tender and animated heart, of which she can so well estimate the value; and all our misfortunes will be forgotten.

But whilst I anticipate this happy moment, I suffer the greatest uneasiness respecting my father. It seems to me, that his riches and honours do not rest on a solid foundation. When any person enters my chamber, I fancy that they bring the news of his fall; the slightest noise which I hear, I am apt to conceive is from a seditious movement directed against him. He is extremely reserved before us, and dissembles both his hopes and his fears. I very much doubt, although you have twice mentioned it in your letters, whether the Duke of Holstein really hates him as much as you are inclined to imagine: it is true, my father once endeavoured to deprive him of the command of the Body Guard; but they have long ceased to regard each other as enemies; the Empress herself  
brought

brought about a reconciliation betwixt them. In the Cabinet Council, my father holds the first rank after the Duke; and the Galitzins, two men of tried loyalty, appear to be strictly connected with him.

But as you, my Fedor, have justly observed, of what importance are all the ties formed by ambition, interest, or politics? How happy should I be, could my father appreciate them as we do—could he be contented to live unknown and tranquil, without titles, decorations, or honours, in our small and beautiful estate of Ronneburg!—If no person knew his name except his own family and his neighbours; if you, Fedor, was the son of one of these neighbours, as unambitious as ourselves, you would love me as you do now, because you will always be Fedor, and I always Maria, and no person would then dispute with you my hand. In such a situation, I should be too happy—yes, too happy for the present world.

But

But how far distant am I from this happiness, upon the steep and dangerous pinnacle where Fortune has placed me!—Sophia has frequently observed, that the ambitious man is never content with what he possesses, and to whatever height he may have attained, he still desires to mount higher; and not without reason, according to his principle, added she, because should he not *ascend*, he must necessarily *fall*. And when he has reached the highest point of good fortune, his fall is inevitable.

Oh God! grant to my ardent prayers that my father, in his fall, be not dashed to pieces. A few days ago, a man was killed on the parade by the discharge of a musket, by whom could not be discovered: this circumstance has been the subject of much speculation. My father became pale when he heard the report. It is generally believed that it was directed against the life of the Empress, as the person who was killed (a merchant) stood directly behind  
her

her. Since this transaction, which occurred a few days ago, my father has not been able to recover the usual serenity, under which he endeavours to conceal his anxiety; once even, striking his forehead, he could not help exclaiming—

“ I shall be lost ! ”

Lost, Fedor!—lost!—and wherefore?—How?—Although the discharge from this musket has not reached the Empress, may not a fever, or an apoplectic attack, carry her off in an instant?

Two days after this incident, the anniversary of the death of our Emperor, Peter the Great, was celebrated; on which occasion the whole Court, in deep mourning, repaired to the Church of St. Peter, where he lay interred. I proceeded thither at an early hour, covered with a crape veil, into the large area hung with black. A profusion of lamps were every where disposed

in

in order to illuminate the Church; but as yet they shed only an obscure light. The Court arrived in solemn silence. I had taken my station in a box directly opposite the Empress; behind her stood my father; and, whether it might be from the dim light of the lamps, or an effect of my own imagination, I know not, but they appeared to me pale as spectres.

On a sculptured bier was placed a very striking figure of Peter the Great, surrounded by several affecting inscriptions. I compared the animated tint of the statue with the pale faces of those who stood around it, and could readily have conceived that it alone lived, and that all the courtiers had been suddenly struck dead. Among this group, the countenance of my father was most conspicuous.

The band struck up a slow and solemn air, which, however, did not much attract my attention. My eyes were still riveted  
on

on my father, and I offered up to Heaven the most fervent prayers on his behalf; when suddenly a voice chanted with the greatest sweetness—"He is fallen!" and, after a long pause, repeated in a still lower tone—"He is fallen!" I was very much agitated, and my emotion increased when I listened to the same strains performed in full chorus—"He is fallen!—Woe!—Woe!"

Ah, Fedor! excuse the weakness of your friend. This word has pierced my heart; the impression can never be effaced. In the midst of the most animated conversations, in the midst of the most enlivening amusements, in the midst of all the pageantry by which I am surrounded, this terrible "Woe!" still resounds in my ears; never do I touch my harpsichord without recalling to mind this melancholy air, and being impelled, as it were, to repeat it.

I leaned against the pilasters, covered  
with



with black. The sparkling of the lamps appeared to my eyes like lightning from heaven, and the vaulted roof seemed to tremble, whilst I every moment expected to behold the figure of the Emperor become animated, and dart his menacing looks towards my unfortunate parent. I was a long time deprived of recollection; and the first thing I distinctly heard was a voice which chanted—

“ Weep, Oh, mothers! Oh, young daughters, weep,—because your father is fallen!”

The voice died away, and was followed by the most profound silence; my forehead was covered with a cold perspiration. I leaned on the choristers' desk, which was before me; I clasped together my cold and trembling hands and sunk upon my knees, more through weakness than from devotion. When I had somewhat recovered my strength, I rose, and endeavoured

voured to tranquillize my mind, by reflecting that this was only a funeral ceremony; but all my efforts to this purpose were in vain. I returned to my apartment, very much affected; which, indeed, I should have been, without the aid of such imaginary terrors. It was the anniversary of the death of our great Emperor, and all his courtiers, all those whom he had loaded with benefits, those who had been his greatest favourites, all yawned with an air of indifference and *ennui*. Good God! Fedor, is it then possible that the remembrance of a beloved object passes away more quickly than his funeral urn? Peter the Great was the benefactor, the father of his subjects; and he is already forgotten by the greatest number of them! Fedor, one year after my death, you may, perhaps, be consoled for my loss! Would it not have been better that you had never loved? Since this day of mourning, *fêtes* in succession have been celebrated in

honour of the Duke and Duchess of Holstein. I have not been enlivened by these festivities; this cry of "Woe!" is still impressed on my heart.

Fedor, the Count Sapieha is arrived here. Do you know that the hand of your Maria was destined to his son? I say *was*, because, God be praised! it is so no more. I was unacquainted with this intention when I danced with him, and he spoke to me with much affability; in short, my mother had not said a word respecting it, until the project was wholly abandoned by my father.

"Had he determined on it?" enquired I, turning pale. "But, my mother, I hope he thinks no more of it?"

"No, Maria, not at present."

"Ah, mamma! what happiness!" said I, embracing her. "But are you certain? My father does not in general readily give

up those plans he has once formed: how then has he been induced to relinquish this idea?"

"It was I, my daughter, who continually, and even on my knees, entreated him to give up this connection: he at last promised to do so, and has already kept his word."

"Oh God!" cried I, throwing myself at her feet; "it is thus, my tutelary angel, that I will each day express my gratitude."

She raised me up, and, weeping, clasped me to her heart with great inquietude.

"My child, my dear Maria," said she, hesitating, as if she knew not what to say; "your father has renounced this marriage so readily, that I know not what to think of it. The Count Sapieha is a brilliant match. When I spoke of it to your father, he rested his head upon his hand, and remained a long time absorbed in his own

reflections; at last he broke silence, and said, in a stifled voice—

‘ Shall I then pass my life in a state of agitation and torment to finish it thus?— Is it for this that I brave the destruction and misery with which I am unceasingly menaced?—Sapieha,’ continued he, after a few moments’ silence, ‘ I shall always be able to secure his alliance; but, at present, who can foresee to what a greater height I may yet be elevated?’

‘ Not higher I hope, my dear friend,’ said I to him, in a gentle and sorrowful tone: ‘ what other dignities remain for you to desire?’

“ My voice awakened him from his reverie, and I could perceive, from the surprise expressed in his countenance, that he had forgotten I was present. He quickly, however, recovered his serene air; and, pressing my hand, said to me, with an animated expression in his countenance—

‘ I wish to be a happy father; I wish—

The

The alliance with Sapieha is relinquished; I give you my word it shall not take place, if this assurance can render you happy.'

'Extremely happy,' replied I, embracing him tenderly. 'Ah, my dear Alexander, resolve at once to be happy; it will be so delightful.'

'Very soon,' said he, with complacence; 'very soon, dear friend.'

'Yes, hasten then to put your resolution in practice, ere it be too late: the Empress is mortal;—it is evident that you are surrounded by numerous enemies.'

'It is well; that is the very reason why——'

'The alliance with Sapieha is broken off,' said I, interrupting him; 'Maria may, perhaps, one day become the guarantee of our happiness.'

Such, my dear Fedor, were the words of my father:—what can they signify?—What, however, is most essential at present, is the assurance respecting the con-

nection with Sapieha; and I rejoice that the threatened storm has passed over our head, without producing any other consequence than a degree of terror, which was quickly changed into hope.

Come to Petersburg—my mother wishes you to come—and tell me what a fool I am to rejoice whilst our horizon is yet covered with thick clouds. Oh Fedor! it is not your presence that will make me renounce the delightful folly of hoping to be happy, since, even at this moment, I am your happy, a thousand times happy—  
Maria.

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LETTER VIII.

*Fedor to Maria.*

Pozeck, March.

INNOCENT Maria, gentle and unsuspecting as a child, destitute yourself of hatred or malice, you neither dread, nor foresee the storm which awaits us! You say the late threatening appearance produced only "a degree of terror which was transformed into hope." Ill have you interpreted the conversation of your father, if it has led you to suppose that he might be induced to consent to our union!



How can you imagine he would bestow on me—on a Dolgorucki—that hand which he values at too high a price even for the Count Sapiéha? Do you think, dear Maria, that he views your Fedor with the same eyes as you, and that he desires your happiness? He is not anxious to promote the happiness of others, and knows not that, in their's he would find his own; he thinks only of his own aggrandizement; his ambition knows no bounds. Scarcely has he taken a single step in the road of ambition, than he endeavours to ascend still higher; but the more elevated his situation, the more dangerous does it become: at every step, he finds himself environed with new enemies and unforeseen dangers, and additional support becomes necessary in proportion to the eminence he has attained.

When only possessing an inferior degree of power, he found the assistance of Sapiéha necessary to the furtherance of his views,

views, and he then promised your hand to his son; since that period, your father has attained the highest honours of the State, whilst Sapieha has wisely contented himself with his original rank; and the ambitious Menzikof looks down upon him with contempt.

Unfortunate Maria! it is you, your beauty, your hand, which is destined to support your father in his elevated situation; it is on you that he leans, in order, if possible, to ascend still higher. Of what consequence to him is the situation of your heart?—that heart so tender and faithful! In the struggle for preferment, the feelings of the heart are forgotten.—Poor Maria! your's has yet much to suffer.

Count Sapieha, to whom they wished to unite you, is my friend; we met in Switzerland, at the foot of Mount Saint-Gothard, when I travelled into Italy, and continued our route in company with each

other. He is very amiable, possesses an enlightened mind, a warm heart, and an enthusiastic head. We hired a guide, left our carriages and servants behind us, and together ascended Mount Saint-Gothard. Arrived at its summit, we stopped to contemplate the sublime spectacle which presented itself to our view. Placed upon this lofty eminence, we trod not only on the earth, but on the clouds. At an inconceivable depth beneath our feet, we beheld a great part of Switzerland; the highest hills appeared to our eyes on a level with the plains, and all this country seemed, from the point where we stood, but as a small rock that had been detached from the Alps, and rolled into the abyss. Before us, extended the fertile plains of Italy, resembling a well cultivated garden. In contemplating this delightful picture, the countenance of Sapiéha was animated, and his imagination became more and more exalted.

“ Oh ! ”

“ Oh ! ” said he at last, with energy and feeling, “ Oh Fedor ! what is this life, which man is so anxious to preserve ? How insignificant does an individual appear in this immensity ! A Sapieha, a Dolgorucki, are not less insignificant in the eye of the Great Eternal, than the most simple shepherd inhabiting these mountains. Grandeur—riches—power—these words create a sentiment of contempt, rather than of envy.—Ah ! Fedor,” added he, with an expressive look, which penetrated to the bottom of my soul, “ with a single heart which loved me, which was devoted to me alone, I would consider myself more rich, greater, and more powerful, eating the bread of useful labour in these peaceable and sequestered vallies, than the Grand Czar upon his throne.”

I smiled, but his observation was just, Maria ; and he spoke the language of my heart. On this immense height, appa-

rently nearer to heaven than the habitations of men; earth and its inhabitants appeared to us as nothing—friendship alone was worthy of consideration; and we swore to each other a friendship as sincere and as durable as the rocks which witnessed our vows.

“Fedor,” said he, “be to me a friend under every circumstance, and reckon upon my friendship whilst I continue to exist; permit not any petty human passions to disunite us.”

I gave him my promise, and a short time after we separated; he remained in Italy, whilst I proceeded to France; and I knew not that he had returned until I received your letter.

Whilst sitting, one morning, alone in my study, contemplating your cherished image, the door was hastily thrown open, and  
Sapieha

Sapieha entered. I experienced the most sincere pleasure at his return.

“ We will renew the vows of friendship on the banks of the Neva, which we formerly swore on the summit of Mount Saint-Gothard,” said he.

“ Have you found,” enquired I, “ the heart you desired ?”

“ I hope so,” replied he ; “ I am about to be married.”

“ I congratulate you on it ; and since you hope to find a heart capable of affection, it must neither be ambition nor policy which conducts you to the altar.”

He smiled.

“ I must avow that it is ambition and policy which have brought me back to Petersburg ; it is my father who has chosen for me a bride : but, in the present instance, his choice would have been mine, and it is love which will lead me to the altar. I  
espouse

espouse the eldest daughter of Prince Menzikof, the divine Maria——”

“ Unfortunate !” exclaimed I, seizing his arm.

I became pale, and trembled; and, doubtless, my countenance was terrifying, as he also trembled, and regarded me with the most melancholy air. Oh Maria! I still shudder at the recollection of this moment. Doubtless, Sapieha acted better than I: he is more heroic, more generous, more a *friend*; but, I call Heaven and my own heart to witness, he loves you not with the same ardour that I love you, since he has been able to renounce your hand!

“ It should seem, Fedor, that Fate inclines to put our friendship to the test, to the most dangerous of all tests—that of rivalry in love. Have I conjectured right? Speak, Fedor; reply to me. I have told you that I love Maria Menzikof, and that  
I have

I have obtained the promise of her hand. What have you to confide to me?—Speak!”

“ That I also love Maria—that I idolize her—and that I am, in my turn, equally beloved.”

“ Destiny is cruel,” said he, quickly; “ it leaves not to me even the merit of generosity. I hoped our friendship might have been cemented by a mutual sacrifice; but, since you are beloved, no sacrifice is necessary. May you be the most happy of men! I withdraw my pretensions.”

“ Oh! dear Sapieha—you will not be permitted——your father——Prince Menzikof——”

“ Well! my father will unquestionably be irritated; but shall I, in order to avoid his momentary displeasure, render you and Maria unhappy?—No, Fedor; if there be no alternative, I will rather secretly leave Petersburg, and return to Italy; I will ascend Mount Saint-Gothard, and re-visiting that sublime altar on which we took the oath of eternal friendship to one another,



another, I will renew that oath, the most sacred that man can pronounce."

I embraced him, and recounted how we first became acquainted; and my hopes, founded on the consent of your mother. He contracted his brow.

"I fear much that these hopes are chimerical," said he. "Should Menzikof continue to be promoted, and to triumph over the Dolgoruckis, he will never bestow on one of them the hand of his daughter; and, on the contrary, should the Dolgoruckis be successful, they will still less permit your union with a child of the disgraced Menzikof. But, Fedor, you have a friend who will never desert you. I will immediately return to Petersburg, in order to tranquillize your poor Maria; she will, by this time, know that her father has bartered to me her hand;"—and he departed in order to renounce you, Maria, you whom he has  
seen

seen and loved. This effort appeared to me above humanity, since, to be recompensed for it, he must find another Maria.

You will now readily comprehend why your father was so easily induced to relinquish the projected union. "Perhaps Maria may become the guarantee of our future happiness," said your father. Should not rather a parent be the guardian of the happiness of his child? And thine—— Poor Maria! every illusion is dispelled. Ambition knows not what it is to love;— you must become the pledge of some interested connection, to promote or secure the aggrandizement of your father.

I will not return to Petersburg; I cannot approach you in the midst of the Court. I suffered too much during my last journey. The glittering pomp, the gold, the precious stones, with which you are obliged to appear in public, and which agree so ill with the noble simplicity of  
your

your figure; those eyes which you dare scarcely raise to mine; the cold and polite expressions which you must employ when speaking to your Fedor; this sad *you*, which love detests—all that, Maria, is insupportable to me. Ah, how much better I see you here in the bosom of reanimated nature! I seem, as it were, to behold your image in every cloud; I inhale your sweet breath with the perfume of the opening flowers; all the little birds, as they celebrate the returning spring, say to me on your part—

“ Maria loves Fedor ! ”

The illusion is sometimes so complete, that I conceive you are present, and that I listen to your sweet voice. At Petersburg, you appear to have less resemblance to me. Ah! Maria, you know not what I experience on beholding you dance with another. You can regard me with a kind of dissimulation which I envy; you speak  
to

to me as if I were a stranger; and even when near me, you are able to support your part in a conversation with another. As for me, I endeavour in vain to imitate you; if I happen to hear the sound of your voice, if you move only your hand, if your robes touch me in passing, I can no more attend to what is said. No, Maria, I incline not to revisit you in your present situation.—Adieu! be tranquil, if it be possible; but as for me, I tremble to contemplate the future.—Adieu!

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LETTER IX.

*Maria to Sophia.*

Petersburg, June.

I HAVE transmitted to you, my Sophia, copies of all his letters; for I was unwilling to part with the precious originals, as they might be so readily lost. You will observe, my worthy friend, how much his mind is a prey to inquietude; my mother suffers equally: but I continue to flatter myself that both torment themselves unnecessarily. My father is so kind to me!— Perhaps he spoke only in jest, when he told

told mamma so many singular circumstances respecting me. Does it not frequently happen, Sophia, that people speak thus without any meaning, and without attaching any idea to what they utter?

If I am permitted to act according to my own will, so great is the confidence I repose in the goodness of my father, that I will throw myself at his feet, and avow my attachment for the noble, the brave and magnanimous Dolgorucki, whom I have heard himself frequently extol: such a step may, perhaps, somewhat irritate him in the first instance; but he will not be able to withstand my importunity, my love, and my tears, and still less those of Fedor, who possesses a disposition the most conciliating. Are you not of the same opinion, Sophia?

His letters will inform you that he is determined not to see me at Court, in the presence of persons interested in prying  
into

into his sentiments; and, probably, he is in the right: for I am well aware we might both be disconcerted on his entrance, and I might tremble so when I saw him approach, as to disqualify me for bearing a share in any conversation. Frequently has my worthy mother been forced to excuse my confusion and absent air, by saying I had a meagrim. I danced, merely because I could not well avoid it; but God only knows how much it cost me to dance with any other than him, and how frequently I was embarrassed in the country-dances. To my poor head were always imputed the faults with which my heart alone was chargeable. After all, however, I would rather have beheld him in public, than been wholly deprived of his company, which has been the case for the two last months; as my mother did not wish that any private interviews should take place between us, after the one I have already related. Ah! how tedious have these two months appeared to your Maria.

A few

A few days since, there was given a splendid *fête* upon the water at Peterhoff, in honour of the Ambassadors. After dinner, we perambulated the fine pleasure-grounds, and viewed the cascades; in the evening, all the groves were illuminated. I contemplated all these artificial beauties without any interest or pleasure; my heart was wholly at Pozeck; but how great was my emotion on perceiving the young Count Sapieha, the bosom friend of Fedor! He bowed, and advanced towards me. I wished to impart many things to him, but we were not alone; at last, he presented me his arm, and imperceptibly took the road into a retired alley. I longed to speak of Fedor; but he indicated that we were followed by ten or twelve heyducs, who might overhear us.

“Do these people belong to you, Count?” enquired I.

“Yes,” he replied.

“Cannot



“ Cannot you make them retire for a moment? I wish to speak to you.”

As we had then reached a large verdant area at the extremity of the alley, he turned about, and cried to his heyducs—

“ Go; you know what you have to do.”

They posted themselves at all the different outlets from this retreat, which resembled a kind of star. Suddenly one of them, who kept a little behind, darted into my arms, crying out—

“ Oh! my dear Maria!”

It was Fedor!—Sapieha had retired. We were alone, surrounded by a profusion of lamps, under a canopy of beech trees, the thick foliage of which perfectly concealed us. The extreme emotion excited in my mind, by the mingled sensations of pleasure  
and

and pain, nearly deprived me of the use of my senses, and I was constrained to lean my head for support on the breast of Fedor.

“ I have then found you,” said he, pressing me more closely to him. “ I have found you,” repeated he again.

As for me, Sophia, I could not speak; but my tears, my emotion, told him plainly that he had again, indeed, found his Maria. Sapieha returned, laid suddenly hold of my arm, led me into the alley, and appeared as if he were pointing out to me the effect of the illumination. When any of the company approached us, we went to the other side, always followed by the heyducs of Sapieha. We stopped as soon as we were at a sufficient distance; nine of the heyducs retired—the tenth advanced, and threw himself on the neck of Sapieha. The Count took both our hands,

hands, and grasping them in a friendly manner—

“Fedor,” said he, in a solemn tone, “you love the Princess Maria more than life?”

“Oh! a thousand times more than life!” replied my dear Fedor.

“And you, Madam?”

I blushed.

“Yes, I love Fedor,” returned I, “as Fedor loves Maria!”

“Well, then,” continued this noble and generous friend, “insure your happiness. My yacht is ready on the next canal; no person knows it; she is armed and provisioned. You may depend on my people; they are devoted to me, and will serve you at the risk of their lives. In a quarter of an hour you may be at sea; and, after putting in at Dantzick, may proceed

ceed through Germany into one of the romantic and sequestered vallies of Switzerland, which, you know, Fedor, I have always contemplated in imagination as the scene of my future happiness, and that of my friends. Here is a portfolio, containing bills of exchange. Adieu!—Proceed under the auspices of love and friendship.—Wherefore this astonishment, Fedor? And why, Princess Maria, do you turn pale? I tell you, never will your father permit a Dolgorucki to obtain your hand: that which it is now so easy to accomplish must, probably, be resorted to in the end; but the present opportunity lost, can never be recalled.”

Fedor cast on me an expressive glance. Ah! Sophia, if I could convey to you an adequate idea of this look, you would pardon, I am certain, my having felt a lively desire to embrace the Count's proposal. I threw myself into Fedor's arms—  
Sapicha led us towards the canal, where

the yacht waited for us. Fedor suddenly stopped.

“Do not stop,” said his friend to him; “reflect on the supreme happiness that awaits you, and hesitate not to seize it.”

“Ah!” returned Fedor, with great emotion, “yes, doubtless, supreme happiness; but the happiness of my Maria must also be consulted.”

He took my hand, and, regarding me with ineffable tenderness, said—

“Here is the bark, Maria, that can deliver us from your father’s power—from the misfortune of being separated. To enter it with you—to exist only for you, would unquestionably constitute my supreme felicity; but I cannot wish to obtain your consent by surprise. You love me—and, although I should never know any other happiness, that would be sufficient; I should, however, reckon that  
happiness

happiness purchased too dearly, if it ever cost you a single tear, one tear of sorrow. Reflect, then, Maria, and consider that you are about to quit your country, your dearest relatives and friends. I speak not of rank or fortune, but of your sister, your mother—your mother, Maria! For these sacrifices I have nothing to offer but eternal love.”

He pronounced these words in a firm and impressive tone, while his eyes were overflowed with tears. I wept likewise, and I pressed him to my heart.

“Fedor,” said I, “with you I would precipitate myself into an abyss; with you I should be happy in every place, and in every situation; whilst, without you, Maria can never experience happiness. But ought we to afflict my mother?—Fedor, my inclination leads me to obey you, as if I were already your happy companion: decide for me.”

“ I have already decided, Maria,” said he, with gentleness; “ I have decided for the repose of your innocent and pure heart. Can such a step be requisite to render us happy? Shall we not be happy in dying for each other? And, perhaps, Maria, I might not be so, were you to abandon your mother for the sake of your lover. No,” said he, placing his hand on my heart, and tenderly embracing me; “ no, this heart is not made for remorse, nor these eyes for tears of repentance; they will flow without doubt, but the tears of a virtuous love are not unmingled with pleasure. Let us return then, my dear Maria: our sufferings are unavoidable; but let us not consider them as a punishment, but as a test of our attachment.”

Oh! dear Sophia, how much at this moment did I love my Fedor!

“ Oh!” cried I, “ you fulfil all my wishes—you restore me to life. I would, however,

however, have followed you, had you desired it. Yes, Fedor, let us continue innocent;—life only endures for a moment, but our love is eternal.”

Sapieha heard us at first with impatience and discontent; by degrees, however, this impression gave place to admiration.

“Magnanimous beings!” he exclaimed, “how much do you merit that felicity which you sacrifice to virtue! Fedor, you cement the oath which we pronounced together upon Mount Saint-Gothard, to remain for ever faithful to friendship and virtue, even at the expence of our happiness. I sacrifice mine to friendship, whilst you sacrifice your's to virtue. Virtue and friendship would only be empty names, were they not superior to the power of love. I urge you no longer to go; but never cease to recollect that you have a friend.”



We returned into the great alley, without any one having noticed our absence, excepting my mother, who had been looking for me. I saw her coming towards us, and I ran up to her. She smiled when she saw me leaning on the arm of Sapieha. On joining her, I took the hand of Fedor, and presented him to her.

“Here he is, my dear mother,” said I, embracing her.

I was so animated by his attachment, that at this moment I would have ventured, in like manner, to present him to the Empress—even to my father himself. My mother was very much surprised, but said nothing at the time, as several persons approached us.

Shortly afterwards, she returned to Petersburg, and carried me with her. My sister wished to stay a little longer, and my

my father was necessarily obliged to remain, by his official situation. As soon as I had retired with my mother, she embraced me, and said, in a tone of mild severity—

“What imprudence, Maria! How did you presume——”

I interrupted her.

“I would have presumed still farther, dear mother; for if Fedor had wished it, your culpable daughter had not been at this moment in your arms.”

I recounted to her all that had passed. She heard me with extreme attention, walking up and down her chamber visibly agitated. Suddenly stopping, she desired me to repeat all that I had already told her, and particularly to detail the precautions employed by Sapieha to insure our safety. She then sighed, and involuntarily exclaimed—

“What an invaluable friend! What a noble young man!—Now, Maria, you may consider yourself fortunate. Oh God!” added she, “shall I never see them happy?”

She clasped me in her arms, and dismissed me to my apartment.

What think you, Sophia? Do not the expressions which escaped her, appear to suggest that she would not have been displeased at my flight? Oh Sophia! her blessing would have followed me: already might we have been far from our native land, and I now the spouse, the happy spouse of Fedor. Very soon should we have reached the lofty Alps of your country—of that country which you have so often depicted to me as the abode of innocence, of liberty, and of love.

If, however, I had fled, my mother  
might

might not have proved equally indulgent as she is now; in thinking only on my happiness, she overlooks her own. No, Sophia, I must remain; Alexandrina is yet too young, too inconsiderate, and too much a child, to supply my place to the best of mothers. I am the only friend in whom she confides, and to whom she imparts all her difficulties; it is I alone who can alleviate them, console her, and enable her to support her inquietude and her sorrow. How then could I be so ungrateful as to abandon her!—her too, my mother—my confidante—the good and generous patroness of my attachment! No, Sophia, never.—Oh! how fondly do I love all the friends of my heart! Sapiaha sacrificed his fortune and his sentiments to confirm my happiness; Fedor refused to purchase felicity at the expence of my remorse; my mother, my respectable mother would have acquiesced in the privation of my society, that I might be happy!

And I, ungrateful daughter, insensate lover, interested friend; ought I not also to sacrifice my happiness to theirs? No, whatever may happen, I will remain with my mother; my heart shall always afford to her a refuge in her difficulties. No, adorable mother, the depositary of my love for Fedor, I will never abandon you!

LETTER

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LETTER X.

*Maria to Fedor.*

Petersburg, July,

NO, Fedor, you are not the only individual who loves me with such noble disinterestedness: my mother's love is equally exalted. When I related our interview at Peterhoff, and the preparations of Sapielha, she let fall some words which seemed to evince that she would not have much disapproved of our flight. I have hitherto concealed this circumstance, for I dreaded  
your

your solicitations, since that obstacle was removed; but, my dear Fedor, must you not acknowledge, as well as myself, that her generosity, tenderness, and self-denial, afford motives sufficiently powerful to retain me? Yes, you must acknowledge it, I am certain, and will never again revive the idea of leaving her. Oh! how happy am I, in possessing such an incomparable mother and friend! How culpable should I appear in my own eyes, did I not endeavour to render myself worthy of their attachment! I swear by their love, which is my supreme good, and which I hold in such high estimation, that never shall their Maria act in any way so as voluntarily to give them pain—never shall they have occasion to repent the ardour of their attachment to me. Fate may render me unfortunate, but cannot make me culpable; the oath I have taken, must prove the guarantee of my virtue. The noble devotedness of your friend, cannot fail to excite our gratitude: his counsels were prudent, perhaps;

perhaps; but it was not allowable in us to follow them. Fedor, I adore you: if I listened only to the dictates of my passion, there is no sacrifice, however great, that I would not make to it—yes, I confess it, blushing, even that of filial love itself; but if I ceased to possess that dignity of character which belongs only to innocence and virtue, it appears to me I should love you also. Perhaps, the dreadful period may arrive when we shall be separated for ever; but we shall always think of each other with a delightful and sublime sentiment, and exclaim with a noble enthusiasm—

“I am beloved with an affection superior to every thing but the love of virtue.”

Yes, Fedor, had we attended merely to the gratification of our own selfish feelings, we should have been less happy together in the romantic retreats of Switzerland than we are at present. Did you not

once



once observe that you would rather remain at the foot of a throne, than ascend it by a crime? Do you know what we have gained by our self-denial—by sacrificing our happiness to virtue? Never does such a sacrifice go unrewarded. Since our interview at Peterhoff, my mother places in me the most unlimited confidence; she permits me to pass a few weeks at Ronneburg, near my Sophia, near my Fedor, and I am to set out immediately after dispatching this letter. She consents also to your visiting me, as often as you chuse, whilst I continue in your neighbourhood. Oh Fedor! my dear Fedor! these few weeks will compensate us for years of separation!

The Duchess of Courland leaves the capital before her law-suit with my father can be brought to a termination; but my uncle carries on the process with the greatest rancour. The Court of Holstein testifies the utmost good-will to my father, and displays

displays it openly; such conduct affords, in my mother's opinion, a strong proof that the Empress does not think of withdrawing her favour from him. My father appears entirely tranquil. I know not whether I deceive myself, but I am inclined to believe that the Empress entertains a true friendship for him. She addresses other courtiers with affability and grace, but on him alone she bestows the smile of confidence, of a confidence without limits; and which, surely, she would never give to an individual whom she did not esteem. Fedor, always shall you read the heart of Maria. Adieu!

LETTER

## LETTER XI.

*Maria to Fedor.*

Petersburg, September.

DEAR Fedor, what happy days have I just passed with you and my Sophia! Let us no more complain of our destiny, my good friend. How many thousands of human beings descend into the silent tomb, without experiencing a single hour of happiness similar to those which we have enjoyed! How have I acquired the energy necessary to support such a felicity? Love alone

alone could impart it to me. When you came to Ronneburg with the rising sun, my looks were always, long before your arrival, directed towards the mountain you had to descend; and when you left us in the evening, my eyes uniformly followed you into the distance, till your shadow entirely disappeared from my sight. I never slept above four or five hours, and on awaking, started up, saying—"He will be here."—You arrived, and the day passed away like a dream.

At my return, my mother told me, smiling, that the air of the country had greatly improved my looks; that I was become tall, and seemed in good health and spirits.

"Ah! dear mother," returned I, throwing myself on her neck, "how happy have I been!"

My

My father bestowed on me many compliments: he said I was handsome, and called me his pretty Maria. I mention this circumstance, Fedor, because my mother observed that it was not without meaning. A father may observe that his daughter is beautiful, but he has always some motives for this remark. What might be his? I cannot comprehend it: but his praises make me sad; while your's, Fedor, give me so much pleasure!

The health of the Empress declines daily, and it has been observed that my father now pays his court to the young Grand Duke. The few friends he has, blame him for this conduct, and say that it will injure him. My mother is very much vexed; but she must surely have some other cause for her sorrow than the apprehension of my father's disgrace. I frequently find her with tears in her eyes; sometimes, when she looks at me, she appears to  
repress

repress them with difficulty, and I am much inclined to believe that it is for me they flow in secret. When we are alone, she embraces me with tenderness, seems to have something to say, and yet remains silent.

But I check this suspicion; my heart is so full of happiness and hope! I resemble one who, having been allowed to view the sun, is again condemned to darkness: for a long time, the bright rays of the luminous planet are still before his eyes.— Dear Fedor, even here, I still see only you; and the recollection of the happy moments we spent together, never can be erased from my memory.

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LETTER XII.

*Maria to Fedor.*

Petersburg, October.

THIS day, Father Brukenthal arrived at our house. He entered my mother's apartment at a time when she had no expectation of seeing him. At first, she did not know him; but, after having looked at him for some time in silence, and with an air of uncertainty, she embraced him, and exclaimed—

“ It is

“ It is you ! our good and faithful friend ! It is, indeed, you.—Welcome, welcome !—At present, every thing goes well ; and your presence gives joy and hope to my heart.”

She then presented my sister Alexandrina, and me to this good ecclesiastic. His eyes were suffused with tears, and he clasped our hands in his with an affection truly paternal. My mother sent for my father, who came immediately, and threw himself into the arms of his old friend, with an expression of real sensibility. I was then convinced that my father was truly susceptible of affection. He loves Father Brukenthal tenderly. He still looks at him, and embraces him with emotion.

“ Dear Brukenthal,” said he, “ I love you as much as I did in our youth. I have not passed a single day without thinking of you, without wishing to see you—and yet you abandon me. You have repaid



repaid my sincere friendship with neglect and indifference!"

Brukenthal took my father's hand in his, and said nothing; but I saw two large drops trickle down his cheek.

After a moment's pause, my father clapped his friend on the shoulder, bade him look at the superb room in which we were, and then said, with a smile—

"Which of us is right now, my dear Brukenthal?"

"I, my Lord," replied Brukenthal, with a lively emotion; "and you——But I shall be silent."

"No, speak, my friend; speak out your mind, I pray you. What would you say?"

"I would ask your Excellency, whether it has not sometimes cost you a sigh, to appear thus in the right? Whether your heart beats as peaceably under that brilliant  
star,

star, as mine under my russet frock? Whether there is as much happiness in this sumptuous palace, as in my humble cell? And, finally, whether it is the hand of God that supports you in your eminent situation, or your own secret intrigues?"

My father looked pale, and knit his brows. He walked about some time in silence; then, turning to Brukenthal, he said to him, in a mild tone—

"Every one is influenced by his particular character and circumstances. I could not imitate you: it was impossible for me to have done what you have done."

"You might have so done," replied Brukenthal, in a firm manner, "and you may yet." My father cast down his eyes. "Oh, my Lord! Oh my dear Menzikof! may I yet be your good genius? You know how much I was attached to you when, in the year 1714, even you then

acknowledged that I acted properly. Listen to a man who loves you sincerely—perhaps, the only one who loves you. Your tutelar genius speaks to you in my voice.”

My father had not yet lifted up his eyes. At last, he took courage, and said, with a smile—

“ You see, however, that none of your prophecies have been realized. I repeat my question then—Which of us is in the right ?”

“ And I repeat my answer—My Lord, I am in the right. It is twelve years since I left you ; during all that time, I have experienced no sentiment of fear, envy, or hatred. My heart is at peace, and my sleep is sweet and tranquil. Is it the same with you ?”

The countenance of my father became  
more

more sombre: he could not repress a profound sigh. The Priest continued—

“ I think of the day that is past without regret; of that which is to come without anxiety. Can you do so? Happiness and tranquillity you have already lost. What prevents you from doing like me, and recovering them? Doubtless, there is no necessity for your burying yourself in a cell, and renouncing the world. You are a husband and a father, and have duties in active life to perform: but you may retire from the Court, and from public business; you may employ the latter years of your life in the manner most agreeable to a rational being—in drawing around you a circle to whose happiness you would be dear, and in watching over the education of your children.”

“ My good, my dear friend,” said my father, earnestly, “ that is my only object: to obtain it, I remain here; and yet must advance myself higher.”

“ Great God ! can you have views of farther elevation, Menzikof ? What evil spirit hurries you on to misfortune, when you might be so happy ? Will you listen to your friend ? Do not hesitate a moment, and you still may be happy. The health of the Empress is declining ; perhaps, the period is not long, during which it will be possible for her to grant you farther favours. Ask then leave to resign, and go to the baths of Pisa. The sums you have placed at Venice are——”

“ Oh !” say no more, my dear friend,” exclaimed my father, with impatience, “ say no more. We will resume this subject when we are alone. Come with me.”

You cannot imagine, Fedor, what pleasure I experienced on seeing them go away together. I threw my arms round my mother’s neck, repeating what she had said before—

“ At present, all goes well.”

My hopes were augmented when she related to me the history of Father Bru-kenthal. Yes, Fedor, this man of peace will restore us all to peace. I am determined to open my heart to him. Oh! if you beheld his interesting countenance; his smooth sincere forehead, on which tranquillity and benevolence appear to be impressed; his mild, but penetrating eye; the interesting paleness of his visage, which is not the effect of disease or chagrin, but indicates wisdom and reflection. In his presence, my father's temper seems infinitely ameliorated: he then drops his haughty and care-worn look; he no longer assumes that forced smile which often forms such a contrast with the knitting of his brows. Sensibility, mild joy, and benevolence animate all his features.

“ I have recovered my Alexander,” says my mother.

Oh Fedor ! you know not my father, I assure you. He is good ; he has a feeling heart ; he is capable of enjoying all the delightful intercourse of friendship. But how would you have him deal with the despicable crowd that crawl around him—hypocrites, who are profuse of their adulation, while they detest him from the bottom of their hearts ? He is not ignorant of this : he knows that every one at the Court hates him, and would rejoice at his downfall. He has now met with one who loves him, and he has resumed his natural character. His pride is changed to gentleness and affability, his suspicions to confidence. He is revived by the animating sun of friendship ; he is happy to find a friend near him, and feels himself a wiser and a better man.

I have

I have great hopes from this disposition ; and I look upon this excellent Brukenenthal, as a good angel sent by Providence to protect our loves. My mother assures me that he has, more than once or twice, been on the point of obtaining my father's promise to leave this dangerous place. Oh ! could he but succeed ! Oh ! if my father, restored to himself, would consent to call you his son !—Adieu, Fedor ! Adieu, my only hope !



## THE EDITOR.

MARIA'S description of Brukenenthal was no exaggeration. He was one of those rare characters who, reflecting early on life, estimate it at its just value, and to whom experience gives wisdom. In his youth, he was connected with Menzikof by the closest friendship—a friendship which had withstood the greatest trial, that of the prompt and unexpected elevation of one of the parties. Menzikof, become the friend of Peter the Great, appointed his friend an Aide-de-camp General. Brukenenthal came to Russia with ambitious views.

views. Like Menzikof, he wished to advance himself, and the road was open to him; for the Emperor knew him and loved him. But he had not lived three months at the Court before he knew all the danger of such a career, and viewed with horror the life of a courtier. He endeavoured to prevail on Menzikof to resolve with him, to renounce all prospects of grandeur, for the more certain happiness of private life. Menzikof would not listen to him, and Brukenthal determined not to confine himself merely to precept, but to set the example: he refused all offers of superior rank. The two friends frequently disputed respecting the object of life, and what men call happiness.

“You wish to aggrandize yourself,” said Brukenthal; “and you will succeed, because you are seriously determined to pursue that object; but you will find yourself surrounded with enemies, all striving to overthrow and destroy you if they can.”

“ Yes, if they can,” replied Menzikof, with a smile.

He relied entirely on the support of the Emperor, to whom he became daily more and more necessary. The higher he rose, the more Brukenthal feared his fall, and pressed him to abandon the treacherous path of ambition. He succeeded in alarming him, in some degree, by the representation of the dangers he had to expect, and prevailed on him to place considerable sums in the Bank of Venice; but he could not induce him to abandon the Court. All he could obtain was a promise that, on the first disgrace he should experience, he would retire and follow his friend.

Soon after this agreement, Brukenthal hoped that the wished-for moment was arrived. The Emperor ordered an examination into the conduct of the courtiers, and an investigation of their peculations. Basil Dolgorucki presided over the Commission

mission appointed for this purpose; and mal-practices were so clearly traced to Menzikof, that even the Emperor could not defend him. He was about to be completely disgraced.

“ I am undone,” said he one day to Brukenthal; “ the Dolgoruckis triumph.”

“ You are saved,” replied his friend, embracing him. “ Remember your promise:—when shall we depart? I am attached to you, and will be your friend until death.”

Menzikof grew pale, wavered, talked of new schemes of ambition, and hoped to get the Empress to intercede for him. Brukenthal insisted that he should perform his promise. Menzikof made excuses, and required some delay.

“ Adieu, then,” said his friend; “ at least I am free myself, and I shall quit this dangerous abode. You will remain,

to climb with infinite labour the arid rock of ambition. After many efforts, you will doubtless regain the ground you have lost: you will ascend higher than ever; but then your fall will be more terrible, and you will regret the loss of a sincere friend, with whom only you can find real happiness."

About this time, Brukenthal was ordered by the Emperor to conduct some recruits to the King of Prussia, at Potsdam. He performed this task; but, on his return by the way of Dantzick, he took a sudden liking to a religious life, entered a Convent in that city, and took upon himself the vows. The Emperor, who loved and respected Brukenthal, made very advantageous offers to him during his novitiate; but nothing could induce him to mix again in the world. He shut himself up in his Convent, and Menzikof had not seen him since.

As Brukenthal had foreseen, the Emperor renewed his friendship for his favourite; and, after his death, the Empress raised him to still higher dignities. But how often did he acknowledge to himself, that he would have been far happier had he taken the advice of his friend! In a moment of confidence he said to his wife—

“It was my own fault that I lost Brukenthal. Had I followed him, he would not have become a Monk, and we should have lived together. He is the only man that ever was my friend.”

“Know you not the reason of that?” replied the Princess. “It is because he had no ambition:—the ambitious are incapable of friendship.”

When Brukenthal returned, after so long an absence, all the sensibility of Menzikof was awakened. The moment they were alone, he affectionately grasped the hand of his friend.

“Do

“ Do you love me still, my dear Brukenthal,” said he; “ notwithstanding those cruel vows which separate you from the world?”

“ But not from my friend,” replied Brukenthal; “ believe me, Prince——”

“ Call me, Menzikof; speak to me as formerly, I conjure you, if you would have me believe that you still love me.”

“ Well, my dear Menzikof—yes, still as dear to me as ever; nothing has brought me here but the desire (which never forsook me a moment in my retreat) of being your guardian angel. You have filled the universe with your name; you have raised yourself to the summit of glory and honour; let that satisfy you. All the steps of ambition you have already ascended; there now remains only one——”

“ Yes, Brukenthal,” exclaimed Menzikof, with his eyes sparkling, “ you are right;—I have only one more step to take. I look upon this expression of your’s as a  
happy

happy presage. I shall also ascend this difficult step of which you have an idea."

*Brukenthal.*—"Yes, Menzikof, there is yet one step to be taken; and it requires an effort of courage to enable you to attain real happiness. The step I mean, is your voluntary descent from the height to which you have arrived; the abandonment of this life of agitation, torment, care, and disgust; the resignation of all your dignities, and your return to domestic felicity."

*Menzikof.*—"This is the same language with which you addressed me twelve years ago; but I am still here, Brukenthal, and much greater than when you left me. If my power should be shaken, I shall always have time to follow your timid councils, and descend softly, without being overthrown."

*Brukenthal.*—"Poor Menzikof! success has intoxicated you, and you see not the precipices that surround you. I grant that  
your



your glory is at its height: you govern all the Russias—half the world trembles at your name—your favour is sought after by the most powerful Monarchs; yet, like the poorest of men, you are only master of the present moment: that which is to succeed belongs not to you; it is in the power of that destiny which derides all human grandeur, and all the plans of mortals.—‘It will always be time enough,’ you say. The being the most independent, the Monarch the most powerful, cannot say as much; and yet you venture to speak thus—you, who are the most dependant of mankind, whose fate depends on the caprice of a woman, and whose downfall is prayed for by thousands.”

*Menzikof.*—“I know it; and for that reason I remain where I am. Ought I, by my retreat, to yield them so easy a triumph? If I neglect the favour of the Empress, some other courtier, less pusillanimous,

lanimous, will soon take my place, acquire her confidence, and I shall be lost. What then will remain for me?"

*Brukenthal.*—"Your wife, your children, your friend, tranquillity, and your treasures at Venice; and the delightful climate of Italy, which will be your new country."

"My country," said Menzikof, with a sombre air, "is only where I can govern."

*Brukenthal.*—"What do you say, unhappy man?—What then is this step which you yet would take?"

*Menzikof.*—"Oh Brukenthal! do not regard me with that air of horror. I meditate no crime: think not that I will undertake any thing your severe virtue must condemn. Were I to do so, how could I call you my friend? You shall know every thing, but not at present; it is necessary that my heart should be more tranquil. Dear Brukenthal, I love you—you know I love you; and you must indeed be dear to me, since I can endure

to

to hear what you have said. I ought to fly from you as my most terrible enemy, for you put me in opposition with myself; you infuse trouble and fear into my soul; you are much too pusillanimous. Will you never presage to me any thing but misfortune?"

*Brukenthal.*—"Can you believe me pusillanimous, Alexander; you, who have seen me a thousand times brave death, while I fought by your side? Do you think it was the fear of a disgrace that made me assume this habit? He who despises flattery need not fear to lose his place. Menzikof, it might be right perhaps for you, in certain cases, to hazard your life, for you have enjoyed it; but you are a father, and it is your duty to preserve it for your children. You owe happiness to those beings to whom you have given life; and, perhaps, you have but this moment to procure it for them."

"This is the language of a Priest," said Menzikof, with impatience. "Fate created you

you for a monastic life, and me for a Court: let each follow his destiny."

This conversation was interrupted, and was not again renewed. Father Bruken-thal lived in the Palace of Menzikof as an intimate friend of all the family; and every day made farther progress in the confidence of all the individuals that composed it. The Prince appeared to have changed his character, since his heart was re-opened to friendship: he appeared more affectionate to his wife and children, more mild to his domestics, and more affable to every one. This change augmented the hopes of Maria. She seized the first moment she was alone with Father Bruken-thal, and made him the confident of her love for Fedor Dolgorucki.

"Ah!" said Bruken-thal, shaking his head, "why has he that name?"

He then, in a gentle manner, endeavoured

voured to convince Maria that her attachment would never have the approbation of Prince Menzikoſ.

“Your father,” said he, “has always been in opposition to the Dolgoruckis; and has besides endeavoured, on a thousand occasions, to injure them. You think, my child, that your love, your union, might bring about a reconciliation between your families—foolish hope: when hatred is mingled with fear and envy, never can it be extinguished. Your father hates the Dolgoruckis, and fears them; they hate your father, and envy his power. Ah! my dear Maria, it grieves me to say, you must renounce your hopes, and, if possible, your love.”

“Yes,” replied Maria, fetching a deep sigh, “I may well indeed give up all hope; but I can never relinquish my love.”

Father Brukenthal affirmed that that amounted nearly to the same thing, and  
that,

that, to accomplish it, a firm determination was only necessary.

“ You ought, Maria, to have stifled that passion when you first listened to the name of Dolgorucki.”

*Maria.*—“ Stifle it, my father! Can I believe you have ever loved?”

*Brukenthal.*—“ No, I confess, I never knew love: ambition in my early years, and friendship throughout my life, have occupied and filled my mind; but I know what an individual is capable of, who wishes sincerely to do that which is right; and the daughter of such a mother as your's, ought not to be turned aside from the path of rectitude by the influence of her passion.”

Maria blushed, and said, with a dignified firmness—

“ It is because I wish to perform my duty—it is because I love virtue, that I  
must

must love Fedor Dolgorucki. If he were not the most virtuous of men—if we had been the slaves of our passion, we might now have been irrevocably united.”

“ How can that be possible ? ”

Maria then succinctly related the dispositions made by Sapieha to favour their flight, and the motives that had operated on them not to take such a step. Bruken-thal was affected by the recital; he requested to see the letters of Fedor, and those of Sophia. On reading them, he said—

“ No, I never knew love.”

He promised Maria's mother that he would exert all his influence with Menzikof, to prevail on him to consent to the happiness of his daughter. The Princess thanked him with the most lively gratitude, and Maria fell at his feet, without having the power to utter a single word, more than—

“ My

“ My tutelary angel!—My  
tor!”

“ Much as I wish to merit these appellations, and particularly that of your friend,” replied the Father, “ I cannot dissemble that my hopes are far from being sanguine; for, however Menzikof may esteem me, he never yet followed my counsels, unless they were evidently conducive to his own interest. I shall attempt, nevertheless, to persuade him that this union would prove useful to him.”

Saying this, he took his leave, with the resolution of embracing an early opportunity of speaking to his friend on the subject. Maria went to impart these new hopes to Sophia, and her mother to address prayers to Heaven that they might be realized. She was so much the more anxious that her daughter's marriage with Fedor should take place, as she foresaw the period not far distant, when they would stand in need of all his interest: the

Empress



Empress no longer testified the same predilection for Prince Menzikof; who, instead of endeavouring to regain her favour, kept at a distance from her, and paid his court to the Grand Duke, whom he never quitted.

This conduct, which did not fail to displease the Empress, afforded an opportunity to his enemies to supplant him. The Princess knew there was a plot formed against him, at the head of which stood her brother-in-law, Count Devier, whose only object was to ruin him. Every body foresaw his approaching fall, and rejoiced at it.

In this state of things, both the Princess and father Brukenthal justly conceived that an alliance with the powerful family of the Dolgorucki, would operate to defeat the machinations of his enemies, and enable him to preserve his power.

Father Brukenthal, shortly afterwards,

went to his ambitious friend, whom he found in his study, gloomy and thoughtful.

“How is this, Menzikof?” said he, after having observed him for some time in silence. “Ought the happy favourite of Fortune, the powerful Menzikof, to be so abstracted—I should rather say sorrowful?”

*Menzikof.*—“You are in the right, Brukenthal; I am wrong to torment myself: but there are moments when I think of the future—of the fatiguing but brilliant career which is about to close.”

*Brukenthal.*—“You frighten me. It was with reason, then, that your wife observed to me that it was too late.”

*Menzikof.*—“Too late, say you? Does my wife then think—— I spoke only of death. I thought that, perhaps, I had not long to live; the manifold cares by which I am surrounded—the cruel constraint under which I live—unnatural and

forced efforts to appear tranquil when wasted by inquietude—to appear friendly towards those whom I inwardly detest—my days passed without repose, my nights without sleep, have all contributed to bring on me a premature old age. My intellectual faculties are worn out;—I can no longer conduct myself as I ought perhaps——”

He arose, and walked up and down, with folded arms, and his head cast down. His friend observed him:

“Menzikof,” said he, “never, in the most trying moments, did I hear you say any thing so strikingly forcible against the evils of ambition, as that which you have now uttered. Call you that a state of happiness?”

Menzikof made no reply; he was absorbed in reflection.

“What did my wife then say?” exclaimed

claimed he, suddenly standing still before Brukenthal. "What does she fear? Why do you think her in the right?"

"She fears lest your enemies may become too powerful, and at last triumph over you; but, with a view to anticipate this misfortune, she has conceived what appears to me a happy idea, that you should endeavour to gain over some of them to your interest—the Count Devier, for example."

"Him—never!" said the Prince, sharply.

"Could she name only my most bitter enemy—that man who has never ceased to humble me, and who forced me to give him my sister?—Brukenthal, you know it; you cannot but recall to mind the dreadful period, when the Emperor, in presence of all the Court, commanded me, with a sneer, to accompany my sister to the altar, and bestow her on this odious man. If I avenge not myself of Devier, I shall always think that I have lived in vain.—No, no; sooner would I be reconciled

with any one, even with the family of Dolgorucki, than with Devier!"

*Brukenthal.*—"Oh! well then a reconciliation with the family of Dolgorucki might still be of greater importance, as its power and influence are so firmly established. What if chance, and your good fortune, should furnish an opportunity to bring about such a reconciliation!"

*Menzikof.*—"An opportunity!—How? Tell me!"

*Brukenthal.*—"Your eldest daughter, Maria, has conceived an attachment for a young man of that family; you may therefore render her happy, whilst that——"

*Menzikof.*—"My eldest daughter has conceived an attachment for a Dolgorucki! Oh God!—And who among them is it, I pray you? Ivan—Alexis?"

*Brukenthal.*—"The eldest son of Lukisch—Fedor."

*Menzikof.*—"Ah! the handsome Fedor. His family entertained the highest hopes of him; he began his career by a brilliant victory

victory in Persia. He possesses a fine figure, much wit, and great dignity. Ah! it is he then. I begin now to comprehend why he withdrew suddenly from the Court—why he has separated from his father and his uncles—why he has refused to return into Persia, withdrawn himself from the authority of his family, and passes his life in the country, in philosophical retirement. It could only be with a view to seduce the heart of my unsuspecting daughter, that he has been made to act this conspicuous part. This plan of the Dolgoruckis is not ill calculated to counteract mine; it appears deeply laid, and very profound. A young romantic girl—a doting mother, who supports her—an affectionate friend, who becomes her advocate—these were the means by which they flattered themselves they might overcome the repugnance of a weak and fond father.”

*Brukenthal.*—“ Think you then, Men-  
k 3 zikof,

zikof, that every project is the effect of ambition? Love has alone, in this case, accomplished every thing: and were you wise, you would avail yourself of it. Is it then so extraordinary, that two charming young people should love each other? For you allow they are amiable. You see a political combination in an affair, which is only attributable to chance."

*Menzikof.*—"Could chance implant love in hearts, wherein hatred ought only to have reigned?—Scarcely do they know each other."

Brukenthal then related to the Prince, how Maria and Fedor had first met; but in every circumstance of that meeting, even in the very inundation which led to it, Menzikof was obstinately bent on seeing a premeditated plan on the part of the Dolgoruckis.

"Well then, admitting the truth of  
your

your assertion," replied Brukenthal, "that proves, at least, their desire to form an alliance with your family."

Menzikof smiled ironically.

"I know them," said he; "these are snares which they spread for me; but should they even be sincere——Hold! Read these papers, and learn my darling plan, the object of all my thoughts, of all my actions, of my very existence, the secret of my soul."

Brukenthal took the papers, and perused them attentively.

"But," said he, laying them on the desk, "your daughter's attachment presents an obstacle to the execution of your scheme. Is this what you term the end of your existence? You had then entertained, it appears, when I left you, twelve  
K 4 years



years ago, the project of making an Empress of your daughter Maria. I now clearly see the reason of the joy you displayed at the birth of a daughter, rather than a son—a sentiment which surprised me at the time, and which I knew not how to explain. Your insatiable ambition cannot be satisfied till you become the father-in-law of the Czar.”

*Menzikof.*—“ You smile at me, Bruken-thal; but what do you consider so extraordinary in this project? The Empress is dangerously ill—her death seems fast approaching—the Court of Vienna, as you see from these papers, favours my designs, and ought to support them. What would be the Grand Duke without me?—A feeble child, at the mercy of a faction, which the most insignificant courtier might govern. Maria will know how to direct him, and reign in his name. Does she not seem worthy of a throne, by her beauty, and the qualities of her mind? Is it the  
first

first time that a Sovereign has espoused the daughter of a subject? What was Catherine herself?"

*Brukenthal.*—"Very well, Menzikof. Fortune favours you; and the Dolgoruckis would, I question not, act like you, with the same means in their power: if you raise the Grand Duke to the throne, with whom could he share it, unless it were with your daughter? The House of Austria must second your plan with all its influence, since the Grand Duke is sprung from it, and since it favours its political views, that he should either reign in reality or in appearance; for, in fact, you alone will govern the empire, in the name of the young Czar, who has not yet attained the period of adolescence. Your daughter will be unhappy; but, what does it signify that Maria be sacrificed, provided that her father govern?—Ah, Menzikof! Menzikof! your scheme is, doubtless, splendid; it may mislead an ambitious man; but a

breath may overturn this superb edifice, which you have been rearing during so many years, from the birth of your illustrious son-in-law; since, it should seem, you even cherished such hopes when I left you. But are you certain that this child, who cannot as yet know what love is, may love your daughter? It cannot be denied that she is beautiful and handsome, but she is older than him by five or six years; and before the marriage can be consummated, how many circumstances may happen! May not a fit of disease, of caprice, or of ill-humour arise to defeat it? But who knows what your insatiable ambition still meditates?"

*Menzikof.*—"Brukenthal, you injure me. I wish nothing but what is conformable to justice, to raise the legitimate Sovereign to the throne."

*Brukenthal.*—"Very well—examine your conscience: if you knew that the first act of the young Monarch should deprive you

of your authority and employments, would you place him upon the throne, because it was his due?"

*Menzikof*.—"Ought I to do it? And would you do it, in my situation?"

*Brukenthal*.—"I would place him on the throne, because justice and virtue required it of me; but in fulfilling that duty, I should be very far from experiencing tranquillity. The Emperor will not always be a child; he must soon perceive that the man who is sufficiently powerful to place the diadem on his head, might also deprive him of it. Think you that he can love, for any length of time, a man so dangerous, and that he will not immolate him, to secure his own safety? The Imperial family fear you—the Grantees of the Empire hate you—your immense riches excite the jealousy and cupidity of all who might expect to share them after your fall. We support the authority of a master, whom birth and fortune have placed above us, but not that of an equal,

equal, or an inferior. As for you, Menzikof, you—Ah! how can you flatter yourself with being able to resist such a host of enemies?"

*Menzikof.*—"When I behold the storm approaching, it will be then time to retreat."

*Brukenthal.*—"You think so. Alas! can you henceforth command the period when your fate may be decided, as the courtier who submissively waits your orders in your antichamber?—Menzikof, you stand upon a volcano; the earth trembles under your feet; and yet you still wish to construct upon it a new edifice. Your daughter loves Fedor Dolgorucki, and your interest requires you to consent to her happiness; an alliance with that noble and powerful family would confirm your power."

*Menzikof.*—"A Dolgorucki!—And is it only for this that I have surmounted so many difficulties, burthened my conscience with remorse, renounced all the enjoyments

ments of life, only to become the father-in-law of a Dolgorucki?"

*Brukenthal.*—"Menzikof, the times are much changed. Would you have dared to dream of such an alliance, when the Emperor drew you from your original obscurity?"

*Menzikof.*—"Yes, the times are changed; and I should believe I had returned into that obscurity of which you speak, if I had not the noble ambition of raising myself above the Dolgoruckis, as much as they were formerly elevated above me. No, no; speak not to me again of this marriage, nor of withdrawing myself from the Court: the happiness of a tranquil and retired life suits not my inclination. To be nothing, after having been every thing—to descend, when I may still exalt myself—no, Brukenthal, that is impossible."

*Brukenthal.*—"You deceive yourself, Menzikof: disgrace will, doubtless, render you insignificant; but if you anticipate it,

it, if you retire voluntarily, the lustre of your name, your reputation, and your honours, would every where accompany you; into whatever part of Europe you might go, you would be received so as to satisfy your ambition; and, as you could no longer excite either fear or envy, you might, perhaps, be loved."

*Menzikof.*—"No, I tell you, that is impossible; even although I were disposed to follow your advice, it is no longer in my power: the Court of Vienna is interested in the execution of my plan. You see that I have pledged myself, in the most positive manner, to perform it; I should be undone, if I deserted the party—if I retired."

*Brukenthal.*—"Well, then remain until you have placed the crown on the head of the young Grand Duke; afterwards, retire with your wealth and family: Maria may then be united to him she loves. By such conduct you will prove, at least, that you have

have acted from a conviction of your duty, and not from any motive of self-interest."

*Menzikof.*—"Think you, then, that I should be believed sincerely disinterested, were I to refuse the recompence due for my services? The Court of Vienna would become distrustful, when it saw my daughter married to another. It might betray me, denounce me to the Empress, and I should be ruined."

*Brukenthal.*—"But promise me, at least, that, if your project miscarry through any unlooked-for event—if the Grand Duke love not, nor espouse your daughter—or if you change your present sentiments, she shall be at liberty to dispose of her hand. Promise me that."

*Menzikof.*—"You torment me, Brukenthal; you seem to take a cruel pleasure in augmenting my distress. Am I not already sufficiently harassed? I am a father: I love my children. If I were merely a private individual, the inclinations



tions of my daughter should be to me a law—I would sacrifice my will to her's—it would constitute my felicity to render her happy; but, in the situation in which I stand, I have no time to occupy myself with infantine follies:—and is love any thing else? Fortune, or my own exertions, have raised me to the second rank in the empire; my children ought to avail themselves of that elevation, in order to rise still higher:—they are born to govern; ambition ought, in their minds, to be paramount to love. Tell that to Maria; tell her that I allow her to entertain a preference, which I shall appear to overlook, but no serious attachment. Fedor himself must perceive that it is a weakness, and that it is impossible for him to obtain the hand of my daughter. He will renounce it, unless it be, as I suspect, a plan invented by his family to entrap me. And you, Brukenthal, in the name of our ancient friendship, I require, I conjure you, never again to speak to me of this folly.

You

You must be aware that I will never renounce a project formed twelve years ago; that I shall not precipitate my fall, in order to gratify the fantasy of a child, which will of itself fly away in the course of a few months."

"Farewell, then, Menzikof!" said Bruckenthal, drily; "I do not wish to witness the misfortunes I foresee. I pity you, and return to my Convent, in order to address the Supreme Being in your behalf; what the solicitations of friendship have failed to obtain, God, by softening your heart, can alone accomplish.—A few words more, and I have done. Maria is as little acquainted with ambition, as you are with love: that throne, which you destine for her, will become the altar on which she is to be sacrificed. You risk your life; what if Maria should devote her's to love?"

Menzikof seemed for a moment absorbed in reflection, while tenderness and paternal fear were depicted on his countenance.

tenance. Brukenthal, who observed him, began to hope; but his visage soon again became obscured—indignation flashed from his eyes; he had recalled to mind that period of his life, on which he could not reflect without the greatest anguish—that, when Count Devier, a suitor of his sister, and favoured by the Emperor himself, had compelled him to give his sister to him in marriage.

“ I trust, Brukenthal,” said he, with a faltering voice, “ I trust this headstrong youth will not presume—that he will take care of himself. You are now informed of every thing, Brukenthal: you may tell my daughter that I cannot allow her to form the least connection with any man whatever; but, remember, keep the most profound silence respecting my plans; you see they are irrevocably fixed—an irresistible fate constrains me.”

*Brukenthal.*—“ You call that fate, and the divine will, which are only the suggestions

gestions of your own passions. Adieu, Menzikof! Remember that I have warned you!"

*Menzikof.*—"It is what you have unceasingly done for these last twelve years; continue to do so for twelve to come, I will then listen to you."

Father Brukenenthal went to seek Maria, who had waited for him with impatience mixed with fear.

"Well then," said she, as soon as she perceived him, "what said my father?"

*Brukenenthal.*—"Banish all hope, Princess Maria: your father requires from you this sacrifice; and, after what I have learned respecting his situation, he ought, I think, to require it. The resolution he has taken, is conformable to his character, and he is compelled by necessity to put it in execution."

*Maria.*—"Necessity!—My father can interdict every thing, except my love for

Fedor:

Fedor: our hearts are united by an indissoluble tie. Have you told him so?"

*Brukenthal.*—"Every thing; and I tell you that, if you persist in this useless passion, you will draw down on your head the storm by which you are menaced;—the situation of your father requires this sacrifice, and you ought not to oppose yourself to his happiness."

*Maria.*—"Have I then a father, who reckons as nothing the happiness of his daughter?"

*Brukenthal.*—"If that were true—if he no longer entertained for you the feelings of a father, would you be authorized to renounce for him those of a daughter?—But you deceive yourself: Menzikof loves you; he regrets the necessity which compels him to afflict you; but he believes your affliction will be as quickly dissipated as your love. Is it just, Maria, that your father should renounce, at the end of an active life, all the fruits of his labours, in order to obtain for you a single pressure  
of

of the hand—in order to behold you enjoy a delirium of happiness for a few months?”

*Maria.*—“Is this the language of the man whom I believed my friend?”

*Brukenthal.*—“Is flattery alone a proof of friendship? I will admit that your love for Fedor is as ardent, pure, and sublime as it is possible; every thing you can alledge in its favour, might likewise serve to justify the foolish passion of every young girl who rebelled against the will of a parent. How will you prove to me that your conduct is better, or more excusable? Not certainly by affirming that your lover is more virtuous, and more beautiful than all other men? Every young female beholds with the same eyes him whom she loves. You blame your father, because he is entirely under the dominion of ambition; and you, nevertheless, wish to oppose to this passion one equally violent.—Who ought to yield? Who ought to obey?—the father or the daughter?—I speak to you, Princess Maria,  
for

for your own sake: if I comprehend you right, your mind is strongly occupied with the idea of flying with your lover, if you can no otherwise be united. I see that you regret, at the bottom of your heart, that you had not formerly consented to this measure, since it would have obtained the approbation of your mother; and that you are determined to embrace the first opportunity which may again offer, to put this design in execution. But have you seriously reflected on the power of your father? He will be able, rest assured, to reach your lover in the most concealed places, and tear you from his arms. Doubtless, you may even then retain a place in the heart of your father; but your generous lover, the amiable Fedor, will become the devoted victim. You, the daughter of the illustrious Menzikof, the *real* Governor of this vast empire, how could you hope to conceal yourself from the millions of his slaves, dispersed throughout the country, or even from the enquiries of  
simple

simple curiosity? What Government would refuse to give up the daughter of this powerful man, and arrest, at his demand, the partner of her flight? And is it thus, Maria, that you satisfy your passion? You yourself throw away the life of this young man, whom you represent to be possessed of every virtue. You are pale!—Yes, I repeat it, your father is revengeful and cruel: recall only to mind the inveterate hatred he retains against your uncle, Count Devier, merely because, by espousing his sister against his consent, one of his projects was deranged. And you, Maria, your flight, your union with a Dolgorucki, would destroy one of the greatest plans he has ever formed, and for the execution of which, he is the most anxiously solicitous. Yet, in time, renounce every hope, surmount your passion; the peace of your family, the safety of Fedor, require from you this sacrifice.”

Maria



Maria listened in silence, and with downcast eyes, to the reasoning of Father Brukenthal; and, when he had finished, said to him, in a trembling voice—

“ You believe, then, that I would render my lover unfortunate, if——”

*Brukenthal.*—“ Yes, if you continue to maintain with him the smallest intercourse—if you oppose the slightest resistance to the will of your father, reflect that you will then furnish him with a pretext for greater hatred against the Dolgoruckis. The struggle betwixt the two houses remains undecided. Would you wish to be the cause of your father’s overthrow?”

Maria became gradually more calm.

“ You may rest assured, my worthy father,” said she, “ that I will no more think of flight; there yet remains another  
method

method of being united, less dangerous, more certain, and which the power of man cannot take away."

Father Brukenthal embraced her tenderly, and departed for his Convent, with a heart filled with sorrow and regret on her account.

Maria wrote to Fedor.

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 LETTER XIII.

*Maria to Fedor.*

Petersburg, December.

I WRITE to you, my Fedor, with the most confident persuasion that I shall love you eternally, in order to inform you that for us every hope is lost, except that which we shall always find in the bottom of our hearts. You once said to me, that the truly virtuous man is wholly independent of his fellow-creatures. Alas! there are, however, human follies and passions which annihilate

annihilate our happiness, which separate with violence two hearts, united by the strictest ties of love and virtue. Would this be the case, were we not in a state of dependance? Every thing appeared to me so easy; I was so convinced of the goodness of my father, or of the firmness with which I should support a refusal; I was so determined to brave every obstacle to be thine, Fedor; but Father Brukenthal has torn aside, without pity, the thick veil with which love and confidence had covered my eyes. My father is inflexible; his friend has said every thing he thought most likely to soften him in my favour; but he laughs at our love, treats it as an infantine folly, and requires from me the most unlimited obedience. You will never obtain my hand, Fedor: such is the decree he has pronounced; it is destined to another, but to whom he has not yet mentioned. I smiled, when Father Brukenthal repeated to me what he had said.

“Why, can he compel me to bestow my hand where he pleases?”

“Your love for Fedor will even force you to obedience,” replied the Father, with a terrible look, and in a menacing tone. “Reflect on the power of your father, the means of vengeance in his possession, and his hatred against the Dolgoruckis; your lover will become the victim of your disobedience.”

I continued to smile, Fedor; for I thought of the sea, of Switzerland, and of the yacht of your friend; but the good Father, who seemed to read what passed in my thoughts, took away from me even this delightful chimera. Ah, Fedor! he spoke with too much reason; where indeed can we find a refuge—in what place cannot the power of my father reach us?—Ah, Fedor! where can we remain unknown?—Disguised under the coarsest garments, your fine figure, and the dignity of your air, would very soon betray us; wherever we went, the power of Prince Menzikof would pursue us like an angry spectre. In what country would they refuse to deliver us into his hands?

hands? And when you were in his power— Ah, Fedor! my father never relents—it is you—you who would become the victim! Ask your own heart, what would have been your conduct, had my life been in danger! No, no, I have lost all hope. I will love you for ever—I will always be faithful to our engagements—no power on earth shall detach my heart from thine! Here, Fedor, even the tyranny of my father is impotent. Receive once more my vows:—whatever you may see or hear, doubt not the faith of your Maria. My father has it so much in his power to prevent you receiving my letters, that they may not, perhaps, reach you; but I again repeat, whatever may be the appearance of my actions, I will continue faithful to our love. Doubt not this—not even should you learn that I am before the altar with another; there, in the presence of God and men, I will still preserve myself to you;—I can resign my life!

Continue to write to me, and give your letters to Sophia, who will herself deliver them into my own hands. She is devoted to us, because she knows the bottom of our hearts, and can understand our sentiments.

Brukenthal was in the right; my father is inflexible: I have spoken to him myself. He entered my mother's apartment, when Sophia and I were with her, engaged in embroidering a robe for my sister's birthday, which happens eight days hence.

"Your birthday is a week later, Maria," said my father, smiling. "I expect you will assume a more serene countenance."

My eyes were filled with tears. He threw on my mother a look of anger, and said, with bitterness—

"I can no longer tolerate in my house the absurd conduct of your daughter. I command

command her to appear with a more cheerful air," he continued in a harsh tone, mixed with the most cutting irony. "I, doubtless, interrupt you," said he, still addressing himself to my mother; "I suppose you were concerting plans with Madame Rocales, to deceive an unnatural father, and take under your protection the caprices of a child. I am inclined to tolerate this comedy, this drama, this romance until your birthday, Maria. Enjoy yet fifteen days of infancy, but no more; you enter then into your seventeenth year: it is time to be rational."

I sighed. My mother, with gentleness, replied—

"You speak, my dear friend, of the affection entertained by Maria for young Dolgorucki. The most singular circumstances have conducted——"

"Yes, very singular, in fact; the folly  
L 4 of



of a too indulgent mother, and the culpable compliance of a weak governess."

"You know, dear Alexander," said my mother, with the same mildness, "that the heart of Maria does not readily receive impressions. I dare affirm, before this beloved and worthy child, that her reason has always been unusually strong for her years. I believe then, I confess, that Providence itself directed her choice of this excellent young man—yes, excellent, although he be called Dolgorucki. But I swear that Maria knew not his name when she first saw him, and that they were attracted to each other by a supernatural sympathy."

"Sympathy!—What extravagance, to throw away her heart on a stranger, the name of whom she did not even know! I have hitherto regarded this affair as mere trifling; but I advise you to put an end to it, because could I believe it serious——"

His eyes became inflamed at these words.

"Take

“Take care, lest you force me to be severe. I declare to you, were this young man the model of every virtue—were he not even called Dolgorucki, he should never obtain the hand of Maria. I know, Madame Rocaes,” said he, turning to Sophia, “that he visited you at Ronneburg—that you had the weakness to encourage, unknown to me, the folly of these young people;—I know even that he has been secretly admitted into my palace, and that my wife saw him here. He must, at least, possess courage, since he fears not Prince Menzikof; but, for the future, Maria, I absolutely interdict his visits, and all manner of correspondence with him.—Hitherto you have only experienced my tenderness; compel me not to make you feel my anger. And this young man, if it be true that he is dear to you, tremble for him; my vengeance will be terrible, should he ever, by a look or word, betray the preference you profess for him; his life will be the forfeit of his indiscreet vanity.”

Fedor, his looks and words became so terrible, that my mother and Sophia trembled; but, as if by a miracle, I perceived suddenly an internal calm diffuse itself over my whole soul. I raised my eyes to him, and said, with the greatest calmness—

“ You shall hear no more of this unfortunate passion, I promise you, my father.”

He regarded me with a frown.

“ Hope not to deceive me, Maria,” said he; “ you may, perhaps, succeed for a short time, but, in the end, you will be cruelly punished, and your lover still more so.”

On uttering these words, he left the apartment. Sophia and my mother remained, drowned in tears. They were surprised at my fortitude, and I myself could not explain it; but I became always more tranquil, because I am more determined. The fanaticism of an erroneous  
opinion

opinion has been able to support the Roskolnikes\* in the midst of the most terrible tortures: and shall not the sainted enthusiasm of a pure and constant love, inspire me also with a contempt for life?—Fedor, hope has even re-entered my bosom—yes, the hope that we shall one day be reunited. The rank which our families occupy in society, render flight impossible. From this time I shall cease to write to you so often as formerly, and still less often indulge myself with your company; but I shall be equally your's—I shall be always with you. Wherever they conduct me, I shall always remain persuaded that you live only for me, even when forced to the altar with another; but there—there, where the hope of the coward is extinguished—there, our's will commence; my eyes will seek you; you will be there, Fedor—you will fly to me—you will throw yourself into my arms;—we will say to the

\* A sect of Russian fanatics.

Pontiff that we love one another, and conjure him to ratify our sainted union; and we will be happy together, or die in each other's arms. Why are not our hearts tranquil in the contemplation of such a project? My love for thee is robbed of every thing earthly; it is so pure, so celestial, that, had I my choice, I believe, Fedor, I would rather wish to mingle my soul with your's in the heavenly regions, than dwell with you on this earth: not that I dread a diminution of our love—that will never take place; but death might sever us from each other. No, no, Fedor, even that is impossible. Away with such a chimerical fear! At present, I am like a beatified spirit who has triumphed over the tomb, and can never be again separated from the object of its affection. Are you, my friend, equally tranquil?

The transient pleasures and pains of this  
life

life appear in my eyes so insignificant, that I have no tie to it but my poor mother. This worthy mother is so very unfortunate, so anxious respecting the struggle of the two powerful parties which divide the Court! The Empress remains quiet and impartial, without declaring herself for either side. My father is generally hated, and has lost much of the favour of his Sovereign; but he protects the Grand Duke; and it is this conduct which has conciliated the nation, and somewhat allayed the discontents that he excited by his pageantry and haughtiness. He has, however, for enemies, the greatest number of the Grantees of the empire, who are also the enemies of his projects, particularly the Court of Holstein.

The illness of the Empress daily augments, and her physicians believe she has not long to live. The struggle between my father and his enemies must terminate before

before her death, as one of the parties must necessarily be overcome. Every one waits with the greatest anxiety for this event; each regards his enemy as if he would annihilate him. On the faces of the courtiers, you see only the expression of hatred, malice, and anger, which they in vain endeavour to conceal under a perfidious smile.

My mother alone fixes upon the husband she loves, and whose destruction she foresees, her eyes filled with the tears of tenderness, and upon his enemies the most suppliant regards. She is almost wholly deprived of sleep; and when she obtains some moments of repose, it is only to be disturbed by the most frightful dreams. I fear much my invaluable mother will become the victim of my father's ambition, should he even succeed to the utmost extent of his wishes. This single idea has the power to disturb me; but I conceal my

my terrors, in order to support her spirits; and she, in her turn, suffers the greatest uneasiness on my account.

“If your father triumph,” said she to me, “you will be inevitably lost; and should he be overcome, who will support him in his fall?”

But why is it necessary that he triumph, or fall? May not Providence accomplish its purposes by a thousand less severe means? Whatever happen, Fedor, I am wholly thine—thine for ever! we will either be united, or together seek that place to which we must go a few years later. Are we not assured that love is the only passion experienced in heaven? And our's is sufficiently ardent, *sufficiently pure*, to find a place in these blissful mansions.

Adieu!

LETTER



## LETTER XIV.

*Fedor to Maria.*

Pozeck, January.

ALL, my beloved Maria, are occupied in ascertaining their own safety. The expected change in the Government has awakened their hopes, their fears, and their ambition; each looks up attentively either to the young Grand Duke, or to the Duchess of Holstein, uncertain to which they must bend the knee. As for me, Maria, I kneel before your portrait, which I obtained, after

after the most pressing solicitations, from your Sophia. I lose myself in the contemplation of your adored features; they seem to be animated by the ardour of my looks. I listen, as it were, to the sound of your sweet voice; I recall each word I have heard you utter; I press your green veil to my heart, and I am a thousand times more happy than the ambitious man can ever be. You see, Maria, that I have also my follies—that I have also my idol.

When lately I passed some time with my relations in Petersburg, I could not behold without a smile the agitation they evinced, without having any adequate object in view. I left them to the enjoyment of their active idleness, and, as often as possible, retired to my chamber to re-peruse your letters, or to gaze upon a miniature which I copied from your picture. They could not comprehend how I remained thus inactive and unconcerned for the future. Ah! how much they are deceived!

deceived! I also, like them, form my plans: not, it is true, in order to obtain a royal smile, not even to obtain a smile from the Sovereign of all the Russias; but to consecrate my whole life to the sovereign of my heart.

Why, Maria, do you solicit death at the hand of the *Destinies*? I shuddered, and became pale, on reading your last letter; yet, by an inconceivable kind of magic, your calmness, by degrees, communicated itself to my soul. Yes, we will live or die for each other; and it is this resolution which will render us truly independent. But, my dear Maria, let us first exert ourselves to the utmost, to find this celestial happiness on earth. Your father is not so powerful as your fears represent him. I know a valley in Switzerland, at the foot of Mount Titlis, on which the sun never shines during six months of the year; the only entrance to this place is by a path across the steep rocks, and above a frightful

ful torrent which runs at the bottom of the precipice; there the footsteps of the traveller never treads; or if, by chance, it be visited once in a hundred years, what is the danger of a discovery? The arm of your father could not extend itself to this place; the simple shepherds of these vallies know not that such a being as Menzikof exists upon the earth. There, Maria, we shall be happy, because we shall be together, and be every thing to each other; and, notwithstanding the roughness of this savage climate, nature is yet beautiful, and the winters less rigorous than in Russia. Is the world, then, so small, that we cannot find, even in a milder climate, a sequestered valley which will shelter two beings who require only love and security? Be tranquil, Maria; we shall find a refuge when it is necessary. When your father shall command what your conscience cannot approve, then are you free, Maria; and if we cannot find an asylum on this earth

earth—(yes, thou art right)—we will seek it in another and a better world.

My hopes lead me still farther: I despair not of a reconciliation between your father and the Dolgoruckis. You cannot comprehend this, because your innocent heart knows not the tortuous paths of ambition. Listen to me, however, whilst I unfold to you the intrigues of your father, and the motives of his resistance to our union. He wishes, after the death of the Empress, to place the young Grand Duke upon the throne. Your uncle, Count Devier, and his party, espouse, on the contrary, the interest of the Duchess of Holstein; and the Dolgoruckis find it necessary to favour the plan of your father, because my cousin, the young Count Ivan, is the favourite of the Grand Duke.

At present, your father is unacquainted with this connection. My relatives hope,

and conversed with him by

by this means, to weaken his influence; and he, in his turn, has a plan by which he hopes more certainly to preserve the reins of government: and it is by thee, Maria—thou art to become the spouse of the future Emperor. Such is your father's plan, and to which the Court of Vienna has given its consent; even the Dolgoruckis are satisfied. They have no daughter to rival you; but they will oppose Ivan to your father. The project of your becoming Empress pleases them not, it is true; but as your intended husband is so extremely young, they flatter themselves that some event may occur, to prevent the completion of this part of the scheme. And I, Maria—I am more confident than they can possibly be, that it will never be executed. They are all upon their guard; they watch all the windings of your father. A family council was called, merely because Bassewitz, the intimate friend of the Duke of Holstein, one day approached Prince Menzikof, and conversed with him a short time.

time. They trembled, lest he had been commissioned to gain him over to the interest of his master ; and, in order to counteract this design—this imaginary fear, they immediately sent overtures of peace to your father. In short, Menzikof and Dolgorucki act in concert in favour of the Grand Duke. The only member of my family who regards the passing events with indifference, and without taking any part in them whatever, is my worthy uncle, the venerable Field Marshal. He asks the others, smiling—

“ Are you not yet weary of storms ? ”

“ But would you, then,” replied my father, “ reject the good fortune which presents itself ? The partiality of the Grand Duke for my nephew Ivan, can——”

“ What, Lukisch ! ” rejoined the respectable old man, “ you, who have always lived at Court, will you found any projects upon the friendship of a child for a young man, who flatters him without ceasing ? ”

ceasing? You sacrifice your peace, your present good fortune, to the caprice of a child."

But they term the Field Marshal an old reasoner, and despise his wise exhortations.

I was at Petersburg on the day of the benediction of the waters, only ten paces distant from you, amongst the attendants of the Field Marshal; I suddenly recalled to mind the word "Woe!" which made such a forcible impression on you, during the anniversary of the death of Peter the Great; when I saw the Empress arrive, having death already imprinted on her visage, and her eyes half extinguished—those eyes which can still, by a single glance, dispose of the happiness of so many millions of souls!

When her magnificent carriage drew up, every eye was turned to that side. I observed



served that she regarded the people with an air of affability, and the Grandees with coldness and pride, as if she had said—  
“I read your souls—I see the plans that you have formed for the period when I shall be no more.”

A few minutes afterwards, when all the Court was assembled on the icy mirror of the Neva, in the midst of this striking spectacle, I saw only you, Maria, and your large eyes, full of innocence and sentiment, which followed the course of the river towards the vast ocean, as if they sought for something beyond it. Oh Maria! with what delight I read your thoughts, and divined what passed in your heart! Methought I saw your lips open, and pronounce sweetly the name of Fedor.— Ah! how much greater I found myself than this crowd of slaves who surrounded their Sovereign! I reigned over a heart altogether my own: amidst the brilliancy of this Court, you thought only on your  
Fedor.

Fedor. In the evening, several of your father's declared enemies danced with you, such as Tolstoi, Pissaroff, and Leschakoff. How can a man touch your hand, and look upon your eyes, beaming with benevolence and peace, without wishing to be reconciled to him who gave you being!—The Tartar will not converse with an individual he is inclined to injure, nor with any of his family; he turns his eyes from them.

“How,” says he, “dare I kill him who has smiled on me, who has spoken to me, whose soul has communicated with mine?”

Ah! if nations who boast of their civilization, possessed but the virtue of these uncultivated savages!

On the following day, I accompanied Sapiaha to Twer. He cannot understand what I confided to him, that, in compliance

with your father's commands, you had relinquished all connection with me by my own consent; still less can he comprehend my tranquillity respecting your projected union with the Emperor.

“ Maria,” said he to me, “ is one of those good, gentle, faithful, simple creatures which we conceive in the reveries of our youthful days; but since I became somewhat better acquainted with the world, I find a crown is preferred to every thing—more so, at least, than I formerly believed. Will it not be a strong temptation to your Maria? And what sacrifice will it cost her? A lover who hates her father, and whom she can never espouse. She will even give to her infidelity the name of virtue, of filial obedience; she will afterwards say, from the height of her throne, that Fedor——”

I interrupted him, and replied, smiling—

“ She

“ She will say nothing afterwards, because Maria will never be what you suppose.”

“ You appear to be very certain of this fact,” replied he; “ but should Menzikof triumph over his enemies, should the young Grand Duke become Emperor, should Menzikof place the crown on his head, on this condition alone—do you believe he would suffer himself to be overcome by the tears of Maria, and terminate the affair, as in a comedy, by sanctioning your union with his daughter?”

“ Assuredly not, my dear Sapiéha: if Petrovitz ascends the throne, Menzikof will exert all his influence to place Maria by his side.”

“ Had you fled together, when it was in your power,” rejoined the Count, “ you might now have been in a place of safety; perhaps you may regret the opportunity you lost, when flight is no longer practicable.”

“ There is one way to escape, which

will always be practicable, Sapiéha. Maria may, perhaps, be forced to accompany the Emperor to the altar; but even there will she be mine—mine alone!”

The Count shook his head, in token of incredulity.—Poor Sapiéha! already has he lost the enthusiasm of his youth, which has been quickly extinguished by the chilling blast of ambition. This life is to him the supreme good, come afterwards as they may, honours, rank, fortune, and, last of all, love and constancy. His natural generosity, however, will always preserve his heart free from corruption and insensibility; always will he be the most sincere of friends. He will aid us with all his power, but without comprehending our feelings, and even perhaps sometimes blaming them.

During this conversation, our sledge flew across the immense plains of ice, which, by the light of a clear moon, sparkled

sparkled like a field scattered over with diamonds. We entered a wood of beech-trees at midnight, precisely when thy birthday commenced. The illuminations of thy sumptuous palace at Petersburg could not vie with the icy girandoles suspended from the branches of the trees, and the mild light of this delightful night. Sapieha wished to stop at a neighbouring cabin, situated at about the distance of a league on the opposite side of the wood. I descended from the sledge, in order to pursue my road on foot. Stopping as I came out of the forest, I fixed my eyes on the full moon which was opposite to me towards the east. Around me reigned the most profound silence; the slight sound of the bells attached to the sledge, became gradually lost to my wear: it seemed to me as if I was alone in this vast universe. I turned towards Petersburg, and extending my arms, poured out an ardent prayer for thy happiness, dear and worthy Maria! Afterwards, pursuing my

road through this brilliant and dazzling country, my soul became as calm and serene as the spectacle which surrounded me. I contemplated the sky, the azure of which was not obscured by a single cloud, when suddenly a brilliant meteor arose in the horizon towards my right, and pursued its course with astonishing rapidity. Maria, it seemed to me a celestial messenger, sent to announce my happiness; the angels also celebrated your birthday.— Laugh not, Maria; it is certain that this *Aurora Borealis*, on this day, and at this hour, appeared to my mind the most happy presage. I joined my friend, with the most certain hope of a blessed futurity.— Adieu!

LETTER

## LETTER XV.

*Maria to Fedor.*

Petersburg, February.

THIS, then, is the frightful secret which my mother and Brukenenthal have so carefully concealed from me. How blind have I been, not to discover it in their looks! Often has my poor mother pressed me to her breast in silence, whilst she endeavoured to restrain her tears; at other times, they have flowed in abundance. If I enquired into the cause of her sorrow, she



she would reply to me by some commonplace saying, or repeat some moral aphorism. She has said, for example—

“ When we smile, misfortune is often near at hand.” And again—“ It is necessary to fortify the heart, Maria, if we would be found capable of supporting the greatest evils.”

I knew not that she had any thing to communicate, but always imputed her sorrow to vague fears respecting the fate of my father; at present, I am fully aware that she wished to prepare my mind for this fatal event. When I received your letter, which unveiled the reason of her conduct, I entered her chamber, determined to be calm, lest it should increase her grief; but on endeavouring to communicate the intelligence contained in your letter, I was seized with an universal trembling, whilst the coldness of death diffused itself over my whole frame, and produced

a sensa-

a sensation of faintness, which I struggled in vain to overcome; a few burning tears escaped from my fixed eyes. I extended my arms towards my mother, and could scarcely articulate—

“ Oh my mother ! I know all: my father destines me to be the consort of the Grand Duke. Ah ! save me—save your Maria !” and I fell senseless at her feet.

At this moment, Father Brukenthal, whose uneasiness on our account had induced him to return a few days before, entered the chamber. He supported my mother, who was nearly reduced to the same state as myself. On observing me open my eyes, he said to me with firmness—

“ Behold your mother, Maria: do you wish to deprive her of life.”

These terrible words penetrated into my

heart, and somewhat restored my strength. I assisted the worthy Father to place her in bed. She regarded me with a mingled expression of the most profound grief and maternal tenderness.

"Ah, my child!" said she, with a heavy sigh, "we are extremely unfortunate!—Yes, your father destines your hand to the future Emperor; you must be the sacrifice of his ambition; he will seat you on the throne, only to see you die with grief. Ah! at least I shall not witness it; I shall sink under the accumulated weight of my misfortunes."

At these words, despair again took possession of my mind to such a degree, that I was unable to support myself.

"Ah, my mother!" exclaimed I, "we will die together!"

I threw myself into her arms, and fainted

on

on her bosom. She exerted her little remaining strength to support me; but, in a short time, she herself was also deprived of consciousness, and Father Brukenthal went in search of Sophia, to whom he related what had passed. They sent also for my father, who entered the apartment with an air of terror. Brukenthal seized his hand, and conducting him towards the bed, said—

“Behold the fruit of your detestable ambition. Maria has discovered your secret; and what you term “the object of your whole life,” has broken her heart, and that of her excellent mother;—perhaps they have already ceased to exist.”

Menzikof was violently affected at this idea; but, by the aid of proper remedies, in a short time I opened my eyes, which encountered those of my father, in which were depicted inquietude and pity. I fell

at his knees, and said to him, in a suppliant tone—

“ My father, I conjure you, never——”

“ You know, then,” said he, quickly interrupting me, but in a more gentle tone than usual, “ you know, then, my project, and the magnificent lot to which I have destined my beloved daughter. Well then, you know me; the scenes you are acting, may kill your mother, who is extremely feeble, but cannot change my purpose. I am sufficiently acquainted with women, to know what will be the result at last; you all prefer a crown to a garland of flowers, even although woven by a lover. It is because I believe your judgment sufficiently strong to appreciate an Imperial diadem—that you possess sufficient spirit and talent to support it with honour—that you have sufficient virtue to constitute the happiness of your people, and wisdom to obey your father—it is because I esteem

and love you so much, that I require my will shall be obeyed: and if you strictly examine your own heart, my daughter, you will discover that your wishes are not even dissimilar to mine." "You know,"

I replied only with a profound sigh. Brukenthal said to him, in a solemn and impressive tone—

"But should you deceive yourself, my Prince?"

"Deceive myself!" replied my father, with a smile. "You must admit, I hope, that I know the female heart better than you. No, I am not the dupe of these faintings. I was at first affected, I confess; but a little reflection makes me view them in their true light.—Will this proud head," said he, placing his hand on my forehead, sacrifice a crown for love? No, that is impossible!"

My prayers were fruitless, Fedor, since  
my

my father cannot comprehend our feelings. I arose, and said, with coldness—

“ You assuredly deceive yourself, my father. God grant that you be not one day too much convinced of its truth !”

“ Already so strong, so calm, Maria !” said he, regarding me with an ironical smile ; “ a grief which is so quickly dissipated, cannot be dangerous. I love you, my child, and wish you to make a merit of necessity.”

He kissed my forehead ; and casting a look at my mother, who was still supported on the bosom of Sophia, left the apartment. Brukenthal remained with us.

“ What is your resolution ?” said he to me, in a low voice. “ Reflect that your mother’s life depends on you.”

“ Oh ! what ought I to do, in order to preserve her ?” said I, joining my hands.

“ All—every thing for her !”

Yes,

Yes, Fedor, every thing for her sake—even to renounce you, if I could purchase her safety at such a price.

“Be happy and tranquil,” said our friend; “I see that your happiness is necessary to her existence. I have no other advice to give: listen to your own heart.”

At this moment she recovered, and said in a feeble voice to Sophia—

“Did I not hear the voice of my husband?”

“Yes, my dear mother,” replied I; “my father was here, and our distress seemed to affect him. Fear nothing, my dear mother; all will be well, I hope.”

When alone in my chamber, I reproached myself bitterly for having terrified my mother, and resolved henceforth to conceal



ceal my grief under a serene air. Ah! if my happiness is necessary to her life, my Fedor, your Maria must be your's for ever, and nothing now remains to oppose this resolution. Her benediction will follow us. The time is come when my father orders me to perform what my heart and conscience disapprove, even were that heart not wholly devoted to thee. Me—Maria Menzikof, Empress!—No, no, never!

I have reperused your last letter. You offered up prayers for me in the midst of that brilliant and solitary country. Fedor, thy prayers have been answered: Heaven has diffused courage and tranquillity through my mind. I have read the description of the gloomy valley at the foot of Mount Titlis, where stands a Convent, named Engelberg. Fedor, were I certain that the power of my father could not there reach me, or that in any other part of the world,

we

we could enjoy security and repose, I would no longer remain a slave to my father's ambition. I would at the same time secure the tranquillity of my mother, my own happiness, and thine; I would fly with you to the end of the world, or even into the arms of death!

Sophia goes every morning to Church. You may confide in her.—Adieu!

## LETTER XVI.

*Fedor to Maria.*

Petersburg, February.

EVERY thing is ready, my dear Maria. The hardness of the snow will enable us to travel with greater velocity. I have been obliged, in order to avoid suspicion, to commit the care of the necessary preparations to our friend Sapiiha. I returned, with the same view, a few days to Pozeck, and am again come back to Petersburg, disguised in the habit of a peasant. One of my people personates me at Pozeck, and pretends to be somewhat indisposed. My valet alone enters the chamber,

chamber, and they are both worthy of trust. A physician from a neighbouring village, who is unacquainted with my person, has been called in; and through him, I doubt not, it will be generally understood that Prince Fedor Dolgorucki is confined to his bed by sickness. Here I have taken a lodging in an obscure little house, on the banks of the Neva, under the name of Polonais, envoy to Sapieha; the arrangements for our flight have all been conducted under a feigned name, and cannot fail to succeed. At the distance of every three leagues, relays of horses are provided, in order the more speedily to conduct us across the country to the borders of the Woolkowa. Embarking on this river, we will proceed by water to Novogorod, and from thence, traversing the Duina, to Wilna. The people who are to attend with the horses, have been employed by Count Sapieha under the most natural pretexts; and being all Poles, and even ignorant whom they serve, we have nothing to dread

dread on their account. I will assume the habit of a Polish ecclesiastic, with a false beard; that will give to me the appearance of an old man;—you will accompany me in a male habit, which it will be prudent to retain for a few years, and pass for my nephew. Passports are already obtained for us under these characters.—On the frontiers of Germany, I will relinquish my Monkish dress, and take the name of St. Amand, and the costume of a French Officer; whilst you will still continue to personate my nephew. A passport has also been procured for me in this name by St. Amand himself, who is one of Count Sapieha's secretaries.—We both speak French sufficiently well not to betray ourselves by a foreign accent, and we will pursue our journey day and night. Before your father can form any plan of pursuit, we shall have joined my friend Gustavus in France; this dear friend of my youth will most probably be on the frontiers ready to receive us. Afterwards, we will proceed,

by this stage a fire will be lighted. You  
must

by Paris, to London, from thence to Naples and Madrid, and, at last, to Switzerland; but always under different names, in order to defeat any information your father may have gained respecting us. You will alternately be my nephew, my brother, my sister; but whatever disguise necessity may compel you to assume, you shall always be my cherished companion, my adored wife. If the ancient world afford us not a safe asylum, we will embark for the new. I am provided with diamonds and bills of exchange to a considerable amount, and have likewise established a safe mode of correspondence with Sapieha. Our project cannot fail.

As soon as it is dark, a sledge, apparently loaded with wood, will wait on the bank of the Neva, near the beautiful statue of the dying gladiator, at the end of your father's garden, behind the point which forms the green pavilion in the river. Near this sledge, a fire will be lighted. You  
must

must listen for the word "Weliki," which is our watch-word. The peasant who attends the sledge, will throw over your shoulders a large mantle, and place on your head a fur bonnet. I myself, wrapped up in a similar mantle, will reply to him "Weliki," and walk on before to the distance of about ten paces, where we shall ascend together a sledge placed there on purpose, and then I shall consider ourselves in safety.

But will you be able to join me there? I know the window of your apartment; attach to it this morning a black veil, if you think my project can succeed; and a red one, if it must be deferred some time longer. I will repair to the opposite island several times in the course of the day. Oh Maria! this evening, when the sledges shall attend, endeavour to profit by the opportunity—the last, perhaps, that may ever be in our power: and may God in his goodness watch over us!—Adieu!

LETTER

## LETTER XVII.

*Maria to Fedor.*

Petersburg, March.

OH my friend! dear and wicked Fedor! what days of agony have you made me pass! Trembling with joy, I read your letter, in which you promised me liberty and happiness; nothing was so easy for me as to fulfil the conditions you prescribed. Not above a hundred paces from that wing of our palace inhabited by myself and my mother, lives one of my aunts, in a separate house. Lately, I have visited

her



her almost every evening, either alone, or accompanied by a domestic; but even the servant was no obstacle to my project, as I could remain in the porch of my aunt's house till he had returned to the palace. Having thus arranged my plan, I flew to my chamber, and fixed a black handkerchief to the window, at which I myself remained a long time, with my eyes bent on the island, believing I recognised you in every human figure which presented itself to my sight.

My father was abroad; and my mother, wishing to pass the evening alone with Sophia, had herself proposed to me to go to my aunt's. At last, the day began to decline, and every moment my heart palpitated more quickly. I seated myself by the side of my mother, experiencing a crowd of sensations I had not the power to express. Often did I kiss her cherished hands, bathing them with my tears, whilst I pressed her to my agitated heart.

“ Worthy

“Worthy child!” said she to me, partaking my tenderness, and returning my caresses.

“Have I been that, my mother?” asked I. “Have I always been so? Have I always merited your maternal benediction?”

“Always,” replied she, placing her hand upon my head. “May Heaven bless my worthy Maria!”

Ah, Fedor! what a delightful moment! My mother once again blessed me—I carried with me her benediction.—I fell on my knees before her.

“Would your blessing have accompanied me, had I departed with Fedor?” enquired I, in a low voice.

“Can you doubt it, my dear child?” said she, kissing my forehead. “Alas, I confess I regret at present that you did not embrace that opportunity—the only one perhaps——”

Ah, Fedor! had I still hesitated, this single word would have determined me. I arose, and embracing Sophia, my sister, and my little brother, stopped before my father's portrait; and whilst I mentally addressed my adieus to him, and requested pardon, methought the picture seemed to regard me with tenderness.

I at last left the apartment, and going to my window, looked towards the spot you had indicated. Already some stars shone in the heavens, and fancy led me to conceive that a fire burned in that part of the garden where you were to wait for me.

"It is the signal of love," thought I; whilst I a hundred times repeated the word "Weliki," in order to fix it in my memory."

Dressed entirely in white, that my figure might be less easily discernible on the

snow, I glided to the bottom of the staircase, where I met a lackey, who attended me unbidden, as he had done several times before. It is not improbable but that he may have been ordered to watch my steps. I remained underneath the porch of my aunt's house until I saw him re-enter the palace; after which, I came out, and ran lightly towards the dying gladiator. Alas! what my imagination had taken for a fire, was only a very red and brilliant star, that appeared on the horizon. I saw neither fire nor sledge. Oh God! Fedor, I waited half an hour at least, with my feet amongst the snow, exposed to an excessive cold; but this gave me no pain. I at first pronounced "Weliki" very low, then a little higher, and at last with a loud voice. I supported my head against the statue, and, in my despair, embraced the cold marble; in short, after watching a long time in vain, I returned dispirited and hopeless.

The first idea that occurred to me was,

that you had not seen the black handkerchief. I went to my aunt's, who could not comprehend what had so much affected me. I remained absent, and wholly absorbed in my own conjectures.

"Perhaps," thought I, "the preparations could not be completed to-day, or he was sick; that alone would have prevented him taking away his Maria."

My aunt conceived I was unwell, because I either replied to her questions without understanding them, or continued wholly silent. I was not, however, yet sick, Fedor; but I was sad, sad even to death. At present, I am really sick, very sick, perhaps even to death!

The following day (yesterday), I again vainly hovered around the dying gladiator. Ah, Fedor! why was it so near the image of death that you appointed our rendezvous!—Finding neither a fire, nor the sledge loaded with wood, I ventured across

the

the bridge; but on the opposite side of the river, as far as my eye could extend, I discerned not a human being, and I arrived at my aunt's dwelling, pale as a spectre, without being able to form any excuse for my agitation. Oh Fedor! Fedor! where art thou? Where dost thou remain, my adored Fedor?

This night you appeared to my imagination, pale and dying; stretched on the bank of the river, you again extended your arms towards me, and expired! This was, indeed, only a dream, produced by the idea of the dying gladiator; but the same image continues to haunt my waking thoughts. A devouring fire flows in my veins, my tongue is parched, and I suffer a thousand deaths. Ah, Fedor! if you but saw your poor Maria! I am pale, as if the cold hand of Death were already upon me. What must I—what can I think of thy silence? What conjecture is left me, since the place of our meeting was

so precisely described, as to preclude mistake? Sophia has not been able to find you at Church, where she has gone every morning, at my earnest prayers. Why are you so cruel? Have you, then, no domestic, no friend, through whose medium you could say to me—"Thy Fedor yet lives?"

Where, then, is Sapiha? I see him no more, I hear no more from him. Fedor, I cannot long endure this torment.—Nothing, not a word from thee! You must be dead; else why keep your Maria in this state of suspense, worse than even death itself?

Great God! I have had an interview with Sapiha. Shall I find strength to survive it? He waited a long time for our arrival at Novogorod, and at last returned in search of you, which, however, has been hitherto fruitless. All he can learn is, that you quitted your apartment the same  
day

day on which I received your last letter, and since then have wholly disappeared.

Sapieha related this with a calmness that inspired me with horror. At the words, "he has disappeared," my senses entirely forsook me;—on recovering, I found I had been conveyed to my chamber, and that my mother was seated by my side.

"What has happened, Maria?" enquired she, with anxiety.

"Oh my God!" said I to her; "worthy mother, request the attendance of Count Sapieha!"

My agony, my impatience were such, that I— Yes, I confess it—Oh Fedor! that I forgot every thing but you! I even forgot almost the respect due to my mother, and wounded her feelings by the earnestness with which I urged my request. She succeeded, however, in convincing me how improper it would be to admit



the Count to my chamber, after having fainted whilst conversing with him. This observation imparted to me new strength. I arose from the sofa on which they had placed me, and hastily adjusting my disordered dress—

“I am able to walk, my mother,” cried I; “let us return to the saloon. I must speak to Sapiiha: Fedor is lost—he has disappeared—he is dead—he has been assassinated—Oh my mother!”

This horrible idea presented itself with so much force to my imagination, that I relapsed into the state from which I had just recovered, and trembled to such a degree, that I could not leave my apartment. My worthy mother descended alone to the saloon, in order to welcome Sapiiha, and question him relative to the late events. He knew nothing, and only conjectured that my father, being informed of our projected flight, had caused Fedor

to

to be arrested—a circumstance my mother agreed with him in thinking extremely probable, more especially as, for a few days previous to this event, Menzikof had appeared unusually gloomy and abstracted. He had besides given orders to my waiting-maid to observe me secretly, and to sleep every night in my antichamber; our garden had also, for several evenings, been surrounded by armed men. A regard for my peace had induced my mother to conceal these circumstances from me, supposing they were the consequence of vague suspicions on the part of my father; but, alas! he had been too well informed, too certain of his object, as, since the evening of your disappearance, these precautions have been discontinued.

In consequence of a determination to put an end to this distracting suspense, I this day sought my father on his return from Court, and said to him, with all the calmness I could assume—

“ My father, the young Prince Fedor Dolgorucki has been arrested.”—He regarded me with a stern and severe aspect, which, however, had not the power to make me shrink.—“ My father,” I continued, “ you know not, then, of what I am capable, should you sacrifice him because he loves me, and is beloved.”

“ Because he loves you, Maria! You absolutely wish, then, to give to your passion *an air of importance*? Yes, a young Prince Dolgorucki was, in truth, arrested nearly fifteen days ago; but I scarcely know whether it was this lover of your’s, or another Dolgorucki; but since you are become his advocate, I am inclined to suppose it must be the one with whom you fancy yourself in love. What do you solicit, then? That he be instantly set at liberty!—In fact, I myself know not his crime.”

“ His crime is that of loving me, my father.”

“ It will be very singular,” said he, with

an

an ironical air, "if the Empress has arrested him for that. Perhaps, you believe she is your rival; but, to satisfy your anxiety, my daughter, we will enquire into the cause of his confinement."

He summoned his first aide-de-camp.

"I understand," said my father, with a gloomy air, "that one of the young Dolgoruckis has been put under arrest: you have not reported it to me."

"Yes, my Lord," said the officer, "the report ought to be still upon your table; perhaps you have forgot it."

"Perhaps so; I have not the least idea of it. Well, inform me what he has done. Some pretend to affirm that he has been engaged in a love affair."

"No, my Lord," replied the officer, in the most natural manner; "her Majesty conversed one day with Prince Lukisch Dolgorucki respecting the war in Persia, and enquired after his son, Fedor,

whom she supposed to be with the army. His father shrugged up his shoulders, and confessed that his son had absolutely refused to join the troops, and, to his great vexation, passed his life wholly in the country, in a state of inactivity. The Empress said, smiling—

“I am inclined to bestow a parental chastisement upon this obstinate youth.”

“She sent, the same day, one of her aides-de-camp to Pozeck, where it was said the young Prince remained indisposed.

In this way, it was discovered that one of his domestics had been ordered to personate his master, and to feign sickness, whilst he himself remained concealed in Petersburg.”

“Has he, then, in fact, been engaged in some love adventure?” said my father, throwing upon me a scrutinizing look that made me blush.

“It is very possible,” replied the officer; “but that was not the cause of his arrest. The servant who passed for him at Pozeck, discovered to us the place of his  
his

his retreat. On proceeding to this house, we found him on the point of his departure, and he precipitately threw into the fire some papers that were before him. I was charged to read the order by which he was condemned to remain under arrest in the strong Fort of Kisouschalok, until he was corrected of his obstinacy, and in order to punish him for having disregarded the positive order of his father to join the army, and also for having despised the recompence which his Sovereign had accorded to his bravery. His father and his uncle, Field-Marshal Prince Basil, were present when I read this order. The young Prince was at first greatly agitated; but, on learning the cause of his arrest, he immediately became perfectly calm, and embraced his father and uncle with as much serenity as if he had received news of the most fortunate event. As we proceeded to the Fort, he earnestly entreated me to inform the young Count Sapiaha of his arrest—

With

With whom," said he, "I have an affair of honour."

"He conjured me several times to go to him directly, and inform him why he had failed to keep his appointment. I have sought the Count, but he is not at Petersburg."

"Ah! ah! this is the whole affair," said Menzikof, in a tone of indifference. "You may retire:—go, and if you wish to execute your commission, Count Sapieha is returned."

After the departure of the officer, my father continued to regard me with an ironical air.

"Well, Maria," said he, "you may now enquire of the Empress, the reason of her conduct towards this young man. She certainly intends to make him the victim of her jealousy and her tyranny. I advise you not to suffer it."

Fedor,

Fedor, I was truly ashamed at having suspected my father. I blushed, and cast down my eyes, on receiving a billet from Sapieha, to whom the Field-Marshal had related the details of your arrestation, precisely as they were reported by the aides-de-camp of my father.

We ought not, then, to fly. It seems that, in this case, the Empress interposed, like our tutelary angel, at the moment of its execution. It is here—it is in this place, where I drew my first breath, that Providence has destined me to remain, and be happy.

“ You are not the only prisoner, Fedor, as, since your arrest, I have wholly confined myself to my chamber. Oh, were I but near thee! I am told that the Commandant of Kisouschalok is a worthy and amiable man: I know his daughters; they visit sometimes at the house of Osterman, where I frequently meet them. With what  
tenderness



tenderness shall I embrace these good girls, since their father has bestowed so many civilities on my Fedor!—Adieu!

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### LETTER XVIII.

*Princess Menzikof to Sophia Rocales.*

Petersburg, April.

MAY the Heavens smile upon you during your journey, my dear Sophia! You have been already sufficiently tormented by your friends. I remain exactly in the same situation as when you left me—sometimes  
tempted

tempted to believe that the fortunes of my husband are unassailable, although a secret presentiment whispers to me the contrary. Alas! how nearly have its predictions been realized. His enemies have obtained the confidence of the Empress; he was on the point of being disgraced—the officer was even appointed to arrest him, and the night fixed, on which the arrestation was to take place. My husband has since related, in my presence, these circumstances to his friend Brukenenthal, triumphing that he has escaped this danger. Would it not have been better, my dear Sophia, had he, considering my weakness, avoided entering into these details before me? For me, Sophia, this terrible night is not yet passed; I still experience all its horrors!

“I stood on the brink of an abyss,” said he to his friend, “and a miracle alone could have saved me.”

Ah! yes, dear Sophia, it was a miracle.

It

It was the Court of Holstein that preserved him—this Court whose interest it certainly is not to second his projects. My husband, however, had the art to persuade M. de Bassevitz that his plan was extremely advantageous to the Duke, his master. Bassevitz brought the Duke over to this opinion; and the Duke, in his turn, influenced the Empress. You know that Menzikof is fond of having it believed that he can direct at his pleasure passing events, and bend to his purposes the will of others. It was with this view that he detailed to us every thing he had done to maintain the favour of the Empress.

“It seems to me,” said Brukenthal to him, “that a wise mariner will not rejoice at having escaped shipwreck, until he has reached the port, and finds himself in a place of safety; it is not when, yet upon a stormy sea, that he ought to deliver himself up to joy. Will Fortune always prove so propitious to your wishes?”

“Fortune,”

“Fortune,” replied my husband, with an ironical smile, “will in vain endeavour to ingulph me; it is I who conduct my vessel with a firm and steady hand across the waves—yes, I alone. Is it solely the effect of chance, do you suppose, that I have already so often escaped shipwreck? I have overcome, I tell you, men and events.”

“But, perhaps,” replied Brukenenthal, “you may not always be able to do so.”

“That is precisely the reason,” rejoined Menzikof, “why I proceed with full sail towards port, in order to shelter myself from the storm, and found my fortune upon a rock. Once father-in-law to the Emperor, and my enemies must relinquish all hope of my destruction.”

He now makes no mystery of his projects, which are built on the misfortunes of my poor Maria. Ah, Sophia! how will she be able to escape from them? It is even probable that the Empress herself

may

may sanction her union with the young Grand Duke; if my husband place the crown on his head, she will be able to refuse none of his requests.

What a child is our Maria—so mild, gentle, and yet, at the same time, so determined!

“ My father,” said she, with calmness, “ has indissolubly connected the idea of *happiness* with that of *power*. He cannot conceive that an individual may be found, who will sincerely refuse to ascend a throne. If that be my destiny, dear mamma—if I must end my career thus—if the tutelary genius of love protect me not, I know, at least, how to compel my father to esteem, to fear, and perhaps to admire me. He shall see what love can achieve.”

I already pity my unfortunate child; I pity her with the heart of a mother:—and, were I even to be deprived of her for ever,

I could

I could wish that she were happy with her Fedor, in some obscure corner of the world. Not, however, that I believe with her, that her passion is insurmountable: a regard to the convenience, to the opinion, and to the will of a father must, doubtless, have great influence on the most enamoured heart; but Maria wishes not even to endeavour to combat her love.

It seems to me sometimes that all those whom I love, are obstinately bent on rendering me unfortunate. I dread as much the generous, but too exalted love of my Maria, as the insatiable ambition of my husband. Maria, at present, confines herself wholly to her chamber, and refuses every species of amusement; she no more touches her harpsichord, nor attends to the flowers in her greenhouse, of which she used to be so passionately fond. Her dress is so plain, that you would believe she was in mourning for her Fedor; and she rejects with disdain the liberty she might

might enjoy. Oh tender and sensible Maria! how happy could your father render you, if he but knew in what true felicity consists!—Adieu!

### LETTER XIX.

*Maria Menzikoſ to Sophia Rocales.*

Petersburg, April.

MY misfortunes, dear Sophia, increase every moment. It was by my father's orders that Fedor has been arrested! He had corrupted the domestic at Pozeck, who personated

personated his master, and by that means, discovered the house in which Fedor was concealed at Petersburg. The Empress has been only the *instrument of Menzikof* in this business, and Fedor has at last been forced to set out for Persia. I have confessed to my mother that every thing was prepared for our flight:—she sighed, raised her eyes towards Heaven, and embraced me, without uttering the least reproach.—Ah! I am certain, very certain, that her benediction would have accompanied us.

LETTER XIX

The decisive moment approaches—the enemies of my father are overthrown; my uncle Devier (I tremble whilst I write his name), Tolstoi, and all the others, are banished to Siberia. Unfortunate men! their image is continually before my eyes during the day, and haunts my dreams in the night. My father—Ah! doubtless, he also must pass his nights in horror! Should he deceive himself when awake, conscience, which never slumbers, must present to  
him



him in his sleep ghastly images of his injured friends. I have frequently been surprised how the commander of an army could sleep tranquilly, after having ordered the death of so many millions of men, and seen their blood flow in the day of battle; but he is supported by the love of glory, whilst, on the contrary, the vile intriguer of a Court triumphs without honour; and if the cries of the wounded and dying disturb the repose of a victorious General, what ought my father to experience, who has pronounced, in cold blood, this terrible sentence, a thousand times worse than death itself? And against whom?—Against his associates, against a brother—men whom he has familiarly termed his companions and friends!—Ah, God! Sophia, to what a degree can ambition harden a heart, which I have frequently seen exhibit proofs of sensibility!

The project in which I am to act a principal part, is upon the point of being  
executed;

executed; the Court of Holstein has acceded to it, and every thing conspires to force your poor Maria to ascend the throne. It is reported that the Empress, whose death approaches, has even ordered it in her testament.

My father triumphs; he is surrounded by flatterers. The people appear also at present to love him, because he has placed the crown on the head of the beloved son of their great Emperor. The age of the Grand Duke is thirteen, and mine seventeen. Dare children like us evince any will of our own? The lustre of a diadem will, doubtless, dazzle me. Ah, Sophia! thou knowest if it be a crown that my heart desires! But every thing conspires against me—the two Imperial Courts—the Grandees of the Empire—the people, and more especially my father—my father, Sophia! all incline to raise me to this dignity. And I, unfortunate being! without aid, and without consequence, must  
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brave them all, even parental authority, and perhaps death itself, without any support but what I receive from my own heart, filled with a pure and innocent love. Yes, my Sophia, I ought, I will teach my father how much love can enable a woman to perform!

I still hesitate between different resolutions. My purpose is fixed, but the road which conducts to it, is terrifying. Very soon, however, my fate will be decided; and it may, perhaps, be less cruel than we are, at present, led to conceive. A few days ago, the Empress appeared so exhausted, that my father, and some other of the Grandees of the Court, slept during the night in her antichamber. An immense multitude of people assembled before the palace, and the grandson of Peter the Great already received the most affecting testimonies of the love of the nation. The multitude pronounced his name with exclamations of joy. Oh! if these exclamations

mations reached the ears of the dying Sovereign, how despicable, at that moment, must have appeared to her the ambition of courtiers, and how insignificant her own power!—Great God! this respectable woman, who had beheld millions of men prostrate at her feet, is already forgotten, even before she had yielded up her last breath! These very courtiers, by whom she was surrounded during the four last days of her life, have already composed those flattering speeches they will address to the youth who is to succeed her. A violent crisis recalled a feeble ray of life, which was extinguished the next moment.

On the return of my father, I hoped, at least, to discover in his fatigued and harassed visage some traits of sorrow for the death of a woman he had loved, and whose lot had been so strictly connected with his own. But no; ambition had stifled every other sentiment; through the

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inquietude

inquietude he still experienced, there appeared a certain kind of joy on the speedy accomplishment of his favourite project.

Amidst my own sorrows, I mourn also for the Empress, whose death-bed was encompassed by men anxious for her dissolution, and who shed not a single tear of regret at her fate. Alas! those among whom she had diffused so many benefits, the poor whom she had solaced in their misery, *durst* not approach her at this solemn moment. She died as she had lived, surrounded by a frigid and unmeaning pomp.

Ah, Sophia! I shall not—I will not be a Sovereign; but around my death-bed, I shall behold eyes moistened with tears of regret; mine, ready to be closed, will still meet the regards of love; and sobs of grief will accompany the last sigh of Maria.

I despair

I despair not, however, of happiness.— How can I describe to you the present feelings of my soul? It is a kind of pride, mingled with confidence in the goodness of the all-wise Governor of the Universe, that he will either change my lot, or receive me into the mansions of everlasting happiness. Have you not often said to me, dear Sophia, that we ought to confide in him with resignation, and reckon on his aid? Knows he not my love, and the tears which I have shed? Is not every thing fore-ordained in his eternal wisdom? And do not these laws tend to produce the happiness of his creatures? If my fate be determined from all eternity, can my prayers change the will of Heaven?—and ought I not to submit to it without repining? Perhaps, it may be necessary for my eternal happiness, that my life be cut short in its prime, while I yet remain free from guilt.

The unfortunate, when abandoned by

the whole world, still experience a sentiment of innocence, and of unbounded faith and confidence in an equitable and unerring Judge. Were it not for this faith, my impatience would have already severed the tie that connects me with life; but I am not yet wholly destitute of hope. The Grand Duke is only thirteen, and some years must still pass before he can present himself at the altar; and it is not till I am dragged thither to his side, that I will despair of aid from Heaven, and prepare to save myself from misfortune and crime—alas! doubtless, by another crime! But a merciful God will take pity on an unfortunate being reduced to despair.

I am calm—yes, Sophia, I am calm: be you also tranquil, I conjure you. Your last letter is full of the most tender fears; I see from it that you are greatly agitated for your poor Maria: it is for me, therefore, to tranquillize and reassure you.—

How much I envy your residence in the

country during this fine spring! I solicited leave to join you, but was refused. My father dreads even Fedor, although in Persia, and never suffers me to be alone; a very rigid governess, unlike my Sophia, is always by my side, and watches me without ceasing. She examines and counts every sheet of paper I touch, and those which I write. This distrust wounds me, although it is merited; for I would most assuredly write to my Fedor, were the means in my power. It costs me much to behave with civility towards this woman; but she only executes the orders she has received, and I obey her in every thing. I give her all she desires; she conceives, therefore, that I mean to corrupt her: but no—I entertain no such idea; I do so, in order to attach myself to her. Adieu, dear Sophia, adieu!



## LETTER XX.

*Princess Menzikof to Sophia Rocales.*

Petersburg, May.

**T**HE Empress is no more, my dear and worthy Sophia—Peter the Second is Emperor, and my husband has attained to the highest honours and power. If the joy he experiences, was not purchased so dear, I could partake in it. Since he believes his footing secure, he is become more humane, more benevolent; never have I seen him act as he does at present: he

begins to love the nation he governs. To a constant restlessness and inquietude, have succeeded a gentleness and tranquillity that delight me; and sometimes in his arms, pressed against his heart, I forget all my sorrows. The other day, he was seated in the midst of his family, more tranquil than I had ever beheld him in my life. We were all gay; even my poor Maria was less sad, less abstracted than usual. Bru-kenthal alone frowned whenever his friend pronounced the word *happiness*. Maria placed herself at the harpsichord, and sung, with the most affecting expression, a romance on the charms of domestic life, and the happiness of a peaceable mediocrity. This led to a conversation, in which all took a share. Menzikof never before knew what a happy father he might have been. The affection and the tenderness displayed for him by his children, affected him extremely. He pressed Maria to his bosom, and placed Alexandrina on his knee, whilst tears rolled in his eyes, and his

his heart opened to the delightful emotions of nature and true sensibility. He arose; and, addressing Brukenthal, who preserved the same gloomy visage which has never relaxed since the death of the Empress, said to him—

“ My friend, I have never been so happy as at this moment.”

“ And what prevented you,” said the Monk, in a cold and severe tone, “ and what can prevent you from prolonging this happiness ?”

“ You continue in the same strain, Brukenthal,” replied my husband. “ I am happy, because I begin to enjoy, and to make those I love, enjoy those honours and emoluments that I have acquired by such unwearied exertions. Ought I then to overturn with my own hands the edifice of my happiness?—and wherefore, in order——”

“ To be happy and tranquil!” said Brukenthal, quickly interrupting him. “ You speak of happiness; never has it appeared  
more

more insecure than to-day; never has that edifice, which you deem so firmly established, been in greater danger of falling to pieces."

My husband smiled; our children went out, and the Monk proceeded with still greater energy.

"Menzikof," said he, "you lived under a Sovereign who loved you, who esteemed you, and did not fear you, because he was your master, and because Peter the Great feared no man; notwithstanding that, you stood oftener than once on the brink of a precipice. Afterwards, you lived under a woman, who unquestionably owed much to you, but who, though not ungrateful for your services, never forgot she was your Sovereign; and during the two years of her reign, even the strong ties of gratitude did not prevent you from being menaced with a fall. At present, you wish to govern under a child, who

will likewise one day become your master—who must hate, because he fears you—who will lend a ready ear to every flatterer, because he is unacquainted with mankind. Say now, Menzikof, have you a single friend among all the tribe of courtiers who surround the young Emperor?”

My husband again smiled. Brukenthal was the only man who could have spoken to him thus, without exciting his indignation.

“In the name of God, and all the Saints!” impatiently continued the Monk, “open your eyes, and tremble instead of smiling. You smile, Menzikof, and the earth yawns beneath your feet.”

“You are in the right,” answered my husband, still continuing to smile; “but I know how to avoid the threatened danger, and preserve my power.”

He then rung, and gave orders that our palace

palace should be magnificently fitted up, and all the apartments on the parade prepared for the reception of the young Emperor and his retinue, on the following day. As a reason for this arrangement, my husband has caused it to be given out, that the Court of Holstein still continues to occupy the Imperial palace. But may not this bold step tend still more to augment the number of his enemies?— How much reason have I to be uneasy! Scarcely had the Empress yielded up her last breath, when all the principal personages of the Empire assembled in the great hall of the palace; and on opening the testament of the deceased Sovereign, found it to contain her approbation of the marriage of Maria with her successor. The Grand Duke was immediately declared Emperor; but the Court of Holstein very soon perceived that my husband was not in its interest. The Supreme Council, whom the Empress had nominated to govern during

during the minority of the Emperor, assembled only once, since which my husband has assumed the sole management of affairs, and completely vanquished the party which was opposed to him. But, Great God! Sophia, what did I experience when, by an Imperial ukase, the brother-in-law of my husband, Count Devier, and his other enemies, were banished to Siberia, and their fortunes confiscated!

I and my children threw ourselves at the feet of the Prince, and supplicated him in behalf of these unfortunate individuals. He commanded us to arise, and said, in a severe tone—

“ You know not what you demand.”

The condemnation of his brother-in-law is particularly severe; but although we have frequently, with tears, petitioned in his favour, we have not been able to obtain for him any remission or alleviation  
of

of his sentence. Maria—I know not whence she derives her energy, and what can be at present her end and view; but I no longer discover in her that infantine timidity which formerly characterized her. When she saw that all our efforts were fruitless, she said, with firmness—

“ My father, the only crime of these unfortunate people is, that they were your enemies:—the laws punish, and ought to punish crimes; but it is only by generosity that we should revenge ourselves of our enemies.”

“ Well then,” replied her father, “ the laws must punish crimes. Have not you perused the Imperial ukase?”

“ Oh my father!” said Maria, in an affecting tone, “ a single word on your part would have sufficed to reverse this ukase, and to obtain the pardon of my uncle Devier, and of all the unfortunate persons sacrificed to your vengeance.”

I trem-



I trembled; but Menzikof, instead of being irritated, pinched gently his daughter's cheek, flushed by a sentiment of indignation and virtue, and said to her, smiling—

“ You will one day learn, Maria, that the world is not such as it appears in the pleasing reveries of your imagination.

“ Ah!” replied she, casting a contemptuous look on the gilded decorations of the apartment, “ why am I not then destined to live in a wretched cottage, where I could freely exercise humanity, justice, and generosity? Oh my father! your sister embraced your knees in her despair, and left you without consolation.—No!” cried Maria, on turning with earnestness towards her brother and sister; “ no, you shall never quit me thus, did you exact from me the greatest sacrifices.”

She left the chamber, followed by the eyes of her father, on whose countenance

were

were depicted pride and pleasure, but un-  
mixed with anger.

“The little hypocrite,” said he, laugh-  
ing, “does she not speak as if she were  
already the Sovereign of her father? See  
how she begins already to appreciate rank  
and power!”

I was very much struck with this reflec-  
tion. What think you of it, Sophia? Did  
the Prince judge Maria rightly? Whence  
proceed that indifference and that courage  
which she displays in the presence of her  
father, whom formerly she always ap-  
proached with fear, unless from a belief  
that she is about to ascend the throne, that  
she may become the spouse of her master?  
It is at least probable that this idea exists  
vaguely in her mind. She perceives she  
is independent of her father; hence that  
resolution and courage which are so little  
consonant to her usual character.—On the  
other hand, when I reflect with what con-  
stancy

stancy and sincerity she loves that worthy young man, who is now in Persia, and endeavouring, perhaps, by a glorious death, to terminate his misfortunes!—how her eyes sparkle when she speaks of him!—then——Does she not labour under some illusion? May not her tranquillity derive its origin from a sentiment much more sublime than that of soon possessing a crown? Or can the prospect of that crown already begin to flatter her? She receives all the marks of respect that are given her, as if she were already seated on the throne. Ah! if all the storms which threaten us, could be dissipated—if a pure and serene sky again cheered us—if the love of Maria and Fedor were to cease—shall I dare to avow it?—her mother might then find a pleasure in seeing a diadem placed on the brow of her daughter. The Emperor is an amiable child; his countenance, while it expresses all the loveliness of youth, displays the majesty of his origin and rank. He possesses an excellent heart,

heart, and the most happy dispositions; and that which enchants and comforts me is, that he appears to entertain the most friendly sentiments for my husband.—  
Adieu, dear Sophia!

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### LETTER XXI.

*Fedor to Sapiéha.*

Petersburg, June.

**Y**OU believe me in a remote part of Persia, my dear Sapiéha, while I am at Petersburg, and even determined to appear publicly, notwithstanding the commands

of

of the all-powerful Menzikof. You must be, doubtless, astonished; but it is not very surprising that I should discover, on the frontiers of Persia, such a burning climate did not correspond with the feelings of a mind already overheated by love and rage. Ah, Sapieha! I stand in need of a frozen region: I wish to become cold as the atmosphere by which I am surrounded; but before I can cease to love, I must cease to exist.

Fool that I was, I traversed distant countries, and never dreamed of her inconstancy. However sorrowful, I yet continued tranquil: it never entered into my imagination that a crown could be of equal value in her eyes, as a garland of flowers consecrated by love. Thus it happened when, at Azoph, I was overtaken by a courier from the Senate, the bearer of an ukase, wherein I read an event—a trifle—at which I alone, perhaps, in all the Empire, felt surprise—I read that Maria  
Menzikof:

Menzikof was betrothed to the young Emperor !

Yes, Sapieha, I was struck—struck with astonishment ; a shivering ran through my veins. Maria Menzikof !—I once dreamed that this Maria had plighted her faith to another man—that she had yielded up her heart to him—that, if this man had been less generous, he might have been her husband, and the sole master of her destiny. I yet experienced a more frightful dream on reading this ukase. I observed to the courier, that its contents did not seem probable ; but he confirmed them by so many circumstances, that I could no longer call their truth in question. I was informed that the beautiful Maria estimated a crown very highly, and scorned a simple garland of flowers. I learned that, in the contemplation of her exaltation, she already dispensed her favours and smiles to the courtiers eagerly crowding around their future Sovereign. I moreover learned that  
the

the espousals were to be solemnized during the present month, and that, on this occasion, superb *fêtes* would be given at Court.

Upon this information, I determined to leave my people and equipage at Azoph, and fly to Petersburg, in order also to offer my compliments of congratulation to this charming and faithful spouse. No sooner had I arrived, than I was informed that the ceremony would be performed on the sixth of June—that is, on the day after to-morrow, and that the Emperor already lived under the same roof with Maria Menzikof. I repaired to the new Preobrazinski\*; for so they called at present the Imperial Isle, where Menzikof's palace is situated. If islands thus change their names, Sapieha, why may not also the fickle heart of a woman change her sentiments? I penetrated to the gate of this superb mansion,

\* The young Emperor had, in fact, given this appellation to the palace of Menzikof, as a compliment to its owner; the Imperial Palace being named Preobrazinski.

and,

and, upon entering, beheld the future Empress in all the height of her beauty. Till this moment, I had questioned the reality of my misfortune, for my heart suggested that it was impossible Maria could be unfaithful; but I saw this perfidious woman traverse the garden with a haughty and bold look, like that of a Sovereign. The roses of her cheeks fully evinced the tranquillity of her mind, and the happiness she enjoyed. She entered, smiling, a magnificent gondola, and crossed the waters, infinitely more constant than herself. Ah, Maria! inconstant Maria! you thought not then of that bark, prepared by friendship, into which I might have entered with you; or, if you thought of it, you, doubtless, felicitated yourself in not having been removed from that grandeur, and that throne which you prefer to love.

I remained immoveable, penetrated by a grief too lively to be expressed. Yes, it was she herself—it was not a phantom  
produced



produced by any evil genius, or by a disordered imagination; her heart was only changed; she still possessed the same bewitching smile, the same melodious voice and enchanting look. But her heart—Oh Sapielha! mine suffers torments unutterable!

I have returned to my chamber; I am become somewhat more tranquil; I still, however, can scarcely persuade myself that what I have seen, is not an illusion, or that, perhaps, I may not have lost my reason. What has proved the infidelity of Maria? She was beautiful—she smiled. Ah! have I not seen her, more beautiful than the angels, smile while thinking of her Fedor, and swearing to him eternal constancy. I conjure you, Sapielha, write a single line—

*“ Maria is, or is not affianced to the Emperor.”*

If

If she is, I set out immediately on my return to Azoph. I go to combat a perfidious wretch—Alghaner Eschrof, who has, for the love of a crown, assassinated his master; but if he readily yields up to Russia a part of his acquisitions, he shall remain in tranquillity. What sacrifices do we not see daily made to obtain a crown? He has only betrayed his master; but she!—A positive answer I beg of you.

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*Sapieha's Answer.*

Petersburg, June.

MARIA is proclaimed the betrothed bride of the Emperor.—I shall see you in the evening; till then, I conjure you, be tranquil. A perfidious woman is unworthy the chagrin which appears to overwhelm you: once again, be tranquil. The follies

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into which the despair of disappointed love betrays its votaries, afford the highest triumph to those who prove unfaithful. Let Maria never know that you have been here—that you have been here on her account; if I rightly understand the female heart, that intelligence would be more highly prized by her than the crown for which she sacrifices you. Expect me: I wish to assuage your sorrow. You will learn how little she whom you adored, merited your attachment—with what facility she has abandoned you, in order to gratify her ambition. She is a daughter worthy of *Menzikof*.

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END OF VOL. I.