A PRINCESS IN EXILE

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Author: Marie Pavlovna Romanova (as Marie, Grand Duchess of Russia) (1890-1958)
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BY
MARIE, GRAND DUCHESS OF RUSSIA

EDUCATION OF A PRINCESS

A MEMOIR

LONDON, 1919

A PRINCESS IN EXILE

BY

MARIE, GRAND DUCHESS
OF RUSSIA

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TO MY BROTHER

DMITRI

Where'er the call of destiny may lead us,
Wherever happiness may make us go,
A foreign land, the world, for naught can change us,
Our only home is Tsarskoie-Selo.

—ALEXANDER PUSHKIN.

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A PRINCESS IN EXILE

INTRODUCTION

THE theme of this second book is education in exile. In telling it I have necessarily used my personal experiences and observations, and depicted the process from a single point of view, although in this process I by no means stood alone. In many respects it was paralleled by numbers of my compatriots, whose trials were often severer than mine, but it represents an experience, tragic and yet hopeful, which is a phase of history. Otherwise I doubt if it would deserve to be told.

When a social order is overthrown and almost an entire class of people displaced and made homeless, materially and spiritually, it takes a long time for life to absorb them and take care of them. By telling of what happened to me and to those who formed part of my environment during the first period of exile, I hope to have shown some of the problems which confronted us and the manner in which we met them.

I am aware that I have been at a disadvantage in trying to tell this story now. The events are too recent to permit of an exact interpretation, and it is altogether too early to estimate the characters at their true value. Nor has it been possible, as in my first book, to find a unified atmosphere and background for the constantly shifting scenes and changing circumstances of an exile's life. The psychology of a body of human beings subjected to an overwhelmingly crushing experience is more or less relative; the central force is the struggle for existence. But I have wanted to set it down while it was still fresh in my memory, to be taken for what it may be worth as a chapter in our history.

My first book recited the facts of a life which today seems so remote as to be no longer a part of myself. My childhood and youth were passed in a setting which has ceased to exist, in a land over which time and change have swept until it has become another world. My training had not prepared me for material struggles, and the new existence which followed my escape from Russia in 1918 became a long series of adjustments to fit myself to an entirely new order of things.

My years of exile can be divided into three definite periods. The first one lasted approximately three years and was a state which may be compared to sleep-walking. My step was steady enough but my eyes were still closed. While life was taking its relentless course, I was looking at the changed

conditions with the eyes of one in a dream, nothing yet having the power to touch me very vitally. The only realities to me then were my personal bereavements; the disturbing impact of the new existence registered superficially or not at all. Towards the end of these first years I began to realize that the ground I was walking on was very precarious and gradually I became conscious of the abysses which surrounded me on all sides.

The second period was one of awakening, of slow revaluations, of strong mental reactions, of learning, and of desire for personal achievement. The first years were mostly passive, whereas those which followed consisted entirely of struggles, unconscious as well as conscious. They were years of violent contrasts full of short-lived hopes and disappointments, temporary successes and cruel defeats, of the shattering of old beliefs and the gradual building up of a new, independent, and personal world. Our capacities were tested and taxed to the utmost, the impossible was expected and demanded of us. But the rare rewards were worth the struggle. To make good in a test or reach a goal was a novel and marvellous experience, a satisfaction which nothing could have equalled.

I emerged from this period at the end of eight years a battered, destitute, and completely remodelled human being.

The third period, the one in which I am living now, and which followed upon my departure from France in 1929, has been totally different from the first two. I tore up my roots in Europe in full consciousness of what I was doing and, although I was again launching forth towards an unknown destiny and a completely strange existence, I felt confident of my own strength. I could look squarely at life.

I am often asked how I feel about Russia today and what future I can see for her. This question will not be answered by my book, at least not explicitly. Russia will remain the country of the unexpected. There is one thing which can be said with certainty—the old Russia has ceased to exist, and will never be re-established. Yet history acts by violent changes and slow recoveries, and the violence of the revolution has not yet by far swung back to the level of liberty and order which will finally be the sequel to the period of the Tsars.

Neither the bereavements of the revolution nor the hardships of exile nor the passing of the years could alter my feelings towards my country. I might never see Russia again, but my wishes for her welfare will be just as fervent as they have always been. Nothing could shake my belief in her ultimate triumph. Some day she will throw off the evil forces which now hold her in

their grip. Who knows if it is not for the Russia of the future, a Russia ennobled, purified, and made wiser by suffering, to present a bewildered and drifting world with the new formulæ which it is seeking for and needs so desperately.

Glen Nevis, Long Island,
June 1932.

PART ONE

SLEEP-WALKING

CHAPTER I

REFUGE IN RUMANIA

AFTER our escape from Petrograd at the end of July 1918, and our painful months in Odessa, where the Spanish influenza was now raging, our final flight had taken us across the border. On a cold and dismal November night, my husband and I found ourselves in a Rumanian train. Russia lay behind us, and we dared not think what lay ahead. My mind had sunk into a stupor.

The journey from the frontier to Kishinev, Bessarabia's capital and the residence of the Rumanian military governor, I can hardly remember. My last vital resources had been exhausted in saying good-bye to our Russian escort and by all that this farewell had meant to me. We arrived very late at Kishinev and were taken from the station to the governor's residence, where we were going to be put up for the night. It was, I believe, understood that on the following day we were to proceed further on to Jassy, a little provincial town in the province of Moldavia, where the King and Queen of Rumania had spent many dreary months since the occupation of Bucharest by the Germans.

The house occupied by the governor, as I vaguely recollect, stood by itself on a little hill. It belonged to one of the wealthy local merchants and was a somewhat pretentious building with a monumental marble staircase which took up most of the interior space. A supper was all ready for us. Since the hosts, General Voytaiano and his wife, were away, one of their daughters with the help of the governor's staff was doing the honours, but I was too ill to think of food and asked to be shown to my room. My teeth were chattering, I felt frozen to the marrow, and every bone in my body ached with a separate pain. I undressed with the help of the old Russian maid I had brought with me from Odessa and after having taken a cup of hot soup, which somebody handed us through the door, I went to bed. My last recollection was the icy touch of the stiff linen sheets; it was like lying down between two slabs of marble.

When I came to several days later, I found myself in another room, apparently even on another floor, where I was isolated from the rest of the household. Putiatin—my husband—and a little bearded gentleman in uniform were conversing in low voices in a corner. The top of my body was

swathed in a huge compress, and I had a very strong and extremely disagreeable metallic taste in my mouth, which until the end of my illness nothing would remove. I called to my husband, and both he and the bearded gentleman, who turned out to be the doctor, came up to my bed.

There followed a sequence of long and wearisome days. The little Rumanian doctor insisted that my room should be kept at a temperature of about ninety-five degrees and that I should be covered by several thick blankets. The world had ceased to exist for me. I had splitting headaches; my chest seemed to be crushed by a weight; all my body ached, and I tossed on my bed, finding no rest. I dreamed nightmares of horror. Otherwise I was solely preoccupied by the heat, which caused me still another kind of suffering, a raging thirst, and by the real difficulty I experienced in breathing. Although apparently I was fighting for life, this time it was unconsciously; I did not realize it, and no thought of my danger crossed my mind.

The crisis once over, my recovery was swift. I had had a narrow escape, as I was told. With lucidity returned the cares and worries of the days preceding my illness. The situation was indeed a serious one. My father had been arrested by the Bolsheviks and since the beginning of August had been in prison—and this was November; my husband's parents, to whom we had been obliged to entrust our little son, as he was far too young to be subjected to the risks of our escape, had managed two months later to cross the Bolshevik-German lines at the small town of Orsha, the same spot where we had crossed. At that time we were still in Odessa. My calculations had proved correct. As they were protected by the right kind of documents, their journey had been less perilous than ours; being older people they did not attract much attention and could proceed by slower stages, which was better for the baby. They had safely reached Kiev, where it was decided they would remain until we had found a dwelling in Odessa large enough to house us all for the autumn; but this plan had soon to be abandoned. We did not have the money to establish a household of our own, and it also became evident that Odessa could not be counted upon as a permanent residence, the political situation being too uncertain. There was no possible chance of finding an occupation for the men and so there could be no question of settling down.

The final debacle came upon us more quickly than we had expected. At the moment we found ourselves once more scattered and separated from the rest of the family, my parents-in-law with the little boy were cut off from Odessa by the Ukrainian adventurers, who were operating on the line between Odessa and Kiev. And my brother-in-law Aleck, who had been with

us during our escape from Petrograd, preceded us into Rumania; we did not know his exact whereabouts.

The first impression to reach me from the outside world after my illness was the report of the Armistice. The news was momentous for many more reasons than one. In the first place the blind slaughter, which had lasted for so long that it had grown into a habit, had at last come to an end. But also for us personally the end of the war might be of tremendous importance. What was going on in Russia was bound to call forth some reaction on the part of the civilized nations; it was too dangerous a situation to be disregarded. On the other hand, elsewhere a general readjustment would now begin to take place; the world would be returning to conditions of peace. But in what manner would this readjustment affect us, our personal lives; how could we return to peaceful conditions? Little did we realize then that peace would hardly mean anything to us and that our struggles for existence were only just beginning.

Now was the time to call the attention of the Allies to the suffering of those in Russia who had remained true to them. My first thought was always of my father, over whom I never for a moment ceased worrying. At the bottom of my heart I knew that, once he was in a Bolshevik prison, there was little chance for him to get out, but still I hoped. I was sure, moreover, that the Allies, when they heard my story, could not refuse their assistance. I knew, of course, that the Kerensky government, the last recognized by the Allies, had done its utmost to discredit my family in the eyes of the world and had frowned on every gesture of sympathy which might have been extended towards the fallen dynasty. And yet I hoped, but it was a miracle I was hoping for.

While I was convalescing from the “flu” and still keeping to my bedroom, the military governor and his wife returned to Kishinev. They at once came down to pay me a visit. General Voytaiano had been to Jassy and he brought back messages from the King and Queen. As soon as the Germans should evacuate Bucharest their Majesties intended to return to the capital and would invite us there as their guests, first at the hotel, and then, as soon as they had had time to settle themselves, at their palace. The General had also been charged to put some money at our disposal, but this offer we were then in a position to refuse, having borrowed a small sum from a friend before leaving Odessa. Apart from the fact that it was entirely thanks to them that we had got out of Russia at all, the Rumanian sovereigns’ invitation and offer were only the beginning of a series of kindnesses. Of all the royal families still in possession of their thrones and

all more or less related to us, it was only from them that we met with real sympathy and understanding. General Voytaiano and his family also showered us with attentions.

As soon as I had sufficiently recovered, we were sent to Bucharest; but when this happened I could still hardly stand on my feet from weakness. The distance was not long, but to me the journey seemed endless. The territory we went over had only just been evacuated by the Germans; transport was disorganized; the railway carriages were unheated and had no light. The only warmth came from a little iron stove at one end of the carriage, around which, when the cold in the compartments became intolerable, we all collected irrespective of rank: brakemen, the governor's A.D.C. accompanying us, conductors, stray peasants in sheepskin coats who drifted over from the neighbouring cars, as well as ourselves.

At Bucharest we went to the hotel; it was the first one of its kind I had seen for many years. The tall mirrors on the landings flanked by pots containing tired palms, the red carpets, the food, the restaurant with its band and its crowd of uniformed officers and women in evening dresses, all seemed to me incredible luxuries, something coming from an extinct world. It was strange also to see Russian officers walking the streets unmolested, in their uniforms with shoulder straps and arms, when at home it had become a mortal danger to have anything pertaining to the military attire even hidden away in a closet. How queer it felt to be able to go about freely. In Russia every step one took outside the house was like an expedition into an enemy's territory, every face one met was suspicious-looking or hostile. There was hardly any traffic in the streets, which were never cleaned, and there was nobody to look after order. In Bucharest everything seemed to us to be sparkling with neatness, the shop windows full of merchandise, the streets of bustling, jolly crowds, automobiles, and horse carriages. At every corner stood a polite and reassuring policeman. Animation and care-free gaiety were already reigning in Bucharest, which was crowded with foreign missions of every description. The war was ended, but peace had not yet begun. In spite of its remoteness one felt in Bucharest the connexion with Europe which we had somewhat lost in Russia at the beginning of the war and which was altogether cut off from us during the years of the revolution.

In the meantime the King and Queen of Rumania returned to their capital, where they were received with great pomp; but upon their arrival the Queen was taken seriously ill with the "flu." In spite of this she asked me to come and see her, but for fear of tiring her I remained only for a few minutes. Her bedroom was quite curious. It was of Byzantine style, with

many elaborate stone carvings around the walls and windows, the stone floor covered with bearskins. The wide, low bed in which she lay stood under a similarly carved stone canopy. But the room was dark, and I could discern only dimly the outline of the fair head buried in a profusion of lace-covered pillows. I expressed as best I could, and as briefly, the deep gratitude I felt towards her.

The King came with his two eldest daughters to pay several visits at the hotel. The last time I had met him and Queen Marie was at my wedding to Prince William of Sweden in 1908, ten years before. The King had aged and grown somewhat heavy around the waistline. His hair, which he wore in German fashion in a brush over the top of his head, was turning grey. He looked worn out and at the same time extremely anxious to conceal this fatigue even from himself. Later I came to the conclusion that seldom had I seen such a conscientious person as he was. Although a German by birth and devoted to his old family and country, he had resolutely turned his back on them when the time came to take sides and it became clear that Rumania's interests lay with the Allies. Because it was his duty, he did it quite simply, and probably very few suspected what it cost him. He had Rumania's best interests always at heart, was wise, unselfish, and unostentatious.

His appearance was of a decided disadvantage to him, and I think he realized and maybe also suffered from it. He was short, and his disproportionately large body was supported by legs rather too thin and short. On either side of his face his ears protruded in a most disconcerting fashion; he lacked eloquence and ease in speech, had little poise, and his manner was shy and nervous. Knowing his own deficiencies he never attempted to step into the limelight, leaving this entirely to Queen Marie, who by her charm, beauty, and ready wit could obtain anything she desired. The King stood in the shade behind her, inspiring most of her acts. Not long afterward, guided by the King, she was to prove herself extremely useful to her country. In Paris, where she went during the sessions of the peace conference, she "placed Rumania on the map," as she herself would express it, by constantly reminding the Allies of the country's sufferings and sacrifices during the war, gaining for Rumania various advantages which even experienced diplomats would have had great difficulty in obtaining.

By Wide World Photos

THE RUMANIAN RULERS

QUEEN MARIE

KING FERDINAND

Photo by Ewing Galloway

But the brightness of the limelight in the end dazzled her; she was after all too self-centred to be far-seeing and too scintillating to be satisfied with anything less than a leading part. To be brilliant is not altogether an advantage for a Queen in the democratic age. Having little in common otherwise, the King and she supplemented each other admirably in their services to their country. When I now saw him again after so many years, I was struck by his lack of external charm and the kindness of his expression.

His daughters, the Princesses Elizabeth (later married to King George of Greece) and Marie (who became Queen of Yugoslavia), were then very young. The elder was fair, with a small head, perfect in features, but she was much too stout. She was an interesting girl, extremely gifted in all the arts. Among other talents she possessed a very fine voice and a gift for drawing and painting, in which she displayed unusual sense for colour and a versatile imagination. She could have been a good illustrator; she could have done many things, but her weight made her indolent. She did not have the energy to develop her potentialities.

Most of her days, as I afterwards noticed, were spent in her own room doing very little, although occasionally for a short period of time she would be taken by a craze for one particular thing. Now it would be embroidery, and reclining on a broad low divan she would surround herself with endless little bags, out of which emerged skein after skein of delicately coloured silks and metal threads; on thick hand-woven linen or fine voile she would copy or adapt without any tracing or design the Rumanian embroideries, which are very oriental in feeling. Another time it would be the flat necklaces made out of tiny beads, such as are worn by the peasants. For making these she would use no loom, but only a needle, and compose the design and combination of colours as she worked, the finished result being always perfectly charming. Then she would suddenly be seized by the desire of inventing a new dish. She was a born cook, and the food she made was delicious. A tiny oil stove would be brought into her dressing-room and placed upon the marble top of the washstand; some ingredients would be sent for from the kitchen and others she would bring forth from her own cupboards, where they stood among toilet articles, scents, and perfumed soaps. She would mix and stir, now sprinkling in this, now adding that, tasting the concoction, taking it off the stove and putting it back again to simmer. It was a delight to watch as well as a delight to eat.

Elizabeth was fond of literature, had read widely, and had an excellent education, which she had acquired entirely by herself. But her real passion was for clothes and perfumes. In a way she was, as her mother once remarked to me, a truly oriental princess. Between her and her father there existed a great and tender understanding.

Princess Marie, or Mignon as she was called in the family, had a lovely, round baby face and big blue eyes. She was also rather too stout for her age but more active than her elder sister. She had no particular talents, was easy-going, extremely good-natured, and took herself humorously. She and her mother got on perfectly.

It was among these friends that we settled down for our first taste of exile.

CHAPTER II

NEWS OF DMITRI

In Rumania we came across many acquaintances and friends whom we had not expected ever to see again. Like us, some of them had by force of circumstances been separated from their families, parents or children, and, like ourselves, they had left Russia, abandoning all their property and belongings except a dress or two and a change of underwear. We were all alike and equal in the face of our common trials. But as yet our perception had not had the time to be deepened by what we had experienced. We took events as they came without reflecting particularly upon their significance.

Now at last I had the possibility of finding my brother Dmitri, learning of his whereabouts, and sending him word of myself. About him at least I had no direct reasons for worry, although in the past year I had heard from him but once. He had been exiled by the Tsar to the Persian border early in 1917, after his participation in the plot against Rasputin. His courage and the punishment inflicted upon him had won him the sympathy of everyone, and that at a time when the Romanov family had lost all its prestige. After the revolution the provisional government sent word to him that his exile was now at an end and that he had permission to return; it was Kerensky, then Secretary of Justice, who was said to have proposed this motion. Whether the invitation was a deliberate trap set for the only popular younger member of the imperial family or a sincere attempt at an act of justice it is difficult to tell. My brother, however, refused to come back. It was his Emperor who had sent him into exile and he would respect the command of his sovereign even if he had fallen. His intention was to remain in the place he had been ordered to and in the same unit as long as the war lasted.

At first all had gone well, but gradually the Bolshevik propaganda penetrated into that remote outpost of the army, and dissolution set in, followed as it was everywhere else by the breakdown of discipline, mutiny, and the torturing and murdering of the commanding officers. Dmitri was obliged to leave the army, and it soon became apparent that he could not even remain in Russia. He therefore crossed the border and went to Teheran, Persia's capital. This was in the spring of 1917. At Teheran he lived through a succession of very painful experiences. Some of the Russians, even those who had been appointed to their posts by the old regime and still held them,

turned their backs upon Dmitri, hoping thus to be agreeable to the new rulers. He had very little money, nowhere to go, and no friends.

It was the British minister, Sir Charles Marling, who was the first to alter Dmitri's situation. He and his wife invited my brother to the legation for one or two week-ends. After the second one Dmitri remained with the Marlings for good, never leaving them during the entire time he stayed in Persia, which was nearly two years. The Marlings were extraordinary people. Sir Charles had without any fear of consequences extended the British legation's hospitality to a homeless Grand Duke at a moment when his government, wishing to be on good terms with the new Russian rulers, refused to have anything to do with our family. Lady Marling supported her husband whole-heartedly. As was to be expected, Sir Charles was obliged to pay heavily for his generosity: the promotion to the ambassadorial post to which he was entitled never came. It was from the British legation at Teheran that I had last heard from Dmitri. One of the first things I did upon my arrival at Bucharest was to send a telegram to the Foreign Office in London asking them to tell me where he was.

I saw Queen Marie again only when she had completely recovered. We had been invited to come to a tea party followed by music, and besides ourselves there were other guests, belonging chiefly to the foreign missions. That very day the news about my brother arrived from London, and it was at this tea party that I was quite accidentally to hear about it.

The first glimpse I caught of the Queen upon my arrival was through the door of her big panelled sitting-room. Dressed in a flowing orange tea-gown, she was moving about the room arranging flowers, and her lovely fair hair caught the light which streamed from under the large ornamental lampshades. Excepting the day when I had visited her during her illness, I had not seen her for ten years and I was impressed at that first moment by her youthfulness and the vivacity of her gestures. The greeting she gave me was warm and perfectly informal and made me feel at ease with her from the very beginning. As to that, she always made everybody feel at ease in her presence; she could not be happy without calling forth an atmosphere of sympathy about her own person, enveloping herself in it as in a rich sable mantle. Without being in the least conscious of it, she nevertheless would take great pains to create this atmosphere of responsiveness, which was the stimulation and encouragement she most needed and without which she could not live.

This is true of nearly every person possessing charm in an unusual degree; it is a source of some special vital energy which has to be

continuously flowing over others, no matter over whom, and, if checked, the manifestation of every other quality, no matter how substantial, is also dimmed.

The guests settled down wherever they chose, and tea was served. I happened to be sitting on a sofa beside General Greenly, the chief of the British military mission. We had met before this afternoon, and the General was for some reason particularly glad to see me.

"I am delighted, Ma'am, at the news you got from London today; you must be awfully happy," he said as soon as he got the chance.

"What news?" I asked, my heart bounding.

"Don't you know?" he asked in astonishment. "I have probably committed an indiscretion, but since I've started I may as well go on, that is, if you promise not to give me away."

"Well?" I asked breathlessly.

"There's a telegram for you at the legation from the Foreign Office; your brother, the Grand Duke Dmitri, has arrived in London."

I could have thrown my arms around the worthy General's neck and kissed him; this was the only joy I had experienced for very many months, and the last one, as a matter of fact, for a long time to come.

When I returned to the hotel that evening, the telegram was waiting for me, accompanied by a note from the British minister. Dmitri and his hosts, the Marlings, were in London. The distance which for so long had separated us had diminished considerably, and a meeting could now be planned. The King and Queen suggested, upon hearing the news, that Dmitri should join me at Bucharest, and I immediately wrote to him transmitting the invitation. The answer, however, was disappointing. Upon leaving Russia in 1917 Dmitri had applied for an honorary officer's commission in the British army, which was granted him not long before the Armistice; he had not been given an assignment and was obliged to remain in England until ordered to some post or demobilized. From then on I was constantly devising means by which to join him.

Now that the Queen had taken up all her activities again, it was the moment to speak to her about my father and his three cousins, who were all in the same prison. It might be easier, as they were in Petrograd, to begin by helping them rather than to try to do something for those of my family who were in Siberia. Besides, my father's fate was naturally nearest my heart. That it was too late to do anything for those in Siberia I did not yet know.

Queen Marie, of course, was greatly affected by their situation, realizing perfectly what might be the outcome, and she promised to do all in her power to help. But alas, aside from her and the King, no one was interested in them. This complete indifference, this total unconcern, came to me as a shock. I understood then that we were no longer needed, that at last we had ceased to be dangerous and that our fate was a matter which concerned us alone. The cruelty of such an attitude seemed to me monstrous, and I had great difficulty in accepting it. Russia as a big and powerful nation need no more be reckoned with; for the time being she had fallen out of the picture; she was disregarded; the common efforts and sacrifices were forgotten.

Queen Marie then turned to the task that could be accomplished by her own means. She devoted herself to helping those of the Romanovs who were on the shores of the Black Sea and could, therefore, be reached from the water and brought to Rumania. The Dowager Empress Marie, mother of Nicholas II; her two daughters, Xenia and Olga, with their families; Grand Duke Nicholas, who commanded the Russian troops during the war; his brother and their families, were in the Crimea, where they were all herded together in one house. Before the German occupation of Russia's southern provinces they had endured terrible hardships and had been spared only by an accident, according to some a miracle.

By Keystone

QUEEN MARIE OF RUMANIA AND HER DAUGHTERS IN PEASANT DRESS

Princess Elizabeth of Greece, Princess Ileana, Queen Marie, Queen Marie of Yugoslavia, and Crown Princess Helen.

The story ran that the leader of the Bolshevik detachment of sailors who were the self-appointed jailers of the family had for many months, unsuspected by anyone, played a most intelligent and difficult double game. He was supposed to have kept the confidence of his men by treating his prisoners as harshly as was humanly possible, protecting them at the same time from a fate much worse. When the German troops reached the Crimea in the early summer of 1918, after the signature of the peace treaty in Brest-Litovsk, he disclosed his real self to the members of the family and returned to the very last object all the jewels and valuables which he had previously confiscated from them.

This romantic tale did not, however, quite correspond to the truth. The sailor in charge of the royal prisoners, whose revolutionary soul was cautious, decided to deliver his charges only to a higher tribunal for execution. He feared that, if he allowed their murder by the minor, provincial Soviet from Sevastopol, he might be held personally responsible by central authorities for usurping their rights to revenge and himself have to suffer for the blunder. If he was a saviour, it was involuntarily so. His fright at the approach of the Germans had, according to witnesses, been quite pathetic.

The German authorities offered their protection and were willing to help the Dowager Empress reach Denmark, her native country, but their aid was indignantly rejected, for at that time the war was not yet over. Russian volunteers, all officers of the old army, gathered together of their own accord and constituted a guard, which thereafter watched over the old Empress and the Grand Duke Nicholas, their very much beloved military chief. The interval between the withdrawal of the German troops and the arrival of the Allies was thus safely weathered. It was during this interval, when the bad elements of the Crimean population had once more lifted their heads in hopes of further chances for loot and murder, that Queen Marie made arrangements to transport the members of the Romanov family to Rumania.

To the east of the Black Sea in the Caucasus remained a few more of our relatives; they were the Grand Duchess Marie, widow of my uncle Grand Duke Vladimir, and her two sons, Boris and Andrew. These also Queen Marie intended to bring to Rumania after they should have succeeded in getting to the coast. The first group, however, feeling comparatively safe under the protection of their guard and not wishing to leave Russia, declined the Queen's invitation, and Grand Duchess Marie's departure was indefinitely postponed because of the difficulties of travelling. Eventually they all left Russia but were forced to do so in a much more hurried way.

We were awaiting with impatience the promised occupation by the Allied troops of the northern shore of the Black Sea. My husband's parents had been obliged to remain at Kiev, and we felt very uneasy about them as the Germans had long ago evacuated that territory. Communications were at the time so difficult that we had to wait until the Allies should clear the district and make it possible for them to travel. It was, of course, understood that they were to join us in Bucharest, where at last we might be able to find ourselves together again. But much precious time was lost before this occupation took place. Slowly and reluctantly the French at last made up their minds to occupy Odessa, and the results were disappointing. The general entrusted with the operation displayed little skill and still less tact; members of his staff overstepped their powers and committed abuses which made the population regard them with suspicion. As concerned the French troops, who longed for home, they looked with loathing upon everything connected with the war; it was quite natural that they should have no interest and no sympathy for the problems of others. People had by now become used to bloodshed, cruelty, and horror; nothing more could arouse their indignation; their sensibilities had been numbed.

Earlier in 1918 a few Russian officers who had succeeded in escaping the first wave of Bolshevik wholesale executions had gathered on the river Don, where they formed the nucleus of the future White armies. Their members were soon augmented by refugees from the north and by men from the units sent to support the Rumanians before the revolution. These and many others who had found themselves beyond the reach of the Bolsheviks and could not return home for fear of falling into their hands trekked towards the Don, some in groups, some individually. They went through hardships which are difficult to imagine in our modern times and impossible to describe. The history of their exploits has remained untold and is hardly known at all by the rest of the world. In spite of their miseries they were still animated by the one idea of fighting the Red enemy. But they lacked everything for the struggle; their clothes and boots were in rags; they had no food, no munitions, no hospital supplies, and above all no money. The Allies began to help them. The foreign interventions, so called, lasted for two years but without result. To this question, however, we shall return later.

CHAPTER III

A COURTLY INTERLUDE

We moved to the Kotrocheny Palace at the beginning of January 1919, but we were still at the hotel on Christmas and New Year's Day. On New Year's Eve the British military mission, with the members of which we had become very friendly, invited me and my husband to a dinner. King Ferdinand's chief-of-staff and his wife were also present. Towards the end of the dinner General Greenly drank to the health of the King of Rumania, and the Rumanian General offered a toast to King George; the orchestra played both national anthems. Then General Greenly rose once more and drank to me, and the orchestra struck up the old anthem of Imperial Russia. It was the first time I had heard it since the revolution. As I stood there at the table and listened to the familiar melody, the tears poured down my cheeks. The British officers understood my anguish; every one of them in turn came up to me and in silence touched my glass with his.

The Kotrocheny Palace was situated a short distance outside of Bucharest. It was a large building built around a rectangular courtyard, in the centre of which stood the palace church. We were given a whole apartment to ourselves; the rooms were comfortable and delightfully decorated; and once more we felt like respectable human beings. If it were not for the constant, never-ceasing anxiety for my father, from whom I had not heard for a long time, and the impossibility of receiving news from him or being able to help him, life might have been extremely pleasant.

I moved to the palace still with the single, very much weather-beaten suitcase I had brought with me out of Russia; the toilet articles were the same nickel-topped things I had used during the war. I possessed one or two worn-out dresses made over from my pre-war wardrobe, and hence more than four years old; thick cotton underwear, no silk stockings, and a few miscellaneous articles such as handkerchiefs, the initials of which had been cut out with scissors. My husband was equally destitute, for in leaving Petrograd we had taken only as much luggage as we were able to carry ourselves, and we had been careful not to have anything by which we could be identified in case we were searched.

While still at the hotel I sent for a dressmaker who brought me some models from Paris, amongst which there was a brown frock made of knitted

silk material. This dress, she said, came from a new house called Chanel, Chanel being the rising star of the Paris sky of fashion. The clothes by far exceeded in price what I could spend, and I therefore took none of them. Nor indeed would I have known how to wear them, as my contacts with the world of style had been lost many years ago. But I remembered the name of Chanel. Before the war a girl called Chanel used to have a small millinery shop in the rue Cambon, and I wondered if it could be the same one.

The Queen, discovering my poverty in clothing, gave me whatever she could spare, and the dresses, which were too long and too large for me, were fitted to my figure by the Queen's own dressmaker. I was also fitted out with shoes, stockings, and lingerie. When I now looked at myself in the mirror, I saw a different person, somebody I had nearly forgotten. Putiatin received a few suits from the King.

Life at Kotrocheny speedily assumed a routine, presumably very much the same as in pre-war days. Old habits were taken up again together with new ones. The war had left many unsolved problems which needed immediate attention. The Queen was tremendously active and alive to all the new requirements; she worked from morning till evening without sparing herself. I have never seen a person in her position take such delight in it as she did. No official task was too irksome or tiring for her. Rumania was on the point of becoming a very much larger country than she had been before, and the ambitions of her Queen had been gratified beyond expectation. Queen Marie already saw herself being invested with a Byzantine tiara and mantle at the old city of Alba Yulia, although the new borders of her enlarged realm had not yet been defined. It was a moment she had been dreaming of all her life.

Queen Marie and I spent many hours together, and she did everything in her power to divert my thoughts, to help me live through this difficult time of suspense and uncertainty. The more I saw of her, the more she attracted me. She was sincere in everything she did and said, and there was no pose in her attitude. She was a woman before anything else, an exuberant human being full of life, health, and good spirits. Even in her childish vanity she was sincere, the vanity of a very beautiful woman. She admired herself enormously and often when speaking about herself she would sound as if it were some other supremely beautiful and fascinating creature she was seeing and describing. She was constantly looking at herself from without. But at the same time she was unspoiled, enthusiastic, and capable of great devotion. Luxury-loving as she was, she nevertheless had lived through months of greatest discomforts and privations when, together with the

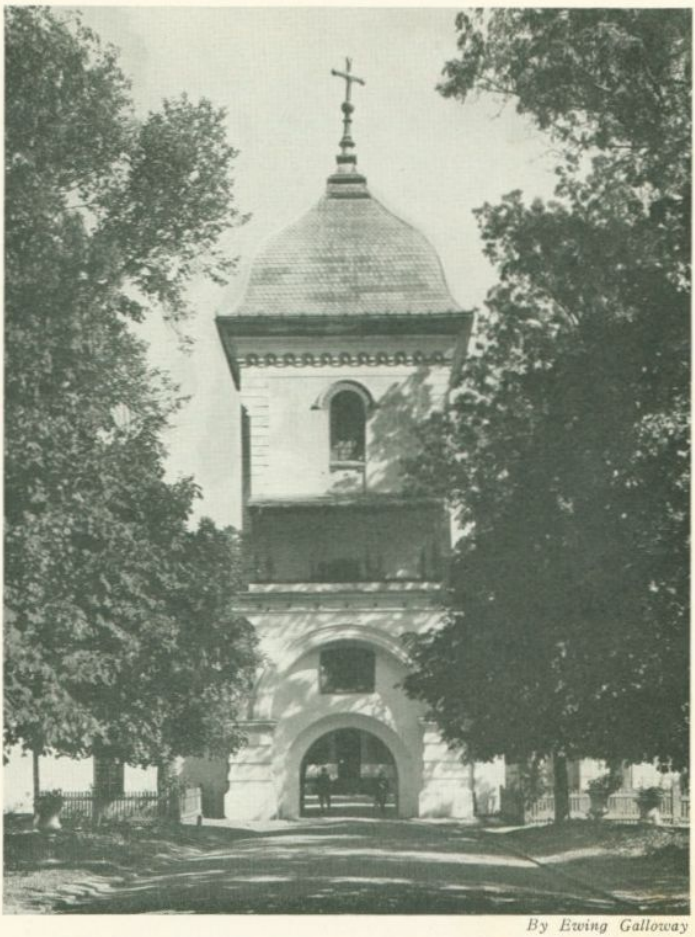
government and army, the court had had to retire to Jassy before the German advance. She never complained of anything, sharing all the hardships of her people. She was fearless also, exposing herself constantly to dangers, visiting epidemic-stricken villages and hospitals where lay soldiers ill with typhoid and cholera.

Queen Marie was extremely attached to her children but seemed at a loss what to do with them and how to treat them since they had grown up and developed personalities of their own. At the moment she was very much worried over the conduct of her eldest son Carol, for whom she had a special fondness. A few months previously he had, without the knowledge of his parents, married Zizi Lambrino, the daughter of a Rumanian general, and she had borne him a son. He had let himself be persuaded to leave her officially but continued to see her secretly.

Eventually Zizi was discarded. She retired with her son to a comfortable villa, and both were provided with an income. A few years later Carol married my first cousin, Helen, the elder daughter of King Constantine of Greece, but they did not get on together. Meanwhile he started a new romance with the wife of a Rumanian officer, Magda Lupescu, for whom he gave up his rights to the throne and was banished from the country.

Carol had a mind of his own which worked along secret channels. He had very little in common with his parents, who almost feared him at this stage. Although definite measures had been taken by them in the case of his first marriage, which was declared illegal, they otherwise avoided interfering with his private affairs and tastes. He held himself aloof from the rest of the family and adopted an attitude of challenge which was either genuine contempt or a form of inferiority complex. Towards me he behaved in the same way, and, although for months we had been daily neighbours at lunch and dinner, I never managed to get an interesting word out of him. Definitely antagonized by him though I was, I could not help suspecting that there was something else in his make-up besides defiance. This feeling of mine was justified many years later when I met him again in Paris, in 1925. He was on his way to London, where he had been sent to represent his father at the funeral of Queen Alexandra of England. For some reason or other he came to pay me a visit, and we started to talk. Our conversation lasted for much longer than we had either of us expected. Was it the atmosphere of my modest Paris flat that inspired him, or was it that I appeared to him in a different light since I had launched out into an independent life? Anyway our talk was extremely interesting, and I discovered in him an intelligence, a practical sense, and a level of culture which was far above the average. I

understood then that, although the son of a German father and an English mother, he nevertheless was a completely independent product, the product of his half-civilized, semi-oriental, self-indulgent country. This is why, in spite of all his transgressions of accepted standards, he has a following, and his career up till now has been successful.



By Ewing Galloway

GATE LEADING TO THE ROYAL PALACE IN BUCHAREST

My cousin Helen and her husband were divorced at the time of his romance with Mme. Lupescu. When Carol returned to reign in Rumania, although public opinion desired nothing more than to see their King reunited to his wife and every pressure was exercised in this direction, a

reconciliation could not be effected. Princess Helen, therefore, though not wishing to abandon her son Michael, reluctantly left the country. She is extremely popular in Rumania; the people, feeling the difficulty of her present situation, sympathize with her; her sufferings have even inspired legends. Carol in the meantime is permitted to follow his own course.

This, however, is running too far ahead. During the winter of 1919 it was still Zizi Lambrino who was affording much trouble and anxiety to Carol's parents, the King and Queen.

Life at court was very quiet and the atmosphere of the palace a serious one. The King was engaged on important reforms, which seemed necessary in order to prevent the Russian disasters. Rumania being an agrarian country, its peaceful development depended upon the spirit of the peasantry, the peasantry which had fought in the army and would now return to the soil. It was therefore decided to expropriate the large owners and redistribute the land amongst the rural population. The King himself showed the example and was the first to hand over the enormous properties belonging to him and his family.

The Queen was planning various organizations for the care of the disabled, the war widows, and orphans. She was also preoccupied with the prevalent illiteracy of the country. For the work she had in mind she was obliged to seek the advice and support of experienced foreigners, her own people—outside of one or two really devoted helpers—being of no great use to her. Rising early she gave up all the morning to business occupations. For lunch the entire family and the suite gathered in the big dining-room downstairs. There were always some outsiders invited, which made the number of seats at table a large one. After lunch and some time spent in conversation with the guests, the family retired to their rooms.

The Queen and I would then go off on a long motor drive to visit especially destitute villages; our car would be followed by another loaded with food and clothing, which we distributed to the peasants, particular attention being paid to the needs of the children. The Queen would converse for hours with the people, whose language she spoke with ease, and would listen patiently to the long tales of woe and suffering. The life of the peasants was hard; they were very poor, and many had lost everything in the war.

In winter and because of road conditions these expeditions were often quite difficult; sometimes we were stuck in the mud and sometimes were caught in blizzards, but the Queen would let nothing stop her. We came

home long after dark, cold and wet. After changing our clothes we had tea together in the Queen's little study panelled with stained pine. We had many quiet talks during those teas. Afterwards she would stretch herself on the sofa and read aloud to me out of her own writings. She wrote in English, and English was the language we spoke together in the family. Writing was then her latest hobby, and she devoted all her leisure to this occupation. She had a great admiration for her country and its wild beauties, also for the patient and mild character of its peasants; of all this she wrote in the hope of stimulating the interest of the world in Rumania.

For dinner we met in a smaller dining-room, as nobody but the family was present. Queen Marie hardly ever came down, having her dinner on a tray in her own room. She would generally use that hour for reading. Great parcels of books arrived at regular intervals from England and France, and stacks of them stood on the floor of her bedroom and study waiting to be placed when read in the libraries of the different residences. She managed in spite of all her other interests and occupations to keep herself up to date in her reading. After dinner we joined her and had coffee in her room. The King then usually retired to his own quarters, and we spent the rest of the evening, some of us playing the piano, some doing embroidery, and some reading.

Queen Marie was perfectly happy and satisfied in her work and daily occupations, but for the young princesses this life seemed somewhat monotonous. They hardly ever went out in the evening, the only diversions being occasional visits to the theatre and tea parties at the palace, the various legations, and missions. Once we all went together to a large festival organized by the Rumanians for the Allied missions and the few troops which were then in Bucharest. Queen Marie, the princesses, and even I wore the Rumanian costume for the occasion.

Later in the winter the Queen asked M. de Flers, a writer of comedies famous in Paris before the war, who was then attached to the French mission, to come and give us readings out of his plays. On these occasions M. de Flers used to exchange his horizon-blue uniform for a very French black suit with a short jacket and an equally typical flowing cravat, which he tied in a bow under his chin.

Sometimes the Queen would take us out horseback riding, but this was always somewhat of an ordeal. She liked to go as fast as the wind, hardly ever walking and never trotting; the ride generally consisted of an hour's mad galloping complicated by efforts to keep up with her pace.

As much as possible I tried to live from day to day without looking into the future. My mind was in a state of utter confusion.

CHAPTER IV

TWO THUNDERBOLTS

THE news from Russia was far from reassuring; a regime of terror was sweeping over the country; reports of imprisonments, tortures, and executions were reaching us every day. Many of our friends, men and women alike, had been swallowed by the Bolshevik prisons, never to reappear. In the north the situation was particularly terrible. I was continually obsessed by the idea of the danger that threatened my father. Often now in the middle of the night I would wake up with a start and in the dark stillness I would imagine I saw a ghastly picture in all its details. . . . I then had to turn on the light but could not go to sleep again. Soon I was obliged to leave the light on all night.

I tried not to think; I tried to concentrate on what was around me, on trivial everyday events, but it was of little help to me. Most of all now I longed for the presence of my brother.

One day in February 1919, sitting as usual beside the King at lunch I noticed that he seemed worried; but he said nothing, and I was too well disciplined to ask what was the matter. After lunch he took leave of the guests and asked my husband to follow him to his study. Not knowing what was going on I felt rather uneasy. When my husband returned, I plied him with questions. In the end he was forced to admit that the King had wanted to show him an agency telegram from France telling of a rumour circulated in Paris that my father's three cousins, who were incarcerated with him, had succumbed in prison. The end of the report, which did not mention my father, was either unintelligible or missing, and it was impossible to make out what had in reality happened to them and what could have been the circumstances of their death. Most information when it reached Rumania was distorted; sensational reports were often contradicted as soon as they were out.

I was terribly alarmed, and yet just then, when misfortune was so close and so probable, I would not admit its possibility. All that day, however, and the next I spent in mental anguish. No further news confirming or contradicting the communication had yet arrived.

On the evening of the second day we had an early dinner, after which the Queen and her daughters were going to some gala performance at the theatre. My husband and I were not accompanying them, as we neither felt in the mood for amusement nor had suitable clothes for the occasion. When dinner was over, the girls went to their rooms to put the finishing touches to their attire and then gathered in their mother's boudoir, where we had remained. All together we went out on to the spacious second-floor landing, where the ladies- and gentlemen-in-waiting had already assembled. Queen Marie and the princesses slipped on their evening wraps and kissed me good-night, and the Queen at the head of the party was about to step into the lift when the butler hurriedly came up and handed her a note upon a salver.

"From the British legation, Your Majesty," he said.

"Oh, yes," said the Queen indifferently and, tearing open the envelope, took out its contents. All stopped talking, not wishing to interfere with her reading. But after a glance at the paper she cried, "Why, this is a telegram for you, Marie, from Dmitri," and proceeded to read it aloud. "Papa and three uncles . . ." She suddenly stopped short. She did not lift her eyes from the paper. What was the matter? Her colour changed ever so slightly, her expression became strained. A dead silence fell, nobody moved. Helplessly I looked at her, looked at the faces around me. And then I understood. . . .

My knees were trembling violently. I let myself drop on to the cushion of a carved wooden chest that stood along the wall. I felt dizzy, only dizzy; there was not one thought in my head. The Queen hurried to my side and threw her arms around me; I can remember the warm softness of her sable collar as I rested my head upon her shoulder but I can remember nothing else.

"I think we had better leave her to you," the Queen's voice said to Putiatin; I heard it through a veil as one hears the voice of the surgeon after an operation when still under the influence of the anæsthetic. Then she and the others departed, the door of the lift clicking behind them, and the landing suddenly became very empty.

Presently my husband led me downstairs. My limbs were so heavy that I could hardly drag myself along. The rest of the night I spent in an arm-chair without moving. I don't think I even cried. My mind was a blank.

Next morning Queen Marie and her little daughter Ileana came to see me. Silently they sat beside me. I still could not speak. Then by and by the tension loosened, and I could cry. I cried torrents, and it helped me; otherwise I think I would have lost my mind.

A solemn requiem for my father was celebrated in the palace church, at which the royal family, court, and officials were present. After the ceremony the Queen knelt at the grave of her little son Mircea, who died during the war, just before they had to abandon Bucharest. Kneeling beside her I wondered if we were ever to discover how and where my father had been buried. Until this day it remains a mystery which probably never will be solved.

The tragedy had impressed everyone, and in spite of the Rumanian animosity against anything Russian I received many expressions of sympathy from people I had met and even from total strangers, but I would not see anyone, I could not.

Ileana, then a child of about ten, was a great help to me during those days. Children usually shun both physical and moral suffering, but she was an exception. Entirely of her own accord she would come to my room and spend an hour or more with me trying to divert my thoughts. She showed me her picture books, her toys, and talked to me about the things that interested her. And while she was there I tried to pull myself together.

When the first few days had passed, I began to get over the physical effects of the shock. The prostration, the emptiness I had experienced at the beginning gradually disappeared, leaving me with a dull and heavy pain in my heart, but otherwise I had become almost normal again. I decided that, as long as this was not my own house, I had no right to indulge in personal grief, so I joined the others at lunch and forced myself to resume the life I had led before the catastrophe.

Only later did I hear how my brother's telegram addressed to me happened to be received by the Queen. The mail service was irregular between western Europe and Rumania. My correspondence with Dmitri passed through the British legation, and the telegrams were forwarded from the Foreign Office to the Minister and delivered to me by the legation. Usually they were sent to the palace addressed to me, but this time the minister, having read the communication, thought it wiser to send it to the Queen accompanied by a note, which in the hurry she had overlooked when opening the envelope.

A week or two later the foreign press, particularly the French newspapers, began to come in carrying articles on the Petrograd tragedy, some of which were full of detailed description. These descriptions were the creations of the journalistic imagination, and later proved to have been completely false, but then they seemed plausible enough. They were kept

from me and, but for Prince Carol, they would have mercifully remained unknown to me. But one day while we were sitting at lunch in the dining-room, he came down late holding in his hand a whole bunch of clippings. These he casually deposited beside my plate, and by the headlines I guessed with a pang of horror what might be their contents.

A short time after the first misfortune came the news of another, no less terrible. In June of the preceding year, that is, in 1917, on the very day when we were celebrating the christening of our baby, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth (Aunt Ella), my step-brother Volodia Paley, and their companions in exile had, unknown to us, died a terrible death at Alopaievsk. These companions included an uncle, three young cousins, all of them brothers, and two servants. They were all thrown down a disused mine-shaft, most of them still alive. After the executioners had thrown them down, they shot and threw stones at them. Some were killed, others lived on for several days and died in the pit partly of their wounds, partly from starvation. My father, as I found out later, never lived to know of the horrible death of his twenty-one-year-old son and, if in the midst of all these misfortunes there could be a consolation, this was certainly one.

My Aunt Ella, the one with whom my brother and I had lived in Moscow, never recovered from the shock of her husband's tragic death from a terrorist bomb in 1905. A few years later, and immediately following my first marriage in 1908, she instituted a new religious order and herself retired into the convent she had founded. Although it may sound like a paradox, her retirement into a convent brought her the contacts she had lacked during her entire previous life and probably most needed for her development. Out of a reticent woman with rigid principles she became, under the influence of her new surroundings and responsibilities, a deeply understanding and sympathetic human being. At Moscow she was known and loved for the life of sacrifice and good works she led. All through the first part of the revolution nobody had annoyed her, chiefly because of her popularity with the simple people. Even when the Bolsheviks came to power, at first nothing happened to her; she continued to live the same life as before and never left her convent. Aunt Ella's work, the work of the sisters, the church services, all went on as always. The peaceful atmosphere of my aunt's convent, her own serene calm and spirit of conciliation impressed those who heard of it; her popularity grew; the number of people who desired to see her and speak to her about their sorrows and misfortunes or sought her advice was augmenting steadily. The doors of her convent were open to everyone. She knew perfectly what she was risking. This situation could not last.

One day in the early summer of 1917 a Bolshevik detachment of soldiers presented itself at the Martha and Mary Convent. They said they had come by the order of the Moscow Soviet to take my aunt away. Where she would be sent was none of her business. They produced the document of arrest duly stamped with the Soviet seals. My aunt was warned of their arrival, but she confronted the dangerous-looking armed men fearlessly. By that time all the inhabitants of the terror-stricken convent had assembled; my aunt was the only one to remain absolutely calm. She told the Bolsheviks that before going she desired to have some prayers said in the convent church, and her tone sounded as if she never doubted that her wish would be granted. It was.

My aunt at the head of her flock of wailing sisters went towards the church followed by the Bolsheviks. When they got to the church steps, she turned to the men, inviting them to come in. Avoiding each other's eyes they shuffled into the church and sheepishly pulled off their caps. When the prayers were said, my aunt gave her last orders to the sister who was to take her place at the head of the convent, quietly said good-bye to all, and was driven away. Two other sisters were allowed to accompany her. The car that the three women rode in was surrounded on all sides by armed Bolshevik soldiers.

They were sent to Alopaievsk in Siberia, where they joined the group of relations together with whom they later were murdered. One sister only perished with my aunt; the other was sent back to Moscow. The last days preceding the execution were terrible, but my step-brother Volodia and Aunt Ella in their different ways helped to cheer and support their companions. My aunt had never approved of my father's second marriage and had no interest in the children born of that union; and now, strangely enough, she found herself confined to the same place of imprisonment as one of them. Volodia was an altogether unusual character, and my aunt and he before dying the same death formed a friendship about which he had the time to write home the most enthusiastic accounts. All this, naturally, we learned much later.

Of my step-mother and two step-sisters there was absolutely no news. I inquired but nobody seemed to know what had become of them.

I was already so shaken by grief that I could not react separately to this new tragedy. The two seemed to have merged together. I thought that the cup of sorrow had been drained. Although, nominally at least, peace had been re-established in the world, for us peace was but an empty-sounding word; normal conditions prevailing around us affected us only physically; mentally we still were in the midst of horrors. All our accepted ideas had

been upset. Everything that we had left in Russia had been wiped out completely, had disappeared from the face of the earth as if it never had existed. But we still belonged to that old world, the world which had vanished; our ties with it could not yet be broken.

Now more ardently than ever I longed for Dmitri. I decided that, as soon as my parents-in-law with our little son were out of Russia and safely installed in Bucharest, I would go and see Dmitri. I would use this occasion to get in touch with my eldest son and also get my jewels from Sweden, where I had sent them before escaping from Petrograd. We had enough money to take us as far as London. None of us Russians then really believed that our exile would last—at the utmost it could only be a question of a few months until the Bolsheviks should fall and then of course we would all return to Russia again—but in the meantime we had to live. Once again in possession of my jewels, I could sell a few small pieces, and that would carry us over the time we had to wait.

We were now in touch with my parents-in-law; they were at Odessa awaiting the favourable moment to cross the frontier; their arrival was a question of days. In the meantime I applied for a French visa but had to wait for a long time before I finally received it. When I first arrived in Rumania, I never realized how unpopular we—the Romanovs—had become. It was compromising to be related to us and especially to patronize us. The attitude of the Rumanian King and Queen was the only exception. They never allowed me to suspect that my presence in their house brought upon them the displeasure of their government. And their generosity had not been limited to myself; they had not been afraid to offer their hospitality to other members of my family. But I appreciated their attitude at its full value only much later, when certain comparisons forced it on my attention.

Rumania's destiny depended a great deal upon the big powers: America, England, France. These had greeted the Russian revolution with enthusiasm, the two latter in the hope that the new democratic government would be in a better position to continue the struggle against Germany; and all three together were expecting the establishment of a regime which would have nothing to do with the Romanov dynasty. Democracy had fought the battles and won the victory. Europe was adapting herself to the new formulas and Rumania was adapting herself to Europe. At the beginning of April the Queen was going to Paris, a visit that involved the fulfilment of many aspirations. By that time we hoped to be ready to go also, and spontaneously she offered to take us with her, but this time the Rumanian government protested emphatically. The Queen of Rumania could not arrive in Paris

accompanied by a Russian Grand Duchess. She had to give in. I remember how tactfully she told me about it, but it was a hard blow nevertheless.

This was the first direct humiliation I experienced in my new situation. In the time to come they were to be frequent. It had been easier to bear without resentment the catastrophes which had befallen us in our own country, as in the first place I realized how much we had to blame ourselves for what had happened to us, and in the second we had been swept away as by a hurricane. You could not feel any resentment against a force of nature. But abroad it seemed strange to meet with so little understanding, especially on the part of those who, being close to politics, knew the exact situation, knew Russia's chaotic state at the moment. We in ourselves could not present any political danger; we were totally disorganized; the head of the family as well as his immediate heirs had been destroyed. We demanded nothing from anybody and expected very little.

From an historical point of view the ostracism we were subjected to was natural enough. We had outlived our epoch and were doomed. There was no place in the world for a replica of the Byzantine Empire, whose ideals were unsuited to modern times; the principle we represented was to disappear. But this point of view could not yet be accepted by a descendant of a dynasty so recently powerful, brought up in those very principles. It took me a long time before I could treat with indifference the blows aimed at my pride. I suffered when subjected to humiliations—trifling humiliations indeed compared to what had already been overcome and also to what had been inflicted in another, broader sense.

We had been torn out of our brilliant setting; we had been driven off the stage still dressed in our fantastic costumes. We had to take them off now, make ourselves others, everyday clothes, and above all learn how to wear them. The old pride proper in former days was at present ridiculous and out of place. A new pride had to be acquired but chiefly a new point of view towards life, for without it a readjustment to the new conditions could not be possible. I came to a clear and impersonal understanding of this truth much later and was slow in developing and living up to my new theories, but there can be no doubt that I began to grope in their direction as soon as I left Russia, even though at the beginning I often missed the convenient support of the old pedestal of which I was now deprived.

CHAPTER V

PARISIAN MEMORIES

THE QUEEN left Rumania without us. Her absence made the Kotrocheny Palace seem very silent and empty; all the bustling activity had ceased. A few days after her departure my husband's parents with our little boy arrived at Bucharest. The poor old people were exhausted by their various experiences and journeys, but the baby was in perfect condition. The reunion, however, in spite of all the joy it was giving me, could not lessen my yearning to see Dmitri. Until our future life was definitely mapped out, it was decided that my parents-in-law would remain in Rumania, and we again entrusted to them the little boy, knowing how much they had grown attached to him and how well they took care of him. The Queen, whose absence was only going to last for a few weeks, had promised to look after them.

Many delays and difficulties still stood between me and the moment of my meeting with Dmitri. We were obliged to wait not only for our passports but also for the re-establishment of a normal passenger service between Rumania and western Europe. Also, in reply to an inquiry sent to Paris about the possibility of obtaining an English visa, I was told that probably it would not be granted me. Yet in spite of such an unfavourable report, I decided to go. We did not leave until April. My husband and I went alone accompanied only by the old Russian maid. Aleck, my brother-in-law, remained with his parents in Bucharest.

It seemed unreal to be travelling comfortably without the feeling of being chased, hunted down, without the anxiety of expecting somebody to break into the railway carriage at any minute. And I still went through very unpleasant moments when at night we were awakened by passport officials who verified our visas at the crossing of the various frontiers. I had become much less bold since I had been in safety.

In Paris we did not go to an hotel—it would have been too expensive. We had accepted the invitation of a Russian couple we met at Bucharest who owned a house in Passy. Our host was a sculptor of talent, a retired diplomat, and a former wealthy land-owner in Russia. He was also a student of philosophy and metaphysics. His wife, a very beautiful woman, shared his interest in the occult. Their house later became a centre of spiritistic activities; the audiences attending the meetings were large, and some of the

names on the list of members quite important. The results obtained at these séances were astounding, and all of Paris spoke of them, until from one day to another nothing else could be heard. The rumour then spread that the host's brothers-in-law had been systematically tricking both him and the audience by a very elaborate arrangement of string and adhesive tape. As the interest of those present was aroused by the various phenomena, their curiosity became increasingly difficult to satisfy, and the culprits were discovered because their system had grown too complicated to enable them to keep it up. The story created a little scandal at the time.

While we were staying in the Passy house, the occult world had not yet begun to play the important part in the household which it did subsequently. Our hosts were charming to us, and we had to remain here until the decision came from England about our visas.

My memories of this stay in Paris are particularly sad. Before the war I used to come to France only to see my father, and those used to be gay and joyous trips; but now Paris held for me nothing but recollections of him.

In 1902, after his morganatic marriage and his exile, my father and his wife settled down in Paris, where they bought a house. The property they selected was situated outside the gates of the city in a fashionable suburb called Boulogne-sur-Seine. To reach it you had to drive through the Bois de Boulogne. The house, which stood in a garden, was at first not a large one, but every year something would be added to it. My father and my step-mother led in their home the life of private people, saw whom they wished, and did what they pleased. During the years I spent in Sweden, where I was forced to be constantly in the public eye, it was a rest and a welcome change to escape all formality for two or three short weeks; it was a joy also to feel, for a time at least, part of the happy household, for happy indeed it was.

Immediately upon my arrival in Paris I felt the longing to go out to the house at Boulogne. Although I knew what pain the visit would give me, I felt it was also going to be in a way an appeasement. For so long had I concentrated my thoughts upon the atrocious circumstances which surrounded my father's last months and death, that the sight of the old home, the once familiar setting, with all the recollections they would bring back, might, I hoped, drive away the pictures my imagination had created around my father's sufferings. I wanted to connect his memory with the peaceful life, the pleasant home, with the things that still held his imprint. And I went to Boulogne.

THE GRAND DUKE PAUL WITH HIS WIFE, THE PRINCESS PALEY, AND THEIR DAUGHTER IN FRANCE, 1914

Nothing at first sight had changed there during the five years in which I had not seen the place; from the outside the house and the garden looked exactly the same. The paths were swept, the bushes clipped, only there were no flowers in the beds. I rang at the gate. Old Gustave, the concierge, peeped out of his lodge and recognized me, as did his fat wife Josephine, who came to the door when she heard the bell. Visitors were rare now, they told me;

Dmitri had called several months before, and it was they who told him that his father was in prison.

"Our poor dear Grand Duke," said Josephine.

I followed her and Gustave into their lodge, where we sat down and wept. Then we told each other about our troubles. The old couple had also had their share of anxieties; their only son, who went through the worst of the war unhurt, was now in a sanatorium ill with tuberculosis. They were able to give me news of my step-mother. After my father's death, according to them, she had left Petrograd and was now either in Finland or in Sweden. My step-sisters were with their mother.

Then I wandered out into the garden. It was spring, and everything was beautifully green and bright; the gravel crunched under my feet. I was immediately plunged into the old atmosphere; it seemed as though the door on to the stone terrace might open and my father, wearing his old tweed cape, would come down into the garden followed by the two little girls.

Gustave followed me to the entrance with his keys. The door was opened, I walked in, and then Gustave discreetly withdrew. Everything here was very different from what I had been accustomed to before, even the size of the rooms—they seemed to have grown smaller. All my father's collections and every object of value had been transported to Russia a few months before the war. His banishment had been lifted in 1913. He had started then to build a house at Tsarskoie-Selo, into which he and the family moved in the spring of 1914.

The house at Boulogne stood now exactly as it had been abandoned five years previously. The glass cases were empty, there were hardly any pictures on the walls, and the furniture stood huddled together under sheets. A dead silence hung over everything. From the hall I went into the dining-room. Here nothing much had changed; only the two beautiful Chinese pots were gone from the chimneypiece. It was a small room, which could hardly hold more than the family; when my father and step-mother gave big dinners, the table was set in the adjoining room. But it was here that we gathered every day for lunch and dinner. The spring sun poured through the tall windows. I stood there looking at the worn yellow silk of the chairs, at the polished round table, and one by one the familiar scenes came back to my mind.

Here was the place at which my father always sat. He was very punctual and, if we failed to be in his study on the stroke of half-past twelve, he would go to the dining-room alone and sit down. Before lunch we had taken a walk in the Bois de Boulogne, and I had gone to my room to tidy up.

When I joined him in the dining-room, he would be mildly impatient because it was bad for the Parmesan soufflé to be kept waiting. At my father's side stood his wife's empty chair, and it always remained empty until the middle of the meal. My step-mother could never be ready on time, and he had given her up as hopeless. She was either dressing, up in her bedroom, or shopping in town. After a shopping expedition she would return laden with neatly tied parcels and cardboard boxes which she flung down on a chair beside the windows. I was invariably teased about my curiosity and accused of wanting to know the contents of the parcels. Then she would settle down to a few slices of cold ham and a salad. Fearful of putting on weight, she was always starving herself at table but eating between meals. Lunch proceeded. The little girls on either side of their governess tried to be very good. Volodia, my step-brother, made a lot of noise and asked innumerable questions; any attempt at a conversation in his presence was useless, and it was equally useless to try and silence him.

At dinner our party was still smaller, the children having had their supper before us. My father liked us to wear tea-gowns. After dinner he would read aloud to my step-mother and me. From the dining-room I went to the little library, where we used to sit around a small table and embroider while my father read.

But it was his study next to the library which held most of the memories of him; in this room I could picture him much more clearly than anywhere else in the house. It was a narrow room with three big windows along one of the walls. At the first window his desk stood sideways, at the second his favourite arm-chair and a small leather sofa. The arm-chair stood uncovered. There was a dent in its back at the place where he leant his head. I could see him holding up a book with his beautiful tapering fingers and looking over his dark-rimmed spectacles to answer a question. Here we used to have tea when we were alone. If I had been in town after lunch, I was expected to be back at half-past four; I was also expected to call on my way home at a certain confectioner's where I would be given a small parcel wrapped in wax paper with the favourite sandwiches and rolls which had been ordered in the morning.

Seating myself now on the leather sofa I plunged deeper and deeper into the past. I saw my brother as a slim youth of seventeen, very proud of his new dinner jacket worn for the first time on his very first grown-up visit to Paris; I saw my father showing him in front of the mirror how to do his evening tie. I remembered my father's amusement at Dmitri's wide-eyed delight in the Paris attractions. Dmitri's satisfaction at being considered

grown up did not prevent him, however, from playing me a schoolboyish trick. Hiding behind a bush in the garden he very successfully aimed the hose at me, completely drenching me just when I was preparing to take a trip into Paris.

It was in this room that, one evening after my final departure from Sweden, I nearly fainted upon hearing the rumour that Doctor M., the Swedish court physician from whose dominating influence I had just escaped, had arrived in Paris. The rumour was never confirmed, but I lived through a few days of extremely disagreeable suspense.

We had seen very little of my father from 1902 till 1908, since during that time we had been children and remained in Russia with my uncle and aunt. I was married and practically grown up when I began to see him again regularly. He had been afraid that during the years we had lived apart I had grown away from him or been influenced against him. He probed carefully into the depths of my soul to see if the things he had planted there when I was a child had not been uprooted.

In all my father spent twelve years in exile and, although he never showed any impatience, at times his enforced inactivity and idleness weighed heavily upon him. His family life was an extremely happy one, but he missed his own country. Although it was the Emperor, his nephew, who had banished him from Russia, my father's loyalty to him was perfect and he never expressed any bitterness against him. Custom sanctioned by many years of practice did not admit of unequal marriages for the members of the Russian imperial family; my father knew what price he would have to pay for following his own inclination and therefore accepted the consequences.

Many years later my father was still just as outwardly reserved and loyal when everybody else around him loudly criticized the Russian sovereigns, and, when his attempts to remedy the situation failed, he met the final catastrophe and all it entailed with calm and dignity.—But no, it was to get away from the memory of those awful last months that I had come here.

Between the study and the big drawing-room there were a short passage and the staircase which led up to the second floor. The drawing-room was used only when there were guests. On Sunday afternoons my step-mother was "at home" from five to seven. I have seen many interesting people drop in during these informal tea parties. Once, I remember, I had been sitting beside Paul Bourget, the novelist, and we were talking about Leonardo da Vinci, in whose life story I was then particularly interested. Paul Bourget offered to send me some books on the subject. He kept his promise and the

next morning sent over several very beautiful volumes. But he evidently soon regretted his gesture, fearing that I could not be trusted with valuable books, for that same evening he asked to have them returned, which hardly gave me the time to glance at them.

On the first of January according to the old Russian calendar a big reception was held in my father's house. Everybody, including diplomats, society people, writers, composers, and artists, came to offer their congratulations. Prominent singers, including Chaliapin, sang at the evening parties.

In this room I suffered the greatest humiliation of my life. During my time in Sweden, when I was searching for occupations which would consume some of my overflowing energy, among other things I also took up singing. All through one winter I took lessons and, by the time spring came and I went to visit my father, I must have imagined myself already an accomplished singer. One evening after a sedate dinner party at Boulogne a very musical young Russian was asked to play and sing, which he did to the entire satisfaction of the audience. During the singing I seated myself behind the piano. When the young man had finished, he turned to me and, probably not knowing what else to say, asked me if I could sing. I said yes with such enthusiasm and readiness that he had to offer to play my accompaniments. With the greatest self-confidence, without doubting for a moment of my ability, I chose a Schumann song and began. But as soon as I had opened my mouth I knew that I had made the most awful blunder. My voice was all wrong, throaty, horrible; the thick carpet, the heavy curtains smothered the little sound I could produce. The guests sat stiffly on their chairs and listened politely. I glanced at my father and noticed that he was looking away self-consciously. I don't know how I got to the end of the song. I was ready to die. For the rest of the evening I dared not go near my father again. He was generous enough not to say anything to me afterwards, but his silence was crushingly eloquent. It is hardly necessary to say that I not only never sang in public to the accompaniment of a piano again, but that in the future I carefully avoided mentioning in front of my father the subject of my vocal experiments.

At Christmas time Volodia wrote plays for his little sisters to act. A stage was rigged up in the large drawing-room with screens from the nursery. Blankets and sheets were used as curtains and hangings. The elaborate construction thus conceived would generally collapse at the most important moment and fall over the heads of the actors. For days in succession Volodia firmly schooled his sisters, who at the time were hardly more than babies.

This recollection made my thoughts turn to Volodia, my talented young step-brother, who also was no more. I made my way up to his room. Here was his desk covered with pen-knife scratches and ink-spots. Childish pencil-drawings and caricatures were pinned to the walls, his favourite books and note-music lay on the shelves. I even opened one of the closets where still hung his outgrown suits. . . .

I spent a long time in the quiet, empty house and left it with red and swollen eyes but with peace in my heart; my father once again stood before me surrounded by the charm of olden days. Whatever happened to me in the future, those memories belonged to me and they were mine to carry through life, sometimes as an inspiration, sometimes as a warning.

Before I went, Gustave reminded me that in 1914 I had left a trunk in the pavilion where I used to live when visiting at Boulogne, so I stopped to see my old rooms.

Here I found a box of paints and a few books belonging to me which had remained behind in the spring of 1914. This made me think of the time when, with a streaming cold in my head, I laboured over a miniature painting of the Boulogne house as I saw it out of the window of my pavilion. I had it mounted afterwards into the lid of a cigarette box and presented it to my father. My venture into this form of art was, it is to be hoped, not quite as unsuccessful as my singing; the cigarette box stood always on the dining-room table.

It was in this same little living-room that King Alfonso XIII of Spain paid me a first and what was intended to be a very formal visit. I had met him and the Queen, whom I had known before, at a luncheon party earlier in the day. Etiquette demanded that he should call on me the same afternoon, but I had not returned to Boulogne after lunch. I met a cousin of mine in town who told me that Alfonso was on his way to pay me a visit, so I hurried back home and found him getting into his car after having left his card and probably rather relieved at having missed me. He was now obliged, however, to go up to my room. But no formality could hold out long against our youth and exuberant spirits, and we became friends from that afternoon onward.

A few days after this I went for a morning stroll in the Bois de Boulogne accompanied by my faithful Moutzka, a very much over-sized and wise old fox-terrier. Walking along the Allée des Acacias with the Spanish Ambassador at his side and surrounded by police in uniform and mufti, I perceived King Alfonso. Then and there I decided to give the police a fright

by coming upon the party unawares. I crossed the drive ahead of them and, keeping behind the trees, proceeded forward carefully. But just as I was going to join them some deer wandered calmly out of the brush-wood. Old Moutzka, who had never seen a deer before in his life, started barking madly; the deer took to their heels, and Moutzka, forgetting his habitual poise, dashed after them into the thickets. As a result I had to come out of my hiding, and King Alfonso, the Ambassador, the police force, and I scattered under the trees and whistled and called until a very much excited and heavily panting Moutzka was retrieved.

It was also in this little apartment that I lived through a few dramatic weeks of anxiety following upon my departure from Sweden. Exchanges of letters were going back and forth between my father and the King of Sweden, between my father and the Tsar, between myself and various relations who felt themselves obliged to give me a word of advice. My father conferred with Ambassador Izvolsky and the then Secretary of State Sazonov, who was on his way to Russia from London. How young I was then and how blindly and implicitly I trusted the future!

It was here also that I had to cope with a new French maid, whom I was obliged to engage after my old Russian nurserymaid Tania had left temporarily because of ill health. The new maid was a person of formidable dimensions and grim determination. I sent her to my hairdresser to learn how to wave my hair. After two lessons she decided that she knew all that there was to learn. In consequence one evening when I was dressing to go out to a party, she armed herself with the curling tongs and resolutely set to work. The waves she produced stood out in bumps all over my head, but she would not be discouraged.

"This coiffure is really very becoming to Madame. It is as if Madame had a crown on her head," she remarked, complacently patting the bumps and surveying the results of her handiwork in the mirror. She was quite indifferent when we discovered that half my hair had been burned off.

Everything I possessed or purchased she criticized contemptuously. Her secret opinion of me was that I was stingy. Only things she bought for me herself did she approve of.

"Now this," she would say, holding up a pair of garters with an air of great superiority, "is really very, very beautiful because it is very, very expensive."

Although I was frankly terrified by her, I got tired of being bullied and told her that in a month she could go. Next morning she came into my room

with a face distorted by rage. She had her hat and coat on.

“I am not going to remain for another moment in this house,” she exclaimed dramatically, and swept out of the door. In a few moments I saw her get into a taxi with all her luggage and drive away. Before going she had taken great pains to make it as difficult as possible for me to find my own things, and I spent the best part of the morning wandering around searching for them.

The girl who replaced her was an Austrian. I took her back to Russia with me, and, when mobilization was declared, she left hurriedly taking many of my things with her, which in the general excitement was only discovered much later.

Experience after all is made of contrasts; there had been plenty in my life, but everything, the joyous as well as the tragical, the important as much as the futile, had been enacted upon another plane. The everyday sides of life were unknown to me; I did not know what the relationships were between ordinary human beings. It was right that I should now set out to see for myself, that I should learn what the new life had to teach me.

CHAPTER VI

PARIS BEFORE AND AFTER

AFTER my pilgrimage to the house at Boulogne I made another, this one to the Russian church. Already in pre-war days many of the Russian colony's activities were centred around the church in the rue Darue. The services at Christmas and Easter were attended by the Ambassador and his staff; a brilliant crowd used to gather on Sunday mornings in the garden surrounding the church. Foreigners went to listen to the beautiful singing.

We also went to mass regularly every Sunday, but used to enter the church by a side door and stand alone in a little room looking into the altar, from where we could follow the service without being seen by the crowd. (In Orthodox churches the altar is separated from the nave by a high altar-screen, in which there are doors used by the clergy during the services.) On the Emperor's birthday and Saint's day an official Te Deum was celebrated, for which my father would put on his full-dress uniform and all his decorations and go out into the centre of the church, where he stood beside the Ambassador. They were surrounded by a group of French officials and foreign diplomats. The congregation would put on their smartest clothes for the occasion. Through a crack in the door we used to admire the imposing scene.

At present I did not feel as though I wanted to use the separate entrance and went directly into the church. While I knew that almost everyone present was Russian, I was surrounded by unfamiliar faces; only the clergy remained the same. The old priest who had christened my step-sisters and had for many years been the family's confessor recognized me in the throng and gave me a surreptitious greeting. At the time an attitude of suspicion prevailed even amongst people of the same intellectual standing, and many, although like ourselves in exile, avoided noticing us in public. With the years this mistrust disappeared. But then everything was out of proportion; people were different. Even the familiar atmosphere of Paris seemed strange and hostile. Not knowing how they would treat me I let nobody of our former group of acquaintances know that I had arrived. I was afraid also of being reminded too vividly of the former days, of being asked questions about our escape, and above all I dreaded to inspire feelings of pity.

Although Queen Marie's life in Paris offered a striking contrast to ours, she was the only person I saw often. She was then at the height of her glory and success and enjoying them to the fullest extent. A Rumanian flag floated in the air above the entrance to the Ritz where she stayed, and night and day a police squad stood around on the sidewalks in front of the hotel. Dressed in new Parisian gowns, imbued with her own importance, beautiful, beaming all over with happiness, the Queen was a different person from the one I had known at the palace of Kotrocheny. She swept in and out, received guests, gave audiences, entertained, was entertained herself both officially and privately. She was photographed, featured in the papers, interviewed, flattered outrageously, taken advantage of, and talked about everywhere. The Paris public was delighted. After the drabness of the war years this spectacular creature provided a feast for their eyes. A crowd would collect everywhere she went and warmly respond to her brilliant smiles.

With old pieces of brocade, Indian embroideries, knick-knacks, and bibelots Queen Marie had transformed her hotel apartment into a place reflecting herself. The Paris shops eager for publicity would compete with each other in sending their newest and most tasteful novelties for her to look at; her dressing-table was laden with a startling array of enormous scent bottles; baskets and vases full of the most gorgeous flowers stood around everywhere.

By that time I had made myself a little more presentable and could show myself at the Ritz, but my clothes were black, trimmed with crape, and I wore a cap and crape veil. My mourning was still too deep to allow me to go out in the evenings.

One afternoon in Queen Marie's apartment I came across the Countess de Noailles, the prominent French poetess. She was a small wiry woman with nervous, swift gestures. Her conversation was brilliant and animated, provided that she could guide it, which meant that she alone spoke. When I came in Queen Marie was resting on a chaise-longue and the Countess sat at her feet. The Queen, thinking that we had met before, did not bother about introductions. Madame de Noailles continued to talk. Presently the conversation turned to Jaurès, the noted French Socialist murdered at the beginning of the war, and the Countess expressed her sympathy with him and the socialistic theories. After that she began to talk on the subject of the Russian political situation and made a few extremely disagreeable comments on my family, adding that the Bolsheviks were justified in their regime of terror considering what had preceded them. I could not remain

indifferent to remarks of the kind made by a stranger; the terrible events had been too recent. I flared up.

"I don't think you realize, Madame," I said in a trembling voice, "that I am the daughter of Grand Duke Paul, whom you all here professed to be so fond of. My father was murdered by the Bolsheviks only three months ago."

My words created a painful embarrassment; the Queen tried to save the situation by changing the subject of the conversation.

This incident was an example of what occurred now very frequently. People from the safety of a cultured world would view our situation from afar, casually expressing superficial opinions, forgetting that we had been actors in the greatest tragedy that history had so far presented, that our families had been practically wiped out, that we ourselves had barely escaped with our lives; and without the deliberate intention of hurting, their tactlessness would nevertheless often be cruel.

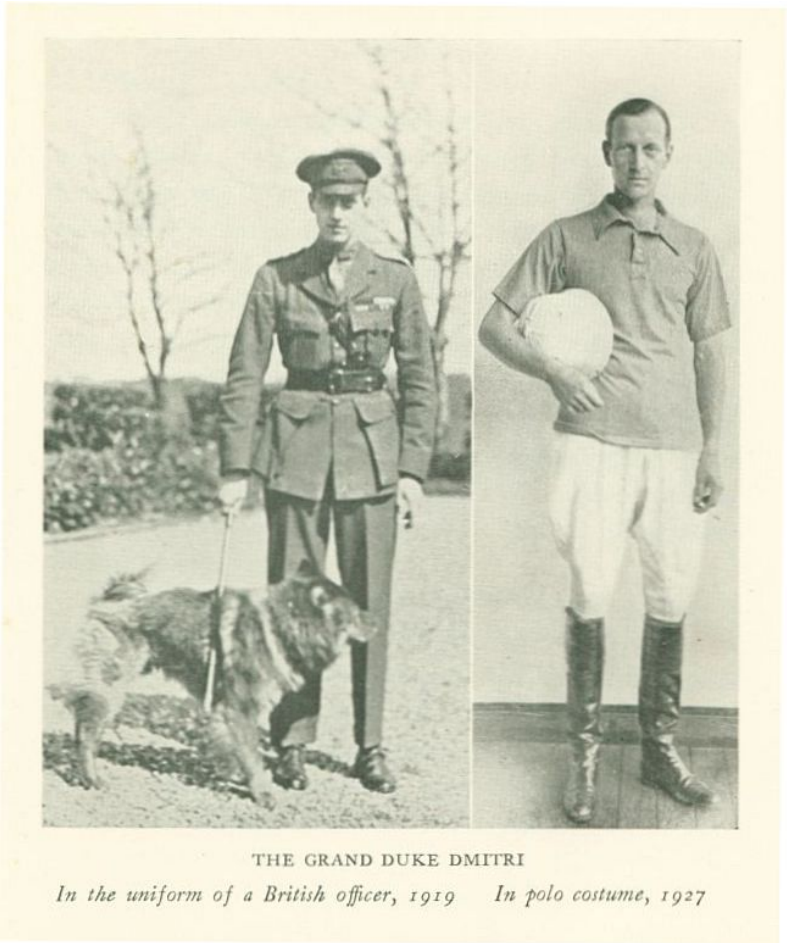
To face lack of understanding, just as to face the humiliations, required a new and different point of view, but this also needed time, study, and patience. Outwardly the change in our situation had become particularly palpable in Paris. In Russia after the revolution we belonged to a generally persecuted class. In Rumania I was the Queen's cousin. But in Paris we had now become ordinary citizens living or supposed to live an ordinary life, and this "ordinariness" was completely novel to me.

Never before had I carried money or written out a cheque. My bills were always paid by someone else—in Sweden by the equerry in charge of my household, in Russia by the superintendent of my brother's business office. I knew approximately the price of jewels and clothes but had not the slightest idea about how much bread, meat, milk ought to cost. I did not know how to buy a subway ticket; I was afraid of entering a restaurant alone; I would not have known how and what to order there and what to give as a tip. Although I was then twenty-eight years old, in practical matters I was a child and had to learn everything from the beginning, just as a child has to learn to cross a street before it can go to school alone.

When the British visas were finally granted us, aside from the anticipation of seeing Dmitri, I was delighted to leave Paris. In Paris it was impossible as yet to find the new equilibrium.

CHAPTER VII

REUNION IN LONDON



THE GRAND DUKE DMITRI

In the uniform of a British officer, 1919 *In polo costume, 1927*

A journey to London thirteen years ago and barely six months after the Armistice was a very different thing from what it has now become. The train from Paris to Boulogne was slow, and the carriages old-fashioned, crowded, and uncomfortable. Boulogne, still bristling with war constructions but silent now and abandoned, looked like the castle of some martial Sleeping Beauty. The channel boat was old and dirty. Through most of the crossing

we had to stand in a line with other foreigners to have our passports stamped. When at last you penetrated into the cabin which the official used as an office, you had to sit down in front of him and undergo a perfectly polite but minute oral examination. At the end of it you felt almost a spy. But in England nothing indicated the recent hostilities; the landscape lay smooth and peaceful, undisturbed by barbed wire and wooden shacks; everything was orderly and neat. It was not without excitement that I took my first look at the Dover cliffs. I had never been in England before. But the journey up to London left me few impressions; I could think of nothing but the meeting with Dmitri that lay ahead of me. The nearer we got to London, the more nervous I grew. At last the train entered Victoria Station. Long before it had pulled up, I was hanging out of the carriage window scanning the platform. The train stopped. A tall khaki-clad figure was walking up the platform towards me; the swinging gait was familiar.

"Dmitri!" I shouted.

The face under the British officer's cap looked up in the direction of my voice. It was he, it was Dmitri. I rushed blindly through the Pullman and jumped down on to the platform. Our hands met. We looked at each other in silence, suddenly overcome by something that was more like embarrassment than anything else. Shyly Dmitri drew off his cap, and we embraced. Then, still without uttering a word, we stood apart and looked at each other again. How different he had become; he was no more the fair-skinned, gracile youth I had seen off at the empty station on the wintry night of 1916. Lines had appeared on the now tanned face, his shoulders had broadened, he seemed much taller; he had become a man.

A welcome relief to the almost unbearable tension of these first few seconds was brought by my husband, who had joined me on the platform and had now, I felt, to be introduced. Dmitri spontaneously turned towards his new brother-in-law and warmly clasped his hand. They had met but once before—in the war, after some heated engagement, at a moment when the excitement and exhilaration of a past danger brings strangers together and makes them feel as if they had been lifelong friends. The memory of such moments never entirely fades away. It was a comfort that Putiatin and Dmitri could plunge immediately into war reminiscences. Those were memories of a fair fight, when both were risking their lives for a cause, when they were armed to defend their country. The misery of what came afterwards, the tragedies and losses of the years of our separation, could not be put into words; words would have been out of place, even shocking. Dmitri had a black band on his sleeve; I was wearing my crape bonnet with

a veil; and those were the only visible signs of our scars, the only ones we exhibited to each other and the world.

From the station Dmitri took us to the Ritz, where he had been living since his arrival in London. His resources, I learnt afterwards, came at that time from the sale of his palace in Petrograd during the revolution. Since the time of the transaction the Russian rouble had been much depreciated, and the initial large sum had dwindled considerably, not allowing him to live otherwise than on capital. Used with discretion, however, the money was sufficient to keep him comfortable in a comparatively modest way for some time.

During our first evening together we were so nervous that we carefully avoided mentioning anything serious, and our conversation was as puerile as if we still were children. We had to laugh and joke incessantly in order to deaden our emotions. If we had dropped the pretence of gaiety even for a moment, we would have been crushed by the weight of what was within us. The first day we had tacitly agreed upon this procedure. Afterwards, when the acuteness of the first moments had been somewhat dulled, we were able to tell each other, at first only in snatches and then more extensively, the different stages of our experiences. But our tone towards the new realities never changed: we tried to laugh them off. The past, our own past, still held the most important part in our lives; we were like people roughly shaken out of a pleasant dream, waiting for the moment to go to sleep again and take up the threads where they had been broken off. When we spoke of our father, it was as of a living being from whom we had for a time been separated, of Aunt Ella likewise, and especially of the Emperor and Empress, in whose death few people then believed. The political and moral reasons which brought on the catastrophe in Russia we never discussed with each other; since the revolution we both had heard nothing but violent and very one-sided comments on the subject and there was nothing we could add or chose to add to them. On the contrary both of us had the feeling that we ought to wait and let the sandstorm of generalizations subside until we could see clear in the situation and form unprejudiced opinions of our own.

Dmitri had not only grown more mature physically; he had greatly developed mentally as well, and for me this change was both extremely gratifying and in a way heart-breaking. Nobody had had an easier, a more brilliant début in life than he. He had had a large fortune with very few responsibilities attached to it, unusually good looks coupled with charm, and he also had been the recognized favourite of the Tsar. Even before he had finished his studies and joined the Horse Guards, there was no young prince

in Europe more socially conspicuous than he was both in his own country and abroad. He walked a golden path, petted and fêted by everyone. His destiny was almost too dazzling, and his father used often to shake his head in anxiety over what the future had in store for him. But in the midst of all his successes, in spite of his own youthful enthusiasm towards them and in spite of the superficial sophistication he acquired, at heart he had remained simply a child, a boy who had been deprived of a home, of steadying influences, who suffered from his loneliness, who was secretly shy and reticent, who recoiled from vulgarity and promiscuousness, and who longed for something big and real with which to fill his life.

To see him deprived of his background, to which he was so admirably fitted, to see him obliged at every step to check the generosity of his nature, to watch life ruthlessly trim down the bright feathers of his wings, which had just been spread for a lofty flight, wrung my heart with pain.

Although his life had not been endangered directly by the revolution, his present experiences were made harder by the fact that he had not looked into its sordid face. He had not witnessed, as we had in Russia, the disintegration, the crumbling of all accepted standards, the disloyalty, the cowardice. We had been through everything; there was nothing that could surprise us, there was scarcely anything that we were not prepared for in the way of material hardships. But he was only beginning. After more than two years spent at the side of the Marlings and under their protection he had now to start out on his own. He would be surrounded now by people who were in the same situation as himself, whose mentality would be bewildering and incomprehensible to him, who would be likely to submerge him with the sense of personal disaster. And to be able to keep one's feet on the ground it was very important to try to suppress the personal side of the situation. But he stood his own, silently took the blows, and endeavoured to discriminate.

His former life in Russia had been divided between a very strenuous service in the regiment and social activities; during the war, at the Emperor's headquarters, he was in a position to observe from the inside much of what was going on. In Persia he had had the leisure to do a great deal towards improving his mind: he read and studied quietly those subjects which had been omitted in his thorough but exclusively military education. He looked with more attention at the happenings of the near past, and now when we met again we noticed that our mental development had been running very much on the same lines. We had been trying to solve the same problems and had reached each in our own way similar conclusions. Nor did we differ in our point of view upon the fact of the revolution, and we were ready to

admit whatever share we had in the faults of the old regime. The perfect understanding we had on most subjects was a source of great consolation to us both.

Although Dmitri was spared the dangers of the revolution, he was not spared any of its anxieties. In Persia, where he found himself soon after things began to go to pieces in his own country, he was practically cut off from Russia, especially from Petrograd where his father and I were living. In the past year he had not received any direct news from us. The little information he managed to gather came with the refugees from Russia and was uncertain and belated. About my marriage I was able to let him know by letter, but since then much time had elapsed and he knew nothing of our escape.

Towards the end of 1918 Sir Charles Marling was recalled from Persia in view of a new appointment, and Dmitri, with nothing to keep him in Persia, decided to follow him and his family back to England. The only route they could then take was through Mesopotamia, and this journey was long, hot, and wearisome. They finally got to Bombay in India, where they all embarked upon a British transport which was taking troops back to England. An epidemic of typhoid fever was raging at the time in Bombay and also broke out on board the transport. Dmitri was one of the first to come down with the disease. He was frightfully ill, and so were many of the others. Very little could be done for the sick on the small crowded boat; there were few medical supplies, no nurses, of course, and only one young doctor. Dmitri was luckier than the others in that he had with him his Russian orderly who could nurse him. Lady Marling and the orderly in turns watched over him night and day. Dmitri himself dimly realized how ill he was, struggling tenaciously and successfully for life until something happened which made him not only lose his courage but also his desire to keep up the fight.

One hot night when he was dozing heavily in his small stuffy cabin, he had a curious dream. He saw a diminutive human form hanging in mid-air at the farthest corner of his cabin. The figure was somehow familiar. After he had looked at it steadily in the dim light, he was able at last to recognize it. It was I, and he saw that I was beckoning to him. In his dream the idea struck him that I must be dead and had come to call him. Something in him then let go; he felt himself drifting lightly, slipping away. The sensation was not a disagreeable one. He lost consciousness. Lady Marling, who was sitting beside him, suddenly noticed a change come over his features; she saw that his breathing had become shallow. The pulse had failed and was hardly perceptible. She immediately sent for the doctor. When he ran into

the cabin, he saw at once that a collapse had taken place. Time was precious. The young doctor evidently did not have any means at hand whereby to revive him, or simply lost his head. The only thing that he could think of at the moment was to throw himself over Dmitri, seize him by the shoulders, and shake him violently.

"Come back, come back," he called frantically.

Somewhere from afar, perhaps subconsciously, Dmitri perceived the voice. He said that it was this call that undoubtedly brought him back to life. But the effort he was forced to make was extremely painful. He had no desire to live, and for days to come the doctor and Lady Marling had to fight for him. Several times all hope for his recovery was given up. Gradually, however, and very slowly he gained sufficient hold on life to be able to gather some strength and he began to get better. When Dmitri told me of this experience, we compared dates and came to the conclusion that his dream might have coincided with the worst days of my "flu." When the transport reached Port Saïd, the Marlings decided to take Dmitri off the ship and spend a few weeks with him at Cairo, where he could recuperate in comfortable surroundings. He was still so weak that he had to be taken off the boat on a stretcher.

In Cairo his convalescence began to progress speedily, and he soon was able to move about and eventually to take interest in the country, which he was visiting for the first time. At the beginning of January 1919 the Marlings and Dmitri left Egypt, landed at Marseilles, and went to Paris. For months now Dmitri had known nothing about what was going on in Russia. In spite of himself the recollection of his dream still haunted him. Upon his arrival in Paris he immediately went to his father's house at Boulogne to interview the old concierge. The little news that Gustave was able to give him was terribly alarming. The Grand Duke Paul was in prison, Princess Paley and the two little girls were in Petrograd, young Prince Paley had disappeared and so had I, as far as he was informed. Dmitri was stunned; he felt the ground slipping from under his feet. He knew already that Russia was in the throes of a regime of terror; his father might still be alive, but there was certainly no hope of seeing him again once he was behind Bolshevik prison bars. And about what my fate might have been he hardly dared think. Up to that moment the revolution, although it had already deprived him of many things, was only a word, a fearful and resounding one, just as it had been to me until that day at Pskov when I heard of the abdication of the Emperor. And now suddenly the real meaning of it stared him in the face in all its horror. He did not remember how he left Gustave's lodge, how he returned

to the hotel. He was dazed, overcome by the feeling of the ultimate end of everything. Country, family, all that he had ever cherished in life was gone, irrevocably. He was all alone and homeless.

The more detailed information he was able to gather when he got to England was no more reassuring. In addition he heard the more or less official confirmation of the murder of the imperial family. He remained in an almost desperate state of mind until a month later when he got my telegram from Rumania. He avoided referring directly to those moments, and I understood what he had suffered only through inferences, casually dropped sentences, and through what Lady Marling told me later. Then came the news of the murder of his father. He learned of it first from the papers, and then the Foreign Office confirmed it. All through that time I cannot think what he would have done without the Marlings. No father or mother could have been more understanding and helpful than they were.

Dmitri and I talked by the hour sitting in the small white-and-red drawing-room which separated our rooms at the hotel. During those moments we succeeded in forgetting almost everything, the forbidding reality and all that surrounded us. We were homeless, yet we had the joy of being together. The hotel, however, soon proved to be too expensive for me and my husband, and we were compelled to search for a cheaper dwelling. I found a small furnished flat in Berkeley Street into which we moved for the time being, but we still took our meals at the Ritz and I continued to see much of Dmitri.

CHAPTER VIII

JEWELS AND REALITIES

LIFE in London, where I had never been before, was a relief in comparison with the sad and dreary days spent in Paris. Unable to compare the present with pre-war conditions, I rested in an atmosphere where everything breathed peace and reverence to traditions. Little by little people I had met in former days on the continent found out my whereabouts and looked me up; but the royal family, who were related to us, though knowing us very slightly, did not give us much attention, even rather avoided us. They had no doubt good reasons for it. Political England was still uncertain of the outcome of the Russian situation; had the Bolsheviks fallen, they would have been once more replaced, according to the then prevailing opinion, by the men who were the first to take power after the end of the old regime, the Kerensky Socialists. To those men and to the political tendencies they represented, England was paying an ambiguous and at the same time condescending court. No help or support was offered us, and luckily both for us and for our English relations we were not yet in a position that obliged us to seek their aid.

The Marlings were not in London when I arrived there. Sir Charles had been appointed British Minister in Copenhagen and had already gone to his post, taking his family with him. Lady Marling, however, returned very shortly to London on business, and we met for the first time. She was then entirely taken up by the relief work she was starting in Finland for the Russians who were fleeing from the Bolsheviks. We grew very fond of each other, and for several years to come Lucia was to be the best friend we possessed. Five years ago she was killed in a motor accident, and both Dmitri and I have missed her terribly. She was the most generous-hearted human being I have ever met, and her house was the only place which we could call our home.

On arriving in London I had established communications with Princess Paley, who, after my father's death, had gone to Finland, whither she had already sent my step-sisters. As soon as she found herself out of Russia, she had to undergo a very serious operation for cancer of the breast. As I heard afterwards, the disease developed quite suddenly in the last year, but she had not begun to suffer till lately. After all her trials, after the imprisonment and

murder of my father and her own escape, she found herself destitute and sick; but the operation seemed to have been successful. She and I exchanged letters but saw each other only a year later.

That same spring the Swedish Crown Prince and Crown Princess came to London from Stockholm and brought with them detailed news of my eldest son, and also my jewels. Lennart was now ten years old. He was chiefly in the care of his grandmother, the Queen, who adored him. Luckily I did not have to worry over his material welfare. Before leaving Sweden I had surrendered to him a considerable amount of my fortune, which was transferred to Sweden from Russia just before the war. I had also left him the house I had built in Stockholm. Apparently my second marriage had made a reunion with him out of the question for the time being, but I was promised that I would be allowed to see him when conditions became more settled and a suitable meeting-place could be selected.

This was the first time since my divorce that I had come into contact with the Swedish royal family again. Of the Crown Princess I had kept the pleasantest of memories but, when she let me know of her intention to come and see me personally and bring me my jewels, I was somewhat taken aback. We met at my small apartment, and I was shocked to see how she had changed since I had seen her last. She looked thin and worn. Being by birth an English princess she had had a hard time during the war, as Swedish sentiment was not particularly pro-Ally. Under trying conditions she had taken upon herself many activities in connexion with the war, amongst which was a bureau for the locating of British prisoners in German camps and the distribution of food to them. Both she and I were extremely nervous during our first interview. She showed me much kindness all through her stay in London, and we had the chance to discuss many things which in former days were never alluded to. After that summer I never saw her again. A year or two later she died after a short illness, leaving a large family of children. She was profoundly regretted by the Swedish people, who had learnt to love and appreciate her. The jewels were sent over from Sweden just as they had been delivered there from Russia—in the singular wrappings which were meant to conceal them from Bolshevik eyes in case of a raid on our house at Petrograd. They had been rather ingeniously hidden away in ink bottles, paper weights, and imitation wax tapers. Luckily for me the Swedes upon receiving this assortment of miscellaneous objects believed what they had been told, which was that they contained my jewels. I was quite astonished to recover them. They were extricated, some with great difficulty, from their complicated hiding-places and deposited in a bank. We

were now running short of money and were obliged to turn to the jewels, which were our sole resource.

But here I made my first big mistake, which was only the beginning of a series of errors due to inexperience and the remnant of our illusions. We still imagined that the Bolshevik regime would not last and would come to an end either by itself or through the efforts of the anti-Reds. We did not think of making any plans for the distant future or organizing ourselves on a permanent basis. We could conceive only of temporary makeshifts. Business people, and amongst them the famous Colonel Boyle who had managed our departure from Odessa, advised me to arrange an auction at Christy's and sell my jewels all at the same time; in this way I would have had some capital which might have permitted me to live, if not in luxury, at least free from worry. But I would not hear of such an arrangement and refused to listen to my advisers. I valued my jewels mainly because of the memories connected with them; the greatest part of them had been inherited, and I had always felt as though they had only been entrusted to me for as long as my life should last and that my duty was to pass them on. All these tiaras, bracelets, and brooches in their old-fashioned settings were the only tangible bond with the past grandeur, not only my own but that of my grandmother's and great-grandmother's. Each time that I was obliged to part with a piece of jewellery I remembered its history, and, when it passed into the hands of the buyer, a bit of the past went with it. I realized the wisdom of the advice given me when it was too late and when the amount of my jewels had been reduced to such an extent that it was impossible to save anything. Later on in Paris the market was flooded with Russian jewels. Their owners usually entertained exaggerated ideas about their value, but the dealers knew exactly who possessed important sets or collections of stones and, if they were offered for sale, came to an understanding not to overbid each other. Thus the most beautiful things went for practically nothing. The gradual sale of my jewels, which lasted over several years, constituted one of the painful experiences of my life as a refugee.

The sales were started with the pieces that had the least sentimental value for me; it was my rubies that I began with. I remember the day that my husband and I stood in front of a jeweller's shop in Bond Street with Colonel Boyle hovering in the background. In my husband's pocket lay the rubies wrapped up in cotton-wool and tissue paper. I was embarrassed at the idea of having to enter a shop with something to sell; it had never happened to me before. At last I mustered up my courage and went in. Boyle followed. We asked for the owner. A scene ensued which was repeated so many times afterwards that in time I grew perfectly accustomed to it. The jewels were

produced out of Putiatin's pocket, unwrapped, and bared to the scrutiny of the shop-owner. He viewed them and handled them critically, depreciatingly. His fingers, his eyes ran over the stones, the flexible, delicate mountings, like ants over a flower bed. This was done in deep silence. If we thought the stones had a great value, we were of course greatly mistaken. This we were invariably told everywhere. They were either too big or too small, cut when they ought to have been uncut or vice versa, and they were never well enough matched. Times were hard, customers rare. Once at a big jeweller's in Paris, when I was obliged to sell a very important piece, the father of the owner, a tottering old man whose existence nobody had even suspected, was present at the interview in order, no doubt, to impress me with the firm's honourable intentions. The son respectfully but firmly explained to me how few advantages he would derive from the transaction, but how anxious he was to please me. At times he would glance at his father for support, and the old man silently and gravely nodded his head in approval, although it was clear that he understood nothing of what was going on. This family scene was enacted over merchandise which the firm was in reality extremely anxious to purchase, and between sighs, protestations of loyalty, and complaints about the present moment's difficulties they beat my price down to almost nothing. I left the shop in despair and disgust, and they never got that important piece, but they had got many others before this one. I knew by then that it was useless to go to another dealer. The jewellery was eventually sold at a very low price to people I knew, and to the consequences of this sale I shall be obliged to revert later as they were quite important.

But to return to the first experience: Colonel Boyle, noticing how feebly we were conducting the negotiations, stepped in personally, and the tone of the conversation underwent a considerable change. The rubies were sold and the money pocketed.

Now we could make plans for the immediate future. We would find a place where we could settle down comfortably. My husband would go back to Rumania to fetch the little boy.

One Monday morning in summer we returned from a quiet week-end in the country and found the usual batch of mail. It included a letter from my mother-in-law. She wrote regularly once a week to give us news of the child, and up till the last letter it had invariably been excellent. The last report was not so good, but there had been nothing alarming about it. Although the letter was addressed to my husband, I opened it myself. From the very first sentence I guessed with a shock that something had happened. I was terror-

stricken. Skipping over the first page of preparatory phrases I turned to the second and at the end of it I found the dreadful news. The baby had died.

How ruthlessly death was persecuting us! Was it going to stamp us out altogether?

The baby was exactly a year old. This was the fourth being dear to me whom I had lost within just a few months. The letter that had brought the news of his death contained very few details, and we only learned afterwards how it had occurred. He had been in perfect condition, gaining weight steadily and progressing satisfactorily, when as the hot weather came on he developed intestinal trouble. At first his illness inspired no anxieties, but suddenly from one day to the next he grew worse, had convulsions, and died. Nothing could describe the despair of his grandparents. Some strange psychological twist in my character made me painfully self-conscious of this new calamity. I concealed it most carefully from my friends in London; only Dmitri knew about it. I feared and wanted to avoid renewed expressions of sympathy; I hated to appear as the embodiment of tragedy.

The weight on my own heart grew heavier, although I was so crushed already by my father's death that most of my sensibility had been blunted, nearly killed. For many years afterwards I was unable even to react to joy. Something seemed to have burnt out within me.

CHAPTER IX

HOME ECONOMICS

SUMMER went by and autumn came. Nothing held very much interest for me any longer. I had grown apathetic and shunned the company of others; I was still wearing my crape bonnet and did not wish to divert my thoughts from my sorrows. Although since the death of the baby I had not made any definite plans, in autumn we came to the conclusion that, if Dmitri and we lived together by pooling our expenses we might reduce them and also have a much pleasanter time. Giving up my small apartment I took a house in an unfashionable part of London and we moved in.

Now I had to keep house, a thing I had never done before. I was obliged to interview servants about matters that I did not understand myself; I had to engage them; I had to order meals; I felt that I ought to see if the lid of the piano was dusted and the parquet floor waxed. But I did it all extremely badly. I knew nothing about the intricacies of housekeeping, and all the details worried and annoyed me tremendously. The house was too big for us and, when winter finally came, the hopelessly damp and grey London winter, I discovered that it was impossible to keep the house warm. There was, of course, no central heating, and the open fireplaces were much too small for the size of the rooms. We were obliged to close some of them because of the coal bills, which became alarming. At night we had to lie down on sheets which not only were icy but also clammy; in the mornings the rooms were so cold that leaving one's bed was like performing a heroic feat. We spent our days and evenings in the one room we could keep warm, which was Dmitri's study, where we had a blazing fire burning without interruption. I did not think much at the time of the celebrated English comfort. The only consolation under the circumstances was a hot bath, but even that brief pleasure was soon spoilt for me. The bathroom was papered, and after the first few weeks the paper began to blister and then peel off. It soon hung around the wall in tattered fringes. The landlady, who lived in the house next door, secretly suspecting us of being a family of Tatars, kept a vigilant eye on what was going on in our household. She was horrified at the looks of the bathroom, and it was not long before she told me that when taking a bath we should keep the window open. I really was not prepared for this and upon following her instructions I immediately got a bad attack of

bronchitis. After we left, she sued me for establishing a Turkish steam bath in her house.

I could not cope with the servants. I was lucky with the English ones, but we had two Russians as well, and the foreign and native elements either clashed or got on too well. The old maid I had brought with me from Odessa was willing, but too advanced in age to be of any use. Not knowing a word of any language but her own and never having been abroad in her life, she was in a state of chronic bewilderment and utter helplessness. Her mental faculties were, moreover, decidedly below the average.

One day when we were still staying at the Ritz, she developed a toothache, and my husband took her to the dentist's in a bus. Before leaving her he wrote the name and the address of the hotel on a piece of paper which he handed her, but she refused it saying that she could easily find her way home by the *rails*. Having never seen a bus before she mistook it for a tram car; and was extremely astonished to hear that it had no rails.

My brother's orderly, who had been in his house for some time before the war began and who was now his valet, suddenly decided that it was he who would rule the household and rule it according to his own ideas. This house in Kensington, as long as we were living in it, was a palace and he himself was the major-domo. Everything had to be done according to the sanctified traditions of old, and he disapproved of what he thought our uncalled-for simplicity. He just could not understand that traditions were now a luxury far beyond our means. But in his way he was devoted to Dmitri and myself although his devotion was of a primitive and jealous nature. Putiatin he hated and in spite of severe and numerous reprimands from my brother he never took the pains to conceal his feelings; he could not forgive him for the misalliance—as he regarded it—that I had contracted.

For a time at least I struggled bravely but clumsily against his determination to exercise control over the household and then I gave it up; even if his reign was more expensive it certainly made things far easier for me. This was only the beginning of my role as housekeeper, and, as I have always since then had a private home, no matter how small, I have had to face the housekeeping situation, and it will recur as my narrative continues. But I must confess that, although I have learned many things in these years, I do not think I shall ever learn to be a housekeeper.

Now that my mind was eased of the domestic problem, I could turn my thoughts towards other things. But there was at first surprisingly, disconcertingly little to turn them to. Since 1914 I had been living in an

atmosphere totally removed from the interests of persons of leisure. During the war I had been working hard, studying in the real sense of the word and also learning about life. During the revolution my interests had been reduced to a struggle for existence. All this had involved the essential forces of my nature. For five years my life had lacked exterior signs of refinement; I had not heard any music, had not seen a painting or a picture gallery or a play, had not kept up with literature. In its simplicity my existence had been almost ascetic. I had become detached and indifferent to worldly things, and the circumstances I was now compelled to settle down among I found petty and futile. I did not see any more hope for a vast field of action; I could not make any plans; my horizon was once more threatening to close in upon me. But I was too bruised inwardly, too exhausted morally to make a serious effort towards breaking through the restrictions which again were heaping themselves up around me. As I could not do otherwise, I accepted them, I tried to accept them. I felt, besides, that very much of my domestic happiness depended upon the acceptance of these restrictions and I wanted to be happy even if it were only in a small way.

But what could I do with myself, with my time? Study art, take up my painting again? No, that belonged somehow to another period of my life, a period which was dead and which I did not feel I had the courage to revive. As it often happens, circumstances themselves very soon provided me with occupations, which, if far from intellectual, seemed for the time to satisfy my desire for activity.

Although I was still thinking of our exile as temporary, I nevertheless was worried about our future and about the lack of a practical scheme of existence for us; I was troubled by the fact that none of us worked. In my simplicity I imagined it would be an easy enough matter to remedy this situation; I would work myself. As to Dmitri and my husband, who were soldiers by education and profession, there was very little chance for them to find occupations which would keep us all in the present and could later secure them a comfortable living. For a woman it was easier; she could use her hands.

Ever since my childhood I had been taught to sew, embroider, and knit; this knowledge I could now apply. That year in London the fashion was for hand-knitted sweaters and even for entirely hand-knitted dresses. There was a chance for me in that field. I bought some wool and needles and with them a card on which directions were printed for knitting a sweater. The first one I made was so large that nothing could be done with it. I worked out new calculations and started afresh; this time I was more successful as to the size

but not satisfied with the quality of the knitting and this second sweater I kept for myself. After this I grew more experienced and at last judged my work good enough to be offered for sale. I inquired after a shop where I could place my knitting and was given an address at which I presented myself with my sweater wrapped up in paper under my arm. Although the woman who ran the shop did not have the slightest idea of my identity she seemed astonished at hearing about the object of my visit. I undid my parcel, laid out my work in front of her, and, while she was looking it over, my heart beat violently. She bought the sweater for twenty-one shillings and paid it to me in cash, besides asking me to bring her more. I had always heard that one's first earned money gave one a special thrill with which no other satisfaction in life could ever be compared. I was delighted that my work had pleased her enough to make her want more of it, but the money gave me no thrill. I felt guilty; the work was not hard enough to be so highly remunerated; I felt almost as if I were taking something away from another person who needed it more than I did. Forgetting to put the money into my hand bag, I left the shop still holding it in my hand.

I continued to knit sweaters and even made a few dresses. A sweater would take me about four or five days to complete, a dress from eight to ten, and I got a little over two pounds for a dress. I never put down my knitting. I got up early in the mornings and worked before breakfast; I took it with me to table and worked between the courses; I worked in the train and while I read.

I thought out new time-saving devices. The whole world had become "one row plain, turn, one row purl," and the boys began to hate the sight of the needles. But even so I could never make more than a little over six pounds a week, and it got me absolutely nowhere; it was a drop in quite a large bucket. It was after all a ridiculous undertaking and I gave it up. I turned to something else.

My wardrobe, which since the Rumanian days presented just a collection of stray garments, reached now a stage of such dilapidation that it needed serious attention. Although we still lived very quietly, I could no longer avoid all human contacts as I had hitherto done. Although I did not seek them, people began drifting into my life. Dmitri had made many new friends; old acquaintances became more insistent, and I was forced out of the complete seclusion of the summer and autumn months. As far as I can remember, I was by then quite willing to resume relationships with people, but until a year had elapsed after the death of my father I refused to go out to dinner or the theatre. After that there was no more excuse. Seeing people,

however informally, meant not only the pleasures of companionship; it entailed also necessities of a more material order: I had to have clothes. But as I did not feel that I had the right to burden our budget with dressmakers' bills, I resolved to try and make them myself.

I found a magazine especially devoted to the making of clothes and studied it carefully. Then I got some paper patterns and at last a length of material. I could not tell now with what kind of dress I started nor what it looked like when finished; I can only remember with what apprehensions I took the first bite at the material with a huge pair of tailoring scissors. The scissors and a large box of pins I had bought at the same time as the material. There was no table large enough to cut upon so I used the floor; I possessed no sewing machine either, and all the seams had to be done by hand. My Russian maid was far too unintelligent to act as fitter, so I had to call upon my husband for help. Standing in front of a looking-glass I explained to him what he had to do, but his own discretion was necessary in the places I could not see myself. I was so excited that I did not even notice the pain from innumerable pin pricks which I received. The first attempt was followed by others until I was able to copy a black Callot evening dress lent to me by a friend, the skirt of which was made of many yards of tulle. I wore this dress the first time I went to a formal dinner party. It was not without anxiety that I studied the expressions on the women's faces when I entered and when I stood among them in the drawing-room before dinner. Did they see anything queer about me? I was more or less certain of my front view but what about my back? As much as possible I tried not to let them see too often that part of my anatomy. But all went off well and, by the time dinner was over, I had forgotten that I was wearing a dress made by myself in a salon where all the women's clothes came from Worth, Vionnet, or Callot.

Later I became quite an expert at this kind of handiwork; for a number of years to come I made most of my clothes and all my underwear. I made dresses and lingerie for friends who cared to order them from me. I went so far as to be able to fabricate a fancy smoking-jacket for my husband which he could wear not only out of respect for my labours but with comfort to himself. I also made a dressing-gown for Dmitri, a rather splendid affair with small groups of blue birds scattered over a black background. This dressing-gown he wore for many years; every time I saw it laid out for him to use I was flattered. I was less fortunate though with some pyjamas I attempted to make for him. My intention was to produce six pairs, but after the first one, which was fairly successful, something went wrong, and the sleeves as well as the trousers all turned out to be too short. Nevertheless he

wore even those, but never missed an occasion to call my attention to their defects when he happened to be arrayed in them in my presence.

CHARITY BAZAAR, LONDON

A BOYS' CLASS OF RUSSIAN REFUGEES

Later on I even learned how to make hats but I never got much further than the preparatory stages. The hats worn at the time needed considerable

gluing and wiring, which tried my patience and rather dampened my enthusiasm.

All these naïve attempts at making money in a direct way or indirectly by saving could not get me anywhere. During rare moments of lucidity, when flashes of premonition crossed my mind, I realized how profoundly helpless we were. The underlying current of my thoughts was continuously preoccupied with the idea of work, but with work which really would be profitable. A second set of jewellery, the turquoises, had by then been sold.

In the meantime Dmitri, so as not to remain idle, took up the study of political economy and social sciences. His mind, trained in serious matters in the last years, imbibed all he heard with avidity. He was tremendously interested in what he was doing and read and worked a great deal during that time. My husband was perfecting his English.

Before resigning myself to a life in which interests of a wider nature were excluded I made one last attempt. In the beginning of the winter of 1919 a group of Russian women in London asked me to head the organization of a workroom which would supply underwear and hospital equipment for the White volunteer armies fighting the Bolsheviks in the south of Russia. I consented. A suitable place was found where we could work and store and pack the articles we had made ourselves or received as gifts. We gathered almost every afternoon, cut and sewed garments, folded compresses. The majority of the women I worked with did not belong to the titled class of Russian society; some of them were recent refugees as I was, some members of the colony and established in London either during or before the war. They spoke freely in my presence, and I encouraged them to do so by asking questions. I used these occasions to get in touch with their thoughts; I listened to the different opinions, trying to catch their shades and meanings; I observed. I examined the psychology of my compatriots to see if I could discover something in it which would explain the past, which would give hope for the future; but I could discover nothing worth taking notice of, nothing new. All were bewildered as we were; like ourselves they made no plans, did not think of making a clean sweep of the past, lived in illusions and on their last money. They could not be of any help to me.

Once, indeed, I might have had a chance to speak with somebody who during his entire lifetime had been on the other side of the fence; but of this chance when it came I could not avail myself.

To explain the incident I must return to the past. One night in February as far back as 1905, when the revolutionary disorders had already begun in

Moscow, my uncle and aunt, with whom we then were living, took Dmitri and me to the opera for a charity performance. We lived then under a cloud of apprehensions. That night the group of terrorists who had been plotting my uncle's murder had posted a few of its members at a place in the street past which we had to drive on our way to the theatre. One of the men was supposed to make a sign at the approach of the carriage and the other had then to throw the bomb. The first one upon seeing us children in the carriage did not have the heart to give the signal and thus saved our lives. Two days later my uncle went out alone; the bomb was thrown and he was killed.

The man who spared us and whose name was Savinkov subsequently went through all the stages of a revolutionary's career. At the time of the 1917 revolution he had gained some fame in his particular field but, being a man of ideals and seeing that the aspirations of the revolution were threatened by the Bolsheviks, in spite of being himself a Socialist, he joined forces with the bourgeois elements. He ended by having to leave Russia just like any other member of the persecuted classes. Now he was in London. I happened to know somebody slightly who had met him and who mentioned my name in his presence. Savinkov was reminded of the past and commented upon the strangeness of the fact that the children whose life he had once saved were now, when they were grown up, political refugees like himself. He expressed the desire of meeting me, and I heard about it. This was all the more astounding inasmuch as Russians, whatever political party they may belong to, invariably adopt a violently sectarian attitude and eliminate relationships with people of other convictions than their own. Especially was this attitude upheld towards us and even by members of bourgeois factions if they happened to be in opposition to some of the former government's ideas.

For my part I was delighted at the prospect of a possible meeting with Savinkov. Although he had been an ardent revolutionary and our principles would have been in opposition on most things, I felt sure that his action in the past would create a human tie between us and that this tie would enable us to bridge the gulf and find a ground for mutual understanding. I imagined that it might make him speak to me more freely. I longed to find out something about the psychology of a man who was one of an organization which had such bitter enmity against us as a dynasty, desiring to annihilate us at such frightful risks. Did he feel himself justified now in spite of what was going on in Russia? But before making a definite move I thought it best to discuss it with my husband. He was horrified that I should care to meet an individual who was one of my uncle's murderers, which after all he was; but I seemed to look at the situation from another point of view. He accused me

of idle curiosity. At the time I was not articulate enough to explain my reasons for wanting to see and talk to Savinkov. The matter was dropped and we never met. Afterwards, tortured by the desire for action and also by ambition, Savinkov went back to Russia at the invitation of the Soviets. But he did not last long there. Only a few months after his departure we heard of his death. The Bolsheviks said that he had committed suicide, but the prevailing opinion was that he had tried to conspire against the regime, an activity in which he certainly had some experience, and was done away with.

CHAPTER X

IMPERIAL ÉMIGRÉS

DURING our first weeks in London there were practically no other refugees from Russia besides ourselves. Then they began to arrive, generally in more or less numerous parties. The first one to come was composed of the Dowager Empress Marie and her daughter and grandchildren. The old Empress was entitled to some interest on the part of the English royal family as she was King George's aunt, the sister of his mother, Queen Alexandra. Empress Marie and several other members of my family had remained as long as they possibly could in the south of Russia, where finally an English man-of-war was dispatched to take them away and bring them to England. The Crimea was at that time in danger of a new Bolshevik invasion and, although the members of my family who still remained were guarded by a volunteer detachment of Russian officers, it was no longer safe for them to stay in the country. They left reluctantly in spite of all they had been through. Steamers and cargoes had been hurriedly sent to Yalta to evacuate as many of the civil population as possible, and the Empress would not let the captain of her own ship lift anchor until she was sure that nobody she knew of had been left behind.

Her arrival in London was shrouded in mystery, and every effort was made to avoid publicity. The man-of-war landed her at some port where, as nearly as I can remember, she was met by her sister Queen Alexandra, and both came to London by train. We were advised at the last minute about the time of the train's arrival. On our way to the platform we were stopped at every corner by officers of the police, to whom we were obliged to give our names, and got through with great difficulty. We emerged on to the platform just as the train was coming in. The scene we were looking upon was reminiscent of receptions in former days, and yet how different! The brilliance and bustle were gone, and the feeling of welcome, even if only official, was somehow lacking. In the foreground stood the King and Queen with their family, a little behind them the group of their household officials. We kept in the shadow. There were no crowds; the station was empty and very quiet. The carriages glided in smoothly. In the first of them at one window stood Queen Alexandra, at the other Empress Marie. The train stopped. The royal party on the platform stepped up and in a few moments the two aged sisters alighted. Greetings were exchanged; then the group

moved up the platform, the two Queens and the Empress at its head. We then joined them, and the Empress, after we had kissed her hand, spoke a few words to us.

She had not changed much in these two and a half years since I had seen her. As always she was dressed in her little black tailor-made suit with a small hat trimmed in sequins. Around her neck she wore a short feather boa pinned together at the throat. She did not appear nervous or upset; she was perfectly calm, contained, and even smiling. Did she make comparisons between her present arrival and those of the past? Did she notice the emptiness of the station, the uneasiness around her; did she perceive the mixed feelings with which she was received? Whether she did or not, nothing of what was going on escaped us; the impressions we brought away were painful.

By Keystone

By Wide World Photos

THE DOWAGER EMPRESS MARIE OF RUSSIA

At the time of her marriage to Alexander III

As an exile shortly before her death in Denmark

Queen Alexandra took her sister to Marlborough House, where she resided and where she intended that the Empress should now settle down with her. The two sisters, one over seventy and the other nearing that mark, had kept for each other a girlish devotion which had lasted ever since they were children in their father's Danish home. All through the years they had exchanged letters or telegraphed to one another daily; both had missed these constant communications during wartime and especially during the revolution, and the Queen had suffered great anxiety for her sister. Now they

were together again. To look at, both seemed much younger than their ages; they had preserved their colouring, the Queen fair, the Empress dark, and their eyes had lost nothing of their brightness. Both were small, lithe, and alert. They were surprisingly active, moved briskly, and kept up their interest in what was going on around them. The world, not the world of political intrigue but the one endowed with human feelings, knowing the sisters' affection for each other, was satisfied in the certainty that they were now perfectly happy in their reunion. But as weeks and then months went by, the situation apparently underwent slight changes. The two old ladies, sitting day after day alone with each other, must have noticed that, although they had been fighting off age and did not show many of its outward signs, in reality they were just two old women with weary and furrowed souls and very little now in common but their age. For over fifty years they had led entirely different lives with different, sometimes even conflicting interests, and had developed different points of view. Their meetings in the past had been frequent perhaps, but short and full of social diversions; then too they were free to come and go as they had pleased, now they were tied together. The Empress found the Queen's deafness trying, the Queen was irritated by the incursion of the Empress's attendants into her well-ordered household. Discreetly and pathetically one complained of the other, each one commenting upon the changes in her sister's disposition. They missed their former perfect understanding and could not make out what had come between them although their affection was as deep as ever. The public whispered; to them the news was disappointing, the romantic friendship of so many years was threatening to come to an end. But here—happily for once—political reasons intervened, and it was thought better for the Empress to leave England and establish herself in Denmark, the country where she was born.

The winter and spring of 1919-20, however, they spent together, and Dmitri and I frequently visited Marlborough House. It was difficult to believe in those surroundings that so much in the world had changed. Although by then we had all heard of the murder of the Tsar and his family and the official world seemed not to doubt it, no convincing or final proof had yet been produced of the tragedy. The rumours had reached the Empress's ears but never for a moment did she think them true; she spoke of her sons and grandchildren as if they were alive, confidently expecting news from them. Her attitude was so firm in this respect and she showed such faith, that people were encouraged to believe that she really was in possession of reassuring information. Rumours, one more fantastic than the other, began to spring up and circulate, amplified and enriched with details

as they were passed on. Sometimes it would be an officer coming from Serbia, who had there met a friend who in his turn had seen the Emperor with his own eyes. Then it would be somebody else who said he knew that the imperial family had been saved and concealed by a group of Siberian peasants belonging to some sect that had its dwellings in the midst of impenetrable forests, where the family would be perfectly safe. Then they suddenly would have been discovered in China, Siam, or India. People knew people who had seen letters, received messages, talked to eyewitnesses, and so on until these tales became quite an ordinary topic of conversation and no one paid any more serious attention to them.

The Empress's eldest daughter Xenia, who had come to England with her mother, lived in a small house smothered by a large family of boys and numerous female servants who had followed her out of Russia. Smiling, always perfectly enchanting and a little bewildered, she moved about the house in search of a little privacy. Her we saw very often; we went to her house and she came to ours.

Prince Yusupov, married to her only daughter, had also established himself in London after having left Russia at the same time as the Empress. He and his wife lived in an apartment owned and furnished by him before the war and in which he had stayed during his previous frequent visits to London. Felix tried to resume his friendly relationship with my brother but in spite of all his efforts he did not succeed in doing so. Long before, Dmitri had heard that Yusupov no longer considered it necessary to keep the oath of silence taken at the time of Rasputin's murder. He not only related to every casual inquirer the details of that horrible night, but even read aloud some notes he had compiled afterwards of what had then occurred. At his house in Petrograd he had left the room in the cellar exactly in the same condition as it had been on the night of the murder. He used to display to trembling female admirers a white bearskin rug on the floor which, according to him, had been soaked in Rasputin's blood. Happily, however, the stains were no longer visible when, not knowing where I was going, I found myself in the cellar and eating supper precisely at the same table where he had tried to poison his victim and guest. Dmitri was revolted by Yusupov's light-hearted attitude towards the event of which he himself never had spoken, and could not forgive his chatter. The silence he himself continuously observed on the subject made me believe that he had never lived down this tragic and resounding affair, in which he had taken part only in the hope of averting an impending revolution. Dmitri avoided Yusupov, but I and my husband continued to see him.

Yusupov, among all of us refugees, was in those days the most fortunate and the best off financially. He had succeeded in bringing out of Russia objects of art and jewellery amounting to a very considerable sum; but, just as we were, he was living on the proceeds of occasional forced sales. At that time he was seriously imagining himself an historic figure of considerable importance, and all he did was calculated to enhance this position. He cherished the hope of playing a political part in Russia, basing his calculations on the notoriety, mistaken for popularity, which came to him through Rasputin's murder. His desire to be talked about at all costs made no discrimination as to method or manner.

PRINCE FELIX YUSUPOV

PRINCESS IRENE YUSUPOV

Upon his arrival in London one of his first preoccupations was to put himself in evidence as the benefactor of the Russian exiles, and in this he was entirely successful. In a beautiful old house, for which he paid high rent, he installed a workroom where the same work was done as in mine but on a much larger scale and in much more magnificent surroundings. This workroom, however, was attended by the needy class of refugees, and their labour was remunerated. The cutting tables and sewing machines stood in a room decorated with gold mouldings, the windows of which looked out on to one of London's most aristocratic squares. A lady of great name and distinction but of little practical experience was asked to head the

organization. Thousands of pounds were lavishly and usually indiscriminately expended by Yusupov out of his own pocket.

Once or twice a week in the evenings Yusupov gave parties at his apartment. These gatherings were most informal, rather amusing, and lasted long into the night. The guests consisted of Russians, mostly men and women of his own class but usually with a sprinkling of an outside element which had very little in common with his friends. The strangers, impressed by the company, would generally keep their places and not call attention to themselves; sometimes, however, situations arose which would be extremely painful to the friends who had accepted Yusupov's hospitality. Once just before dinner Felix, being in a hurry to get dressed, put away in his desk several small packages containing precious stones and forgot to lock the drawer. After the end of the party he happened to remember the packages and found on looking into the drawer that they were gone. The story spread with the rapidity of lightning, and until the culprit had been found—as he was eventually—the other guests who had been present that evening felt extremely uncomfortable. Yusupov seemed to enjoy mixing his guests; he liked to see the embarrassment with which the outsiders were greeted by his friends and to observe how out of politeness to their host they would try to overcome the barriers of prejudice or social distinction. He himself presided with talent and a certain cunning humour over these unusual gatherings. His beautiful, silent wife was just a spectator and to all appearances an unconscious one.

These parties were much more suitable for men than for women but, as the life of the refugees was deprived of most amusements, they were attended frequently and with pleasure by both sexes. When I came out of my seclusion, Yusupov's house became almost the only place where we went in the evenings. My husband's knowledge of English was not sufficient as yet to enable him to take interest in my own or Dmitri's English friends, and he preferred to find himself amongst people who spoke his own language. Despite Dmitri's silent disapproval and a certain uneasiness on my part, my husband and I became involved in the Yusupov set. My relations with Felix have since then undergone several different phases until a few years ago they ceased altogether.

CHAPTER XI

"ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE"

THROUGH all these months our hearts were still in Russia and nothing was more important to us than news either concerning her or coming directly out of the country. We could not resign ourselves to the idea that the Bolshevik rule had come to stay. And at first our hopes were encouraged by what then seemed important and viable movements against the Reds, which in some cases were supported and conducted by the Allies, in others led by Russians themselves. To the Allies the sudden collapse in 1917 of the Russian armies and the steady increase of Bolshevik influence in the country meant the strengthening of Germany, and they fought the Reds insofar as they themselves and their interests were directly threatened. To the Russians the struggle against the Bolsheviks was a crusade. Many human lives, much energy, and vast sums of money were involved in the movements, and yet every time that they were on the eve of succeeding something invariably went wrong. First the English at Murmansk, then Kolchak in Siberia, General Denikin in southwestern Russia and General Yudenich in Estonia and Finland, one after the other dispersed Bolshevik forces, overthrew Soviets, instituted local governments. Kolchak's armies planned to be in Moscow in June 1919; in October Moscow was threatened by Denikin from a distance of two hundred miles; Yudenich, also in October, was within ten miles of Petrograd. The Red forces could not at the time be considered as a seriously organized army, and yet at the very moment when they seemed to be hopelessly crushed they would rally, check the advance of the Whites, and reverse the attack. Opinions differed on the reasons for the persistent failures of the Whites. Some explained them by lack of strategic coordination between the Russian military leaders, between the generals and the civil authorities, by incapacity for organization and absence of authority; some attributed them to the ill-faith and mistakes of Allied statesmen and military chiefs, due to their ignorance of the Russian situation and requirements.

The struggle was fierce, merciless on both sides, a struggle in which not only regular units, but the entire civil population of a region were involved. Cruelty and feelings of revenge reigned in both camps. The civil population played an important if not a decisive part in the final miscarriage of the White movement. The peasants had not yet experienced the rigours of an

organized communistic system; they believed that through the revolution they had at last been able to satisfy their century-old longing for the possession of the soil, and now that they thought their desire to be accomplished they wanted no more changes. The White armies, they were told, were composed of officers, which to them meant the former land-owners whose estates they had divided amongst themselves. They did not want to be forced to return them and feared reprisals. Red propaganda took every advantage of the situation. In vain were proclamations issued by the Whites in which the peasants were assured that they would be allowed to keep the land, that it was theirs; they did not believe them. And in their vast majority the peasants were hostile to the Whites and resisted them as far as possible.

We lived and fed upon the various reports from Russia, following breathlessly the activities of the anti-Bolshevik movements. We were either full of hopes or crushed with despondency. In Russia blood was flowing, the Communists were trying to wipe out an entire class of the population. Europe, licking her own wounds, and America watched without comprehending while this mysterious fire of Bolshevism spread wider and wider, its sparks flying all over the world.

Several dates belonging to that period remain engraved in my memory. The day in October when we heard that General Yudenich was already as far as Gachina, some thirty miles from Petrograd. Dmitri and I, expecting momentarily to learn the news of the capital's fall, could not sit still. We walked the streets anxiously awaiting the special newspaper issues. We waited in vain: they never appeared. General Yudenich's failure after he had been so near the goal was a terrible blow to us.

In November came the first celebration of the Armistice. The whole of London was rejoicing. Throughout the day troops paraded the streets, colours flying, military bands playing. All three of us had taken part in the war but had no place in the celebration of the victory, or what then was thought the victory. In the evening, noisy gaiety reigned in the restaurants and hotels, but we kept to our rooms and our hearts were heavy.

In January 1920, Admiral Kolchak, who had been so successful in his advance through Siberia and on whom all our hopes now rested, had experienced reverses, military, political, and moral, and had resigned his command. In February the news reached us that he had been betrayed by the Czechs, former prisoners of war interned in Siberia who had formed units and joined the Kolchak army with the purpose chiefly of fighting their own way through to safety. Admiral Kolchak was delivered to the Bolsheviks

under the indifferent gaze of the head of the French mission, General Janin, and executed. The Kolchak operations had lasted the longest and had seemed the most reliable. When in his turn he failed we began to doubt whether anything coming from the outside of Russia had the chance of being successful.

Admiral Kolchak's armies had occupied during a certain time the two small towns in western Siberia, Ekaterinburg and Alopaievsk, where the Tsar's family, Aunt Ella, Volodia and their companions had been murdered. These murders had certainly been precipitated, if not caused, by the rapid advance of the Whites. The Bolsheviks were afraid that the members of the imperial family by getting away from them and into the enemy's camp would create additional difficulties for them, especially as the Kolchak operations had the support of the Allies. Many months had already elapsed since the murders; nevertheless an investigation was undertaken as thorough as the circumstances then permitted. The procedure was complicated, but finally most of what had taken place was established with apparent certainty.

For about a year and six months, the Tsar, his wife, and five children had been kept first under arrest and then in close confinement. They remained in the palace only during the first months of the revolution. The establishment of the Soviet rule found them in Siberia, where before the arrival of Soviet representatives their existence, if deprived of most of its comforts, was bearable; that is, in so far as the existence of people deprived of everything, including liberty, can be so considered. But with the advent of Bolshevik commissars everything changed. The imperial family was subjected to a much stricter regime, to constant humiliations and insults, not to speak of the mental cruelties practised hourly, which really amounted to torture.[1] The last months of their lives they spent in a small house at Ekaterinburg of which they were allowed to occupy two rooms only—the Emperor, the Empress, and the little boy living in one, the four girls in the other. The doors of these rooms had to be kept open night and day on a corridor where the Red guards held constant vigil, watching every move made by the family.

[1] See the articles in *L'Illustration* written by M. Gillard, Swiss tutor to the Tsarevich, and also a book written by him. Later details are known through the legal investigation conducted by a judge named Sokolov, who published its results in a book which was translated into French.

The house itself was surrounded by a high wooden fence which shut out even the view of the sky and kept the rooms in semi-darkness. No window could be opened and the prisoners were permitted neither air nor exercise. Insufficiently fed, systematically brutalized, they had long lost all hope of a happy ending to their sufferings when they were suddenly told that because an attempt had been made to release them they were going to be transferred elsewhere.

What they thought of this news it is impossible to say. They were taken down to the cellar. The Empress was unable to stand; whether this was due to mental anguish or to general physical exhaustion it is also impossible to tell. It was for her that the Emperor asked for a chair. He himself stood up, holding his son in his arms as the boy's condition, undermined by privations, prevented him from walking. When the family, their personal physician, and servants were all assembled, the guards came into the room, closed the doors and shot down all of them. It is true that this final stage was brief; nevertheless, some of the victims did not succumb to the first shot.

At the time of the investigation remnants of a pyre were discovered in which bones, objects of clothing, and precious stones were found. After careful examination and identification of the various objects they were proved to have belonged to the imperial family and to those who perished with them. The remains were put into cases, taken away, and subsequently sent to Europe.

At Alopaievsk the bodies were found in an abandoned coal pit. They were taken out, put into coffins, and sent in a special railway carriage to the rear. Aunt Ella's body and that of the sister of her convent who had lost her life at the same time as she were later, through the efforts of her sister the Marchioness of Milford Haven and of her brother the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt, sent to Jerusalem, where they now rest. The remains of the other victims, those of Volodia amongst them, were deposited in the church of the Russian Orthodox mission in Peking. But there was one member of the family—Grand Duke Michael, brother of the Tsar—of whom no trace could ever be found. He was deported to Siberia with his secretary at about the same time as his other relations but was kept separate from them. According to rumours the Bolsheviks took him and his secretary out of the house where they had been living in confinement and shot them in the nearby woods. Nothing more definite could be discovered and Grand Duke Michael and his friend have vanished for ever.

TSAR NICHOLAS II

One of the last photographs, taken at Tobolsk, 1918

In the winter of 1920 cases were sent to London with things which had belonged to Volodia and my cousins, found in the house at Alopaievsk where they had spent the last months of their lives. Volodia's belongings were not numerous: a double leather frame with photographs of his parents,

a small pocketbook containing paper money, a few yellowed letters from home, and some trinkets. The frame and pocketbook were covered with mould and had a peculiar musty smell of earth as if they had been dug out of the ground. We knew that during his captivity Volodia, who was a writer and a poet, had worked a good deal, but we found no manuscripts in the cases.

With the lists of the objects were included photographs of the bodies taken after they had been carried out of the mine. When I had seen the first one I could not look at the others.

In the early spring of 1920 Princess Paley, who after her escape from Petrograd had been in Finland and then in Sweden, wrote to me that matters concerning my father's estate obliged her to come to Paris in the spring. She had by then recovered from her operation. I was extremely anxious to see her, and my husband and I decided to go to Paris.

Princess Paley and I met at the Ritz, where she was stopping. As I took hold of the doorknob before going into her room, my knees shook so violently that I wondered how I should be able to cross the threshold. The drawing-room was empty when I dragged myself in. I saw a black figure moving about in the bedroom.

"Who is there?" I heard a startled voice.

"It is I, Marisha," I answered.

And then she appeared. Her face was deathly pale and transparent, terribly aged and lined. She had grown smaller, she seemed to have shrivelled up, smothered as she was in her black widow's clothes heavily trimmed with crape. We fell on each other's neck, weeping and speechless. That afternoon we sat in silence; nothing that we could say would have expressed our feelings or brought us any comfort.

After that I came back every day as long as her stay in Paris lasted. Her grief had completely changed her; she was a broken, miserable creature who could hardly speak, hardly think. All the magnificent self-assurance, the composure of the past, had totally disappeared; she was cowed, downtrodden by her misfortunes; she abandoned herself to her misery completely, passionately.

Hidden beneath her outward worldliness there had always been something untamed, elemental about her nature which was now more apparent than ever.

Between violent paroxysms of tears she would accuse herself furiously of having herself been the involuntary cause of the death of her dear ones by not having tried to get them out of the country when there still was time to do so, just after the beginning of the revolution. This idea tortured her night and day.

Slowly, painfully, by bits that I afterwards pieced together, she told me the dreadful story of my father's last months.

Exactly ten days after my husband and I had started on our perilous journey towards freedom, in the night of August 12, 1918, the house at Tsarskoie-Selo where my father was then living with his family was visited by a detachment of Red soldiers. After raiding the house and confiscating all the food and alcohol they could lay hands on, they arrested my father. The order of arrest was duly signed by Uritsky, chief of the Cheka. This organization (the word Che-Ka is made up of the initials of the Russian words meaning Extraordinary Commission) was formed in December 1917 for the purpose of dealing with "sabotage" and so-called counter-revolutionary manifestations. The Extraordinary Commission's activities were tremendous and mysterious, its power far-reaching, its sentences arbitrary and swift. The executions were carried out without trials or the decisions of a tribunal. Subsequently the Cheka headed the Red terror; the word itself became a synonym for horror and desolation.

To protest against the arrest was useless. My father dressed himself and so did my step-mother, who felt that she could not be separated from him at such a moment. They were taken to the local Soviet, which was situated in one of the palaces, where they spent a sleepless night on the benches of an office. Early in the morning they were both driven to Petrograd by car and brought to the chief headquarters of the Cheka, where my father was subjected to a very summary interrogation by an individual who seemed to have no experience in such matters. Here my step-mother was separated from my father. Up till now she had succeeded by her energy and perseverance in protecting him, but things of late had taken a decided change for the worse and she realized to its full extent the danger of the situation. Three of my father's cousins had been put into prison a few days previously. Terribly upset, she tried to think of new ways and means to be of aid to him. She decided at last to ask for an interview with Uritsky, the powerful president of the Cheka himself, in the hope that by pleading with him and appealing to his human feelings she might succeed in influencing him to change his decisions regarding my father. He agreed to receive her. She tried in vain to make him formulate a definite accusation against my

father; he would only say that the Romanovs were “the enemies of the people” and would all be made to pay for their three hundred years of oppression. He told her that in three or four months my father would be sent to Siberia but that at present he was going to join the other Grand Dukes in prison, whither he would be transferred that very night. She, however, would be given passes to the prison which would enable her to visit him and bring him his food.

Their first meeting took place the same evening in the prison yard, where my step-mother was waiting in the hopes of snatching a glimpse of my father as he was being brought to the prison. During the four months that followed my father was kept in a cell by himself. My step-mother was allowed to visit him on certain days and so was his private physician, but there was always someone else present at the interviews. They met besides in the prison office, which was usually crowded with other prisoners and their visitors. On the days when the prisoners could not receive, my step-mother would herself carry to the prison heavy baskets with food and crockery and bring back the receptacles which had contained the previous delivery.

PRINCE VLADIMIR PALEY ("VOLODIA")

The only known picture, hitherto unpublished

Meanwhile my step-mother left no stone unturned to effect a rescue; she made use of every influence, spent hours waiting for the important men of the moment, patiently swallowing every humiliation, every insult. Turbulent and outspoken as she was, it was at times extremely difficult for her to suppress an angry retort. She hoped that, if it were impossible to obtain my

father's release, she could at least get him transferred to a prison hospital where he would be more comfortable. While making her wearisome rounds of the Bolshevik authorities, the poor woman would try to get some information on the fate of her son Volodia, of whom she had had no news since July. The reticence she encountered everywhere on the subject ought to have wakened her suspicions, but she persisted in her belief that he had escaped.

My father, since his illness during the war, had not been strong; he had to be under the constant supervision of his physician and follow a diet. Food was difficult to procure and the little there was had attained tremendous prices. The selling of things to get the necessary cash, the hunting up and buying of provisions of the kind my father could eat, occupied all my step-mother's time. Although she made her headquarters now in Petrograd, where she was nearer to my father, she often went to Tsarskoie-Selo to visit my step-sisters, who had remained there. Irene and Nathalie, fifteen and thirteen at the time, were living through anxious days. Not only were they constantly worrying about my father whom they worshipped but were themselves surrounded by dangers. Raiding parties often broke into the house, generally at night, and the soldiers who took part in them were as a rule far from sober. My step-mother was at a loss what to do.

In September occurred the murder of the notorious Uritsky, animator of the Cheka, which was followed by fearful reprisals and wholesale executions. Princess Paley trembled. My father told her that at night he would hear heavy footsteps in the prison corridor, the clicking of arms, the opening and shutting of cell doors. At noon when the prisoners were taken for their walk several familiar faces would have disappeared, never to be seen again. Every night my father expected to hear steps at his own door, and the click of the lock; to see behind the door suddenly thrown open the detachment of soldiers come to take him away. He was waiting to hear his death warrant. The anxiety was wearing him out physically. But he kept his composure, never showed impatience. On the contrary, seeing my step-mother's anguish he tried to rouse her spirits by being gay and hopeful himself; he even found the courage to make fun of his sordid surroundings. The discomforts, the insults and humiliations, he did not appear to notice.

In the meantime, my father's own house at Tsarskoie-Selo, in which because of its size the family had not lived for several months, was confiscated by the art division of the Soviets and made into a museum. In the way of private belongings my step-mother was only allowed to take the ikons and the photographs. Then she and my step-sisters were ordered out of

my cousin Boris's house, which they and my father had been occupying since they were obliged to leave their own. Princess Paley was forced to prepare for her removal in a few hours' time. She and the girls moved to Petrograd, where they settled down in two rooms, keeping one servant.

At the beginning of December my father was at last transferred to a prison hospital. My step-mother drew a breath of relief. He had a clean room with white walls and real windows, a welcome change after four months spent in a dark cell. The only trouble now was the distance at which the hospital was situated from the part of town where Princess Paley was living. The trips backwards and forwards laden with heavy food baskets completely exhausted her. Most of the way she had to walk; the tram-cars ran only in the centre of the town. Besides she was beginning to suffer a great deal from the tumour in her breast. Once or twice, since they were so anxious to help, she let the children go in her place, but after Irene had been knocked down by a car that went on without even stopping, she did not dare do it again. My step-mother, however, was now allowed to visit my father more frequently, spend more time with him, and talk to him in his room and without witnesses. Her hopes rose; she now bent her efforts on getting him out of the prison hospital and into a private nursing home.

Several people at that time offered their services to help my father escape. The surveillance at the prison hospital was comparatively lax, and it would not have been an impossible matter for my father to get away; but he gave up his chance for freedom, fearing that by escaping himself he might cause the death of his cousins who were in prison. Princess Paley took advantage of the offers for my step-sisters and sent them to join some friends in a sanatorium in Finland, where she was sure they would be well taken care of.

On Christmas Day, when my step-mother went to see my father, she found a commotion reigning throughout the hospital and was soon informed of its reason. The authorities had discovered that the regime at the hospital was too lenient and were changing the entire administration. This day was the last time she ever saw my father. Do what she might, she could never again obtain a permit to visit him. She was desperate but continued to drag herself through the snow to the hospital two or three times a week with her heavy load of baskets. She would wait outside in the cold and try to catch a glimpse of him through the window, ignoring the guards who tried to drive her away with curses and the butts of their rifles. From time to time she would be rewarded by a note which was brought out to her by the nurse or a

maid. The doctor's visits had also been stopped, and my father was far from well. More than a month passed in this way.

Finally, on January 28th, she was told at the hospital that my father was no longer there, that he had been removed to the Cheka headquarters. Strangely enough, the news gave her no particular shock. As long as he had not been taken back to the prison, she thought him safe; it might even mean complete release. She was at that time only preoccupied by his health and by the idea of how to deliver to him the provisions he was so seriously in need of. But on the next day all her fears returned with renewed force. Starting early in the morning she went to the Cheka and the prison, where she failed to obtain any information. Getting more and more desperate as the day wore on she telephoned to one official after another, only to receive evasive and often sneering answers. The next day passed in the same way. On the early morning of January 30, 1920, a friend came to see my step-mother at her rooms. He insisted that she telephone immediately to Madame Gorky, the wife of the author, whose help Princess Paley had often enlisted of late, and ask her for news. Madame Gorky reassured her and said that Gorky himself was returning from Moscow, the seat of the government, where he had obtained the complete release of all the Grand Dukes. Hearing this the friend showed Princess Paley the morning paper. In it she read a long list of names of those executed on the previous night; amongst them were the ex-Grand Dukes Paul, Nicholas, George, and Dmitri. She swooned. By the time she had come to herself Madame Gorky had already confirmed the news.

All was over. After the months of anxiety, feverish activity, efforts, suffering, hopes, there was suddenly this awful emptiness. My father was gone, there was nothing more that she could do for him, he needed her no longer, she was all alone, useless, lost. She was in a stupor and no longer cared about anything.

Only much later, when she was living in Finland, did she hear in detail about what had been going on at the prison hospital during the period between Christmas Day and January 28th, the period when she had not been allowed to see my father, and especially about what had taken place on the days of January 28th and 29th, when she had lost all traces of him. A doctor who was himself a prisoner at the hospital told my step-mother what follows. The subject of my father's last hours I never had the courage to approach when speaking to her and know it only through reading it in her book which was published in French in 1923. I will quote most of the narrative from Princess Paley's writings, some of it in her own words and some condensed by myself.

The change of administration at the hospital affected all the prisoners; in particular my father's existence was made much harder. He was submitted to many discomforts and no longer had a private room.

At noon on January 28th a soldier with an automobile came to the hospital from the Cheka to take my husband away. The prison commissar sent for the doctor and ordered him to tell "the prisoner Paul Romanov" to get ready to go. The doctor went to the room which the Grand Duke now shared amongst others with a colonel of the old army.

"Sir," said the doctor, "I have been sent to tell you that you are to pack your things and dress; you are going to leave this place."

"Am I free?" was my husband's first joyous reaction.

"I have the order to get you ready to go; they are taking you to the Cheka."

"They will probably liberate you," said the Grand Duke's room-mate, the Colonel.

The Grand Duke shook his head.

"No," he said, "it's the end. I know that all is over now. I have felt it coming for some time. Will you promise me, Doctor, that you will tell my wife and children how much I have loved them. I would have wished before dying to ask the forgiveness of those I might have harmed or hurt in my life. And now," he added cheerfully, "help me to pack my things; we must go."

He was taken to the Cheka. On the evening of the next day he asked a Georgian who was being liberated to telephone to his wife and tell her about where he now was. Out of fear or perhaps because he could not get to a telephone, the Georgian did not do so.

That night at ten o'clock the Grand Duke alone was taken to the Peter and Paul Fortress. The other Grand Dukes were brought there directly from the prison. They were then locked up in the Trubetskoy dungeon, where political prisoners were kept in former days. The last events of the tragedy were told to the same doctor by an old-time warden of the fortress prisons. At three in the morning two soldiers came down to the dungeon, made the Grand Dukes strip to the waist, and took them out into the fortress square, the square on which stands the cathedral where all the Romanovs since Peter the Great have been buried. Here they were confronted with the sight of a long and deep common grave in which thirteen bodies already lay. The soldiers stood the Grand Dukes in a line in front of the grave and shot them. A few seconds before the shots were fired, the old warden heard my husband's voice say,

"O Lord, forgive them for they know not what they do."

Other versions no less dramatic exist of my father's last moments, but as they come from less reliable sources it would be superfluous to repeat them.

A week after the tragedy my step-mother's friends and relations in Petrograd arranged her escape. She was incapable of making any decisions about herself, and it was thought better for her to go to Finland, where she could rejoin my step-sisters. She got over the border with surprising ease.

As rapidly as possible she proceeded to the sanatorium at Rauha, where the girls were staying. Here she was met by the doctor and a woman in whose care the children had been during the last weeks. Not only had they not dared to break the news to the girls but they had not even ventured to tell them of their mother's arrival.

> So as to avoid giving them a too violent shock, I took off my heavy crape veil before going to their rooms. I opened the door and looked in. Hearing the sound of the door opening they looked up and catching sight of me they ran towards me with exclamations of surprise and joy.
>
> "Mother, mother" . . . and then after a second, "But where is father, why is he not here . . . ?"
>
> Trembling violently in all my limbs I leant against the doorpost. I answered:
>
> "Father is ill, very ill." Nathalie burst into loud sobs; Irene was white to the lips, her eyes like two burning coals questioned me.
>
> "Father is dead!" she exclaimed.
>
> "Father is dead," I repeated slowly under my breath as I gathered the little girls into my arms.
>
> For a long time I did not have the courage to tell the children that their father had been assassinated; I assured them that his death had been peaceful, without suffering.

Some two weeks later the Princess was operated on. As she was getting better, she tried to concentrate her thoughts on the children, on her son Volodia and on her little daughters. She had now to live for them. Although some sinister rumours had reached her about Volodia's fate, she had never been willing to believe them. Upon her return to the sanatorium at Rauha from Wiborg, where she had been operated on, she got a letter from the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, widow of the Grand Duke Constantine, whose sons John, Constantine, and Igor perished at the same time as Volodia. The Grand Duchess enclosed a report from Siberia received by her from the British military mission attached to the Kolchak armies. In this report were stated the details of the murder. Until that moment my step-mother had been trying to keep up her strength; now she broke down completely. All was over, her life was finished. She prayed for death.

Afterwards, however, she slowly recovered her balance; her amazing vitality got the better of her moral depression and she began again to take an interest in life. She was forced to by her daughters' need for her, but her wounds never healed; they remained as fresh as on the first day.

CHAPTER XII

THE MIND OF THE EXILE

In spite of the sad hours spent with Princess Paley and all they brought back in the way of painful remembrances, Paris appeared to me this time in a much more congenial light. My nature was beginning to overcome the indifference into which I had been plunged since my father's death. Though still unconsciously, I longed for activity, and in London there was decidedly no outlet for my returning forces. In Paris I came to the conclusion that the life I led in London furthered my apathy. London seemed standing still, unable to find a way out of the situation the war had left it in. Paris was different; in comparison it seethed and foamed. So far, of course, a great deal of energy was wasted, but the French were shuffling into place, they were feeling the urge for building up anew their interrupted well-being. I felt sure that in such an atmosphere it would be easier for me to rouse myself and take advantage of the freedom which had been granted me as a compensation for what I had lost. In London the love for traditions which had so agreeably impressed me at my arrival placed me by force of custom almost in my old position—a position somewhat ambiguous—and in which I could no longer see myself. As long as the money lasted, I would have vegetated pleasantly beneath a very thinly gilded surface. This would have amounted almost to living under false pretences, and I did not want such life; I preferred the open and the risks connected with an altogether changed existence.

The thought then came to me of moving to Paris; yet I do not know if I would have done so had not an apartment been offered me at the right moment. This apartment was of convenient size, just four rooms, and agreeably situated; it belonged to a friend who had had it before the war and now wanted to let it go, but preferably to someone he knew. I took it. We returned to London to give up our spacious but uncomfortable palazzo in South Kensington, and in summer we left England definitely. A few months later Dmitri followed our example but he went to live by himself at an hotel; we decided that this was better for many reasons, and we still could meet as often as we liked. Paris was beginning to fill up with Russians.

Princess Paley, who was spending the summer in Switzerland with my step-sisters, also decided to settle down in Paris in spite of the fact that Paris

was for her, still more than for me, alive with painful memories of bygone days. Paris was the place where she had spent the twelve happiest years of her life, the place where she had lived with my father in such perfect understanding, where their children had been born and where she had achieved undreamed-of spiritual satisfactions. But more than a year had now elapsed since my father's death, and she was obliged in spite of her dejection to attend to the material problems of her existence, which, up till her first journey to France in the spring, she had altogether neglected.

The house at Boulogne had now to be sold, as it was far too large for her and the girls; besides, there was an accumulation of debts on the property which made it a heavy burden to carry. By selling it my step-mother could hope to realize, even after the charges had been paid off, a small capital on which she and the children could live. The attention she had to give these matters brought her out of her torpor, and eventually she proved herself to be a much sounder business woman than any of us.

Coming to Paris in the autumn of 1921 she at first settled down in an apartment; my step-sisters were made to go to school, which they did with great reluctance, realizing nevertheless that their education was too meagre to suffice them in the future. But it was difficult for them, after what they had been through, to go back to the schoolroom. When I had left them in 1918, they were still small children; now they had quite grown up and the difference was especially noticeable in Irene, the eldest. She had always been a pensive, highly strung child, and the anxieties of the revolution, her father's sufferings and death, and the death of her brother had made an impression upon her soul that nothing could obliterate. Her sorrow was of a silent and reserved nature; she would hardly ever show any outward signs of emotion, but you could not help noticing that this child of seventeen could not see life with the eyes of her age. Her younger sister Natasha, although she also had carried away with her from Russia many tragic remembrances, was of a more resilient nature and accepted the unavoidable with greater ease.

Both sisters, however, had been so fundamentally shaken by all that had happened that for a long time it was difficult for them to find an adjustment. They had retired so profoundly within themselves, especially Irene, who in her turn influenced her sister, that they seemed to be in a state of internal revolt against the whole world. They shunned people and fled even from old acquaintances. I tried at different times to bring them out of this almost morbid condition but with no success. Once, nearly a year later, thinking to divert them I organized an informal dance in their honour, to which I asked

young Russians of their age. But they did not appreciate my action in the slightest; they came with tear-stained cheeks only after having been soundly scolded by their mother, and not one smile crossed their faces during the entire evening. I felt very much annoyed with myself for having unwillingly inflicted such an ordeal upon them. In due time, however, they grew out of this attitude; they began to enjoy life like any other young creatures of their age; but they never lost their earnest attitude towards existence and have kept deep down in their eyes an expression of wistfulness which nothing will ever entirely take away. In 1923 Irene married Prince Theodore, second son of Grand Duke Alexander and Grand Duchess Xenia. Natasha, the second sister, was married in 1927 to Lucien Lelong, a prominent Parisian couturier.

THE WEDDING OF PRINCESS IRENE PALEY AND PRINCE THEODORE

Standing are the Grand Duke Dmitri, Princess Olga Paley (mother of the bride), Prince Theodore, the Grand Duke Alexander and the Grand Duchess Xenia (the groom's parents), and the author

Eventually, when her affairs were settled, Princess Paley bought a small house in the rue de la Faisanderie, not far from the Bois de Boulogne, in which she spent the last years of her life surrounded by the photographs and few souvenirs she could collect in the old Boulogne house. Once a year at Christmas she used to gather us all together around a Christmas tree for a celebration in memory of the past. Although the violent phase of her sorrow

had passed, the marks remained. Her own appearance, of which she had taken such meticulous care, she now largely neglected. She had grown stout and in the morning padded around the house in worn-out slippers and an old dressing-gown, her hair hanging in strands about a still beautiful but tired face. But her energy was still astounding; her interests and those of her children she defended with persistence and tenacity, clinging to the few possessions which still remained to her.

I had moved to Paris in the illusion that immediately upon my arrival a new life would open up before me. But I was mistaken; here, too, I found certain difficulties in adapting myself. I did not know what I really wanted, I was groping in the dark and was blind even to possibilities which surrounded me. But our new home was much better suited to our present situation in life than the big house in London.

In the autumn I found a position in a bank for my husband and, as he was absent during most of the day, I was very much by myself. The bedroom and drawing-room of the apartment looked out upon the quiet rue de Courcelles and in these two rooms I spent my days. In the bedroom I had installed a cutting table and a sewing machine, for I was still making my own dresses and now even took in orders; in the drawing-room I sat with my handwork. Bent over endless hemstitching I thought and thought. Weeks, months passed in this way. And as the time went by I grew more and more dissatisfied with myself; instead of evolving I was going backwards; I was not doing anything either for myself or for others and I was wasting, wasting precious years. If my life had been restricted in London, it became far more so in Paris. There was no influence around me which could bring me out of this impasse, and I could not help myself; I often despaired now of my own future. Little by little, and almost unaware, I took on the mind and spirit of the exile.

We went out very little and saw almost exclusively Russians, Russians of our own class. I knew very few of them as I had not had the opportunity to meet Russian society. Before my first marriage I had been too young to go out, and my return to Russia coincided with the outbreak of the war, during which I had given up all my time to hospital work and was absent from social centres. Besides, the war had scattered everyone. The atmosphere which settled down around us had nothing to do with the people or the interests of the country we were living in; we led an existence apart. We avoided seeing foreigners, not so much because we were now on different material planes or were unable to return hospitality, but because they represented actualities which were distasteful to us and which we affected to

despise. We were mentally self-sufficient and rather arrogant in our narrowness.

But apart from this, amongst those we saw there were none who had not lost several members of their families in the turmoil and had not been themselves a hair's breadth from death. Most of them had suffered materially more than I had, but losses were never discussed or even alluded to in our midst, and we never told each other the harrowing tales of our escapes from Russia. Everyone tried to make the best of his present situation, and the situation itself was made easier by the fact that it affected us all equally. No one was hysterical, no one complained. We managed even to be gay in a detached, inconsequential sort of way.

If psychologically we presented an interesting study, intellectually we were of no importance. All our conversations still turned around one subject —the past. This past was like a dusty diamond which we held to the light in the hope of seeing the sun rays play through it. We spoke of the past, we looked back to it. And speaking of the past we sought for no lessons but tirelessly and aimlessly went over old ground seeking whom to blame for what had befallen us. Our future as a whole we could not imagine, while our return to Russia, of which we were then so certain, we pictured only under very definite auspices. We lived side by side with life but were afraid of meeting it; drifting on its surface we avoided penetrating deeper into the reasons and meaning of things, afraid to be faced with our own deficiencies. The new problems of the world and its new requirements passed us by. We were pliable in adapting ourselves quickly to the altered external conditions, but rarely were we able to adjust ourselves fundamentally to the new era. We were falling behind our time but very few of us noticed it. The problems we discussed had been solved without our aid and in spite of us. Yet we still held heated arguments upon their different points. We began by expecting the change in Russia first from month to month and then from year to year, and from year to year we drifted farther and farther away from what Russia was becoming, without being able to follow or understand the thoroughness of the changes she was undergoing.

But many years have now passed, enough for us to be replaced by a new generation, a generation which, although it has grown up on foreign soil, still thinks of Russia as its native land. Some of these young ones do not remember anything of their country, but many have kept vivid if fleeting impressions of lofty skies and broad landscapes, of the odour of autumn leaves in the great forests, of the sound of bells from the village church, of the feeling and the smell of home. The war and the revolution for them are

history, the memory of Russia unmarred by political strife. The old controversies of their parents do not interest them; they are in a new age and it has its new problems for them to solve. Life is bitter reality to them, and they are equipped by early hardships for a struggle in dead earnest. They are free of prejudices, full of courage and the daring to seek their own truths, full of a new and healthy idealism of their own.

AT HOME IN THE RUE DE COURCELLES

But as for myself, I must say that my observations continued to give me no satisfaction; I saw nothing constructive even in a personal sense. More and more I shut myself up in an inner world of thought. There were answers missing to many questions and, since I could not find these answers in the conversations around me, I was forced to look for other sources of information. I had long been convinced that the catastrophe which had befallen us had its roots within us, but how was I to bring these roots to light and make them clear even to myself? The subject was a vast and a complex one, and I could not afford to wait for the judgment of history.

As in London, I made a few desperate attempts to escape from the state of mental stagnation in which I now found myself—not because of my own lack of energy as before, but because of the increasing weight of my surroundings. At first I was unsuccessful but an opportunity did at last present itself, and this time nothing could stop me from taking advantage of it.

One day in the winter of 1921, towards the end of the afternoon, as I was sitting as usual in my green arm-chair bent over my stitching and deep in

thought, I was startled by a ring at the front door. The servant handed me a card; it bore a name which I knew without ever having met its owner. The man was a Russian who was known as a very energetic Red Cross worker and a promoter of various relief organizations for the refugees. I asked him to come in. He sat down in front of me and, after the first few conventional phrases had been uttered, he began to shame me for what he called my idleness and inertia. He could not understand how, after my experience in war work, I could be content with sitting still, shut up in my apartment, and why I did nothing to speak of for the refugees. There was nothing I could say in my defence. He pointed out the tasks which in his opinion I ought to undertake; they were numerous and interesting enough to fire my imagination immediately. I was easily persuaded to follow his suggestions and set to work with enthusiasm. This conversation was the origin of my charity activities, which I carried on with more or less success for several years to come. Through these activities my seclusion soon came to an end, my road began to widen again, and as it widened I saw my responsibilities grow and become more important. But in my home this emancipation was met with no sympathy.

The story of the emigration is a unique chapter in Russian history. At the end of 1920 the last anti-Bolshevik movement in the south of Russia, led by General Wrangel, was completely defeated and the civil war in Russia came to an end. Entire military units, about 60,000 men in all, were evacuated to Gallipoli, whence they subsequently were transferred to the Balkan states, mostly to Serbia. There they settled down still banded together in units and in order to earn a living they formed organized teams which were employed on railway construction, road building, and work in mines and forests. General Wrangel, whose ascendency over his troops was tremendous, lived in their midst and held them together by the sheer magnetism of his own personality. He and his wife led the lives of Spartans, not giving a thought to themselves, supporting and caring for the needs of this little army in exile, keeping up discipline and their *esprit de corps* until they could be normally absorbed by the country which had offered them an asylum. The volunteer army consisted largely of professional officers who had been in the field since 1914 and of members of the intelligentsia, the lower-class elements being in the minority. The first two categories had an extremely hard time in adapting themselves to the condition of manual labourers and suffered greatly in the process; still they accepted their lot with extraordinary fortitude and clung together in their misfortunes.

Even now, after all these years, this spirit still persists. I know of a group of men who have settled down in Paris, about eighty in number, all

belonging to the same regiment. They all work as porters and freight handlers at one of the railway stations and live together in a wooden barrack in the yards. A number of these men are perfectly capable of doing intellectual work and have had many occasions to get positions more suited to their capacities, yet they would rather continue this hard existence than break up the unit. The results of their perseverance are noteworthy. By cleverly managing their joint accounts they were able eventually to buy a house in a Parisian suburb which they use as a club and where they have started a Russian military museum. The objects which they have been able to get together already form an important and unique collection.

The civilians who were evacuated at the same time as the Wrangel army were landed at Constantinople and later distributed amongst various camps in the suburbs and the islands of the Prince's group. This however was not the first arrival of refugees from Russia; the town and its vicinity were overcrowded with more than 300,000 sick, destitute, and miserable human beings. English, French, and especially American organizations did all that was in their power to minister to their needs, to look after the sick, to provide food and clothing, to save the children. The results achieved were splendid, yet the calamity had assumed such proportions that to meet all emergencies was almost impossible.

Heartrending tragedies under such circumstances became commonplace occurrences. Families had been torn apart in the haste and disorder of the evacuation, mothers had been separated from their young children, sometimes never to find them again. Of the members of one family some would have arrived in Constantinople to discover that others had been left behind in Russia to an unknown and usually terrible fate. Epidemics of the "Spanish flu," of typhus, typhoid fever, diphtheria, raged amongst the refugees and carried them away by the hundred. The children especially suffered. I remember hearing about an epidemic of diphtheria which swept over a camp of refugees on one of the islands; nearly all the children died. People I knew lost two, three, four of their children in a few days' time.

As Constantinople was cleared the refugees gradually spread throughout Europe. Many of them settled in the Balkans, others belonging to groups coming from the north went to Germany, where living was cheap, thanks to the depreciation of the mark. It is believed that with the Siberian evacuation the number of Russians who had been obliged to leave their country exceeded a million and a half. Although the invasion was a burden to European countries which had their own post-war problems to solve, they did what was in their power to aid the refugees, and especially in the way of

education was their help important and beneficent. In return the Russians brought to the lands which received them their artistic and cultural perceptions, their innate love of beauty, which all their tragedies and their present sordid surroundings could not destroy.

The lot of the Russian exiles remains a tragical one. There is no place at present that they can call home; wherever they settle they are only tolerated, never welcomed. Their competition is feared and, if unemployment strikes a country, they are the first to lose the work which it has taken them such infinite pains to procure. In most cases they are unfit for prolonged physical effort, not possessing the strength or training for manual labour, yet they do not have the necessary diplomas to take up intellectual professions in a foreign country. Of all the problems in the lives of the exiles it is the education of their children which is the hardest. Those of them who have seen better days—and most of them have come from a very different kind of life from that which is open to them now—cannot reconcile themselves to the idea of seeing their children grow up without education, deprived of means to make a better place for themselves in the future; but this education is something that the majority of them cannot afford. Foreign institutions have extended help lavishly, and Russian youth owes them a great deal of gratitude; but only a comparatively small number have been able to benefit by this help, and many have been obliged to make their own way.

Paris in its turn was invaded by the refugees. Most of those who arrived were in search of work, and in the course of time those who were earnest in their desire to earn a living were successful. There was no fear of unemployment in France in those years; on the contrary hands were lacking to perform the necessary amount of work. But until they had looked around and could take care of themselves the refugees had to have moral and material support, especially for the large percentage of aged and sick who needed attention. Many organizations were formed for their relief, which in most cases were directed and run by Russians themselves, generally by those who had the desire or the means to give their services for nothing.

I would lay my needle and *crêpe de Chine* aside and spend hours sitting on committees, visiting organizations, planning charity performances, selling tickets, begging for money. Around myself I saw nothing but need, such need and sorrow as to make one's blood freeze. It was beyond human power and ingenuity to come to the aid of all who required it, and this helplessness often drove me to despair.

The work, necessary as it was, was fraught with great difficulties. Except for the feeling that I was doing my duty I derived few satisfactions out of it.

Sectarianism still played an important part in our relationships, and the revolution had emphasized class suspicion and distrust which exile did not efface. Many of us viewed with fear those who did not belong to us; and they returned this suspicion. In my charity work I often encountered this mood. The naïve enmity of the progressive intellectuals towards the former aristocrats, based upon old prejudices and preconceived ideas, made it almost impossible to work together. A liberal leader, not to mention a Socialist, although both were antagonistic towards the Soviet regime, would not sit at the same board meeting with a Grand Duchess, nor would anyone dare to suggest our serving on the same committee. Though I could have been useful in many ways, I was sought after chiefly for purposes of a material sort: my activity was always limited by political considerations. All this put me in a difficult position, and I had to proceed with a painful amount of tact.

GENERAL WRANGEL REVIEWING HIS KUBAN COSSACK TROOPS, 1926

THE REGIMENT OF THE GUARD OF DON COSSACKS IN PARIS, 1925

Even those I tried to help often assumed a curious attitude towards me. One incident, although trifling, affected me deeply because it occurred at the beginning of my career when I was still ridiculously susceptible. In the spring of 1921 I organized a charity sale at a private house belonging to some friends of mine. I could have the use of the house only on certain dates, which happened to coincide with the last days of the Orthodox passion week. Being very devout, my compatriots to begin with were extremely shocked by my choice of the date. The sale was to consist of various articles which had been fabricated by the refugees themselves and which they had no chance of showing to the public in any other way; the performance was to last for three days and had taken time and work to

organize, especially as I had no one to help me. On the passion week Thursday I went to church in the morning for communion. The Russian church as an institution had always been one of the supporting pillars of the throne, and for that reason its representatives were now extremely anxious to display a marked indifference towards us in order to keep public sympathy. The priests at the Paris church were afraid even of saying mass for the dead imperial family with the mention of their titles. Having many arrangements to complete before noon at the house of my friends, as the sale was to open in the early afternoon, I was in a hurry to leave church. But the church was crowded with people who had also come for communion, and I was afraid that if I took my turn in line I would not be able to get away until too late. I therefore sent to ask the priest if he would let me be one of the first to approach the chalice, explaining the reasons for my request. He consented and at the right moment dispatched an attendant to help me through the crowd. A long line had already been formed. As, following my guide, I made my way through the throng, I noticed a few unfriendly glances directed towards me but, when I reached the head of the line, I began to hear words of protest in tones rather out of place in those surroundings. Although I felt justified in doing so, I could not for a long time forgive myself for having asked for a privilege.

The sale incidentally was a great success, partly on account of the beauty of the house and partly because it was the first time that the public came into personal contact with the refugees and saw what they were capable of producing. But criticisms still poured down upon my poor head. Wishing to show the visitors and especially my compatriots that I shared in the general predicament and did not shirk work I also exhibited some of my own productions; but this was totally misunderstood by the Russians, and I was accused of trying to take all the limelight. This was not the only disconcerting incident; they continued to occur, as was perhaps after all only natural, considering that those I had to do with were in most cases sorely tried and overwrought people. But in spite of them I continued my work. While observing the courage, cheerfulness, and patience of all these struggling and homeless beings I was learning a great deal myself.

But in the meantime life in Paris, in spite of our modest establishment, proved to be more expensive than it had been even in London. It was impossible to take part in charity work and not contribute a certain amount oneself; it was impossible to sit back and watch people starving who used to live in the same conditions as we had. Besides we were the prey of friends who wanted to start businesses which promised to put them on their feet and which never did; we were exploited by adventurers who knew how to entrap

us into some enterprise profitable to them alone. A great deal, a very great deal of money went that way. Thinking that my husband was more capable of looking after money matters than I was, I left it all to him, but his kindheartedness and inexperience persistently and regularly got the better of him. One piece of jewellery was sold after the other; the store which had seemed inexhaustible at first diminished with alarming rapidity; our resources were melting and we had no income. Work and only work could save us now, save us from aimless speculations, from complete ruin, and from our unsatisfying existence.

CHAPTER XIII

MOTHER AND SON

THE first winter in Paris had been, on the whole, uneventful except for my decision to take up charity work. And outwardly even this did not change my existence very much. In the evenings I still did my sewing, and we continued to see the same people.

By that time I had become quite anxious to see my son again. He would soon be twelve years old and, although I realized the impossibility of having him with me, I longed to re-establish the contact between us. Besides the fact that I had married again and the Swedish court did not wish him to meet my husband, my present conditions were not suited to the life he was going to lead and I had nothing to offer him. I knew all this perfectly well and the knowledge did not make things easier.

My former father-in-law, King Gustave of Sweden, had come to Paris on a private visit for a few days, and a meeting was arranged between us, the first one since I had left the country. The chief aim of this interview was to discuss the possibility of a reunion with my son. I shall never forget the kindness the King showed me on that occasion and the delightful way in which he received me. After giving me an affectionate kiss he began talking to me in Swedish as he had done in former days. The correct form in the Swedish language demands that in conversation, especially with a person older than oneself, the third person, his name, or his title should be used. While I was married to his son I always addressed the King as "Father" but after what had taken place I could not think of doing so and was very much embarrassed. Instead of continuing the conversation I said in English:

"What do you want me to call you, Sir?" laying particular stress on the word "Sir."

"Why, 'Father,' of course," said the King, and added, "On the condition you yourself do not mind doing so. You know how fond I was of your father; now that you have him no longer it would be a pleasure for me to have you call me as you did him. And I hope you feel the same way."

By Wide World Photos

KING ALFONSO AS THE GUEST OF KING GUSTAVE IN SWEDEN

I was so touched and overcome by his kindness that I could not find a word to express what I felt. Of late we had not been so very much spoilt by our more fortunate relations, and these words, especially coming from him, I appreciated more than I could ever say.

After such a beginning it was perfectly natural that the results of our conversation were satisfactory. The King gave his consent to a meeting between my son and me. Yet the meeting had to take place on neutral ground; there was no question of my going to Sweden and the boy could not be sent to Paris. It was therefore later decided that the most convenient place for us to see each other would be Denmark. We both had many relations there; Dmitri wanted to accompany me, and we could stop with the Marlings, who were now at the British legation in Copenhagen. Lennart would come with his old Swedish nurse and my former equerry Rudebeck and live either at the Marlings' or at the hotel. This arrangement satisfied everyone, and I was delighted that my first meeting with Lennart would be at the home of the Marlings. So much for the future depended on the way this first meeting would come off, and I knew that Lady Marling's tact and understanding would be of tremendous help to me.

In the early summer of 1921 Dmitri and I started for Denmark and we thoroughly enjoyed almost every minute of this trip. We arrived in Copenhagen ahead of my son so that all the necessary arrangements could be completed beforehand. The day of his arrival Dmitri and I went down to the docks, and I was so overcome with emotion that as the boat from Sweden neared the pier I had to steady myself against a wall. On the deck of the steamer a sturdy little figure in a sailor suit was waving to us. How big he seemed to me. Beside him in her grey suit and little black cap stood his faithful nurse, whose face was so familiar to me, the face that was associated with so many poignant memories. In a flash I saw her moving about the Oakhill nursery looking at me with her kind old sympathetic eyes; she never said anything, but her subsequent behaviour showed how much more human and understanding she was than many others.

The boat had docked; Dmitri took me by the arm and led me on. They were coming down the gangway. I embraced my child, and then the old nurse and I kissed and kissed each other, the tears streaming down our faces, while Lennart in the perfect composure of his twelve years was conversing sedately with his uncle. These moments, in spite of their joy, rank amongst the bitterest in my life.

Lady Marling could not offer her hospitality to all of Lennart's party, and, as he was not supposed to be separated from the people he had come with, they were all obliged to go to the hotel. The legation, however, was just across the street from the hotel, and I spent the mornings with my son in his rooms. We lunched at the legation, and afterwards all of us, including the Marling children, went for drives or excursions in the afternoons. The

Dowager Empress Marie was spending the summer at her villa on the seashore outside of Copenhagen, and we often went to see her. These visits were especially delightful, for, despite exile and all that went with it, she had kept every particle of the old atmosphere about her. There was nothing by any means imposing about her present existence; it was modest, even poor; but permeating it you felt the spirit of olden times, of all that was best in the olden times. In her simplicity and total absence of concern over her present surroundings there was so much dignity that in spite of yourself you thought of the Russian Empress beneath the worn black dress and you forgot that this modest little house was not the palace. How much more impressive and stately she seemed to me in her acceptance of her fate. Her manner was precisely the same as it had always been; she displayed the same affectionate interest in what we were doing; she showed the same unconcern, the same old-fashioned but sweet naïveté about the things of our modern days.

Our stay in Copenhagen turned out to be a kind of general Swedish gathering. There was a military horse show going on, and many Swedish officers, of whom I knew several, had come over. My favourite maid of honour, Anna Hamilton, now married and the mother of three or four children, came and spent a few days with me. All these people were full of attentions towards me and made me feel very happy.

But time went all too quickly and the delightful days came to an end. I had to say good-bye to Lennart just at the moment when I had drawn a new and still tender tie between us. Would it hold until I saw him again? We had begun to understand one another. It seemed so hard to see him disappear from me again, go back alone to the milieu which I had left once and for all, where there was no place for me any longer, even as his mother. I could never see him live in his own country, never see what his surroundings were nor how he developed in them or how they influenced him. I no longer had my own country to receive him in, my country which I had hoped he would learn to like, which I would have shown him with such delight. Henceforth we were destined to meet like gipsies, first at one hotel then at another, against an impersonal background. I had no home, I had nothing to give him except what I had drawn myself out of life, and this I had to impart to him sitting on a hard, plush sofa in a hotel parlour or in a taxi during an excursion. It was an ordeal; all my sensitiveness revolted against it, the words stuck in my throat, I myself became banal, frozen. And I who saw with such regret the passing of the years, would in this case gladly have skipped over a few of them so as to see Lennart grown up and free.

I saw my son only twice more during the next seven years that I spent in Europe. The planning of these interviews took such time and was done in such detail that the preparations they required resembled more the organization of political conferences than simple meetings between a mother and son. These preparations complicated things extremely. The rules of court etiquette had ceased to exist for me such a long time ago that now when they were forced upon me again I felt as if I were looking back into another age.

The second time Lennart and I met was at Wiesbaden in Germany. He must have been about fourteen years old then. I will never forget the sad memories I carried away with me of the hot, dreary days we spent together and my desperate endeavours to find occupations to keep him amused. I never felt myself for a moment and was afraid that his own impressions of the stay might be so painful as to make him think of me with horror. It was almost better not to see him at all under such conditions and to wait for a more natural occasion.

Amongst the excursions we undertook during the time we spent together in Wiesbaden was one to Darmstadt, the residence of the Grand Duke and Duchess of Hesse-Darmstadt. Grand Duke Ernest was the brother of the late Empress Alexandra and also of Grand Duchess Elizabeth (Aunt Ella). In our childhood we had often accompanied Uncle Serge and Aunt Ella on visits to Darmstadt of which I had kept pleasant memories. Besides the pleasure of seeing the Grand Duke and his wife again after so many years I knew that in their home I would find many an old souvenir that would remind me of the past. Both the sisters, the Empress and Aunt Ella, adored their brother and their old home. This was also a unique occasion for showing Lennart a place which was at least vaguely connected with my own past, with my childhood, the days in which I did not have to wander about the world homeless.

As I had anticipated, the visit was both painful and delightful. Seeing spots which once were quite familiar to me but where I had not been for a very long time was like reading the epilogue of a novel. The setting was the same, the characters also; but the story had moved on, the children had grown up and the parents had aged somewhat.

The revolution in Germany had deprived the Grand Duke of his official position and of a certain amount of his possessions, but most of his private property had been left him. As a private citizen now he still enjoyed the respect of his former subjects, was perfectly free in his movements, and above all he and his family could remain in their country and in their old surroundings.

It is true that the setting had lost much of its former brilliancy. The house seemed too big now, out of proportion with the present requirements. There were no liveried footmen standing about in the halls, no guards, no sentinels at the front gate. Weeds had come up on the paths of the palace garden. Everything, even the town, lacked animation. It was as though the whole place, including the palace and the town, had been closed up for a long period of time. The people in the streets looked like heavy autumn flies, and the Grand Ducal couple themselves as if they had covered up the furniture but had been too indolent to move.

The Grand Duke and his wife seemed satisfied with their life and perfectly contented with its present privacy. Uncle Ernie, as we called him, had always been an active person interested in all aspects of art and he still found enough to keep him busy. Our conversations turned mostly around the subject of the terrible fate of his two sisters, but he could not add anything to the information which I possessed already, and he on his side knew all that I knew.

PRINCE LENNART

Mother and son

In Copenhagen *With his uncle*

After Wiesbaden I did not see my son until three years later. Time was passing, and he was nearing the age when he would be free. He was seventeen now. This time the meeting was arranged in Brussels, where he was coming from Italy, after a visit to his grandmother, the Queen of Sweden. The old lady was devoted to him and during these years had kept him with her as much as possible. But as the circumstances of my departure from Sweden had left her no pleasant memories of me, it was more than

natural that my name was never mentioned in her presence. There remained, however, several people in Lennart's entourage who never let him forget me —of these the most important one was the old nurse. Ever since I had left Sweden she had written to me regularly and continued to talk of me to Lennart in an effort to keep his memories alive. Now that he was grown up, she had been pensioned and lived in a little apartment in Stockholm where Lennart used to go and see her. He still was as fond of her as when he was a small boy, and this woman did more for him and his mental development than anybody else around him. In Wiesbaden she had still been with him, but now he really could no longer travel about accompanied by a nurse. This time he was coming with a Count Loewenhaupt, an elderly gentleman who held an office at court and who had been one of my most loyal friends in Sweden.

In order not to lose an hour of the precious time we were allowed to spend together, I went to Brussels on the eve of the day appointed for the meeting. Upon my arrival at the hotel I was taken straight up to the apartment I had ordered in advance. My maid unpacked, and we both pulled around the furniture in my sitting-room to make the place look less formal. I had brought some bibelots and sofa cushions which I disposed around and then I went into the town to get some flowers for the rooms. Having accomplished my preparations I decided to rest for a while as I had a bad headache. Just as I had settled down on the chaise-longue I heard a knock at the door. A bell-boy came in and handed me a card on a salver. It was Count Loewenhaupt who wanted to see me. I was delighted but a little astonished that he should have arrived in Brussels a day before his charge. In a few moments the door opened and Loewenhaupt walked in. We had not seen each other since I had left Sweden, which was a good many years ago, and we both felt quite tearful during the first few minutes of the interview.

"And when is Lennart arriving?" I asked as soon as our effusions had somewhat calmed themselves.

"Prince Lennart is here," he answered.

"Here! But how is it that I have not yet seen him? Where is he?"

"He is at the palace, calling on his cousin, Crown Princess Astrid."

Both Lennart and I had had the same idea in arriving a day ahead of time. Count Loewenhaupt had seen me come to the hotel with my luggage and go up to the desk, but his discretion was such that he had not ventured to approach me unawares. He also thought it more correct to wait until I had rested after my journey (the trip from Paris takes five hours), and in the

meantime Lennart had gone to see his cousin. All this was done with the kindest intentions but I could not help marvelling at this excess of politeness and formality.

While we were waiting for Lennart to return from the palace, Loewenhaupt and I talked about him. Since he was a small boy Lennart had been friendly with the Loewenhaupt children, and the Count had taken a great interest in him. He spoke to me freely and told me more about Lennart's boyhood than I had heard from anybody before. The irony of learning about my son from this outsider was tempered by the knowledge that he had been in kindly hands.

At last Lennart himself arrived. In the three years since I had seen him he had grown up, he was a young man now; and with a pang of joy I realized that the moment I had been waiting for with such impatience had come. I saw also that I need not fear any disappointments. Another three years and we would be completely free. To my great surprise and still greater pleasure I discovered that he himself looked upon the situation in the same way.

In spite of our long separations, in spite of many unfavourable circumstances, in some mysterious way he clung to me. This instinctive feeling he had towards me reminded me of my own past; it was the same kind of feeling I had towards my father after his second marriage and during his banishment in Paris. Nothing that was said around me, no influence in the world, could have turned my affections from him, the longer we were separated the dearer he had grown to me.

While I looked at Lennart often in bewilderment, wondering in spite of myself at this big boy being my own child, he took me as a matter of course. Our relationship this time quickly assumed an easy and intimate character, as if we had always been together; and best of all he treated me not as a parent but as a friend, almost as an equal in age. It is true that I was younger than those who generally surrounded him; he apparently found me younger-looking than he had expected. When we went out together, he watched with eagerness the reactions of the people around us; he was delighted at the effect made by my Parisian clothes against the rather dowdy Brussels background.

I studied him closely. There was in him the great inexperience and naïveté of his age enhanced by the restrictions of his upbringing and yet an inclination towards independence developed by his lonely boyhood. He was

natural and gay but at the same time very mindful of the rules in which he had been brought up. He was the Swedish prince.

I wondered how his future would shape itself in our modern age, when no one can ever tell, and least of all a prince, at what moment he will be compelled to face life in its hardest aspects. At the time he was hardly more equipped for realities than I once was. For years I had grieved over the fact that his mind was being fashioned by others and that I could not be of any help to him in his development, but now for the first time I saw that under the circumstances it was better that I had stood outside of his usual circle. Later my experience might really be of value to him and he would have more confidence in it. Perhaps I would be allowed to contribute something to his happiness after all.

By Wide World Photos

QUEEN VICTORIA ENA OF SPAIN (SEATED) AND QUEEN ELIZABETH OF BELGIUM AT THE COURT IN BRUSSELS, 1923

Now that he is a young man and master of his actions, the mere feeling that we are free to go to each other when and how we please is a consolation. To have been able to go to London for his democratic wedding in 1932, and to meet his attractive young bride, meant much to me, though I

could only regret his excessive independence in refusing to be married in a church.

In Brussels I had at last the occasion of meeting Queen Elizabeth and King Albert. Upon my arrival I had written a note to the Queen asking her to grant me an interview and she invited Lennart and myself to dinner. The feelings of admiration with which I was approaching her had been of long standing, she was everything that constituted my idea of a true Queen. All she did was done in a way I admired. She had made her life herself without permitting her position to interfere with it, and, what is rarer still in our circles, she had moulded her position into suiting her ideals, the combined ideals of a real person and of a real Queen. The moderation, the taste she displayed under every circumstance was something that from afar I had marvelled at always. And with it all, with all the seriousness of her interests, I loved the human side one felt, I loved her smiling pictures and even her smart trim clothes.

Unfortunately my visit to the palace was much too short for me to get acquainted with her. We sat rather stiffly on a sofa before and after dinner and talked about things which, though they were perhaps not exactly dull, were vital neither in her existence nor in mine. We were much more shy and self-conscious in each other's presence than we would have been with outsiders.

This time when I went back to Paris my mind was at ease about Lennart.

PART TWO

FALSE DAWN

CHAPTER XIV

THE BIRTH OF KITMIR

In 1921 the first spectacular—to some even romantic—stage of our exile had come to an end, and the interest we had attracted at the beginning was on the wane. There were too many of us Russian refugees, and we began to be taken as a matter of course. Although we ourselves did not realize it, life was claiming its rights.

My brother, following us from London, had settled down at first in a small two-room apartment not far from mine. He was obliged now to look for a job, for his resources were coming to an end. In money matters he had gone through the same experience as I had. He also was doling out his money right and left, was being exploited and persuaded to invest in unprofitable enterprises. But what happened to him I always took much more to heart than my own unpleasant experiences, and I worried over him so much that he began to conceal his real financial situation from me. I did not see much of him during the first years in Paris. Our interests were very different at that time, and he kept away also because he did not care for the people who surrounded us. If I wanted to see him, I would walk over to his apartment in the morning and keep him company while he was having his breakfast. It was not a case of our having become estranged; we understood each other better than any other two people in the world—yet, just because our understanding was so perfect, we avoided mentioning certain subjects, those precisely which were nearest to our hearts and most disturbing. I had come up against problems in my private life which I had least of all expected and which made the uncertain future appear still more disquieting. But I had always believed that to discuss the difficulties of married life was like scratching a sore; it never did any good. Voicing complaints to a third person no matter how near to you made the situation harder to bear. Therefore, for the time being I kept them to myself.

Dmitri, on his own account, was going through a very painful period of readjustment and was just as reticent about his problems as I was about mine. Consequently we had little more to talk about than personalities and everyday trifles.

Eventually Dmitri accepted a position he was offered in a big champagne firm at Reims, to which his services became so valuable that he

was made a member of the board of directors. My parents-in-law and Aleck Putiatin had also joined us in Paris. Until Aleck could find another occupation, Dmitri took him as his secretary.

My own thoughts now were taken up solely with the idea of a paying occupation, as with every month it became more apparent that we could not go on in the hit-or-miss fashion that we had been following. But my very limited capabilities excluded most kinds of work, and those which would have been available to me either did not seem attractive or would not have been worth while financially.

In the autumn of 1921 I met Mlle. Chanel, the most successful dressmaker in Paris since the war and a promising business woman besides. Europe had very few business women and refused to take them seriously, but her brilliant talents had begun to attract general attention. Chanel was neither a professional designer nor a professional dressmaker; she had a head for business and a flair for it. Born in the provinces, of modest extraction, she began by trying her hand at various occupations, amongst them exercising horses as a "boy" in a racing stable. Finally she opened a small millinery shop in Paris financed by a very intelligent friend of hers who being himself a business man started her off on a sound basis.

She became a dressmaker during the war and entirely by accident; she chose the career not because she had a particular vocation for it but because it offered her the biggest opportunities within her own limitations. Had she begun life in different circumstances and possessed the necessary training she would have become an important executive in any field of business she had chosen.

At the time I met her she was not much older than I was, but somehow you did not think of her age, nor did you particularly notice her looks. It was the firmness of her jaw, the determined carriage of her neck that struck you. You were swept off your feet by the fierce vitality she exhaled, the quality of which was inspiring and infectious. Mlle. Chanel was an innovator and a revolutionary in her particular line. Until her time Parisian dressmaking was an art exercised by very few initiates and jealously guarded by them. They studied and dealt with the tastes of a comparatively small group of fastidious and smart women; the fashions would therefore take a long time to reach the multitude and, when they reached it, would be disfigured beyond recognition. There would be no such thing as a season for one article or a vogue for another. The mode was created by what was designed for the lovely Countess of So-and-So or the Princess of This-and-That and what was becoming to them. Individualism reigned supreme, to the detriment of

business. Mlle. Chanel was the first to cater to the public in its broader sense and to produce a standard which appealed to every taste, the first to democratize the art of dressmaking for purely economic reasons. The post-war trend was for simplicity and informality. Chanel adapted it to clothes and she struck the right note. She personified her time and, although affecting an attitude of sublime contempt for public taste, she catered to it assiduously.

By Wide World Photos

MLLE. GABRIELLE CHANEL

This unusual woman crossed my path at precisely the right time. I made her acquaintance with the hope that she would give me some useful suggestions; but although we deliberated and discussed possibilities for me, it was a long time before we came to any result. My problem was solved by accident and in quite an unexpected way.

Mlle. Chanel's personality, her enterprising spirit and imagination, attracted me, and I often used to visit her private studio situated on the third floor of the building on the rue Cambon which houses her business. She was then at the height of her creative ability. Every day some new and original idea came to her and was launched forth, to be eagerly snatched up both by those who could afford its expensive first edition and by the others who had to be satisfied with a reproduction by a copyist. A great part of her popularity came from the fact that the clothes she created were so easy to make; they were reproduced as fast as they left her workrooms. She had just then imported some multi-coloured Faro Island sweaters and had conceived the idea of using their design for embroidery on silk blouses. One day as I came in I found Mlle. Chanel engrossed in an argument with Mme. Bataille, the woman who did the embroidery for the house. They were both examining the finished pieces of a crimson *crêpe de Chine* blouse. Chanel was beating down the price and she was speaking so quickly and volubly and had so many arguments at her disposal that Mme. Bataille was staggered. The end of this very one-sided conversation I remember as follows:

"I am telling you, Mme. Bataille, that I cannot pay six hundred francs for this work!" said Mlle. Chanel.

Mme. Bataille, a stout person in a tight-fitting black dress, the perspiration standing out on her forehead, endeavoured in vain to interpose a word in the torrent of Mlle. Chanel's arguments.

"Mademoiselle will allow me to call her attention . . ." panted Mme. Bataille.

"To what, Mme. Bataille?" interrupted Chanel immediately. "I wish you would tell me the reasons for charging me this ridiculous price; as I have told you already I can't see them at all, myself."

"The blouse is embroidered with real Chinese silk, one kilo of which costs at present . . ."

"I don't care what kind of silk you use—real or artificial," continued Mlle. Chanel; "it is none of my business. What I want is to sell the blouse.

As it is, it is too expensive; therefore you must charge less for it. That's all."

Mlle. Chanel in one shrewd glance had already been able to estimate the value of her own invention and the success it was bound to have.

"But, Mademoiselle," stammered Mme. Bataille, red spots covering her face.

"*Ma chère*," Chanel again interrupted firmly, "it is, it seems to me, quite as much in your own interests as in mine to produce these blouses in larger quantities; you must understand this and be reasonable. Come down in your price. You're not the only one to make embroidery in Paris, and anybody would be only too delighted to do the work for me. You can take it or leave it as you please."

Chanel waved a hand which still held the embroidered pieces of the blouse, indicating that the interview was at an end. Mme. Bataille disappeared behind the door.

"Mlle. Chanel," I heard myself say suddenly, "if I could embroider that blouse for you at 150 francs less, would you give me the order?" What prompted me to make this suggestion I could no more have told then than now.

Chanel flashed around and faced me. "Why certainly," she said, "but the blouse is machine embroidered! Do you know anything about machine embroidery?"

"Nothing whatever," I admitted truthfully. Chanel was amused.

"But since it is embroidered by machine I might be able to find one and learn to work it," I added quickly.

"Well, you can always try," said Mlle. Chanel dubiously.

Less than three months later I actually brought her a blouse embroidered on a machine and charged her the 450 francs. I was, moreover, prepared to accept further and regular orders. It was lucky that these blouses were still the fashion. The story of how it came about is worth telling in detail.

When I left Mlle. Chanel's office after our conversation that afternoon I was treading on air. The idea which had so unexpectedly come to me had gone to my head like a glass of champagne; I was so overcome by the rush of sudden inspiration that I felt almost intoxicated. Why had I not thought of this before? It was the only thing I really could do. I had the training for it; I would use the notions acquired many years ago at the Stockholm art school. I ran out into the street, took a taxi and went to the Singer sewing machine

company. On the way I was summoning up from my memory the principles of composition as applied to textiles. I had visions of the school; I felt the rough texture of the drawing paper under my hand and heard the little rasping sound of the charcoal pencil. My fingers were itching to begin again. It seemed to me that I could feel once more the long-forgotten pains and joys of composition.

But when I got to Singer's I was met by a disappointment; they did not have the machine which produced the required stitch. I had to look for it elsewhere. It was too late, however, to do anything more about it that day, and I was obliged to take myself and my enthusiasm home, where the only thing I could do to further my plans was to study the telephone book and search for addresses of embroidery machines. In that I was equally unsuccessful, and it was not until a few days later that I discovered the right place through the famous *Bottin*, the trade directory. I went there at once and in a back street of one of Paris's poorest sections came upon the factory I was looking for. There to my delight I found an endless choice of machines from the simplest kind, which I required, to the most elaborate and complicated ones. I had already decided before I came that I would start work in the American way, that is from the very bottom. In order that I might know what to demand of my future employés I thought myself obliged to study in detail the machine I intended to buy and learn how to operate it. The manager informed me that everyone who purchased a machine was entitled to instruction at the factory, so I bought one then and there and made the arrangements about the lessons. I gave an assumed name and next morning returned to the factory in an old dress but a brand-new smock, having carefully discarded the bits of jewellery which I usually wore. The manager took me to the workshop and handed me over to the forewoman, a stout blonde girl in a smock covered with oil stains who looked me over disdainfully without saying a word. About twenty other girls sitting at their machines stopped their clicking and buzzing to gaze at me. I was shown a seat in front of one of the machines, and the forewoman gave me some vague and unwilling explanations about what I was to do. The chief difficulty for a beginner consisted in following the tracings of a design with a little hook, which in an embroidery machine takes the place of a needle. The hook was guided by working a handle under the table of the machine and this was done with the right hand while the left held the work in place. I was given a piece of paper with tracings in pencil to exercise my hand and eye. It was like learning to drive a car; you had to think of several things at once. As soon as you got the knack it was easy, but at first the little

hook just would not keep to the line. It took me a fairly long time to get it to do what I wished.

I exercised for many days bent over the machine, which I had to pedal with my feet as there were no motors; the workshop had no windows, the lighting was insufficient, and the air smelt of dust and oil. The girls, sensing in me an amateur and an outsider, although they did not suspect my identity, treated me with animosity. When I got over the preliminary stages of my training and was allowed to use bits of material and thread, the forewoman would refuse to come to my place to look over my work or to give me instructions when I needed them. I had to take my work out of the machine, which obliged me to cut the thread and bring it over to where she sat; she also rather enjoyed dropping it on the floor just to make me pick it up. Later on, when I started buying one machine after another, the workshop finally discovered who I was and the girls and I had more than one good laugh over their previous behaviour towards me.

In the evenings my husband and his parents discussed the future organization of the embroidery factory, which of course was to be started at first on a small scale. My mother-in-law was to help me. A name was chosen for the new undertaking—it was to be called "Kitmir," the name of a legendary dog in Persian mythology. I came across it in a rather amusing way. We were then on very friendly terms with M. Bakhmetiev, last Russian Ambassador to Washington before the revolution, and his wife, who was an American by birth. The two old people lived in a comfortable house in the rue de l'Université, on the left bank of the Seine. M. Bakhmetiev was a man of the old school and refused to compromise with a new world, his loyalty to what had been before amounting to a religion. Before leaving Washington, Bakhmetiev packed into cases the official portraits of his sovereigns which adorned the walls of the Embassy and took them away with him. He feared that if left behind they might not be treated with due respect. They were certainly not works of art but were nevertheless hung up on the walls of his Parisian drawing-room, from where they looked down stiffly out of their ornate and heavily gilded frames.

Mme. Bakhmetiev shared all her husband's convictions; they had lived together for so long that even physically they had become alike. She spent her time in Paris trying to help the exiles. The old couple had never had any children; instead Mme. Bakhmetiev poured out her affections upon animals, which filled the house. Amongst these were three Pekinese, one of which—a magnificent black one—was called "Kitmir."

We began to look around for suitable premises. But everything proceeded much too slowly in my opinion, for I was burning with enthusiasm and consumed with the desire to start on my big venture. In my imagination I saw myself already at the head of an important concern, dictating mail, answering telephone calls, giving orders, and sitting at a desk in a walnut office surrounded by samples, reels of silk, and albums of designs. My ideal had always been to have more work than I could possibly do. All my wishes were finally granted except the walnut office, but in the meantime I hated having to be patient.

CHAPTER XV

CHANEL ON DISPLAY

THIS work, which would allow me to lead an active life and to which I could apply my initiative and imagination, seemed to come at exactly the right moment, when I required an interest absorbing enough to divert my thoughts from myself. I had been brooding for too long; the time had come to act. I needed now to prove to myself that I could act; I had to acquire confidence and measure my strength; I also had to regain the independence and freedom of action which I had achieved during the war and lost to a large degree since then.

The further I went, the more convinced I became that I could not have thought of anything better than the kind of work I had chosen. First of all, it was going to be a wholesale business and would not compete with the innumerable dressmaking and other retail shops started by many of the Russian women who had by now been obliged to take up work in Paris; secondly, I would be selling to the trade and not to private customers, which would place me in a much more independent position towards my friends and acquaintances in not having to solicit orders from them. In the third place, I had already an assured customer in Mlle. Chanel and in this way, to my thinking, there was hardly any risk connected with my new enterprise. And lastly, by employing Russian girls I hoped also to do some good.

I was supremely, ridiculously confident of the future. In my profound inexperience I never stopped for a moment to think of all the difficulties that lay in wait for me; had I suspected them, in spite of all my desire for activity, I might not have had the courage to proceed. But as it was I felt the same fervour and daring as a young general before his first battle!

THE AUTHOR IN ONE OF HER CREATIONS

It took me about a month to master the intricacies of an embroidery machine, to acquire a certain amount of technical ability and speed. And then I had the machine sent to my apartment. When it arrived, I placed it right in the middle of the drawing-room and, seating myself on the sofa, I looked at it from a distance. It stood there on the carpet between two arm-chairs and a table littered with knick-knacks and photographs—hard, sturdy,

and aloof, with the light gleaming coldly on the polish of its steel parts. . . . Just once or twice in my life, my past with all its antecedents has appeared to me not in separate scenes but as one whole, a map with all the incidents fitting into one vast picture, but seen from a new angle, like the impression one gets in looking at a familiar landscape from an aeroplane. This was such a moment, and it made me feel small and helpless. I was now going to walk out of that landscape and create an absolutely fresh pattern for myself. A sensation of dizziness seized me as if I were about to be hurled to the ground from a great height. The machine was an emblem of the new pattern of my life. If the old setting should claim me, if the old ties should prove to be too strong, if my strength should fail me, then I was lost. But if I could overcome the first difficulties and my various handicaps, then the world belonged to me. It was worth making the attempt. For the next few days when I entered my drawing-room, it seemed as though the machine were still silently defying me, but my courage had returned.

In the meantime I had picked out two or three Russian girls and sent them to the factory to learn to operate the machines. Next, suitable quarters were found for a workshop; they were situated at the back of a luxurious private house in the rue François I and had a small separate entrance from the street. I discovered later that the house was occupied by a rather notorious lady whose behaviour in Paris had been conspicuous for years. One day a friend of mine, coming to see me for the first time in my workroom, rang by mistake at the main entrance. When he asked for me, the servant who opened the door said drily, jerking his thumb over his shoulder:

"Take the back stairs if you've come to see the Grand Duchess."

Our neighbour provided us with a certain amount of excitement. On one occasion she walked out upon the balcony of her house and shot herself. The report of the revolver was heard in the street and help was immediately rushed upstairs. She was only wounded, however, and soon recovered.

The rooms in which I was about to establish my workroom were a rather queerly conceived place, but for the moment it would suit our requirements perfectly. By the time we had taken it and signed the lease, the girls had finished their apprenticeship. I moved my machine from my apartment to the new premises and bought two others, together with the rest of the necessary equipment. We were ready to start.

It was the beginning of January. Mlle. Chanel was preparing her spring collection of models, which she made a practice of showing on the fifth of February, so there was no time to lose. I had to think out and prepare designs

and make samples. I had also to do the shopping for the materials, and this took much of my precious time, as the wholesale stores were situated in the downtown districts of Paris. I spent hours in consultation with Mlle. Chanel, who explained to me what she desired and gave directions. The designs were executed on paper and submitted to her, then tried out upon material and resubmitted. Besides this work there were endless technical details to be looked after. I was struggling desperately but cheerfully against trifles and was swamped by matters of no importance, but I had not yet learned to discriminate. The only person who really helped me with all the devotion she was capable of was my mother-in-law, the old Princess Putiatin, but she was a novice in business, just as I was. Looking back I see that Mlle. Chanel was of no help to me in technical details, either at the beginning or later on; she ordered the merchandise, expected it to be ready on time, but did not bother about the organization. I, for my part, knew nothing about established business principles and did not suspect that the development of my business depended largely upon organization.

The first designs, however, were made, the silks matched, the samples ready and approved. We were now approaching the last and most important stages of our work. The material had to be cut, the designs stencilled upon it, and then embroidered. The first part, the cutting of the materials, was done at Chanel's; the rest we had to do ourselves. The most difficult of all was the preparation of the designs on the big sheets of paper for stencilling. My "staff" consisted entirely of amateurs, and nobody had told me that for all these tasks there existed professionals who could have done them far more quickly and better than we.

Trembling with excitement, we went through all the necessary manipulations. We were successful with all but one piece. One of the sheets slipped, and the front of a tan-coloured coat was hopelessly damaged by the dye with which we transferred the designs. It proved impossible to remove, which was most embarrassing as we had to ask for a new piece of material from Chanel's.

Finally even the embroideries were completed and delivered; they consisted of several blouses, tunics, and coats. Some of them I had made with my own hands. I remember in particular a light grey tunic embroidered in different shades of the same colour with dashes of red. When later on this tunic was ordered by customers I still would always execute it myself, as it was one of our most difficult designs. I saw it worn for the first time "socially" by a woman lunching at the Ritz at a table beside me. I must

confess that I had great difficulty in keeping myself from staring at her and refraining from running my finger over the familiar pattern.

Mlle. Chanel proceeded to have the embroideries mounted. I followed with great interest every stage in the development of my creations, and nothing would have made me miss the moments when they were fitted upon the models. They were gradually coming to life.

Most afternoons I would come to Chanel's studio and sit there while she worked. There was always something to be done about the embroidery and I preferred to be close at hand in case of any emergency.

For several years to come I watched Chanel's creative genius express itself through her fingers. She never designed anything on paper and would make a dress either according to an idea which was already in her head or as she proceeded. I can still see her sitting on her tabouret, generally beside the mantelpiece with a log fire burning in the grate. The room was overheated. She would be dressed in a simple sport suit, a dark skirt and a sweater, with the sleeves pushed up above her elbows, and for days at a time she would always wear the same dress. Like the proverbial confectioner's boy who is sick of sweets she was tired of clothes and could not be bothered making them for herself. Even at night under a priceless fur coat she would wear an evening dress so worn out that it looked more like a rag than the creation of a famous dressmaker. Even her instinct for publicity could not force her to dress smartly.

During those first years she liked working with only one fitter, a bad-tempered old woman with white hair and glasses, who had a dog's devotion for her mistress but could also resist her stubbornly, though rather in action than in words. The models on whose backs the clothes were made and fitted would be called in one by one from the landing outside the door of the studio. They waited there sometimes for hours in various stages of undress with a smock or just a sheet thrown over their bare shoulders. A girl would walk into the room and up to Mlle. Chanel, who sat on her tabouret with a pair of scissors in her hand.

"*Bonjour, Mademoiselle.*"

"*Bonjour, Jeanne.*" This was the only moment when Chanel would look up at the model's face; the rest of the time she would be entirely concentrated on her figure. As the girl approached, Chanel with her head slightly bent to one side would take in the first impression. Then the fitting began, a slow and careful procedure. The fitter standing beside her handed her the pins. No one spoke except Chanel, who kept up a steady flow of

monologue. Sometimes she would be giving instructions or explaining some new detail, sometimes she would criticize and undo the work that had already been done. The old fitter listened to all in silence, her face impenetrable except perhaps for her eyes, which at times would soften or again throw off a spark of anger. But you felt that, whatever happened, it would be taken out later on the models. Chanel, intent on her work, snipping off something here, pinning up something there, throwing back her head to get the effect, talked on without taking notice of anybody. I sat in a corner and greedily observed all that was going on.

I had seen people occupying great positions at their work, sat silent while matters of great importance were discussed, had listened to orders given by people whose birth or position gave them the right to command. I had never yet met with a person whose every word was obeyed and whose authority had been established by her own self out of nothing. For the first time I began to reflect upon the power of personality and to realize its importance.

At five o'clock or a little later a tray would be brought in with a coffee-pot and a few cups. It was deposited on the footstool, as the rest of the furniture was littered with miscellaneous objects. Sometimes on the tray would be sandwiches made of a brown-crusted bread split in two with a slice of ham between. By then most of the work had been done, and Chanel laid aside her scissors and, getting up from the tabouret, stretched her limbs. If there was no special pressure, word would be sent to the landing for the models to retire. The day's work was over. But often the coffee was gulped down in a hurry and work would proceed. The coffee hour was a relaxation; Chanel, one or two subdued and obsequious executives, and an occasional friend who dropped in would sit on the carpet around the footstool and the tray. Chanel was still holding forth indefatigably. She would discuss everything and everybody with great assurance; she could be at times enthusiastic or again come out with arbitrary judgments about people and events. She was violent in her expressions but changed her opinions about things very easily. She went on and on without allowing anybody the time for an answer or a protest. Her statements had to be accepted. Her power of persuasion was amazing; while you were in her presence she would make you agree with her on every subject, no matter what your previous opinion on it might have been and what you might think after you left her.

The nearer she came to the day appointed for the show, the more nervous she became. And it was under the pressure of the last days that she made her most successful creations. Although it often seemed impossible to get

through with all the necessary work and looked as if many of the dresses would only be half finished, all somehow were ready when the time for the presentation arrived. On the eve of the great day Chanel would have a private show downstairs in the "Salon" for herself and the personnel, and here she would have a final look at the clothes and determine how they were to be presented and in what order. Some at this occasion would be considered unfit to be part of the collection and were banished altogether.

The private show was like a dress rehearsal of a play. It was a kind of pantomime in which the models were the actresses and the gowns the parts. Action was expressed in terms of clothing; the more perfect the combination between model, dress, and accessories the more effective was the general result, and the more irresistible to the prospective customer's heart. The language of the dresses and their different appeals were familiar to Mlle. Chanel, and at the rehearsal it was with this psychological side that she was chiefly preoccupied. Not one single detail escaped her notice. She was so concentrated upon the study that except for a few final remarks she forgot even to talk.

"This dress cannot be included in the collection, nothing goes with it; take it up to my studio and hang it up in the cupboard," or "That one is much too short, it doesn't fit over the back and shoulders, it must be altered," or "This blouse does not go with the rest of the costume, I shall have to make another one; take the whole ensemble upstairs." Then she would say, "Send for the tray of flowers, this evening dress needs a touch of colour; that other one is too old-looking, pinch in the waistline."

A religious and respectful silence hung over the salon around which the saleswomen sat in a row along the walls. Now and then they nodded to each other, lifting their eyebrows by way of expressing their admiration, or whispered cautiously into the nearest ear. The models swished their short straight skirts as they trod their cadences around the room. Everything assumed an air of great importance which at first seemed to me extremely ridiculous. The entire performance, including models, saleswomen, and even Mlle. Chanel herself, seemed strange and unreal to me.

RUSSIAN EMBROIDERIES CREATED BY THE AUTHOR

The opening of a new season in an important Paris fashion house is always accompanied by a ritual and presents an event typical of Paris life. During the first few days the collection is shown exclusively to foreign buyers, chiefly Americans, who come in large numbers to purchase French models for their firms. Special invitation cards are issued, without which no admittance is supposed to be granted. Each buyer tries to place his orders as

early as possible so as to get an equally early delivery and to be if possible ahead of competing firms. Only representatives of important foreign houses are invited to the first day of the showing, but precisely because of its exclusiveness all the minor buyers will clamour for an invitation for that day. If it is not granted them, they will try to get in by force. Chanel's showings, although she was not yet at the height of her glory, were beginning to become extremely popular, and the entrance on the rue Cambon was besieged by a crowd of indignant buyers who demanded to be admitted. Later a detachment of police guarded the front door, and the rue Cambon presented an imposing sight on the days of the Chanel openings. I remember an occasion when I had failed to arrive an hour before the performance began and not only could not enter but could not even get near the door, where the porter who knew me would have let me in. I was obliged to go to the post office across the street and telephone to the manager, who dispatched the porter to conduct me through the crowd.

On the appointed day I went to the rue Cambon to witness my first showing, the showing on which so much depended for me. I joined Mlle. Chanel in her studio, where some of her friends had gathered, and then when it was time to begin we all took up places on the upper steps of the staircase, from where we could see what was going on in the salon. The buyers, mostly men, sat in two rows along the walls. At three o'clock exactly the models began to parade. I was choking with excitement. When the first dress appeared which had my embroidery on it I almost cried out loud. The parading of the models lasted till nearly six o'clock but long before then Chanel's experienced eye had detected the attention attracted by the embroideries. She told me so, but I dared not believe it until I had a tangible proof. As soon as the show was over and the audience began to stir, I could not sit still any longer and going downstairs mingled with the crowd in order to hear the comments. The saleswomen, their arms full of the new dresses, were rushing backwards and forwards between the customers and the model room. Over and over again I heard the buyers demand the embroideries. They were interested in the originality of the designs and the novelty of treatment. There could be no doubt any longer, this was success. I stayed with Mlle. Chanel until quite late discussing the momentous day in every detail. It was too marvellous to be true.

When I at last decided to go home it was quite dark. In the taxi my nerves suddenly gave way; I was too happy. In spite of myself tears were running down my cheeks and I could not stop them. My eyes were still wet when I got out of the taxi and was paying the driver; he took the money, looked at me, and noticing my tears said encouragingly:

"*Allez, ma petite dame; il ne faut pas pleurer ainsi—tout s'arrange dans la vie.*"[2]

Later, in difficult moments, I often remembered the words of the good-natured Paris taxi-driver.

[2] "Come, come, little lady, you mustn't cry; everything in life gets straightened out."

CHAPTER XVI

ALL IN THE DAY'S WORK

The success of my embroideries exceeded my expectations to such an extent that I was almost submerged by it. In my inexperience I had over-estimated my own forces as well as the working capacity of my little workroom. Orders poured in and we were unable to fill them as there were only three or four of us. For several weeks we worked almost without relaxing, especially my mother-in-law and I. Sometimes I sat through most of the night treading the pedal of my machine with no other thought in my tired head than next day's delivery. The old Princess never left my side, either preparing the work for me or giving it the last finishing touch, and this finishing touch was probably the most painful task of all. Before being embroidered the material had to be tacked upon stiff muslin, chemically treated, in order to give it a hold. When the work was completed, the muslin was removed with a hot iron which turned it into a black thick dust. This dust hung in the air, got into one's lungs, nostrils, and hair and settled over everything. My mother-in-law, her eyes red and her fingers scorched by the iron, left the work only to go to the little oil burner on which a coffee-pot was continuously boiling and pour out steaming cups of strong black coffee to keep us awake.

It was summer outside. The windows were open upon the quiet dark street. The Paris season was not yet over. Somewhere, maybe in the Bois de Boulogne, women wearing my embroideries were dancing or sitting out under the trees in the cool summer air.

When at last I went home and got into bed, through my sleep I still guided the steel hook along the tracings of interminable and fantastic designs.

In the mornings I returned to the workroom, where my mother-in-law was already helping the charwoman to clear away the accumulated grime before the arrival of the embroiderers and the beginning of a new day. By the middle of the afternoon I was often so worn out that I spread my fur coat upon the bare floor of the little room I worked in and, lying down upon it, fell asleep immediately. Once an old friend of my parents-in-law walked in by mistake and came upon me while I was taking my siesta. I woke up with a start, sat up hurriedly, and stared at the intruder. In his turn he stared down

at me in silent astonishment. Suddenly his eyes became very misty and without excusing himself or saying a word he turned and left the room.

But in spite of the hard work and fatigue I was far more contented than I had been for a long time. I was achieving something and also sharing, to some extent at least, the struggles of my compatriots in exile. Unfortunately, however, our efforts were successful only in one respect; we obtained perfect workmanship in our embroidery but the business side of the enterprise was totally lacking in organization, and we did not know how to regulate our forces. Although the workroom began to grow under the pressure of orders and we were obliged to augment the staff, I still took only amateurs who had no training beyond the short course at the factory. By this time I had been told that I would get much further by employing professional labour but I still clung stubbornly to my initial idea, which was to help my own people as far as possible. I understood also that professional labour would demand professional supervision, and I did not know where to look for or how to handle that type of person.

To these complications another great difficulty was still to be added. When we had discussed the expenses connected with the future business, our calculations included only the rent, purchase of equipment, and a few salaries. We had not worked out a budget and we started to function without capital. The result was that the more successful we became the more expensive grew the undertaking. Naturally additional jewels had to be sold, and it was precisely to avoid this that I had started to work. I had parted with most of them now except for two important pieces: my pearls and a large collection of emeralds, both of which I had hoped to be able to keep. I soon came to the conclusion, however, that the emeralds would have to go. But wanting to be cleverer than I had been in London when I began to sell my jewels I made up my mind to dispose of the entire collection at once. All the circumstances surrounding this transaction were particularly painful. The emeralds were famous, and the dealers had decided to get them cheap. I felt this as soon as I had them valued, before even offering them for sale. Although I was finally forced to sell them at far below their value, the sum I derived from them was quite important. The news that I was in possession of a comparatively large amount of cash spread instantaneously, and we once more became a prey to all kinds of designing people. Some former business connexions of my father-in-law descended like a flight of hawks upon my husband and gave him no rest until he had promised to invest in an undertaking they had started in Holland. Putiatin was a toy in their experienced hands. The new game, besides, was affording him an immense amount of pleasure, and I was far too ignorant in business matters to protest

against his plans, which to him appeared so promising. Bit by bit the entire sum was devoured by the Dutch enterprise and nothing of it put into my own business. Needless to say the undertaking was not slow to fail, and I lost nearly all of the money. This was a blow from which I found it hard to recover financially and which eventually placed me in an almost desperate situation. My workroom in the meantime had to get on as best it could.

As soon as Kitmir began to function, Putiatin left the private bank where he had been working for over a year and constituted himself bookkeeper of my workroom. He was delighted at an excuse to give up his office occupations, which, being so totally different from anything he had done before, were profoundly distasteful to him. He knew even less about work than I, and the war itself for a boy of his age had consisted mostly of adventure and excitement. He did not know the meaning of a sustained effort and nothing so uninteresting and dull as office work could arouse his ambition. He came and went as if he were acting a part in a comedy he did not like; he could not take it seriously.

Nevertheless he assimilated things with surprising facility. In London he learned to speak fluent English in no time; in Paris he rapidly picked up French, which he had known but forgotten for want of practice, and he could write both languages extremely well. At the bank he worked in the accounting department and mastered all the intricacies extremely rapidly. He did his work in the shortest possible time. In his new job at my workroom he got the necessary set of books and started out so well that Mlle. Chanel's accountant, who came to give him some advice, found nothing to say. Certainly he preferred Kitmir, where after all he was freer to come and go as he pleased, to his former work at the bank; but it still did not really suit him. He was restless, he craved for activity of a more exciting and hazardous nature. This mood of his was exploited by individuals who succeeded in persuading him that he had a genius for business. He was easily impressed by what he heard from those he believed to be his friends, who in reality were playing up to him in their own interests. Kitmir soon became an excuse for him to do only what he fancied at the moment.

Our second season, six months later, brought even more success than the first—and the same trials on a larger scale. Again I made too many models and, although the number of workers had increased considerably, there were still not enough to fill all the orders. The Chanel saleswomen were frantic and almost wore out the telephone wires in their desperate efforts to get us to deliver the embroideries on time. We were told repeatedly that the clients were complaining and that they were even cancelling their orders. When I

went to Mlle. Chanel, I heard so many disagreeable things and was so harassed by the saleswomen that I would sometimes hide from them in the big wardrobe in Chanel's studio.

The work we were doing for Chanel began to bring us orders from buyers who wanted reproductions of the embroideries on the Chanel models. These we were allowed to supply in the case of foreign buyers, but we had no right to sell copies to anyone in France. Orders coming from buyers were more profitable, as it was customary to charge them a higher price than the dressmaking houses.

Most of the buyers came from America, and it was through them that I made my first business contacts there. As nearly as I can remember the first order came from Kurzman's in New York. The buyer ordered several dozen blouses from us on condition that they all be mounted. This was an altogether new problem and one which had to be faced in a limited space of time. I had to find somebody who would sew the blouses. My English maid and I finally made them up ourselves.

A few weeks later I received from the Kurzman buyer several clippings from New York papers and at first had difficulty in understanding what they meant. Later I discovered that they were just ordinary "ads." Kurzman's were apparently anxious to inform their clientele that they were the first to sell my embroideries in America. In order to make them as appealing as possible to the public the advertisement was conceived in the most elaborate manner. Around it was a frame, in the four corners of which my initials were displayed under the crown. The text mentioned me by name, with my title, as the creator of the blouses. I was shocked and grieved. Not knowing anything about publicity methods, I could not understand why my name should have to figure at all in connexion with the articles I had sold; besides, I imagined that this display would only make people think that they were not worth buying on their merits.

Another client of those early days was a leading New York dressmaker named Frances Klein. She was one of my best and most agreeable customers and remained faithful to Kitmir as long as I was at the head of it. When my Paris days were over I came across Miss Klein in New York and we had the occasion to talk over my past business venture. She had sized up the situation at a glance and she gave me a retrospective picture of myself which made me see my own efforts in a new light. I cut a rather sorry figure in her eyes, and a rather pathetic one. She felt that I was blindly struggling against obviously overwhelming disadvantages. I had little chance to come through

successfully, although my business in itself offered possibilities. And the future showed that she was right.

Meanwhile many incidents occurred that were both touching and amusing. Being a very bad salesman myself, I used to leave transactions with buyers to my mother-in-law and later to the manageress. Once, however, I happened to be alone when an American buyer came in, and I was obliged to take care of him myself. I asked him what he would like to see but soon noticed that he was not interested in the embroideries I was showing him, and I finally asked him what was on his mind. "I will tell you," he answered; "I hear that this place is run by a Grand Duchess; do you think that I might see her?"

"Why, of course," I said, trying my best to keep serious, "I am the Grand Duchess."

The poor man could not have been more astounded if he had been struck by lightning. Losing countenance completely he began to fumble in his pockets and finally drew out a package of Lucky Strikes.

"I . . . I would like to offer you something. Would you accept this packet of American cigarettes?" For a long time afterward I kept the little green package of Lucky Strikes unopened on my desk.

There was also the type of buyer who tried to get around the regulations and obtain embroideries without having ordered the original model at Chanel's. I remember in particular a fat gentleman with a cigar sticking out of the corner of his mouth who took infinite pains to persuade me to accede to his unlawful designs. When he saw that his words were of no avail, he decided to use another means of persuasion. He produced a handful of dollar bills and proceeded to snap them under my nose like a pack of cards.

Another buyer, this one having the right to a copy but no time to wait for it, purchased the paper designs for two embroidered coats and a couple of small samples for the same price as the finished work. I was not quite sure that this was really a square deal but the victim of it seemed perfectly satisfied.

I still did most of the buying for my workroom myself. I went to wholesale shops and warehouses in search of embroidery materials and also to match silks and choose stuffs for samples. In spite of the loss of time and the fatigue, I liked these shopping expeditions. They helped me to penetrate into a world entirely new to me but very old as far as French business was concerned, a world still full of its own peculiar poetry.

There was something decidedly stimulating to the imagination about the great warehouses where I bought my reels of China silk wound up on large wooden spools. Heavy bales of raw silk stood around the floor, just as they had come from the Orient, with Chinese lettering on the coverings. The shelves were laden with the richest and most varied assortment of embroidery silks, all of which were of an exquisite quality. The place was flamboyant with colour; it was like moving through an enormous paint-box. I loved fingering the silks and assembling and contrasting the shades. Here I found materials that reminded me of olden days. I came across a pale yellowish twist like the one used in the convents in Moscow where I learned from the nuns the ancient art of embroidering faces of saints with one colour of silk, shading the emaciated cheeks by changing the direction of the stitches. There was also the real gold and silver thread which never tarnished and with which were embroidered the crowns and haloes in high relief after a padding of cardboard and cotton had been made as foundation. Did anybody still use these precious materials? Seeing them I sometimes longed to go back to the patient and concentrated labour over an embroidery frame.

Then there were the stores that dealt in silk from the factories of Lyons. Dignified musty places with bits of old materials, made centuries ago on the looms of the same factories decorating the walls or kept in albums. Some of the patterns I recognized as old friends; I had seen them on the brocaded curtains and furniture coverings in the palaces at Tsarskoie-Selo and Peterhof. Piece after piece of brocade and silk both plain and fancy was unrolled for me to admire, a wealth of taste, artistic wisdom, and experience accumulated for generations. Many of these businesses lived on in the old streets of Paris and followed the old principles of trade. Nothing much had changed in their methods for centuries; they did not advertise, they were not troubled by competition, they just went on nursing their old ways.

The places where I went to look for woollens were run in a more modern way. Here the salesmen were younger and more alert, and you felt that a certain spirit of enterprise presided over these firms.

With all my new duties a completely different existence had suddenly begun for me, but I could not expect my nature to undergo the same sharp transformation. I was still embarrassed by trifles and, being conscious of it, I tried to avoid situations in which my ignorance would be too obvious. Some of these situations had to be faced, and in those cases I would carefully hide my lack of assurance beneath an assumed air of nonchalance. But, of course, I deceived nobody but myself, and most of the people with whom I had

business dealings took full advantage of my naïveté. When I discovered it, this hurt and discouraged me always.

On the surface I had become quite familiar with my new activities; I had penetrated into a new layer of life and was observing its manifestations. I was looking at business and also at the inner functionings, the springs and screws, of one of the most important of the Paris luxury trades. I had become part of it myself. But as time went on and I was able to see more clearly, my feelings became more and more divided. I was proud to have made a place for myself, but the principles of business remained foreign to me. All my life I had been a customer and now I found myself on the other side, the side of the dealer, and in spite of myself this situation embarrassed me. I could not get accustomed to what was said and thought about the clientele behind the scenes. From still another disconcerting angle, my point of view was so ingenuous and absurd that it will have to be explained. I had been brought up in the idea that to spend too much attention and money on clothes was not quite right, that it was actually rather wicked; and here I was encouraging evil instincts, both vanity and extravagance! But I soon convinced myself that my noble sentiments were wasted on the type of human being who is the regular customer of an expensive fashion house; she is perfectly capable of defending herself. I learned more about female psychology during my years of dressmaking than I ever should have cared to know.

Mlle. Chanel, with whom my close associations still continued, did much to give me more practical views on life. A number of my illusions were destroyed in the process, but at least I began to be able to look at things as they were and not through the eyes of the past. For this I feel I must be grateful to her. She also did another important thing for me: she taught me to pay more attention to my own appearance. In former times my means had not permitted me to indulge in extravagant dress, and I did not miss it particularly. During the war I seldom had the time to think about how I looked—still less during the revolution. For the first two years in exile I wore only black. I had forgotten what it was to think of clothes, to want to be smart. The experienced ladies' maids on whose services I had depended in the past had gone out of my life. Mlle. Chanel, with her usual outspokenness, pointed out to me the danger of neglecting my appearance.

"It is a great mistake for you to go around looking like a refugee. Don't imagine that by doing so you will excite anybody's sympathy; on the contrary, people will end by avoiding you. If you wish to do business, the first thing is to look prosperous; remember that," she would tell me.

As pity was the very last thing I wanted, I heeded her advice. Little by little she dressed me up and taught me the proper use of make-up, which I had hardly ever used before. She sent me a Swedish masseuse and made me take off some of my superfluous weight.

"Do you realize that you look years younger now than when I first met you? Why, you were like a woman well over forty," she told me at last, when I had been following her instructions for several months.

The only thing that she still despaired of was my hair. I had never been able to do it up myself, and there was so much of it that it always managed to look untidy no matter how much time I spent over it. Chanel's hair was already short at the time.

"No, I really cannot see you any longer with that unattractive bun at the back of your neck; it will have to come off," she said to me once when I walked into her studio. Before I had time to realize what she was doing, she had pulled out my hairpins, snatched up the scissors and was cutting off my hair by the handful. When she had finished we were equally dismayed at the result which the mirror presented. But the damage was done, and ever since that day, which was more than ten years ago, my hair has been short. It took many weeks, however, before my hairdresser could make my head look to some degree presentable.

Towards my business Chanel urged me to adopt a more professional attitude; she had a horror of everything that was amateurish, that had the smack of a charity organization. She was of the opinion, and she was perfectly right, that business and charity could not be mixed; but I had still to learn my lesson. The really constructive thing she could have done for me then was to find somebody whom she alone of the people I knew could have procured, somebody who would have put my business on the professional footing she talked so much about. On the whole, however, her advice was limited to general principles, which I was incapable of applying without being properly seconded.

What I had to offer her personally Chanel seemed to appreciate enormously, and although she was usually parsimonious of praise she did at times encourage me. My imagination, applied to a single aim, was developing and proved to be quite fertile, although at the end of every season I was so emptied out that I was sure I should never be able to invent anything new again. But when the time came and the new ideas were necessary, they would return obediently enough.

Each new season I was obliged to renovate my “line” completely, as it would have been bad commercially to take on a definite style. Each time I turned to some one period in art for my initial inspiration, but the ideas I acquired from documents had to be remodelled and modernized to satisfy the requirements of clothing and the medium employed. For this I had to do a considerable amount of research work and study. By degrees I collected a considerable library of books, albums, drawings, and designs, all having to do with my new profession.

One season I fashioned my designs after Oriental rugs, another from Persian tiles. I used the ornamentation of Chinese vases and Coptic weaves. And at one time I copied entire pieces of Indian jewellery—necklaces and bracelets—in hand embroidery. I remember making a pair of mules inspired by a Persian miniature. These mules, in spite of their price, were one of Kitmir’s great successes.

Besides making designs I reintroduced old materials and used them in new ways. Amongst these was chenille, which had remained forgotten since the end of the last century. I used chenille not for embroidery purposes but for crocheting hats, which Chanel was the first to sell and which afterwards spread over the entire world. The first model for these hats was worked out jointly with me by a friend who worked at Chanel’s, and then reproduced in endless variations by my own knitters. Thousands of these hats were made and sold for many seasons both in France and abroad.

CHAPTER XVII

THE POLITICS OF TRADE

About a year and a half after the opening of Kitmir the premises we had been occupying proved to be too small, and we were obliged to move into roomier quarters. We rented a whole house in the rue Montaigne, where the first floor was taken up by offices and the showroom, and the two upper floors by the workrooms and storerooms. By now, besides machine work, we were doing beadwork and hand embroidery as well. I had submitted at last to the necessity of employing professionals in some of the branches of my business. This time my conscience did not worry me so much about employing others besides my compatriots; I had begun to have trouble with some of them. A group of the girls who had learned embroidery at my expense had surreptitiously taken to copying my models in their spare time at home and selling them on the side. The same girls suddenly left my workroom during the busiest days of a season and opened a workroom of their own.

At Kitmir there were now over fifty girls in the workrooms and a whole staff of designers and technicians. A black sign with "Kitmir" in gold lettering was nailed beside the doorway which led into the courtyard, and another was hung at the entrance of the house itself. I had a large room all to myself with a mahogany desk, an open fireplace, mirrors, and tables where I could spread my designs and study my books. I had a couple of comfortable chairs and even a blue carpet, not all of it perfectly new and fresh, as I had purchased part of the installation from the previous tenants, but it seemed extreme luxury to me after the bareness and modesty of my old place. The room where we kept our stock of embroideries and displayed them to the customers who visited us seemed altogether magnificent to me. It was a kind of gallery built on to one side of the house, where the lighting came from panes of glass let into the ceiling, which was extremely favourable to the embroideries. My heart expanded with pride each time I looked at the black and gold signs, walked through the courtyard to what I thought a most imposing entrance, and crossed the threshold of my new Kitmir.

Before leaving the rue François I, other important dressmaking houses in Paris had approached me about doing some work for them; but during the first seasons, fearing Chanel's displeasure, I had refused. Now, however, the

circumstances had changed considerably, and the people around me thought that we had arrived at the point where we could take a more independent stand. It would be advisable to broaden our field of action, for to depend entirely upon Chanel might not be safe; should her success or her favour not last, my organization, which had become quite large, would find itself at a great disadvantage. The future proved not only that these calculations were wrong but that we committed a tactical error.

When I first consulted Mlle. Chanel about my new plans, she seemed to agree with me on the principle but at the same time she drew up a list of dressmakers whom she wanted me to exclude from my future clientele, and of course they happened to be the most important ones. I submitted to her desire but soon came to the conclusion that I had to work either for her alone or for the trade in general, as a middle course was impracticable. This, eventually, I had to explain to her; but it did not take me long to discover that my present tactics meant the end of our harmonious co-operation. She resented at heart what she considered my ungrateful behaviour and disapproved of my plans of expansion. I was no longer permitted to come to her private studio, for she feared—and took no pains to conceal it from me—that I might learn some of her secrets and involuntarily pass them on to her competitors. Seeing her less often, I gradually lost contact with her and was not able to please her with the same infallibility as before. She in her turn began to work with other embroiderers, to whom she gave more orders than to me. Moreover, when we catered to a number of houses whose demands differed widely, the production lost its unified character and became less individual.

Nor did I derive any particular benefits from the new order of things. It gave me much more work and trouble, and the new business contacts were too varied to be always agreeable or easy. The turnover augmented considerably but not the profits, as the organization had become decidedly too large for me to cope with single-handed. Had I remained with Chanel on the original basis, I should undoubtedly have had a much pleasanter time. But I should not have acquired the sum of experience, painful as it was, which eventually became an advantage.

Every season now we were obliged to prepare not less than two hundred samples. These were generally pieces of material of standard width and about two yards in length. On them, carried out in embroidery, would be the finished conception of a gown's decoration, for which a certain knowledge of dressmaking was essential. I explained my ideas to my designers, often making the preliminary sketches myself which were then carried out in

detail by the draughtsmen. The material and the medium of embroidery were usually a part of the original conception.

"MME. KITMIR"

The samples had to be ready a full month before the dressmakers began to prepare a new season's collection. They were packed into boxes and taken to the dressmaking houses, where they were examined by the owners, designers, and cutters. None of my customers except agents and foreign buyers came in person to my workroom. I employed special salesmen for the purpose of placing the embroideries, displaying them, and maintaining the contact between the clients and the workroom. The most important houses I visited myself.

An interview with the couturier had to be requested in good time, as a dressmaker in vogue at the moment would be as difficult of access as a statesman, even if he had asked to see my work. Everybody around him objected strongly to dealing with a new house, especially a house like mine, and these objections were founded upon private calculations. Most of the employés, even the higher ones, were accustomed to make their little deals with the wholesale establishments, allotting their purchases according to the salesman's generosity. They did not expect me as an amateur to know the rules of their game and they naturally tried either not to let me in, or to get me out if I had once penetrated. Later on, when I discovered all this, I solved

the delicate problem by sending appropriate presents to whomsoever required them.

On the appointed day and hour I came to the house preceded by my salesmen with their boxes and was led off to some corner while I was being announced. The report of my arrival passed through many mouths and reached at last the head of the establishment or the particular designer I had come to see. Invariably he was unable to receive me at the hour he had appointed, and I had to wait. Fifteen minutes passed, half an hour, sometimes much more. In the meantime I watched the activities around me. I usually found myself in the salon; it was morning and out of season, and the saleswomen sat around in gloomy groups doing nothing. A customer entered. Immediately the saleswomen were transformed; it was as if they pulled masks over their faces. Their expressions became pleasant and impenetrable, their gestures smooth, calculated. At another time I might be waiting in the room assigned to the models, and here the scene was quite different. The room itself was bare and untidy, boxes of powder and rouge, pots of cream, dirty puffs, greasy towels lay around on the furniture. The girls' artful coiffures and heavily made up faces formed a strange contrast with their shabby underwear. They were often much too thin, had sallow skin, pointed elbows, and salient vertebræ. Absolutely indifferent to the presence of my salesmen, they lounged in their underwear or in soiled slips which hardly covered them, and exchanged colourful remarks without paying the slightest attention to us. When they were wanted in the showroom they dressed reluctantly and sauntered out. Returning they pulled the samples off and threw them in a heap on the floor.

Finally someone came to say that I was to be received. I was led along corridors, back stairways, workrooms. The last delay occurred at the entrance to the sanctuary. An attendant knocked softly at the door and, thrusting his head into the opening, whispered my name. When the permission to admit me was received, I was ushered in with the same precaution as if this were a hospital and I about to visit a moribund patient. The important personage greeted me and after a few words of mundane conversation ordered the attendant to have the boxes brought in. My salesmen appeared on tiptoe. Taking the covers off the boxes silently and dexterously, they lifted out the samples, and holding them up one by one at the level of the personage's eyes, waited respectfully for the verdict. From my chair at the side of him upon whom all depended, I also awaited the verdict. Under these conditions my creations appeared to me in an altogether different light. I wondered how I could possibly have imagined that anybody

would like them. All through the ordeal of the showing I was sitting on burning coals.

The samples which met with approval were entered in a book and left behind; the others were thrown in a heap upon the floor, later to be picked up, folded, put back into the boxes, and taken home by the salesmen.

Sometimes, besides the owners of the establishment a whole council of designers and executives was present. They sat around a table upon which the samples were spread, and the gathering made remarks and exchanged impressions as though I were not in the room, while I bore the inquisition as well as I could.

Some of my clients were more considerate, to be sure, but, although I appreciated their tact, it was the others who encouraged me to hope that I was equal to my new position, that I had won a place in their strange world, and out of nothing created something real.

After the samples had been shown to the houses, large and small, their choice was made, and another kind of work began for me. The dressmakers would adapt my ideas to theirs or have sudden inspirations of their own which would have to be carried out in the shortest possible time. Designs were altered, colourings and materials changed. New samples were made. My salesmen hurried around among their clients, bringing back orders and explanations of how to carry them out. Sometimes the important clients sent for me to consult upon a particular piece of work or to make new suggestions. Again I wasted my time waiting in corners. Work started early at my workroom and ended late at night. But the day at last came when the designers had settled definitely on what they wanted. Their creations passed into the domain of the workrooms and thence before the public. My part of the work was then over. When orders began to come in after the showings, they were sent to contractors in the provinces; hundreds of workers now sat over my embroideries. I was free to take a holiday.

But I could not be happy for long without Kitmir. Although by this time I had discovered what new complications I had brought into my life by taking up business, I never really regretted it. My ambition was thoroughly aroused; it was a kind of sport with me to try to compete with people hardened in the job, and I was determined to succeed.

The greatest satisfaction that I received came quite unexpectedly. In 1925 an International Exhibition of Decorative Art was held in Paris; the preparations started months ahead. Amongst the exhibitors who had separate pavilions were listed the Russian Soviets. When I heard of this, I decided

that the public must be shown some of the activity on our side as well. It was only fair that people should see what we refugees were capable of doing in our exile, especially those who had never worked before and of whom my workroom was chiefly composed. At the cost of a great deal of effort and expense I succeeded in securing a place in the main building of the exhibition and I filled a large showcase with my embroideries. Having a French commercial license I was obliged to exhibit in my own class and was surrounded by all the best-known embroidery houses in Paris. Nevertheless, when my designers and I had finished decorating our showcase I thought for once that my creations did not make such a bad display.

The exhibition lasted for many months, and by the time it was over I had forgotten about my showcase. We were advised in due course to take back the embroideries, and did so. Several weeks later we received a circular from the clearing office of the exhibition asking the head of the establishment to call. The manager went immediately and I expected some unpleasant surprise, a thing that happened all too often. But this time I was mistaken. The manager returned with the startling report that we had been given two prizes: a gold medal and an honorary diploma.

When the certificates arrived I was still happier. The administration of the exhibition evidently knew nothing of me or of my identity, for the papers were made out in the name of "Monsieur Kitmir."

CHAPTER XVIII

BIARRITZ AFTER THE WAR

At the end of the dressmaking season I was free to leave Paris, but I did so reluctantly and seldom took a long holiday. I was afraid that something might go wrong in my absence from the workroom; besides, I could really judge of the success of my creations only by the number of reorders. If they were numerous, I had a right to consider that my efforts in preparing a collection had not been wasted.

When I did go away, I went chiefly on account of my husband, who needed a change. Both Dmitri and he got very tired of being tied to the streets of the city. In the spring of 1920, while we were still in London, first Dmitri and then Putiatin got themselves what during the war were called "side cars." In Paris they soon purchased a Citroën car (equivalent to the American Ford), and in it Putiatin dashed about the streets and out into the countryside. He drove the car as if it were a racer, squeezing every particle of energy out of it. Even a more substantially built machine than his would hardly have been able to withstand this treatment, and at the end of three or four months the poor car was utterly exhausted; it rattled and creaked like an old coffee mill. When he had assured himself that the car was incapable of further service, he would purchase a new one and subject it to exactly the same treatment. I had managed to get somewhat accustomed to his driving; but my brother, who had less occasion than I to experience it, felt decidedly uncomfortable when Putiatin was at the wheel. Dmitri and I sat in the back seat and clutched nervously at the cushions as we tossed from side to side, while the car bounced over the roads quite heedless of obstacles.

In the end I preferred to see my husband go on his motoring expeditions accompanied by one of his Russian friends rather than by myself. Some hidden force seemed to protect them, however, and, although they used to disappear for days, they always returned unhurt.

During the summer holidays we usually motored down to Biarritz and stayed either there or at St. Jean de Luz, a few miles farther south down the coast. We spent two or three weeks by the ocean, sometimes in the company of my step-mother Princess Paley and my two step-sisters, sometimes staying with friends. But I had already arrived at the stage when resort life had very little to offer me, and I had great difficulty in relaxing far enough to

enjoy the aimless and easy existence which one was supposed to lead during the short weeks of a season. Although the occasional weeks I spent at one or the other resort meant little or nothing in the working out of my life and so should have no place here, they brought me in contact with the feverish and agitated humanity of the post-war period and added to the sum of my human experience.

Most of the people who congregate year after year at the few fashionable resorts of the Atlantic coast, although they come from all parts of the world, constitute a kind of vast clan; even those who are on their first visit fit into it immediately. The members of the clan are bound together by the same major interests—enjoyment and gambling. The clan, however, breaks up into coteries which group people according to personal tastes and inclinations; these vary from season to season. Violent quarrels break out, intrigues are spun, friendships are made, romances started, all in the space of a few weeks—to be forgotten during the months when those who have played their parts so earnestly in the game have scattered to the four corners of the globe. Returning a year later, they will start all over again with apparently the same enthusiasm, but with different partners or different adversaries, as chance might dictate.

By Ewing Galloway

VIEW OF BIARRITZ

The beautiful landscape of the Basque country receded into the background. Few noticed it. To the majority it was like a familiar frame—though one without which the picture would perhaps be less complete. The

picture itself was an obvious one. People who had nothing in common to start with were thrown together accidentally and with the help of accidentally acquired fortunes organized an artificial existence in which there was no perspective and no substance. This little world was altogether too small to allow you to remain merely an observer. As soon as each visitor arrived he was dragged into its centre.

Although the people who came to Biarritz were often unusual types, the place did something even to ordinary humans which brought out unsuspected peculiarities of their character.

One of my friends in Paris was an Englishwoman with whom I had spent much time and had much in common. She once invited me to drive down to Biarritz to spend a fortnight with her at the hotel. A day before we were supposed to start she told me that something important had occurred which obliged her to remain in Paris and asked me to go ahead with her car and maid to Biarritz, where she would join me in a few days. I protested and offered to wait, but she was so insistent that I had to give in. The trip was lonely but comfortable, and my hostess joined me sooner than I had expected. She had engaged the biggest suite at the hotel, and proceeded to make it her castle. The furniture was pulled around and fur rugs were thrown over the sofas and arm-chairs, which were piled with cushions. A grand piano was rented. All lamps were put under the tables, “to give the room a softer lighting,” and the tables themselves were crowded with vases, filled preferably with white flowers. All day long perfumed incense was burned in an assortment of containers. The setting reminded one of an Elinor Glyn novel. It seemed to be the rule that we must go out every morning to buy more perfume and more incense, until the shelves were overflowing with them, and also to bring back fresh flowers and refill the vases. Restraining myself from asking any questions, I assisted in all the arrangements and waited to see what was to happen.

But nothing happened. Outside of the shopping expeditions I saw very little of my hostess; even her meals she often took alone in her room. Once only, a frightened-looking woman came to sing some songs to us in the evening. Our Biarritz friends occasionally called, and afterwards smilingly made remarks to me about our odd establishment. I was still waiting.

And then one night a thunderstorm broke. I had gone out to dinner that evening and when I returned in the pouring rain I found that my hostess had shut herself up in a closet. The maid who was mounting guard outside of the door explained to me that her mistress could not stand thunderstorms. I

shouted through the door that the thunder had subsided, and my hostess emerged from her hiding-place, but she was still in a state of great agitation.

Next morning I went out early, first informing myself as to my hostess's spirits. She seemed rather shaken by the previous night's experience but I did not attach much importance to her condition and departed at leisure. When I came back to the hotel after lunch and went upstairs, a surprise awaited me. The apartment was empty. The rooms were dismantled; the hotel furnishings, including the lamps, had been restored to their places; trunks stood in the corridor and vestibule. Only the grand piano squatted forlornly in the centre of the drawing-room floor. My hostess had disappeared. In a few minutes, however, the hotel office sent up a note. In it she informed me briefly that since the season of thunderstorms had now begun—a fact of which she had been reminded the previous day—she could not possibly remain in Biarritz an hour longer and was leaving immediately for Paris.

The bill, however, had been paid. As I had made plans to remain in Biarritz for another week or so, I abandoned the grand suite and moved into less ostentatious quarters, where my life resumed its normal course once more.

Even dogs in Biarritz seemed to have codes of behaviour which set them apart from their kind in other places. Such was a short-coated, short-legged, black and white mongrel whose tail had a defiant curl and whom everybody called Pancho. He belonged to nobody and led an existence of complete independence. At cocktail time he sat in the smartest bar, and he always knew in which house there was a dinner party and turned up at precisely the right hour. Sometimes he would take up a temporary abode at some villa where the cuisine was better than at the other private houses. In the afternoons he would go out to the golf course, but he thought it more convenient to drive there than to run all the way on his short legs. He selected his means of conveyance with care. Sometimes he would jump into a horse cab if the person who had hired it was someone who suited him. Sometimes he picked an automobile, but the driver had to be somebody whom he found congenial. He seemed to know exactly in what direction they would take him and never made a mistake. When the tea hour at the golf club was over, he returned in just the same manner. All Biarritz knew him and sought to befriend him, but he was supremely aloof. He wanted no protectors and what he needed he took for himself.

The last time I saw Pancho was only recently, and he was then in a situation which must have been extremely humiliating to him. On my last

trip to Paris I was coming out of the Ritz after a late dinner party. The Place Vendôme was absolutely deserted, save for a woman with a dog on a leash, who was walking up and down the pavement in front of the hotel. In spite of the darkness I seemed to recognize the defiant twist of the dog's tail.

"Pancho!" called my companion, a Biarritz habituée.

The woman with the dog heard her and came up to us. Pancho had aged but he was clean now and his coat was brushed. He had on a harness which matched his leash. By the time he had joined us his tail was between his legs, and he turned his head away when my companion spoke to him.

"How does Pancho happen to be in Paris?" I asked.

My friend laughed. "Don't you know? The So-and-Sos—do you remember them?—took Pancho into their house some time ago. This is their maid. At first he always managed to get away, but they brought him back every time. They tied him up. And then Pancho probably resigned himself. He goes away on an occasional spree but comes back of his own accord. He is much older now and thinks perhaps that it is safer to have a roof over his head. Poor Pancho."

Yes, poor Pancho, I thought, patting the old dog.

The Biarritz crowd, apart from chance coteries, was divided into two sets: summer guests, who formed the more numerous group, and permanent residents—people who owned villas and spent most of the year in them. Some of them had been established in the place for many years and resented being crowded out by the newcomers, whose number had increased since the war. The members of the first set did not by any means think of settling down in Biarritz, even if they acquired property. They were out principally for social contacts and, when their goal was reached, they moved to other places. Biarritz in post-war days was a paradise for the social climber, and several successful careers were achieved in a very short time. Spanish grandees, English aristocrats, titled Frenchmen, American millionaires, South Americans of no definite profession, people of all nationalities and walks of life mixed freely and rubbed elbows with one another.

At a distance of about thirty miles from Biarritz on the other side of the Spanish frontier, in the small town of San Sebastian, the Spanish royal family lived in their summer palace during the season. Spanish society followed the court and settled down around it. The King and Queen came occasionally to Biarritz, but the majority of the San Sebastian colony spent their days, and especially their nights, in their automobiles, tearing madly

backwards and forwards between San Sebastian and Biarritz, making the roads a menace to the rest of humanity. The King and Queen visited Biarritz mostly in the daytime and always informally.

As I passed of a late afternoon down one of the narrow, steep streets which were bordered with shops, I might chance to look through the window of a certain famous tea shop and see the Queen of Spain taking tea at a table surrounded by a group of ladies. Although most of the shops, including the confectioners', were branches of the best-known Paris establishments, their quarters here were so small and cramped that their luxurious wares seemed ridiculously out of scale. In the tea shop there was place for only one or two tables besides the one occupied by the Queen and her party. Sometimes I would walk in and join them, and we would chat for a while over our cups of tea or chocolate.

Queen Ena had blue eyes, fair hair, and a lovely complexion; she was by far the most human representative of her kind in spite of the long period of years spent at the stiffest court in Europe. She achieved perfect balance between ease and simplicity on one side, and the obligations of her rank on the other. The existence of the Spanish sovereigns in a country where political complications were always ready to break out was a troublesome one. They never were allowed to feel safe. The Queen, therefore, did not entertain too many illusions about the stability of their situation.

She was amused and interested by my business activities, and one day when she was in Paris she paid me a visit at my office. I showed her all that was to be seen. When the inspection was over and we remained alone in my room, she turned to me and said with a little wistful smile:

"And who, after all, can tell, Marie? In a very few years I might join you here."

Now, eight years later, she too is living in exile.

The King and Queen usually came to Biarritz for polo. Sometimes the King took part in a game himself; sometimes they both were spectators. After the game there was often a tea party, the invitations being sent by telephone from San Sebastian in the morning. If Alfonso had played that day, his tea consisted of a broiled chicken or slices of roast beef.

Sometimes we were invited to San Sebastian. Because of our Russian passports and the difficulties we always had in obtaining visas at a moment's notice, the Queen would send her own car to take us to San Sebastian and bring us back so as to avoid complications on the frontier. The royal family

stayed at a palace called Miramar which belonged to the Dowager Queen Christine. Upon our arrival we were met by one or two gentlemen- and ladies-in-waiting and escorted to the room where our hosts were waiting for us. Our intimacy with the young sovereigns dated back to 1919 in London, the first year of our exile.

Between our first meeting in Paris in 1912 and the one in London many things had taken place. Queen Ena had lost a brother in the war, and this was, I believe, her first visit home since his death. I was in deep mourning for my father. As soon as the Queen arrived, I went to call on her at the hotel and found her alone. The King was out. That evening after dinner at our house in South Kensington the telephone rang.

"Hallo, is it you, Marie?" asked an unknown voice with a foreign accent.

"Yes, who is it?"

"It is I, Alfonso; I was sor-r-ry to have missed you this after-r-rnoon; I want to see you. When can I come—now?" It was then eleven o'clock at night.

"We shall be perfectly delighted to see you, Alfonso. Please come," I answered.

"I want to tell you how much I have felt for you all. I am not like so many of the others who turn their backs on you when anything happens." The diaphragm was buzzing with his excitement, for he was shouting at the top of his voice to convey his feelings. "I despise them. Can I do something for you? What can I do? Well, I am on my way to your house now and we will talk it over. *A tout-à-l'heure.*" And he slammed down the receiver.

In half an hour he was sitting in our dingy London drawing-room, gesticulating, laughing, full of vitality, sympathetic. The recollection of that telephone conversation and the evening he spent with us came back to me every time I saw him.

But it was his mother whom we were visiting when we went to the palace of Miramar, and, besides, the court of Spain was known amongst royalty for the severity of its almost medieval etiquette.

By Wide World Photos

By Wide World Photos

THE SPANISH RULERS

QUEEN VICTORIA ENA KING ALFONSO XIII

Queen Christine, a trim vivacious little old lady with an intelligent, sharp face and white hair, kissed my cheek while I curtsied and kissed her hand. Her manner was perfectly simple and cordial, but you felt, nevertheless, that she was a sovereign of the old school, who had never stepped outside the palace walls. The decorum with which she was surrounded seemed as natural to her as the air she breathed. The palace was built on the lines of a spacious villa, and the decorations dated, as in so many other palaces, from the late Victorian period.

At lunch we were more than twenty though there were no other guests: all the rest were members of the royal household. The meal, although short, was a formal function; the conversation remained guarded and stiff. After lunch Queen Christine talked to those who were present and then retired, leaving us and her children free to entertain ourselves. We then either went for a cruise in a motor boat along the coast accompanied by the children or played tennis in the garden. When tea was over, the car was there to take us back to Biarritz.

Although the King and Queen of Spain took no active part in the Biarritz life, they lent it a kind of glamour from afar. The charity balls, polo matches, and other social events were smarter and more readily attended because of the hope of encountering them.

But when the season was ended, Biarritz changed almost in a day, and then it became dowdy, provincial, and charming. The most delightful time was April, when the ocean and the sky looked as if they had just undergone

a very thorough spring cleaning. I remember once coming from Paris at Easter time to recuperate after an attack of flu. The bars and restaurants were closed; the streets were deserted. There was no tooting of motor car horns, no fumes. It was the first time in all the years I had been in Biarritz that I was conscious of breathing sea air.

That same spring I met there for the first time someone who was destined to occupy an important place in my existence and through whom my life was to go into yet another phase. After I had stayed for a few days at the hotel, a friend of mine asked me to move over to her villa. In her conversations with me she often mentioned an American girl whose family were more or less permanent Biarritz residents. The girl was absent just then but was expected shortly. My hostess was particularly anxious for me to meet her.

One morning a tall, slim figure in a tweed riding habit, mounted upon a grey mare, came trotting into the open gates of our garden and, stopping her horse on the lawn in front of the house, called out to my friend. She was greeted with delight and asked to come in. The girl dismounted and handed the reins to the groom who had followed her. I was so struck by her appearance that in a very few moments I had joined the two girls in the hall. This, I realized, could be no one but the American girl I had heard so much about.

After the first harmonious glimpse of her in the garden, what appealed to me most when I met her was her warm, deep voice and the generous smile of her large but perfectly shaped mouth. I followed the two friends into the library and, while they chatted and laughed over their cigarettes, I sat and looked at our guest. She had pulled off her soft felt hat, and the dark brown hair fell in thick wavy masses over the high straight brow. The face was narrow yet soft in contour; the eyes were long, dark grey, heavily lashed, and full of unexpected lights and shadows. Yet it was not in beauty alone that her attraction lay; it was in her joyous, friendly manner, in her *joie de vivre*. This girl was Audrey Emery, who three or four years later was to take an important place in the scheme of my life. After that first meeting we saw each other occasionally both in Paris and Biarritz, until the event of which I shall write in a later chapter.

Biarritz in its pre-war and less ostentatious days had been a great favourite with a small and select group of Russians, who chose it chiefly for its climate and its peacefulness. The average tourists and holiday makers

preferred the Riviera. After the Russian debacle those of the exiles who did not have to work and who still possessed means of existence returned to the Riviera and the Basque coast, where life was much cheaper and easier than in Paris. Amongst those who settled down permanently in Biarritz were two relations of mine—the Prince of Oldenburg and the Duke of Leuchtenberg.

The Prince of Oldenburg was close upon eighty; his grandfather, a German prince, had married one of Emperor Paul's daughters in the beginning of the nineteenth century and had become a Russian subject, though retaining his German title. After that time the family never left Russia and had become closely bound to the Romanov dynasty by a series of marriages; they had completely identified themselves with their adopted country, only the name remaining to remind them of their former history.

The old Prince was a man of overwhelming energy; his life had been spent in patronizing scientific enterprises, organizing various kinds of social work, promoting educational schemes, and improving the conditions of public health. He was a tireless and restless worker, always "on the go," wearing out his assistants and subordinates. His activities were not always perfectly co-ordinated, and he was laughed at and criticized by the passive Petersburg bureaucracy, which he worried incessantly with his new schemes and plans. During the war, however, his organizing capacities and tremendous energy were recognized and appreciated. He was extremely kind-hearted, but masterful and brusque in his manner, and those he came in superficial contact with were decidedly frightened by him.

He had left Petrograd before the Bolsheviks had come into power, and in company with his wife, who was paralysed as a result of a stroke, had spent some time in Finland before coming to France. The Prince eventually purchased a piece of property outside of Biarritz, where he led the life of a country squire surrounded by a veritable colony of his former collaborators and old retainers.

Nothing could have made me miss paying several calls on my old uncle every time I was in Biarritz. Although the estate was only a couple of miles away, when I entered its gates I forgot that I was in France. I might have been on an estate in Russia in the lavish days of old. The atmosphere that the old Prince had created around himself was a mixture of extreme simplicity and patriarchal dignity. His spirit was the same as ever. Nothing could break his vitality—neither age nor the trials of the last years; he still was active and alert, and his memory was clear.

In a little black skull-cap, the tails of his old-fashioned coat flapping in the breeze, his hands clasped behind his back, he would walk briskly up and down the paths of his garden supervising the planting and pruning, giving orders in curt, gruff tones. His imagination was still at work although the domain over which it could exert itself had shrunk to almost nothing. He imported shrubs and plants from Africa and tried to acclimatize them to French soil. He had a hut built on his grounds for the purpose of smoking ham and fish as it was done in Russia. But his eyes were always sad now. The real responsibilities had gone out of his life; there were no more duties to perform. His sovereign, whom he had adored, was no longer there to require his services; there was nothing left in his life save memories. But these he kept to himself. They did not belong to him alone; they belonged to an epoch when loyalty consisted in silence. Nobody dared intrude upon this silence. He would talk of the past only to recall unimportant events, such as the details of a visit he paid at Biarritz to Napoleon III and Empress Eugenie in the late sixties of the last century, and of a ball he attended at the palace which had since become the Hôtel du Palais. He would also speak about his experiences as a young officer and the social life of those times.

His wife, the Princess Eugenie, who in her day had been a woman of great culture and intelligence, was a hopeless invalid now. She could not even speak. She sat in an arm-chair with a warm rug tucked around her knees while another old lady, a lifelong friend of hers, knitted endlessly in another chair beside her. While she knitted she talked aloud, pretending to believe that the Princess could understand her. The silence which would otherwise have reigned in this room would have been too much for her to bear. The Prince could stand this sight only for a few short moments at a time.

The proud old man presided over his dining-room table—at which were seated those who were left of his staff of faithful collaborators—as if he were heading a conference. They had all been working in the same field; now they were finishing their lives together. The little group grows smaller every year; soon it will have disappeared altogether.

My other relation living in Biarritz was the Duke of Leuchtenberg, a descendant of Napoleon's step-son, Eugène Beauharnais. The Duke's grandfather had also married a Russian Grand Duchess and had settled down in Russia, where his children took up service in the army. The present Duke was only a few years my senior, and, as my brother and I had inherited consecutively his governess and his tutor, we naturally saw each other frequently.

After a few years of service in a cavalry regiment, Sandro lost his health, and because of weak lungs was obliged to spend most of his time at Pau, which is also in the Basque country. During the revolution he married and escaped from Russia. He then came to France and stayed for several years in Paris, where like the rest of us he went through all kinds of vicissitudes. Finally, with the scanty remains of a once large fortune, he bought a small place in Biarritz and settled down there permanently. He and his wife, being childless, adopted a little Russian girl orphaned by the revolution and later established a complete school for children whose parents had died or disappeared in the upheaval. They have devoted themselves heart and soul to this work, collecting contributions and supervising in person every detail of the organization. Their own home, although quite modest, is congenial, and they find great satisfaction in the useful and calm existence that they now lead.

CHAPTER XIX

DOMESTIC CRISIS

More than two years had passed in almost incessant labour with very short intervals for recreation. My fund of jewels was nearly exhausted, my business was not yet sufficiently important to give me an income, and we were beginning to get into debt. On the other hand my responsibilities had increased tremendously, the chief amongst them being the number of people whom I had in my charge or dependent upon me in one way or another. By this time I had come to realize that I must face these responsibilities alone and had only myself to count upon. The present was insecure enough, and I could see no prospect but financial catastrophe.

While most of my attention was focused upon my embroidery shop, I did not consider that I had the right to abandon charity work. This side of my activities had also taken on considerable proportions, which carried additional obligations. I understood perfectly that in taking too much upon myself I might be harming both of the interests that I was trying to serve—my own and those of the refugees—but I found it impossible to be guided by cold reason. Necessity had obliged me to turn to business, but the whole course of my life had trained me to revolt against a too self-centred existence. The Russians with whom I was associated in relief work were the best and staunchest elements of the emigration, people who had brushed aside political and personal interests and were entirely preoccupied with the fate of their fellows. This group, in contrast to those who still carried on their party strifes, brought me back to my happiest and proudest Russian memories, those connected with the first weeks of the war, when all of us, irrespective of political opinions and class distinctions, had united in the same effort. I preferred to continue with them at all costs, especially now that there was no more glamour to the work, when I would have been a shirker to forsake them. With tragedy and suffering on one side, embroidery, dressmaking, and business interests on the other, I was living amidst a storm of influences which were shaping me gradually into something quite different from what I had been before.

The experiences of the past few years had fully awakened me. I was responding with my entire self to the challenge of this new existence, which I knew I had only just begun to explore. I cherished the past and respected it

with all its misery and romance, with its faults and its good qualities, but I had definitely cut myself loose from it for better or for worse. It was dead. The world had passed on into another age. I had passed on with it, and it was this new age that I was determined to investigate and understand; it was there that my future lay.

Although it would soon be five years since I had left Russia, my heart and mind were still in my country, and I was constantly preoccupied with her fate. My personal losses had ceased to count for me, and I was able to regard the situation from the dispassionate viewpoint that I had acquired during the last few years. I refused to participate in any party work. It seemed impossible to me that Russia's destinies could be influenced by small groups of politicians living in exile, who had already proved their total incompetence. Russia, in spite of the agonies she was going through, could not be wiped off the map. Our duty as Russians was to discard personal calculations, to lay vain illusions aside and look to the day when our country would emerge from her trials. We might not be allowed to return and take part in the eventual rebuilding, but even from afar we could be useful to her provided we kept our minds free from preconceived theories. I felt that this preparation for the future was the only satisfactory course to take, even if it were to be the task of an entire lifetime and were never to bring any visible reward.

These ideas had by no means dawned upon me all at once. The process had been a slow one, but when my thoughts had ripened, I knew that my convictions could not be altered. But here, too, I stood alone. The evolution which gave me such an immense inner satisfaction added nothing to my domestic happiness. Its effect was quite the contrary.

I found myself in the midst of a dilemma which as time went on was becoming increasingly severe. My second marriage, although a "love match," had been an unequal union. It had been contracted, moreover, under the stress of a great crisis. As soon as our lives had ceased to be in actual danger and we had to take up our places in organized society, the difference in our tastes and temperaments became apparent.

Life under conditions of enforced expatriation, following upon a cataclysm such as we had experienced, is probably the crudest existence imaginable. Its uncertainty is shattering. It makes no allowances and ruthlessly brushes aside the lingerers and the undetermined. It had to be fought grimly, step by step, with tooth and nail. Compared to his own comrades and to those in the same social position as himself, my husband was leading a rather easy life; he had not had his back to the wall nor been

forced to exert himself. His family was left to my care; he had no definite duties and took his life in exile as a form of prolonged holiday. The people he sympathized with and insisted upon having about him, and whom I had to see constantly in my home, lived on an entirely different plane from mine. Their intellectual demands were few, and in their struggle for daily necessities the thing that meant most to them was easy pleasure and relaxation, in which my husband joined them readily. There was very little in common between this set of younger people, to which Putiatin naturally belonged, and myself. In order to preserve my enthusiasm I had to keep away from the everyday doings of the refugees. I had to keep away both from their conceptions of life and from their political theories, but this was totally impossible under the circumstances. Small occurrences and incidents, petty intrigues, came too close to me, took on too much importance. Although I had tried to show my dissatisfaction with this order of things, and had hinted at the serious effects it might have, it was to no effect. Lacking the eloquence to explain my point of view, and detesting arguments, I waited wretchedly for a miracle to take place which would alter the inevitable course of events. At times I was on the point of breaking down under the weight of my problems, but too much was at stake to permit of any yielding.

Then at last the day came when I felt that I could not stand the situation any longer. My patience had come to an end; I was not willing to make any more concessions. I would follow the only course which made life in exile bearable or worth while. After a few stormy and agonizing days, torn by regrets and scruples but this time determined to act, I decided to leave Paris by myself and think over the situation at peace. I first joined Lucia Marling in Scotland and then went with her to the Hague, where Sir Charles was then the British Minister. By that time I was completely exhausted by work, responsibilities, and worries, and I thought of nothing but rest. Even my workroom, which had been abandoned to the care of my mother-in-law, was temporarily forgotten.

For the time I was free from my duties, and I gave myself up luxuriously to the purely physical sensations of comfort and shelter. Eventually I must make important decisions; for the present I could not think of them, I could not think of anything. The last weeks in Paris had been a nightmare, too painful and humiliating to seem true, and the only proofs of their undeniable reality were the long letters which arrived almost daily. I was upset by them every time and yet I knew that if I weakened and went back now, I should be forced to resume the former existence in spite of all the promises made in the letters. It was not a quarrel. It was a fundamental difference in attitude, a

difference which would demand something more than a reconciliation to efface it. For the moment I was too weary to be able to work out a new basis for our relationship. The only thing I wanted now was privacy, a place where I could be by myself, to think what I pleased and not to be constantly imposed upon.

The Hague was in every way such a contrast to Paris that it offered an ideal refuge. The British legation was housed behind an imposing grey stone façade which dominated the quiet, narrow street on which it stood. The building dated from the times of the Spanish Governors. It had interior courtyards, vaulted cellars, and a walled garden. One of the rooms on the second floor was even supposed to be haunted, and according to the traditions of the legation the ghost had so frightened the small son of one of the ministers that he remained a stutterer for the rest of his life. But there was nothing particularly forbidding about the great house now that Lucia Marling ruled over it. The wives of British diplomats have a particular gift for creating an English atmosphere around them wherever they settle; and Lucia in addition had the talent of making an interior which vibrated with her own personality and was both a home and a centre of varied activities. In the generosity of her heart she extended her hospitality to any lonely human creature whom she discovered was in need of encouragement or help; she was never so happy as when she could be of use to someone. When my brother and I wanted to have a little fun at her expense, we would tell her that she invented complications in the lives of her friends on purpose to have the pleasure of helping them. During the first weeks of my stay with her she was so upset over my run-down condition that, after sending me to bed early every night, she would bring me a steaming beverage prepared by herself, which she made me drink before she left me.

Life at the Hague was restful by necessity, the only entertainments being what we ourselves could invent, and in the middle of summer these were few. Every morning we drove out of town with the children and spent several hours on the dunes, beside the sea; in the afternoons we made excursions in the car, visiting the small Dutch towns, their historical buildings, museums, and picture galleries; in the evening we sometimes entertained a few friends or went out to small dinners. The most agreeable time of the day was the hour we spent together before dressing for dinner, in what Lucia called her Persian boudoir, where she had accumulated the things she had brought back from Teheran. We settled comfortably upon the Oriental divans and indulged in long conversations. The Hague, although so near to all the European centres, was as dead and provincial as a village. Lucia, with her craving for activity, never found enough to do to keep her

happy; she missed the independent and yet responsible life she had led in Persia and the work she had done while in Denmark for the Russian refugees in Finland.

That summer the Queen of Holland was celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of her reign, and for the period of a few days the Hague came to life: the streets were decorated with flags and bunting, and the inhabitants in their Sunday clothes crowded the pavements to see their Queen and her husband, the Prince Consort, drive through the town in state. Afterwards everything subsided again into its normal tranquillity, and the policemen on the street corners were reduced once more to gravely directing traffic that consisted exclusively of cyclists.

The Prince Consort remains in my memory as having unwittingly made me realize the passing of the years for the first time, and signalling to me the approach of what is described as middle age. He was a distant relative of mine and had come once or twice to see me at the legation. During one of these visits we began to talk about our respective children. Between his daughter Juliana and my son there was only ten days' difference in age. Though they were barely fourteen at the time, he suggested the possibility of bringing about a marriage between them some day. I was taken aback. Another six or eight years would slip by and I might find myself a mother-in-law. But even if I was growing older, certain of my ideas, especially those concerning prearranged royal unions, had become considerably modernized.

By the end of the summer I had regained my balance completely. The holiday had lasted long enough, and my neglected affairs demanded my speedy return to Paris. In the meantime my mind had been made up and I planned for the immediate future. Four months' absence from my everyday surroundings had enabled me to take a longer view, and I could judge the situation more clearly. I saw that in my desire to be tactful and spare the susceptibilities of those who depended upon me I had gone too far; instead of being considerate I had only been weak, and by avoiding issues had let complications pile up which now threatened disaster. Life in exile was too grave, too serious a proposition to allow of any half-measures or compromises. I was forced to take matters into my own hands although this obligation was profoundly distasteful to me. In spite of all, I still clung to that not distant past when the marriage I was making seemed to be bringing the fulfilment of every cherished dream. And it might have been so much easier to go on existing from day to day, without troubling about the future, without aspiring to anything beyond reach or setting oneself an ideal.

In order to have any lasting effect my separation from Putiatin had to be prolonged. Before departing for Paris I decided to send him to Vienna, where we had some business interests. These interests formed part of the unfortunate Dutch enterprise which had engulfed the sum derived from the sale of my last important piece of jewellery. The whole affair had never been properly looked after and required investigation. This was an occasion for Putiatin to use his own judgment about a rather involved situation and to take upon himself the responsibility for the investments he had made. Besides, he needed to be separated from his environment for a time, and from the people he was associating with. Knowing what the change would mean to him, I found it very hard to make this decision, and it was harder still to persevere in it later when I knew him to be very unhappy. At the moment, however, there was no other way out. The rest belonged to the future; I anticipated nothing and would wait until circumstances themselves should point out the direction to be followed.

I left the Hague with reluctance, and my return to Paris was not a joyous one. Outside of my embroidery shop, which was the easiest to take up again, there were far more complicated matters to be attended to. The apartment seemed empty and life very different. At all hours of the day I came in contact with my parents-in-law, who lived in the house on the rue Montaigne where I had my workrooms and my office. The real causes of the difficulty between their son and myself were unknown to them as far as I was concerned, and I preferred to give no explanations. They asked no questions, but their attitude was sufficiently eloquent to make me feel miserable. For the sake of my mother-in-law, of whom I was genuinely fond, I was frequently on the point of letting Putiatin come back again.

I took up all my activities with new zeal now. The little circle I had been living in for over five years disintegrated of itself, and I stepped out of its boundaries. My hold on life became firmer and my understanding deepened. My own yielding attitude of the past soon seemed incomprehensible to me, and I found it difficult to understand how I had endured for so long an existence which had so little to offer me. And then I knew that to go back to it would be impossible. As yet, however, I took no steps towards breaking the ties which still bound me to Putiatin. I hated to make this final gesture and continued waiting for something which I knew could never happen.

I waited for two years in spite of many complications. A married woman in France—although she may be at the head of an independent business, as I was—has no right to sign any contracts or even open an account at a bank

without her husband's authority. Putiatin remained in Austria, and my financial situation was growing more and more involved. I decided at last on a divorce. My affection for his family was unchanged, and they remained in my care for a number of years. Until Putiatin's remarriage to an American girl, we met occasionally in a friendly way. The divorce proceedings had to go through two phases, the Russian Orthodox Church and the French courts. The legal process was slow and difficult, but finally all was arranged and I was free again.

PART THREE

NEW DAY

CHAPTER XX

OLD RUSSIA AND NEW RUSSIANS

JUST as I was getting in touch with the outer world again and rebuilding my existence, an incident occurred which brought me back to a period in my life when I had found myself in a very similar position. This period was the early part of the war, the time when I was suddenly transplanted, alone, into the midst of completely strange surroundings, and obliged to do things which I had never done before. Two people, complete strangers to me, took pity on my inexperience and naïveté: they were Father Michael and Doctor Tishin. Since the day I had left Russia no news from them had reached me, nor from any of my other war companions. And then one day when I arrived at the office, my secretary told me that a Doctor Tishin had called on the telephone. He wanted to see me and had said that he was one of the doctors at my Pskov hospital. The secretary wondered if this could be true; a surprising number of people were always trying to get at me under false pretences. Russia might have been on another planet as far as our actual communications with her were concerned, and the last person I expected to appear from that nebulous world was Doctor Tishin. But I felt immediately that it was true. I sent word for him to come as soon as he could, and waited with a beating heart. At last he walked into my office. But had I not been expecting him I should never have known that it was he, so terribly had he changed since 1917, when I had seen him last. I was powerless to conceal the shock that his appearance gave me.

"Is it as bad as that?" were his first words.

THE GRAND DUKE NICHOLAS

By Keystone

THE GRAND DUKE CYRIL

I am afraid I remained silent. Although according to my hasty calculations he could not yet be forty, he was actually old now. He had lost his hair and had only a very few teeth left. He had grown much stouter but looked heavy and bloated; his complexion and eyes were dull. There was no more vitality or animation in him. I was astonished that this total stranger had Doctor Tishin's voice and manner. While I was fighting with my emotions, he began to tell me about what had happened to him since the summer of 1917. His many and dangerous adventures had eventually carried him to a distant part of the former Russian Empire, where he had become head doctor of a provincial hospital, and there he had remained for the last few years. But his work and the conditions of life were so hard that he developed some peculiar form of goitre, and the Bolshevik authorities were obliged to grant him a leave of absence in order that he might consult with foreign specialists. But the German doctors had not been encouraging. They told him that his case was inoperable. He must have known that he was doomed. If he could find work, he hoped not to be obliged to go back to Russia; he wished to remain in France. He was married now and had a little girl whom they had called Marie; the Bolsheviks had let his family accompany him, and this was another proof of the hopelessness of his condition, for otherwise, according to their custom, they would have kept his wife and child as hostages.

When I had heard his story, it was my turn to tell him about myself and the things which had happened to me. There was much to tell, both about the last year and a half in Russia and the longer years of exile. I must have

boasted a little. But it was largely thanks to him and Father Michael that I had been able to face this new existence, and I told him so.

"Without you and Father Michael I don't know what would have become of me. You gave me my first real lessons on life. Are you satisfied with your pupil?" And I looked about the room, at my desk and my tables laden with papers and designs, at the bits of embroidery scattered about, at all the insignificant things testifying to my new activities. But his glance did not follow mine.

"Although you do not suspect it, Your Highness, you in your turn taught us many things we did not know. I have been thinking of them ever since. The six years I have spent over there have changed my mind on many subjects. You who lived outside of Russia don't know; you know nothing," he said sadly.

I had been preparing to tell him about my work, about my new attitude towards the present. In my enthusiasm I was about to expatiate on my theories for the future, certain of finding in him a sympathetic listener; but the words stuck in my throat, he was not interested. The only thing he wanted to talk about was the past.

I saw Doctor Tishin only once again. Not knowing languages he was not able to find work abroad and was obliged to go back to Russia. He disappeared out of my world just as he had come; he went back to that land of mystery which is Russia today, and I have never heard of him since. But to see him did me good in spite of the shortness of his visits and their profound melancholy. He reminded me of the days of freedom, of disinterested efforts, of beautiful illusions since lost in the turmoil of existence; he brought a whiff of fresh air into our stagnant and colourless refugee atmosphere. He did not belong to it; he knew nothing of its pettiness and prison-like narrowness.

It would not be quite correct, though, to say that I never heard of Doctor Tishin again. I did in an indirect way shortly after he left. Just before he had been obliged to go back, some valuables that he and his wife had brought with them had been stolen, which made it impossible for them to move. With reluctance he asked me to lend them the sum necessary for their journey, and I was glad to do so. As soon as they reached their destination the money was returned to me in dollars and interest. It was done through an intermediary, as to correspond with me directly from Russia might have made Tishin suspect in the eyes of the Soviet authorities.

I mention this trifling incident concerning the loan because it went to emphasize once more the difference between his mental attitude and that of most of the refugees. Money was usually borrowed without the slightest intention of ever returning it. Most of our co-exiles thought that it came to us members of their former reigning house from some unexplained natural source, without our turning a hand. Some considered that we were obliged to distribute it, as it was through our fault that they had been exiled from their country.

Although my attempts at making an independent living excited some curiosity, they were seldom taken seriously. Some regarded my work as a rather useless pastime, some as a form of amusement, and some even as a desire for publicity. In spite of the fact that the refugees had to work themselves, work hard and under difficult conditions, they could not imagine that our situation was the same as theirs. Much was expected of us, but very little of what we did ever satisfied anybody. Submerged as we were by an ocean of distress, there was not much that we could do. Although the courage of the refugees was still undaunted and they were putting up a valiant effort to readjust themselves, their nerves were gradually wearing out under the strain. Their morale was being undermined by adversities, by the struggle to keep their heads above water, by the insecurity of the present, and by the gradual loss of faith in the future. Those who had managed to save something from the final catastrophe had by now spent or sold all they had possessed. The Paris shops were replete with jewellery, old laces, gold and enamel snuff boxes, and sable mantles. Funds derived from sales were being exhausted unproductively; life was assuming a sordid aspect. Thousands of officers were working as labourers in automobile factories, hundreds were driving taxis in the streets of Paris.

Once I met an old war patient of mine in this way. As I left him, I wanted to shake hands, but before I could stop him he leapt from his seat and was standing beside me on the pavement. Passers-by were very much astonished to see the taxi-driver take off his cap and kiss my hand. It often happened that after I had beckoned to a passing taxi I would recognize in the chauffeur an officer of my acquaintance.

Others had taken jobs as waiters and household servants. Paris was dotted with small restaurants, tea shops, and groceries run by those of the refugees who had some business ability, and here the otherwise helpless ones were employed as musicians, singers, dancers, waiters, and waitresses. The women as usual were bearing the brunt of the situation, often supporting the entire family when there was no work for the men. Wearing

out their fingers and eyes over the sewing of fine lingerie or embroidery or knitting they would at the same time be keeping up the morale of the family, holding it together, rearing and educating the children. It was tragic and at the same time pathetic to observe the spirit of these people sinking from year to year and their intellectual demands narrowing. They were uprooted and could not find an anchorage. Their only hope was the possibility of a return to their native land and this hope was growing dimmer as time passed. With every year they were losing their contact with Russia; yet they persisted in seeing her as she had been in the past. Most of them were incapable of admitting that any fundamental change had taken place in Russia since their departure.

The new generation, however, the one which has grown up and attained its majority on foreign soil, is very different from its parents. Brought up amidst hardships, its point of view is more realistic. The proficiency of the Russian race was once more proved to the world by these children of exiles. Their successes at every educational institution have been astonishing. Without the serious check brought on by the present unemployment situation their future seemed on the whole to be assured. Few of them, however, are satisfied with the idea of settling down abroad permanently and assuming foreign citizenship. Most are looking towards Russia, a different and new Russia which some day will require their services. Education in Russia during these fifteen years has been so one-sided and deficient that these young people cannot but one day be very useful to their country. They are accumulating knowledge and experience so that they may be ready when the call shall come.

In the political existence of the Russian exiles the year 1924 was marked by two events, both of which created great agitation.

At the end of August, Grand Duke Cyril, first cousin of the late Emperor and nearest to him in the line of succession, proclaimed himself Tsar. Cyril's political activities had begun two years previously, in 1922. Between that time and his 1924 manifesto, he had been calling himself "the guardian of the Russian throne." His following, however, was never large as he did not succeed in finding a formula which would make him acceptable to the greater number of royalists, of whom there were still many amongst the emigration but who put Russia's interests before the re-establishment of a monarchy. Only a small faction of royalists, the so-called "legitimists," welcomed his gesture and supported it, the majority remaining bitterly opposed to him. But for the "legitimists," for people who still clung to past traditions as the only consolation in a shattered world, the title of Tsar

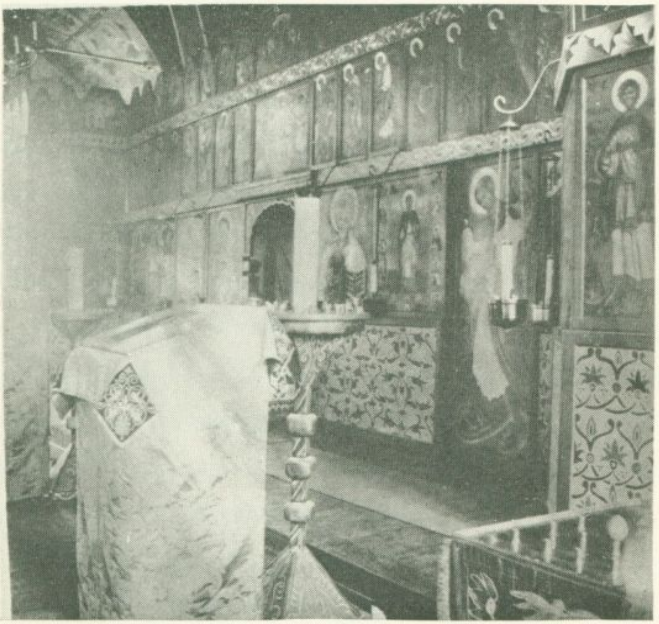
represented an emblem that they could grasp at. They now possessed a figurehead upon which to fasten their hopes. This movement held no interest for me at any time.

The second event was of greater importance as it called forth a larger and more vigorous response. The Grand Duke Nicholas, popular chief of the Russian armies during the war, united under his command and moral leadership the disbanded remnants of the White armies on foreign soil. Since the revolution the Grand Duke Nicholas, on whom great hopes continued to be centred, had remained obstinately in the background, refusing to participate either in any political combination or in any attempt at organizing the exiles. In 1924 he was persuaded to modify his attitude, but it always remained exceedingly cautious. A large and important group rallied around him, as his programme, a very simple one, appealed to the sensible and reasoning part of the emigration, royalists included. The principle he stood for was the re-establishment of law and order in future Russia, without anticipating any definite form of government. His decision was on the whole greeted with a feeling of relief, as the personality of the Grand Duke commanded respect and admiration. But this movement was hardly more fruitful of important results than the other. Grand Duke Nicholas was immediately surrounded by a wall of old-timers whose ideas had not broadened in the slightest by the revolution, and the younger and more talented forces were shut off by them. His entourage cost him the support of the more liberally inclined circles of the emigration.

My own sympathies leant decidedly towards this group, which was not a party and had no specific political colouring. But I came in personal contact with the Grand Duke only once and not until two or three years later. A new dissension was threatening to break out amidst the emigration, a dissension brought on by rivalries between two of our bishops. The conflict soon assumed exaggerated proportions, through the eagerness of both parties to give it the importance of an issue of religious and political consequence. At the beginning of the quarrel I was asked by some of my friends to go to the Grand Duke and beg of him to use his authority towards calming the ardour of the bishops.

The Grand Duke and his wife were then living at Choigny, an estate some forty miles from Paris. There they led an extremely modest and retired existence, so retired that they would hardly see anybody. The French police and a bodyguard of Russian officers carefully watched over their safety. Their seclusion was so complete that under ordinary circumstances it was impossible to penetrate farther than the entrance to the park; only upon

special orders from the house would the sentinels open the gates to a visitor. Both the grounds and the house itself were unassuming. As I entered and was shown through the rooms to the Grand Duke's study, I noticed that the dining-room table, which had not yet been cleared after lunch, was covered with a brown oilcloth; the furniture was sparse and colourless. The Grand Duchess Anastasia (daughter of old King Nicholas of Montenegro and sister to Queen Helena of Italy) was alone in the study when I was ushered in. After an exchange of very formal kisses we sat down. A conversation began, in the course of which I explained my errand. But the Grand Duchess's attitude did not encourage my hopes of success. She gave me to understand that her husband had already intervened, with the desired effect; she was optimistic. I, on the other hand, had been previously informed that no results whatever had been achieved by his intervention. Then the Grand Duke entered and doubled up his imposing height on a low chair beside his wife.



VIEWS OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH IN PARIS RE-MODELLED BY THE AUTHOR

He wore a rough tweed shooting suit and high military boots of black leather. Since I had seen him last, which must have been at some time during the war, he had aged considerably; his hair and little stiff beard were almost white. He showed no interest in what I had come to say, and while I spoke he looked at me with rather bored condescension. How well I recognized this patronizing attitude; it was assumed by nearly all of my elder relatives towards us younger members of the family. More clearly than any words it expressed the profound conviction that nothing of any merit could come from one who was as unimportant as myself. Nevertheless, I delivered my message. I remember that I begged him not to limit himself to persuasions which would lead to nothing, but to command. In this particular case the necessary result could be obtained only by an order. He dropped a few perfunctory sentences, and by the little he said I felt he was confident of the success of his own policy and of the fact that I did not know what I was speaking about. I achieved nothing.

But what we had feared did not fail to take place. The discord between the bishops, who were allowed to continue their quarrel unhindered, had a most disastrous effect upon the morale of the refugees. The church up till that time had been the only institution completely free of political intrigue and was the one spiritual haven left to a homeless people. If the emigration was split by political strife before this unfortunate occurrence, it became much more and more bitterly so afterwards. This circumstance emphasized differences of opinions, created ill feelings, and greatly disturbed the lives of the exiles. The dissension exists to this day, the emigration being split into two camps. Yet the differences are of no essential importance.

My own contacts with the clergy were rather more frequent during that time than was altogether agreeable to me. The congregation of the old Russian church in Paris having outgrown it, the necessity arose for another which could house the overflow. A piece of land was purchased on the outskirts of Paris, on which stood an old unused Protestant chapel. This chapel was to be converted into an Orthodox church. I took charge of the decoration of the chapel and did it as a memorial for the members of my family murdered during the revolution. We intended to carry out a seventeenth-century scheme; Steletsky, a well-known Russian painter and authority on ancient church art, offered to paint the frescoes and ikons for nothing. It took us over two years to complete the undertaking, and it gave me personally so much trouble as to make me regret that I ever attempted it. The clergy interfered clumsily with the decorations, not wishing to understand nor to consider the value of an artistic ensemble; the artist,

irritated by constant hindrances and driven to the verge of a nervous breakdown, threatened over and over again to abandon his work. I was called upon to straighten out the misunderstandings which occurred all too often. Nevertheless, in spite of difficulties, the work was carried out, and the little church is on the whole a very complete specimen of Russian religious art. The church stands on a hillock surrounded by trees and has an atmosphere about it which makes it singularly Russian.

CHAPTER XXI

A WEDDING IN THE FAMILY

AFTER the separation from my husband I did not feel as if I were all alone. I had my brother, for whom my love had not changed since the beginning of my conscious life. The peculiar circumstances of our early childhood and youth created a bond between us which nothing ever could loosen. But my almost protective affection for him had little chance of expression. He fought his battles and met the blows without ever speaking about them. He was reticent about himself and I dared not question him. I was left to judge of his state of mind from outward signs. Moreover, during the last years of my marriage to Putiatin I had not seen him very often; he avoided our home, which was not particularly congenial to him. He did not care for the atmosphere in which we lived and yet was afraid of influencing me. My devotion to him and my readiness to give him preference in everything had placed him in an awkward position many a time before, and this created a tension which did not make matters simpler.

A few months after Putiatin had gone to live in Vienna, Dmitri moved into my flat, and, although I could only offer him a very small, dark room, he seemed quite satisfied. I was naturally overjoyed at having him with me again. In the meantime the lease of my flat was expiring, and I was looking for another place to live in. As my work obliged me to remain in town during most of the summer, I was anxious to find something outside of Paris but within easy distance of my office on the rue Montaigne. The search for a place which would satisfy all my requirements took a long time, but at last a small house was found at Boulogne-sur-Seine, situated, curiously enough, in the same street and quite near to where my father had lived for so many years. His house had been sold by my step-mother to a Catholic educational institution, but the neighbourhood had not changed in these years, and, when I moved into my new dwelling, I felt in a way as if I were returning home.

The house was a typical little white French villa with a black roof, grey shutters, and an ugly fan-shaped canopy projecting over the front steps. A low iron fence with a gate and a stretch of grass separated the house from the road. Two paths on either side of the lawn ran from the gate to the entrance. The fence along the road was hidden by a hedge, which also separated me from my neighbours on either side, and a few beautiful old

trees stood on the lawn in front of the house. The branches of one of these trees brushed against the window of my bedroom, and it was a new joy to me every morning to open my eyes upon the freshness of its leaves. Even in winter when I had only the grey bark to look at I felt happy that it was a living thing. When someone wished to present me with flowers, I always used to ask for a rose bush so that I could plant it afterwards in my miniature garden.

Although my finances were running very low, I did the utmost to make my home look as attractive as possible. It was the first time since I had left Sweden in 1913 that I was going to live in a real house. There were three floors. On the first, to the left of the entrance, was the dining-room furnished with Louis-Philippe mahogany picked up cheaply at what is called in Paris the "flea market." The curtains and the seats were of flowery chintz on a green background. Beyond the dining-room lay the kitchen. To the right of the entrance was a room which was eventually to become the drawing-room but which for economy's sake I had decided not to furnish. It remained empty until the very day I was obliged to leave the house. On the second floor I had my boudoir on one side of the staircase and my bedroom and bathroom on the other. The boudoir was the largest room in the house, and in it I spent most of my time. It was decorated in salmon and grey and had a few pieces of Russian Empire furniture in Carelian birch. My tiny bedroom I had done up in blue. There was a guest room and bath on the third floor, which were to be occupied for the time being by Dmitri. The servants' quarters were on the same floor.

I was frightfully impatient to get into my new dwelling. Paris decorators are famous for their slowness, but if a competition had been instituted between them mine would certainly have taken the prize for his complete disregard of time and promises. The painting of four or five rooms, the covering of a few sets of furniture, took months. Neither entreaties nor threats produced the slightest effect. At first I often went to Boulogne myself while the work was under way, imagining that my personal supervision would help to speed things up. I would find pots of paint standing around but no workmen, or I would not discover any signs of activity at all. In a perfect rage I would send for the decorator, only to receive more promises, which I knew would not be kept. The lease of my Paris flat was up and still there was no hope of moving. Luckily for me a friend asked me to spend a few weeks with her in Rome. When I returned, although the house was not nearly finished, I decided to take possession of it at once. For the first few days I only had my bed for furniture, but gradually and very slowly things began to take shape. Although the house was small, I had so much more

space to move about in that at first I felt quite lost. I had lived for so long in impersonal surroundings that it felt strange to have a home again and things which I had chosen myself and which belonged to me. When I was ready to receive him, Dmitri in his turn moved into the room on the top floor.

We were both very busy, yet to know that he was under the same roof with me was a great satisfaction. In the mornings we had our breakfast together in the little dining-room downstairs. In spring and in summer the low windows into the garden were kept wide open. It was calm and peaceful; the city noises did not penetrate so far out, and we might have been in the country. After we had dressed we went into town. In the late afternoons, when I had finished with my day's work, I came home, put on a dressing-gown, and stretched myself on the sofa in my boudoir with a book. When Dmitri returned from town, he joined me in my room. He settled in the arm-chair opposite my sofa, and we would discuss the things which had happened during the day. We lived in perfect harmony and were never so close to each other as then.

Over a year passed in this way. But by and by I began to notice that Dmitri had moments of depression which, while they lasted, made him silent and morose. I tried not to think about these symptoms, but finally I was obliged to face them. He still persisted, however, in his attitude of reticence. Usually so gay and full of life, Dmitri was losing his interest in everything around him. He began to complain about his health and went to see doctors who could not locate any definite physical trouble. He was restless and melancholy and it made me miserable to see him in this state. But medicines and cures failed to help; some other solution for his trouble had to be found. It was some time before it dawned upon me that the strain Dmitri had undergone for the last few years might have proved too much for him. The more I observed him the more convinced I became that I was right. He had reached a limit of endurance beyond which he had no strength to go. I realized that only a complete change could help him, a change which would shift the tempo of his life from a precarious to a stable one. The only way for him to achieve this was to marry. As soon as I had reached this conclusion, I passed in mental review those who to my mind might be suitable companions for him. There was only one I could think of, however, and this was Audrey Emery, the lovely girl I had met at Biarritz some time ago and had since learned to know better and to like.

But, as I thought rather dejectedly, my choice could only be a theoretical one. I knew better than to try to arrange things. Shortly afterwards, however, something happened which made me very hopeful. Dmitri and I were

invited to tea by some friends at Versailles and drove out together in his open Buick. Amongst the guests we found Audrey Emery, who was just then in a state of comical despair after having bobbed her hair. She had done it that very morning and regretted it already. When it was time to go home, Dmitri came up to me and rather self-consciously asked me if I minded returning to town with someone else as he would like to take Audrey Emery. That evening I found Dmitri in a better humour than he had been for a long time.

But his fits of depression would return more and more frequently, and at last, when he came home one afternoon more worn-looking than usual, I decided to speak to him frankly. To my astonishment he responded readily. I was still more surprised when I discovered that we had been thinking along the same lines. The existence he was leading had become unbearable to him. He was longing for something safe and permanent, a home. I guessed that he would not have spoken to me so openly if in his mind he had not already made his choice, and I was trembling to know it. In a way it was a verdict that I was going to hear, and during the brief moment while I was waiting for it I went through a world of sensations. But the gods had evidently decided to favour me once more. Dmitri's choice was Audrey Emery.

The relief I experienced at that moment was so tremendous that I was incapable of uttering a single word, and Dmitri looked anxiously into my face, misinterpreting my silence. After I had somewhat recovered and told him of my feeling, we began to discuss the situation. It had aspects which I had not thought of. He was discouraged. He considered that, having very little to offer the girl he wished to marry, he hardly had the right to propose to her.

I had very seldom regretted what had been taken away from us, but at that moment, perhaps as never before, my thoughts visualized with desperate clarity all that we now missed. For a moment I was seized by a feeling of rebellion, of blind fury against fate. What had we done that our lives should thus be ruined for ever? And then for some unknown reason the memory of a certain scene crossed my mind, and this memory changed the trend of my thoughts. It was the fourth of August, 1914, the day when Dmitri was leaving for the front. We had gone to church in the palace chapel and were having breakfast in Uncle Serge's old study, which I was then using as my drawing-room. General Laiming, who had been Dmitri's tutor, and his wife were with us. They were the most devoted friends we had. Mme. Laiming was seated at the table pouring out the coffee. We were trying to appear unconcerned and kept up a disjointed conversation, but

none of us really listened to what the other was saying. Dmitri was sitting on the large carpet sofa with his arm around the neck of his favourite Lapland dog. As often as I could without his noticing it, I looked at him, trying to engrave upon my memory every detail of his appearance. It was perhaps the last time that I would ever see him. In spite of ourselves we lapsed into sudden silences, and during those moments I thought in vivid sharp pictures. I saw all this comfort and security we were surrounded by, the huge house, the shining automobiles in the garage, the horses in the stables, the host of servants who were there to wait upon us, the million small things that went to make our lives pleasant and agreeable. I thought of them now because Dmitri was about to leave them and because they seemed suddenly to have become superfluous, unnecessary. There was only one thing that mattered and this was that he should live.

While Dmitri was talking to me of his future, the same thought occurred to me again. This was a question of life; he must live, everything else was unimportant.

Although I did not know Audrey well, something told me that she would be able to disregard trifles and appreciate what Dmitri had to offer her, even if it had nothing to do with the material side of life. I told Dmitri that, while I understood his scruples, my opinion was that he could be confident to go ahead, and that I was sure of his success. The effect of our conversation was almost immediate; Dmitri's spirits rose perceptibly. He came to life again and set out to win.

After a short courtship, Dmitri, with the enthusiasm of a boy, was ready to propose, but he still was not sure of the answer. I shall never forget the evening when he had finally decided to take the risk of a refusal. That night I stayed at home, had dinner by myself, and was planning to wait up for his return. He was so late, however, that I decided to go to my bedroom. I had just got into bed when I heard a car drive up and stop. The gate clicked and the gravel crunched under Dmitri's familiar swinging step. Then the door into the hall downstairs opened and closed. By that time I had jumped out of bed, had thrown my dressing-gown around my shoulders, and was standing at the open door of my room. Dmitri was coming up the stairs. At first I could only see the top of his head, then his face emerged. It was radiating a childlike happiness. As he came towards me, I noticed that there was a slightly embarrassed air about him, more touching to me than any words could have been. We went into my room. I climbed back into bed, and Dmitri curled up at my feet. There was no need to tell me that he had been accepted, but I wanted to hear the details and he told them to me over and

over again. What he had said and what she had answered, where they had stood and sat. It was almost daylight before we separated. But when he had gone and I remained alone, sleep would not come to me.

MISS AUDREY EMERY
Now the Princess Ilyinsky

Audrey and her family soon left for Biarritz; shortly afterwards Dmitri followed them. It was there that the wedding was to take place later in the autumn. Many matters had to be attended to during the two months before the wedding, and I was very busy, especially as I could not neglect my customary occupations. I went to Biarritz several times for week-ends. I learned to know my brother's fiancée more intimately, and it was then that we laid a foundation for the friendship which now unites us so closely.

Audrey had decided that in order to be in closer contact with Dmitri and his people she would embrace our religion and join our Greek Orthodox church. A certain amount of preparation was necessary before she could do so, and I took upon myself the arrangements for instructing her in the new faith. This proved to be much more complicated than I had anticipated. None of our priests knew English and very few of them spoke French well enough to be understood by Audrey. At last a young student was found, a pupil of the Paris Orthodox Seminary, who, I was told, could speak a certain amount of English. As we were pressed for time, I had to ask him to undertake Audrey's instruction without having even seen or talked to him. Of course I was to be present at the lessons, which were to take place at my

office. The first one was memorable. The young student came accompanied by one of the Russian priests. They sat down beside each other facing Audrey, who had taken her place at my desk. Both started talking at the same time, the priest in rather broken French and the student in not very intelligible English. All of us, of course, were in deep earnest. I can still see Audrey's serious gaze rest first on one face and then upon the other and her puzzled expression while she tried to penetrate the meaning of what she was hearing. This was difficult even for me; as for her, I saw she did not comprehend a single word. At times Audrey would give me a desperate look over their heads. It was not for long, however, that I was able to bear the tension. I was soon choking with an uncontrollable fit of laughter and had to leave the room before Audrey could see it.

The day of the marriage was approaching. It was to be on the twenty-first of November and the civil ceremony had to be performed in Paris before the departure for Biarritz. It was to take place at the town hall of Boulogne-sur-Seine where we were registered. Audrey, her family, Princess Paley, my step-sisters, the witnesses (amongst them Ambassador Herrick), and a few guests assembled at my house and from there proceeded to the little Mairie, which had probably never seen such a gathering. At the invitation of the clerk we sat down upon the benches of the main hall and waited for the mayor. When the door opened and the mayor was announced, we all rose in accordance with the custom. A short, thickset man appeared; he was embarrassed and looked at no one as he walked hurriedly to his place. Under his coat, across the waistcoat of his modest brown suit, he wore the insignia of his office—a blue, white, and red sash. The ceremony began. The mayor, unaccustomed to foreign names and titles, did not pronounce one of them correctly.

That same evening we left for Biarritz. Dmitri and I stopped at the hotel. On the next day the Russian bishop and the priests who had come from Paris performed a ceremony at which Audrey was converted to the Orthodox religion. Our cousin, the Duke of Leuchtenberg, and I were her sponsors. The ceremony was a long and wearisome one, and I felt sorry for Audrey who did not understand a word of it.

On the morning of the twenty-first, the day of the wedding, I got up with a feeling which would be difficult to describe. Until then I had succeeded in concentrating my thoughts on things outside of myself, but now it was no longer possible. At noon we went to mass, at which the famous choir of the Russian Cathedral in Paris sang. Some of our Biarritz friends and many of the guests who had arrived for the marriage from Paris followed us to

church in order to hear the music. The church looked festive that morning. It had already been decorated for the marriage, which was to take place that afternoon. A brilliant autumn sun was shining; its rays came through the stained-glass windows and splashed dazzling patches of colour over the floor and walls. From the moment I entered the church I became conscious of something very special in the atmosphere; the air was vibrant with emotion. The voices of the priests were throbbing with it and the choir poured out its soul in its singing. As the service progressed the feeling became more intense. For a few brief moments we had ceased to be only refugees. Even those who had come merely out of curiosity were affected by the atmosphere and carried away by it in spite of themselves. As we knelt during the elevation of the Host the foreigners followed our example and tears stood in many eyes.

While the wedding guests were having lunch at the hotel, I went to the house of Audrey's mother. Audrey had asked me to help her with the placing of the veil, a piece of beautiful old lace worn by my mother and by myself at our weddings. It belonged among the few things I had saved out of Russia. At the time of my escape I had sewed the veil together with other pieces of lace into a pillow upon which I had slept during the journey. Both Audrey and I were so profoundly moved that we could hardly speak; a lump continually gathered in my throat. I knew what Audrey's feelings were at the moment, but I could not tell her so for fear of breaking down altogether.

When I returned to the hotel, it was time for me to get dressed. Dmitri was in his room; all morning we had avoided remaining alone together; we hardly even spoke to each other. Both of us knew that before going to church for the marriage, according to the Russian custom, I was to give him my blessing, in this case taking the place of our parents; and we dreaded that moment. But it came, no matter how we tried to postpone it. When I was ready, I went into the drawing-room which separated our apartments and waited. Through the window I could see the great waves pounding the rocks; the sun had gone down. The grey ocean at that moment looked to me as ruthless and indifferent as fate, and infinitely lonely. Dmitri entered in his black coat, with a white flower in his buttonhole, and we smiled at each other shyly. I went back into my bedroom and brought out the ikon. Dmitri knelt down in front of me, and with the ikon I made the sign of the cross over his bent head. Then he rose and we embraced. For a moment I clung to him desperately. The lump in my throat had grown so large that it was almost choking me.

THE GRAND DUKE DMITRI AND HIS BRIDE

Someone knocked at the door; it was time to go to the church. I put on my hat in front of the mirror without even looking at my face and fumbled for my coat. We walked out of the hotel and over the little square towards the church. There was a crowd of people in front of the entrance who made a passage for us as we approached. Dmitri's attendants were waiting for us on the steps; most of them were his old comrades, officers who had belonged to his regiment. As I proceeded into the crowded church I felt eyes watching the expression of my face. Dmitri stopped at the door, to be welcomed by a hymn according to the ritual. But the choir was silent, overcome with

emotion. A long moment passed before they could begin, and when they did their voices trembled. Only once did I dare look at my brother as he stood at the door, his face pale and grave. The lump in my throat suddenly dissolved, and the tears started pouring down my cheeks.

A stir went through the audience; the bride had arrived and was mounting the stairs with her step-father. Now she was beside Dmitri. Together they moved slowly up into the middle of the church. The marriage ceremony had begun. The same emotions gripped the congregation as at the morning mass. Everyone in the church seemed to understand the feelings of nostalgia and remembrance that we Russians were experiencing.

After the service there was a reception at my new sister-in-law's home. Then I returned to the hotel, and after dining with the other guests I boarded the train for Paris. Dmitri and his bride dined with Audrey's mother and at the first station after Biarritz also boarded our train. As soon as the train moved out, they sent for me, and we had some champagne which we drank out of the thick sleeping-car glasses.

Next morning I accompanied the bride and bridegroom to the station from which they were to leave for England and their honeymoon. We had breakfast in the stuffy station restaurant and then walked up and down the platform until it was time for them to get into their carriage. Only when the train had disappeared from view did I turn and leave the platform.

CHAPTER XXII

SUBURBAN IDYLL

For a long time after my brother's marriage I felt totally lost, as if some vital part of my own being had been wrenched from me. It was not exactly loneliness, for I was used to being separated from him for long periods of time; it was a void which could not be filled. Subconsciously I had regarded him in a way as my Siamese twin, as part of myself. I had no feeling of jealousy towards his wife but I could not realize that I was now something outside of their lives, that there was little that I could share with them.

Before the marriage I had taken firm resolutions as to what my attitude towards them was to be. My intention was to leave them to themselves and keep away. Above all I did not wish that Audrey, who was so much younger than I, should think of me as of a mother-in-law. I sincerely believed that I was carrying out my resolutions but I am not sure now that I did. Although I kept away from them as much as I could, they must have felt my troubled spirit hovering around them, even when I was away. When we were together a weight hung over us and we felt uncomfortable.

In the meantime I was obliged to find something which would fill in the emptiness left by my brother's departure. After my separation from Putiatin I had gone through a period of excessive worldliness which lasted for nearly two years. This was a natural reaction from the preceding period. Our associates of that troubled time appeared to me as representatives of something doomed, and, although their actions and behaviour were beyond criticism, there was nothing either vital or inspiring about them. My life in Sweden and especially the war years had accustomed me to a constant procession of faces amongst which I could pick out those I wished to study more closely. The Putiatin group excluded variety, excluded new faces; foreigners were regarded with suspicion, and I was entirely deprived of stimulating influences. Business and charity, while they gave me new experiences, restricted me to a limited field of action. As I was growing increasingly absorbed in the various aspects of the Russian problem, I needed to study it from its different angles and for this I was obliged to exchange opinions and ideas with people who knew something about it. When my marriage ended, I was determined to set out in quest of

enlightenment. This, however, was easier to plan than to carry out. I was not in touch with people of importance and therefore had to depend upon luck to meet them. The one thing I could do was to mingle with the crowd and hope for the best.

But as soon as I plunged into the thick of it, I was diverted from my immediate purpose. I had lived under restrictions for so long that I was soon caught in a turmoil of superficial agitation which gave me next to nothing. At the end of two years, during which I hardly ever had a meal at home, I had met the entire cosmopolitan world which gravitated around Paris and the French summer resorts. But my old reticence still remained, and while I took part in the amusements I always remained largely the spectator. My dislike of easy intimacies kept me from making many friends. The few I acquired during that period helped me greatly towards widening my knowledge of the world and gaining a certain amount of self-assurance, which hitherto I had lacked, but those few and rare friendships did not justify the rather empty existence and I began to tire of it.

The fact that I now had a home in which I felt happy and comfortable helped me to free myself from this profitless round. I began to find more pleasure in an evening spent with a book than in the long and tiring hours occupied in the pursuit of entertainment. Going to my work in the morning I would look forward to the undisturbed solitude of these evenings at home. This new phase coincided with the time of my brother's marriage. The void left by his absence could only be filled by new and vital interests. If my contacts with the world had failed to furnish me with the materials necessary for the reshaping of my life, I must try to get them through books, even if they were not an altogether satisfactory medium.

The change brought me a great deal of inner satisfaction, even happiness. I thought of my little house as a kind of stronghold, where I lived my life as I chose and where nothing could penetrate which was not in harmony with my state of mind. When towards evening I returned from my office and the gate of my garden clicked behind me, I felt as if the cares of the world had fallen from me. I would go up to my room, cast off my town clothes, slip on *négligé* or a pair of pyjamas and return to the garden. The houses on either side of the street were surrounded by trees, and I would sit on my doorstep and look through the branches at the setting sun. The lawn had just been watered; I breathed in greedily the sweet smell of damp earth and grass. Sometimes at such moments I felt a sort of direct inspiration, which made me regret intensely that I was not a writer, not able to express the ideas which came to me. I tried to capture them, to put them into words,

but it was useless. I had to be satisfied with dreams, and one of them was to write a book some day, a book into which I could pour out my soul. But, of course, this was unthinkable; I could not even express my thoughts in words. The flight of my imagination would suddenly be checked by the sound of shuffling steps on the little porch behind me. Dinner was ready. Then followed a placid evening with the time going so swiftly that, before I knew it, it was two in the morning. Nothing disturbed me. It seemed to me during those hours that between me and the world there was no other connexion than the two slender telephone wires which were fastened to the sill of my bedroom window, swung over to the nearest tree, stretched across the garden, and joined to the tangle on the posts outside in the street. But it was very seldom that the telephone made itself actually heard.

Especially during the week-ends would the silence and peace around me be complete. On those days I did not go to town except occasionally to church, and the hours would slip by smoothly, bringing me nothing but contentment.

As I was just as helpless in household matters and just as uninterested in them as I had been at the beginning of my exile in London, I had left everything to an old Russian butler, who had been with me now for several years. He was a "type," and he dominated my small establishment with suave adroitness. His name was Karp, and it suited him admirably. He always reminded me of the ancient and wise fish bearing the same name as his which haunted the pond in front of Marly, a pavilion built by Peter the Great in the park of Peterhof. Some of the carp carried tiny gold circles attached to one of their fins, and according to tradition they were patriarchs belonging to the time of Peter himself. Had my old Karp worn an earring the resemblance between him and the fishes would have been complete.

Karp was not a recent refugee like ourselves; he had lived abroad for many years and at one time was employed in the Paris household of one of my uncles. His wanderings had carried him to nearly every country and city on the map, and his adventures had been countless, but he still kept all the characteristics of the Russian peasant and therein lay his principal charm.

He could be a perfect servant and had a pleasant and ingratiating manner, but you felt that you could never reach the recesses of his mind and that he kept his real thoughts to himself. His knowledge of human nature was boundless, and he possessed a queer and unique sense of humour. It was difficult to think of him in terms of age; he was a type of the now extinct Russian servant and seemed to have lived for ever.

His baggy cheeks were clean-shaven; on the very tip of his nose he wore metal-rimmed spectacles, over which his eyes twinkled kindly and shrewdly. The clothes he was arrayed in defied description, and on his feet, no matter how he was dressed, indoors as well as in the street, he wore a pair of old carpet slippers.

Nothing could stop the flow of his conversation, and even if I had guests at table he could not refrain from slipping in a remark now and then. All he said was so amusing, and the mixture of French and Russian he used to foreigners was so funny, that I never attempted to silence him. When Dmitri and I had our meals alone, he would provide the entire entertainment and tell us stories out of the inexhaustible store of his experiences until our sides literally ached with laughter.

I never saw anybody with such a passion for animals. When I moved to Boulogne I brought with me a Scotch terrier and a white Persian cat. A huge Great Dane and a mongrel puppy pretending to be a police dog and given to me by my chauffeur were soon added to the family. But this did not seem sufficient to Karp. He implored me to accept a pair of grey Persian kittens offered to me by a friend, which subsequently bred a vast progeny. Under the pretext of wishing to provide fresh eggs for my breakfast he bought a few chickens, but I was rarely allowed to taste of the eggs for it soon became apparent that he intended using them for breeding purposes only. Soon the hens were leading large families of chicks on pecking parties around the garden. Then some rabbits appeared and at last a whole flock of beautiful white pigeons. Once he turned up with a tame pheasant under his arm, and the bird not only ate out of the hand but stalked proudly around the house. The kitchen and pantry were hung with cages containing canaries and other singing birds. I was being gradually crowded out of my own house.

Karp moved about amongst his animals as if he were an aged Adam in the Garden of Eden. He was never so happy as when planning and building strange constructions out of wire, bits of string, and pieces of packing cases to house his numerous family. He kept perfect peace amongst the animals, but the Great Dane, although he possessed the most docile of temperaments, afforded Karp a great deal of trouble because of his size and playfulness. He decided for some reason or other that the Dane was delicate in health and could not sleep out of doors in his kennel. The dog therefore had to be given the privilege of the hall, but preferring soft furniture to the stone floor he would go upstairs, contrive to open my door, and when I came home at night I would often find him reclining comfortably on my bed. I soon tired of this arrangement and told Karp that it had to be altered.

When I came home that evening, the Dane was in the hall pacing the floor nervously. Across the foot of the staircase Karp had tied with complicated knots of string the metal fire screen out of my boudoir. To the top of the screen he had attached a stick, from which hung a piece of string, the whole looking like a fishing-rod. At the end of the string was a large sponge, and from the sponge came a powerful and rather unpleasant odour. I discovered that it had been dipped into the medicine used for the treatment of the Dane's eczema, the smell of which he disliked intensely.

This remarkable contraption had certainly kept the Dane from going upstairs, but it also kept me busy untying knots for a long time before I could go up myself.

On the whole Karp devoted much more time and attention to the care of the animals than to his direct service, and the house and garden became untidy beyond description. In the end I had to offend Karp mortally by getting rid of most of the menagerie, keeping only the dogs and the white cat.

Although Karp served me willingly and assured me constantly of his undying and faithful devotion, I knew that it was not my person he loved but the house and garden where he could indulge in his favourite bucolic occupations. In reality I was much more attached to him than he to me. All would have been well, however, had he not been under the disastrous influence of a woman who had been his lifelong lady friend. Not knowing the story, I had taken her as my cook, of course upon Karp's advice. When I found it out, it was too late. Strange things happened, the household bills kept rising steadily, objects began to disappear, and no admonitions made the slightest difference. Yet it was several years before I could make up my mind to part with Karp, and, when I finally decided to do so, I missed him dreadfully.

Another important person in my household was Marie-Louise, my personal maid. She was a bright, alert, and ambitious girl who added much to my comfort. Her devotion was really whole-hearted, and she stuck to me through times when she could not be sure of even getting her wages. On one occasion she proved her affection for me in an altogether conclusive way, and it was not until a few years later, when she had married and left me, that I learned what she had done.

THE AUTHOR'S HOUSE AT BOULOGNE-SUR-SEINE

Amongst my protégées was a Russian girl who had been obliged to get out of Russia all alone, leaving her parents behind. She was very young when she arrived in Paris and was forced to start earning a living at once. I felt sorry for her and tried to do what was in my power to help her, little as it was. In return she conceived a violent attachment for me which at times became exceedingly irksome; this passion, however, of which she made a constant display, did not prevent her from exploiting me and my influence thoroughly. Once or twice when I learned of her indiscretions I had refused to see her for months at a time, but she was persistent and brazen and always managed to turn up again, with a good excuse for her behaviour. Being curious about everything that regarded me, especially my private affairs, she kept herself well informed on the subject and knew of my increasing financial difficulties. One day she came to see Marie-Louise when she was sure that I was safely out of the way and asked her for a loan of ten thousand francs. She told her that she needed the money to help me and would return it in two weeks' time, when she herself had been paid for the delivery of some lingerie which she had made. Marie-Louise believed the story and hurried to the bank, sold some securities, and handed her the money. The sum constituted a large part of many years' savings. Needless to say, I never saw that money. For a long time Marie-Louise, having no reason to doubt that it had reached me, was satisfied with promises of prompt payment and never thought of referring the matter to me. But nearly two years passed and

still it had not been refunded. At last she spoke to me about it and the truth came out. We turned the whole business over to a lawyer, but the Russian girl has kept judiciously out of sight and hearing.

CHAPTER XXIII

EDUCATION IN EXILE

As soon as I settled down at Boulogne as on a country estate and gave up the idea of searching for contacts, they started to come to me of their own accord. Both books and conversations had their part in the process of re-education that was going on. The more I learned and heard, the more interested I grew. But the further I went, the more convinced I became of the insufficiency of my knowledge. Much work lay before me, but I refused to be discouraged. At last there was a definite purpose in my life once more.

My newly developed interests made me more articulate and, as time advanced, my days of solitude and concentration brought such an onrush of ideas that I was literally forced to give them some kind of outlet, and for this I could think of nothing but pen and ink. These fits, however, were still intermittent and usually resulted in very little. My mind was unable to mould a definite shape into which to pour my thoughts, and my imagination wandered at random. It never occurred to me that writing was a matter of work. I regarded literature somewhat in the light of a religion, and writing as a sort of heaven-sent gift granted to a chosen few. As an ordinary mortal with rather limited capacities, I dared not aspire to regions inhabited by the gods only.

Shortly before that time I had been asked to contribute regular articles to a Swedish magazine. It never entered my head that I could write them myself. I entrusted the work to another of my Russian protégées, an old lady who possessed the erudition and ability which I felt that I lacked. Before mailing the articles I would read them through and content myself with inserting a few sentences here and there or changing one or two words. The remuneration, which was quite respectable in French money, I divided between the author and various other people in need of help.

During the winter of 1927 which followed upon my brother's marriage, I came across a group of French people whose main interests lay in literature and politics. Our meetings were informal, and to my great astonishment my new friends displayed great interest in my own experiences. They listened by the hour to the stories about my childhood and youth, and questioned me on the details of the war and revolution. They drew me out, and I was

delighted to talk to such an attentive audience. Presently I began to see my own life in a new light; its incidents appeared to me as links in a chain. There was an interrupted sequence in the gradual development of events. It is true that I did not think of it as having any political or historical importance, as the part I had played was inconsequential, yet it seemed a pity not to leave a written record of the events and experiences that I had known first-hand.

My imagination reached out greedily at this opportunity. At last I had a subject and one that appealed to me in every way. Encouraged by the same friends I sat down to write; I had to now, nothing could stop me. Long-forgotten pictures rose to the surface from the dim past, detailed pictures coloured in vivid hues. Sounds and odours came back to me. My fingertips felt the touch of familiar objects. I lived the old emotions all over again and was affected by them in the same way. Sometimes I laughed aloud to myself and sometimes tears would pour down my cheeks and make large blotches on the page.

I wrote slowly and deliberately, enjoying myself intensely; this form of happiness had hitherto been unknown to me. The hours flew. I wrote in French and when a passage had been completed I read it aloud to my friends. But I wrote for myself with no idea of the public, nor of publication. My work advanced slowly, at the whim of my inspiration; I stood in childish awe of these moments of inspiration and never forced them. It seemed a sacrilege to attempt writing when I was not under the particular spell. And as I could not command my moods, weeks sometimes passed in which I did not write a single word, but I was not in a hurry.

The publishers of the Swedish magazine to which I was contributing articles had asked me over and over again if I would not write my reminiscences for them, but I steadily declined even to consider the proposition. Then one day a partner of the publishing house came to Paris and personally approached me upon the subject. He was particularly insistent, having heard somehow that I had begun to write my memoirs, and offered outright what was then a large sum to me for the chapters already completed. I happened then to be in great need of just that amount of money and was compelled to accept the offer. A cheque was immediately deposited at the bank, and I handed the publisher my writings, which were hardly more than rough drafts.

The affair did not end here. As I had no other source of income to look forward to, I had to accept an agreement whereby I was to deliver the continuation of my memoirs in the form of regular articles, for which I was

to be paid accordingly. But I felt badly about the whole business; it seemed to me that I was selling something that I had no right to dispose of. I realized, too, that the publication of my reminiscences would call forth a storm of criticism and that I was bound to make myself many enemies. I was not mistaken: from the time that I signed that contract until the moment when the articles appeared in book form in America my writings were discussed in the most unfavourable manner, mostly by people who had not even read them, for they had been published in a Swedish translation.

I continued to write at my leisure, the editors having plenty of material in advance. But after I had finished the first part, dealing with my childhood and youth, the period I most enjoyed writing, my work proceeded with difficulty. The impulse to write would come about more rarely and I had not yet learned the necessity of disciplining my mind to this particular task.

At the beginning of summer of the same year Yusupov, who had a villa close to me at Boulogne, made efforts to draw me once again into his circle. Felix and his wife had moved to Paris from London at about the same time as we had, which was in 1920, but, although we met now and again, our relationships had never assumed any regularity.

Yusupov was still as lavishly generous towards his less fortunate compatriots as he had been in London during the first period of our exile. He was still keeping open house, boarding, feeding, and amusing a vast number of friends and acquaintances. But even the considerable fortune which he had been able to save out of Russia could not for ever have borne the strain imposed upon it, and it was rapidly being exhausted. He was fond of wealth and realized its value chiefly on account of the power that it gave him over the human soul. He was made up of contrasts. He spent nothing on himself; his wife would hardly ever have a new frock, and their automobile was a pre-war, high-wheeled, and dilapidated Panhard. Yet their house was still full of innumerable and useless servants. Besides distributing money right and left to private individuals he had started one or two organizations for the assistance of the refugees, these along artistic lines. He preferred to work independently, refusing to follow a routine, never looking for public support. Wishing to have things done according to his own ideas and will he would have nothing to do with committees, nor would he listen to advice. But though he always wanted to dominate, he was not an organizer; he worked at times with feverish energy, yet his efforts were mostly ineffective.

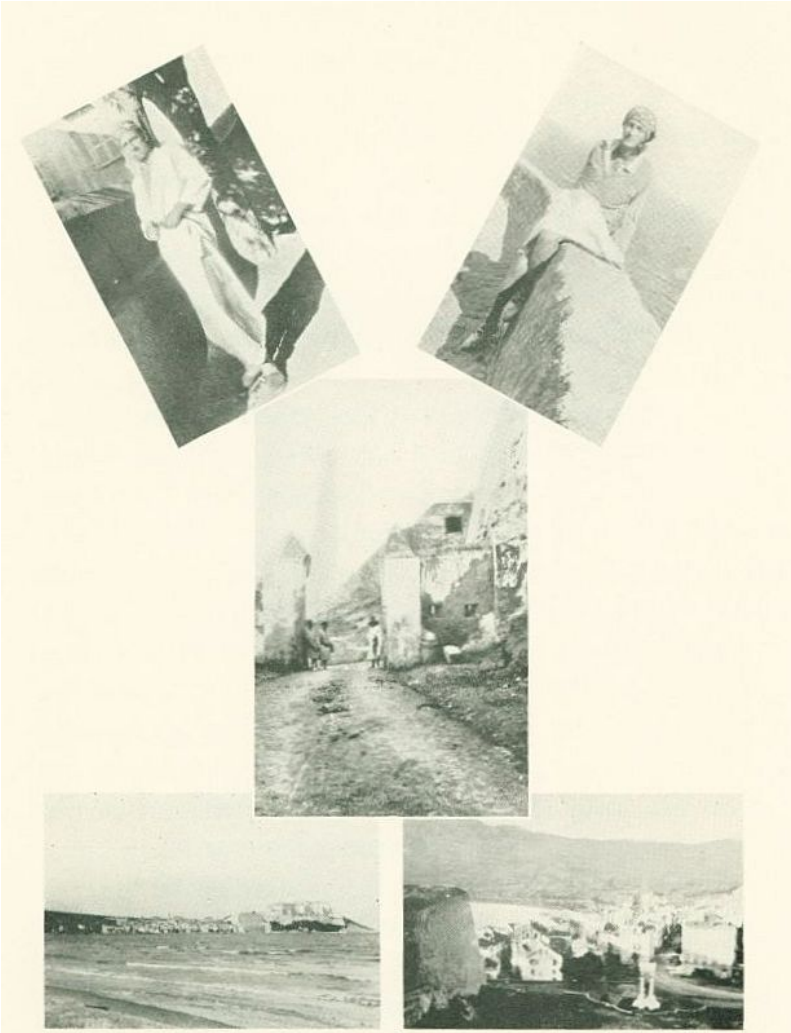
Artistically he was extremely gifted, especially in the arts and crafts of interior decoration. In this field he displayed extraordinary taste, imagination, and originality. Wherever he lived the arrangements of the

rooms, the combination of colours, the balance between architectural details and furnishings were perfect. But as in so many other things he never completed his schemes, wandering off in pursuit of a new idea whenever one struck his fancy. He had a preference for small effects, low-ceilinged and rather overcrowded rooms. Out of the garage belonging to his villa at Boulogne he made a charming miniature theatre, the walls of which were decorated with frescoes painted by Yakovlev, a Russian artist who subsequently rose to considerable fame in France.

It was this theatre which furnished him with an excuse for approaching me. He wished to inaugurate a series of amateur performances in Russian and wanted me to become a member of the cast. I accepted with enthusiasm. By that time I was feeling rather in need of human companionship. There is also some ridiculous attraction about amateur theatricals which, having never participated in any, I could not resist.

A well-known actress, a veteran of the Russian stage and a very good friend of mine, had consented to become stage manager. The cast was to be composed of agreeable people and the whole undertaking promised to be most entertaining. We met and discussed the programme. None of us had any experience in acting and therefore we could not begin with anything serious, so a few short humorous sketches were selected and the parts immediately distributed. I was given the part of a giddy blonde in a sketch by Chekhov. It was not very well suited to me; I was supposed to talk at great speed and pitch my voice at a tone considerably higher than in ordinary speech. We learned our lines and rehearsed for several weeks.

On the day of the first performance we were in a state of feverish excitement. The audience, composed mostly of friends and relations of the actors, were nearly as hysterical as we were. We had suddenly become absurdly like school children about to surprise our proud parents by acting a Christmas pantomime. The stage manager was literally twitching with nerves, and I remember that, when my cue came and I was going out on the stage, she followed me in the wings making signs of the cross in the air at the level of my head. My knees shook and my tongue was as a piece of flannel in my mouth, but I did not forget my lines. This, however, is nearly all I can say for my talents as an actress. For a long time after the performances were over my friend the Russian actress would come to my house regularly twice a week; I thought that reading plays aloud and taking lessons in diction would not harm my Russian, which was becoming somewhat rusty for want of practice.



VIEWS OF CALVI IN CORSICA

Snapshots taken by the Yusupov party. The topmost pictures are of Prince Felix Yusupov and his wife

The rehearsals brought me very often to the Yusupov villa. Irene, Felix's wife, once showed me a snapshot of a ridiculous half-tumbledown building, which she referred to as "our house in Corsica." Although accustomed to the unexpected turns Felix's fantasies would take, I was incredulous.

"A house in Corsica? Does this shack belong to you?"

"Certainly it does," she laughed. "Wait till you see Corsica, and especially Calvi where we bought that house; if you are doing nothing in September you can come with us—but be prepared to face every imaginable discomfort."

A complete change was something I needed very badly at the time and I accepted the invitation.

Irene, her youngest brother Vassili, and I left Paris in the highest of spirits at the end of August; Felix was to join us later. We proceeded to Nice and from there took a tiny steamer over to Corsica. The promised discomforts began from the moment we went on board and lasted until we once more set foot on the French mainland. From the port at which we landed in Corsica to Calvi, our destination, there was a long and dusty drive which we made in an ancient Ford car. But it was worth it. At a bend of the road Calvi suddenly appeared in the rosy morning light as a fairy castle.

Calvi stands upon a great rock overhanging a deep bay. A mighty wall dating from the Middle Ages and restored by the French surrounds the small city, giving it the air of a diminutive fortress. The houses, mostly old and in various stages of decrepitude, are huddled together up and down steep walks and uneven stone staircases. Some of them, which had been the dwellings of great merchants and officials at the time of the Genoese domination, still retained their palatial dignity. Calvi prides herself in the belief that she was the birthplace of Columbus although no proof of this legend has been discovered. The whole place had an atmosphere of age and remoteness about it; exposed as it is to every Mediterranean gale it hardly possesses a tree or a bush inside its walls, and this gives it an aspect of weird austerity.

Five years ago it was a spot seldom visited by tourists; even in the heart of Africa you could not have felt more remote from the world and its luxuries than in Calvi. Irene had been right. There was hardly anything to eat, there was no proper water supply, and the sanitary conditions were appalling; yet we managed to have a very good time.

I had not meant to spend more than a fortnight at Calvi, but my plans were suddenly upset by an accident. For many years I had suffered from a certain weakness in my left foot; one day while walking briskly along the only smooth path in the place, which ran parallel to the city walls, I felt something snap in my left ankle. My foot gave way and I fell on my face. The pain was excruciating. There was no such thing as a doctor. Believing that I had sprained my ankle and not being able to walk a step, I spent my time either in bed or on a mattress on the floor of the sitting-room. There

could be no thought of attempting a journey by myself. I had to wait until my hosts went home and took me with them. During the days when I was laid up I wrote the story about Karp, preserving as far as possible his language and form of expression. It was a labour of love; the story poured out of its own accord, and I scarcely had to make a correction. In the evenings I would read to the members of our party what I had written during the day, and they encouraged me by laughing until the windows of the little house shook.

When I got back to Paris I showed my foot to one or two doctors, but they were not able to diagnose my case. In the meantime I remained very lame although I suffered little pain. Only a year and half later, in America, did I learn that it was the tendon of Achilles that had been torn. Had I been operated on in time I would have recovered the normal use of my foot; as it is I have been left, probably for the rest of my life, with a foot which is a very trying handicap.

All these diversions, agreeable and entertaining as well as painful, were good for me; for during all that time I was confronting a material situation which was growing more alarming with each month. I was now paying for the inexperience and follies of the first years of exile, and only luck could avert a final catastrophe. I should hate to count the sleepless nights I spent tossing in my bed thinking about what was going to happen to me.

My business had long ago outgrown me. I was no longer able to attend to the details myself and had to depend on others. I had been unfortunate in my choice of executives: they were either too amateurish or too shrewd. The amateurs, though honest, were even less experienced than I; the professionals used their knowledge to carry on intrigues and work out their own schemes, of which I had not the slightest idea but for which I was responsible in the end. Since mine was a wholesale business, I found myself squeezed in between two categories of experienced business professionals, my clients on one side, the contractors and dealers I purchased materials from on the other. Both took advantage of me. My clients distrusted me invariably or pretended to find fault with me in order to bring down my prices; they bargained with me shamelessly, always getting the best of me. The wholesale dealers sold me their merchandise at the highest possible price. I was the only amateur in the field of embroidery in Paris, and the swift growth of my business aroused envy on the part of my competitors, mostly old houses long established in the trade. Being a woman in my unusual situation made matters all the more difficult.

Besides, and perhaps most important of all, I had never had sufficient capital for the use of my business, and since its expansion I had been obliged to put into it every penny I could scrape together. My debts were growing. Yet I would not admit that I was beaten. At this juncture I met a Russian woman who appeared to become very much interested in my affairs and who offered to enter into partnership with me. She was still wealthy enough to be able to contribute a large sum. I was forced to accept. Very soon after the money had been paid in, my partner began to show signs of discontent. As the time had been too short to allow her to expect any business profits, I suspected that there was another reason for her annoyance. I was right; she had counted upon her money buying her my intimacy and was disappointed when her calculations proved to be wrong. She found a pretext for suing me. To pay back at least a part of the sum, I was forced to sell the last object of value I still possessed, the pearl necklace which had belonged to my mother, the thing I cherished most. Kitmir was bled to the last drop.

A PICNIC IN CALVI

THE INJURED FOOT

And there was more to come. Suddenly, in one season, embroidery went out of fashion. I still fought desperately and stubbornly against the adverse current when it would have been far more sensible to capitulate at once. For some time the business struggled along pitifully and then I had to give up the battle. Kitmir was finally incorporated into an old and reputable Paris embroidery firm. In recognition of its former renown it was allowed to keep

its name, and although no longer independent it has retained many of its clients, to whom it still is known as Kitmir.

CHAPTER XXIV

TO AMERICA WITH A GUITAR

The winter of 1928 was going to bring a new member into our family. Dmitri and Audrey had taken a house in London and were to stay in England until after the birth of the child. I went over to see them in late autumn but I had to return to Paris because of my work. On either side of the Channel now we sat and waited. As the time approached, I hardly dared leave my house for fear of missing the promised telephone calls from London. One day at last they came, many of them in close succession. One after the other Audrey's friends called me up to tell me how things were going, but Dmitri was too nervous to talk to me himself. Towards the evening there was a lull, and then in the middle of the night the final call came.

"Dmitri wants to speak to you," said a man's smiling voice. There was a pause while he handed over the receiver.

"It's a boy," said Dmitri; "all is well." His voice sounded rather shaky. Somewhat incoherently he gave me a few details. Then the friends continued the conversation for him. When I had put down the receiver, I sat for a long time musing over this new event. So now Dmitri had a son, a child born in exile, who would know nothing of Russia but our remembrances.

The baby was to be named Paul in memory of his grandfather, and the christening was to take place in London in two or three weeks. As the future godmother of my little nephew I was to be present. The day I was to cross the Channel to London there was such a storm that I nearly turned back—but family loyalties were strong enough to get me on board in spite of the elements.

Dmitri met me and took me to the house. As fast as my lame foot would carry me I rushed upstairs to Audrey's bedroom. Shouts from her greeted me all the way up. I found her still in bed but a picture of delight in silks and laces, her thick brown curls scattered over a pink *crêpe de Chine* pillow slip. A bassinet was standing on the bed beside hers, and in it was the very young man.

A day or two later we had the christening. I could see how happy Dmitri was by the pleasure he took in the minutest details of the arrangements for the occasion. Even the flower decorations he supervised himself. At times he would run up to Audrey's room, where I was keeping her company, and demand that I go down and admire his work.

"Now say, don't you think that this is rather nice?" he said again and again, bubbling over with enthusiasm as he showed me the rooms filled with flowers.

"I think everything is lovely; you've really done awfully well." But this did not sound superlative enough to him.

"No, but really, don't you think that it's just the way it ought to be for an occasion like this? You must admit that I'm good at arrangements; at any rate I think so myself."

I laughed and praised. Everything did look charming; the rather drab London house was full of gay colours and anticipation. The Russian priest and his attendants arrived well in advance. A large silver font was placed at one end of the drawing-room and filled with warm water. (According to the rites of the Orthodox Church baptism is performed by immersion.) A table was put beside the font and on it were disposed the objects necessary for the service. Tall wax tapers were lit. The choir gathered and the priest put on his vestments. All was ready.

The guests, only a small group of friends, had assembled and were waiting on the landing. The baby, wrapped up in blankets, was carried downstairs by the nurse and handed over to me. All moved into the drawing-room. The godfather, Prince Vladimir Golitsin, and I took up our places side by side at the font; candles were placed in our hands, and during the greater part of the service I had to handle both the parcel of blankets, inside of which was my nephew, and the candle. It was only during the baptism proper that the godfather took over the infant and I could rest my arms.

While I was standing there, I wished I could have had just one glimpse of Dmitri's face. In our early youth he and I had stood sponsors to innumerable little peasant babies in the country at Ilinskoie, and when we were not the godparents ourselves we were representing my uncle and aunt. The ceremony was usually performed in the corridor of the small maternity hospital built by my uncle for the peasant wives of the surrounding villages. A priest who was generally in a hurry to get somewhere else scurried through the service, running into a drone the words of the prayers. The corridor was stuffy and smelt of pinewood; outside the air glowed with heat,

and we were bubbling over with spirits. Dmitri and I avoided looking at each other for fear of being seized by a fit of giggling, but sometimes our dancing eyes would meet and then dignity abandoned us. I remember standing by the font, the infant's rough blankets scratching my bare arms, while I shook with silent and ungovernable mirth.

I was sure that if Dmitri could see me he would think of those scenes in the small hospital at Ilinskoie. But Dmitri was not in the room, as the Orthodox custom prescribes that parents cannot be present at their own children's christenings; and perhaps it was just as well.

The most anguishing moment of the ceremony came when the priest, undoing the blankets, seized the little wriggling body with expert hands, put his palm and fingers over the child's mouth, nostrils, and ears, and dipped him three times into the water of the font. Behind me I felt a shudder and a suppressed "Oh" go through the room. The baby, squealing with indignant surprise, his dark hair plastered upon his tiny head and the water splashing off his hands and feet, was dumped back into the blankets and rubbed dry in my arms by the disapproving nurse. She certainly did not have a very high opinion of our customs that day. When he was dry his hands were deftly stuck into the sleeves of his shirt and, after the rest of his undergarments had been pinned and tied around him, a much belaced and embroidered christening robe was slipped over his head. By this time his little face was crimson with screaming.

The ceremony once over, Paulie, christening robe, blankets and all were whisked upstairs by the anxious nurse, and the rest of the party proceeded to celebrate the event in champagne. A few days later Audrey was well enough to go to the country, and all of us, including Paulie in the arms of his nannie, left London packed into a large limousine.

In London, while Audrey was still in bed, and especially during our stay in the country, she and I spent hours in each other's company. Audrey glowed with a new inner radiance which filled the atmosphere around her with warmth; everything and everybody within reach were included in the magic circle of her happiness. I sat at the foot of her bed, never tiring of her talk, listening to her vivid accounts of her sensations.

There was in her a profound satisfaction at having participated in nature's creative scheme; she compared herself to the spring earth which had sent forth tender green shoots towards the sun. This to her was true life, something primeval which civilization had not been able to touch, and she revelled in its simple reality. When I left her it seemed to me that I had

closed the door upon an enchanted world. Although her world has expanded considerably since then and undergone some changes, I still feel very much the same about it. Audrey is amongst the rare beings who give life around them a brighter tinge.

Dmitri was happy; his home was now founded. Realizing the importance of this new ordering of his life, he was building the future with a firm hand and I admired him for it.

During the days I had spent with the family, absorbed in their interests, I was able to put aside my preoccupations; but as soon as I returned to Paris they were upon me once more. Kitmir was dying a slow death under my very eyes, and there was nothing I could do about it except watch the convulsions. Difficulties and complications surrounded me.

I felt at times as though I were trapped, as though destiny had planned my destruction by crushing me under the weight of precisely those details of existence which had the least importance for me. I continued to suffer from the lack of opportunity for mental development in these surroundings. The struggle for mere existence involved all my available energy, hardly leaving place for any other thought. Dreams about personal happiness had been abandoned long ago, and I did not expect life to give me much for myself; my mind was continually fixed on a much more important future than my own, on that of my country, a future to which I had hoped some day to contribute what inner resources I had. But the years were passing, energy was being slowly drained from me, I was in fear of losing both my enthusiasm and my vitality.

Ideas would race through my head, scheme follow upon scheme, only to be laid aside with a sigh. One at last was suggested to me which seemed better than the rest.

Paris had gone “perfume crazy.” Each shop, big or small, especially the dressmaking houses, was launching its line of perfumery together with face creams and make-up accessories. I could follow their example. But as the market in Paris was saturated, the place to start a business was London. Very little money was needed to begin, and in case of success I might hope to form a company. In time I might even expand my activities to America, and the business would perhaps offer me the excuse and occasion to go there in person.

In the spring of 1928 I went to London and made connexions which would bring me distribution possibilities. The scheme revived all my energy, and I was once more full of faith and confidence. I spent my time in the

offices of a perfume manufactory facing row upon row of little glass bottles. Out of each in turn a drop of scent would be delicately dabbed on my glove, on my wrist, on my fur collar, on my upper lip. I presently became a living perfume sampler and was soon utterly incapable of distinguishing one odour from another. But the occupation had a great fascination for me. Perfume made me think of music: in both there existed certain fundamental harmonies which could be ornamented and enriched by endless variations. In spite of the difficulty of choosing, two different scents were selected and named. The bottles, labels, and packing were designed. When the samples were ready, I returned to London, taking them with me; the firm I had earlier approached expressed its approval and sounded very optimistic. Things looked so encouraging that I decided to spend part of my summer in London in order to be closer to developments. In a way I was delighted to leave Paris for a time; I did not even mind abandoning temporarily my little house at Boulogne. Paris was the scene of a lost battle. I had recently been forced to separate myself from my old butler Karp, who formed one of the chief attractions of my household, and Boulogne was too full of sad thoughts. In London I rented two small rooms at the back of a larger flat in an old-fashioned apartment house. It was a service flat and there was no place for a maid of my own, but I could not afford anything better then and the Ritz was out of the question. My windows looked out upon a dirty wall and a roof with sooty chimneys. To comb my hair I had to sit upon the bed, which occupied nearly the entire floor space of the room; there was no place for my clothes nor for anything else which would have made it seem brighter.

The perfume business, which had appeared so promising at the outset, began to lag disconcertingly. Difficulties cropped up which had to be straightened out, and I soon came to the conclusion that there was very little prospect of doing anything in a short time.

I do not think that I have ever felt lonelier in my life than in that little flat in London. Although I had lived alone in Paris, it was in a congenial atmosphere, in surroundings created by myself. Here I had nothing of my own and, moreover, I felt that I was once again on the point of losing the comparative comfort I had acquired during my years of hard work. I was obsessed now by the feeling that I was a failure. Everything I touched had eventually turned to dust in my hands. My attempts had been fruitless. Equipped as I was with inadequate weapons, it was apparently impossible to put up a single-handed resistance against an entirely new world.

One slight incident stands out in my memory as characterizing this period. Two or three times during the summer I went to Paris for a few days,

always alone. Once I returned to London on a Sunday evening by a late train. It was with great difficulty that I found a porter at the station. The taxi took me to the house, deposited my bags on the doorstep, and drove off. It was too late to expect any of the servants to be up at that hour. I opened the door with my own latchkey, dragged the bags into the hall, and then carried them one by one upstairs to my rooms. The flat when I entered it was as dark and damp as a tomb.

Although obsessed by gloomy thoughts and loneliness I could not bear the sight of anyone; I avoided friends and acquaintances, preferring to spend day after day in utter solitude. I did not even think of writing. These were truly the blackest hours of my life.

Then slowly out of the chaos of my thoughts something new began to rise and take shape. There could be no doubt now about the fact that I had failed, failed dismally. I had aspired to things far beyond my limited experience. Why not face it? Why not probe into the root of my trouble and start from the very beginning again? But as I had exhausted my chances and had been unsuccessful in Europe, I would go somewhere else. America had long been in my mind; there I could learn. In America I should not be the only one of my kind to have begun life all over again; many had done it before me and were doing it still.

The more I turned the idea over in my head, the more convinced I became that it was the right one. I must go to America. But there existed one serious obstacle to this project: I had no money. How and when I should go I did not know, but go I must and I thought of nothing else.

In August or September on one of my visits to Paris I happened to come across one of my American friends. While I was having tea with her one afternoon, she dropped a rather casual suggestion that I should come over to America in the autumn and visit her. Under ordinary circumstances delicacy alone would have prevented me from taking advantage of a mere hint; but on this occasion I threw scruples to the winds and clutched at the suggestion. It presently became a definite invitation. What I most desired at the moment had been granted. Plans were made, and it was decided that I should go to America in October or November and stay for two or three months. I should take with me my manuscript and the perfume samples. Although the burden of worries was still heavy on my shoulders, I had now at least a ray of new hope.

It proved more difficult to leave Europe than I had anticipated, and several serious matters intervened which forced me to put off the day of my

departure at least twice.

My father's house at Tsarskoie-Selo had been confiscated by the Soviet authorities in 1918, and had since been used as a museum. Articles having no direct historical value, such as table silver, china, furs, and personal effects had been stolen from the house very soon after its confiscation. Some of these have even found their way to America and figure in the catalogue of one of the New York galleries. The collections of antiques, including furniture, pictures, silver, glass, and china remained undisturbed for a number of years. Early in 1928 my step-mother was warned that the collections had been sold by the Soviets to a group of French and English dealers; she was told how and when they had been shipped and even the number of cases they had been packed in. Armed with all this information, she went over to England, located the ship, found the cases, and placed a legal injunction upon them. She then filed a suit against the persons responsible for the purchase of the collections. For my step-mother the matter was not only a personal one. Although the Soviets had been known to sell abroad separate objects belonging to both private and state collections, this was the first time they were disposing of a complete one. Princess Paley's hope was to establish a precedent whereby such sales would be made impossible. Like many things she had done before, it was an extremely bold action, involving effort and worry, and also a considerable amount of money, of which she did not have too much. The suit was to come up at some time during the autumn and, as I had promised to go on the witness stand for her, I could not leave before the affair was over. After several postponements the suit finally came up in November, but I was prevented from being present after all. Just when I was about to start, a violent storm began to rage around the French and English coasts, and Channel traffic was totally suspended for several days, the very days when I was needed in London.

Princess Paley, against every expectation at the time, lost her suit; she appealed and lost again. It was a fearful disappointment to her and a hard blow financially. Since then the Soviets have been inundating the foreign markets with historical and other treasures separately and in collections, property which they had confiscated from the owners under the pretext that it constituted the historical patrimony of the country.

During the same autumn disquieting news began to reach Paris about the health of the Dowager Empress Marie, mother of Tsar Nicholas II, who had been living for the past few years in Denmark. She was over eighty and up till then had been keeping up wonderfully; her strong constitution gave way

suddenly and in the space of a few weeks she was at the point of death several times. In case she were to pass away I wanted to be in Europe so as to attend the funeral. She rallied sufficiently to allow me to make definite arrangements for my departure, but the improvement did not last. The end came on October 13, and two days later I left for Denmark.

When I arrived in Copenhagen, the coffin with the Empress's remains had already been moved from her little villa Hvidore, where she had died, to the Russian Church in town. So as to give time for all those who wanted to gather for the funeral, the ceremony was taking place nearly a week after the Empress's death, and in the meantime services were being held twice daily at the Russian Church. On the day of my arrival I went both in the morning and in the evening.

The Empress's coffin, so small that it seemed intended for a child, stood on a low platform in the centre of the church. It was covered by the Russian national flag and by the standard of the former imperial navy. There were no guard of honour, no crowns, and no emblems indicating titles and rank, all arrangements being reduced to the utmost simplicity. The church was so full of flowers, however, that it looked as if it had been decorated for a wedding. The platform was heaped with flowers, so many that they spread out around it on the floor and formed a huge patch of bright colours. Wreaths hung on the walls and sprays lay on the window sills.

Many of the people who filled the church had in former days been members of her court; some had belonged to the Empress's own entourage, some had been her collaborators in charity and social work. They had now gathered from all over Europe for the burial of their Empress, the last crowned head of the Romanov dynasty; sad men and women with tired, grey faces in worn clothing.

The funeral took place on the day after my arrival. Early that morning Dmitri got in from Biarritz. The ceremony began with mass attended only by the Russians, and was followed by a burial service to which came the Danish royal family, the King of Norway, the Crown Prince of Sweden, the Duke of York, the last two representing their respective sovereigns, and a number of delegations. The Russian Church was once again the scene of a brilliant gathering; it suddenly filled with uniforms. The men wore their Russian decorations, the Princesses the scarlet ribbon of the Order of St. Catherine given to them by the Tsar. In the ten years of our exile this was the first time that we had witnessed a ceremony which revived the past in nearly all its details, and it would also be the last. There will never be an occasion for those decorations and orders to see the light of day again.

The elaborate ceremonial used in Russia for the burial of sovereigns called for a guard of honour composed of court and military dignitaries, officers and soldiers, which mounted guard day and night around the bier throughout the time the body lay in state and during the funeral. In the case of an Empress her ladies-in-waiting and maids-of-honour were assigned to a similar duty. During the funeral service a Danish guard of honour was disposed around the Empress Marie's coffin. But the Russians, although they no longer had their uniforms, insisted upon performing the duty which would have been theirs in former days; it would be their last duty to their last Empress. They took up their places in pairs behind the Danes, on either side of the coffin. The Empress's last two maids-of-honour stood there also. The final pair was composed of the two Cossacks who had followed the Empress into exile.

Before her death the Empress had expressed the wish to be buried only temporarily in Denmark. Her desire was to lie beside her husband in Russia, and she made her daughters promise that as soon as circumstances permitted they would carry out her wish. Meanwhile her coffin was to be deposited at the Cathedral of Roskilde, some twenty miles from Copenhagen, the burial place of the Kings of Denmark since the tenth century.

On the night of the funeral the King and Queen of Denmark gave a dinner in honour of the royal guests who had assembled at Copenhagen for the occasion. In deference to the occasion there was no music and all the ladies were in black. Again both men and women wore decorations. This was a function the like of which I had not seen in fifteen years. Some of us did not know each other at all, with others we had not met since before the war. In former years we had led very much the same kind of lives, our interests had been similar; at present they were vastly different. For those who belonged to the Scandinavian countries things had not changed much, but for the Germans and especially for us Russians they were vastly different. Beyond the customary phrases used by people who have not seen each other for a long time, there seemed very little for us to talk about. I felt that I was being looked upon with curiosity. All knew about my business ventures and believed them to be successful; there was also a certain amount of disapproval in their attitude on account of my articles, which had begun to appear in the Swedish magazine. In spite of myself it made me self-conscious although all these people belonged to quite another period of my life; it was not in vain that I had been brought up as they. My actions were a logical outcome of circumstances by which I had been forced to take one or the other step, but I understood well enough why these actions seemed

strange to them. Everybody was charming to me, however, and discussed me with Dmitri only after I had gone.

I left this gathering with sadness in my heart and a strange mixture of feelings. It was as if I had no definite place in the world any more except the one I was capable of making for myself. I was estranged from my own kin and yet I could not belong to any other class of society outside of the one I was born into. It made me feel very lonely but at the same time it gave me an added impetus towards finding my own path.

On my way back I spent a whole day in Berlin, and to pass the time I went to Potsdam, favourite residence of the German Emperors, and visited the palaces, some of which I had never seen. The place looked utterly deserted; there were hardly any visitors. I talked to the guides, who seemed to welcome a chat. The Kaiser and his wife were often mentioned in the course of the conversation but mentioned without distasteful comments as something which had long ago become history. The sky was overcast that day and there was an occasional drizzle of rain. Between the showers I strolled around in the silent park, my feet sinking deep into damp yellow leaves.

When I came back to Paris I felt as if I had been on a pilgrimage to the past. Now I was about to face the New World with all I hoped it was going to mean to me; my departure was fixed for the eighth of December. I made rather elaborate preparations for my trip and knew that the penalty would be heavy, but for the moment I was possessed by a sense of recklessness and adventure. The future would have to take care of itself. At the last moment I was informed that the company through which I was distributing my perfumes in England had found excuses for not paying the amount due me for the sales made by them. They have not done it to this day, and we are still arguing about it.

By Wide World Photos

At the right, walking near the horseman, is the faithful Cossack servant of the Empress who was her personal bodyguard

By Keystone

The Duke of York, the King of Norway, Prince Valdemar, the King of Denmark, the Crown Prince of Sweden, and the Crown Prince of Denmark in the procession

SCENES AT THE FUNERAL OF THE DOWAGER EMPRESS MARIE OF RUSSIA IN COPENHAGEN, 1928

Accompanied by several friends, I left Paris with my French maid Marie-Louise on a winter afternoon. It was quite dark when we reached Havre and went on board. In my cabin I found cables and flowers from those I was leaving behind. The boat moved out at night and reached Plymouth in the early hours of the morning. Feeling lonely and frightened I

had not slept all night and at Plymouth looked out of the porthole into a bleak stormy sky and on angry waves which gave me very little encouragement.

During the first two or three days of the crossing the sea was rough, and because of my lame foot I did not venture outside of my cabin; I was too frightened of the ocean to be sea-sick. I knew that upon arrival at quarantine an experience was in store for me which is dreaded by all Europeans on their first visit to America—this is the encounter with the press. For days I had been preparing answers to all kinds of questions. But when the moment came and I found myself sitting in my cabin surrounded by eight or ten reporters, I discovered that they were a very harmless and sympathetic crowd of mere boys. Then my photograph was taken by a dozen cameramen and it was over.

While the boat was docking, I looked in dismay at the pier's vast expanse of corrugated iron. The skyline had been hidden by fog and the pier was the first thing I was seeing of New York. I was met and taken to the home of the friend with whom I was going to stay. The next day we left for California to spend Christmas on a ranch. I got a definite impression of New York only when I came back and stayed there for some time. My very first trivial reaction, however, was that New York in some ways resembled Berlin.

After a fleeting glimpse at Chicago I sat and gazed out of the window of the railway carriage during the entire trip west. Only darkness could get me away; I never seemed to have enough of the vast panorama. I was filled with exhilaration at the sight of space; the feeling of space entered into my very being. It made me breathe deeper, it gave me a sensation of freedom, it reminded me of my own country. This was my first impression of America.

I spent three weeks on the ranch in California. From my windows I could see both the blue expanse of the Pacific and the rolling hills covered with spring grass. It was like being on another planet. Although life on the ranch was restful and comfortable, it was not exactly for this that I had come to America. At the end of January I returned to New York and began to look around. I soon realized, however, that, protected as I was by my friends, it would be impossible for me to penetrate into the circles I wanted to reach. When I mentioned anything about business, people smiled. They did not know and I hardly cared to tell them how tragic my situation really was. To me this was worse than being in Europe; here I was merely a guest, somebody to be entertained, fêted, pampered.

One hope still remained and that was the manuscript, which I wanted to use only as a last resort. My friends told me, when I decided to speak to them about it, that before it could be shown to anybody it would have to be translated from the French into English. A man was found who could do the work but he wanted six hundred dollars for it and I did not have them. So I had to give up this last hope. The perfume samples which I had brought with me I did not have a chance to show to anyone. And soon I should be obliged to go back to Europe, back to a state of affairs which could only have grown more involved during my absence. Again nothing had been achieved, worse than nothing; the hopes which I had placed upon the trip to America had failed as had the rest of my undertakings.

In the meantime my ankle had been getting steadily worse, so much so that at times I could walk only with difficulty. But there was so much else for me to worry about that I hardly paid any heed to the condition of my foot. It attracted the attention of my friends, however, and they insisted that I should be examined. Reluctantly I began to visit surgeons. The trouble was located immediately and nearly all advised an operation, though some admitted that the injury to my muscle through neglect was now beyond repair. As soon as I realized the necessity of an operation I decided that it should be done in New York. I did not feel like going through the ordeal in France and, most important of all, the operation would give me an excuse to prolong my stay in America. It would be another six weeks of respite, at any rate. A few days after I had taken this decision I went to the hospital.

Never in my life have I seen so much kindness as was shown me during the days that I spent at the hospital and afterwards during my convalescence; I did not know that such generosity of heart existed. My convalescence was passed in a house where everything was done to make me happy.

At the beginning of April another friend of mine who knew about the existence of the manuscript suggested that she would show it to someone who knew French. She had all the necessary connexions and the thing was arranged. My manuscript was sent to an editor who was to give his opinion on it. But my hopes were low and I hardly expected a favourable criticism. On April 18, the eve of my birthday, I got a fat letter from the editor in question. I opened the envelope and saw that the letter was accompanied by comments on separate sheets of paper, but I could not find the courage to read either; too much was at stake in these documents. My hostess was out at the moment. I waited for her return and when she came in I handed her the letter.

“Read this please, Betty, I simply cannot do it myself.”

She took the sheets out of the envelope and began with the letter. I was stretched on the sofa, my foot in a plaster cast. Presently she raised her head and looked at me seriously. My heart fell.

"Do you know that this is marvellous?" she said. "Listen."

She read it to me; it contained a favourable judgment. Then we studied the comments; I saw from them that everything I had wanted to convey in my writings had been understood. That day and the next I was afraid that I would suddenly wake up and find that it all had been just a dream.

An interview was arranged between me and the editor. He insisted that I should go on with what he called my book, believing that I would easily find a publisher. The friend who had discovered him made all the necessary business arrangements. All I had to do now was to write. At precisely the same time the recovery of my foot was delayed by complications which obliged me to go back to bed, where I remained for over a month. But I did not mind, I minded nothing. I was in a state of bliss. From morning till evening and sometimes late into the night I wrote. I worked feverishly, my hands often trembling with the excitement. It was the war period of my reminiscences, the one most important in my development, that I had now started upon, and as I wished to complete my "book" as quickly as possible I now wrote in Russian, the language in which I could express myself more easily than in any other.

Once more I could make plans. It seemed as if the first stroke of good fortune attracted others. In May I received several offers, amongst which was one from the head of a big dressmaking house in New York who wanted me to accept the position of a style consultant and dress designer in his establishment. The offers removed the last difficulties; I would first return to Europe, settle my affairs as far as possible, and return to America. A position would give me the independence I wished for, it would enable me to participate in American life, it would also allow me to earn a living while trying to find a publisher for my book. Further than that I would not anticipate; for the time being things were as good as they could be.

My hostess went to Europe and, as I was not yet well enough to travel, she left me her apartment where I stayed until the middle of June, when at last I went over to Paris after six months' absence. In September I was supposed to take up my new duties in New York. The summer months were ample time in which to liquidate everything in Paris and London.

But as the weeks passed and I had to sever connexions one by one and pull out every root that I had planted in Europe, I noticed that they were far

more numerous and far stronger than I had ever expected. I was leaving behind my brother and everything that I was attached to. I was obliged to give up my little house, store my belongings, and find homes for the dogs and the cat. Those of my friends who did not know my exact situation tried their very best to discourage me from going to America; and without influencing my decision they succeeded in weakening my spirit. As soon as I had returned to Paris I learned that my step-mother was suffering from a second recurrence of cancer. This time an operation was impossible and she had in all probability only a very few months to live.

The step I was about to take was a final one and this time at least I was not blind to the consequences of what I was undertaking. I knew the dangers, I realized that at the age of nearly forty I was about to change deliberately the entire structure of my existence. I had seen enough of America to know how different my life would be over there and I did not wish it otherwise. But at times I wavered; would I have enough endurance to go through with it? Did not my continuous failures in the past show how little I was qualified to face naked facts? Yet, as matters now stood with me, I could do nothing but go or lose my self-respect.

AMERICA, 1931

My passage had been booked for the beginning of August on an Italian boat which I was to pick up at Marseilles. I made my farewells. The leave I took from the Princess Paley was the most painful of all. She was my last tie with the older generation, and I knew that I should never see her again. She herself had no idea of the hopelessness of her own condition and still went about without great difficulty, but her appearance could not deceive anybody. My courage failed me to go and say good-bye to her at Natasha's house in St. Cloud, where she was then staying. We met in Natasha's office at the Lelong dressmaking establishment in Paris. Natasha herself, who had promised to be present at the interview, was obliged to leave the room so that her mother should not notice the tears which she was unable to control. My step-mother died in the beginning of November 1929. Although she had

longed for death for all these years, when her time came her fundamental strength fought desperately for life. Step by step, inch by inch, she relinquished her hold and only gave way at the last moment, when her animal energy had been completely exhausted.

There were very few people in Paris when I left; only my step-sister Natasha, her husband, and one or two Russians came to see me off at the station. This time I had indulged in no luxuries; I had no maid and very little luggage. In my pocket I had three hundred dollars, all that I possessed in the world besides debts. In my hand I carried my typewriter. The only compromise I had made with myself was my Russian guitar. As I left Paris my heart was heavy with sadness and anxiety, but outwardly I managed to keep my composure. Only when I lost sight of Natasha on the platform and was alone in my compartment did I break down.

At Marseilles I was informed that the boat was late, and I welcomed the delay which allowed me a few more hours in France. Just then I felt passionately attached to the home of my exile. But finally the boat arrived, and I had to go on board. I saw the shores of France retreat into the distance. Who could tell when I should see them again?

During the crossing I worked assiduously at my typewriter; it was my only escape and recreation. One evening as I stood at the porthole of my cabin looking at the setting sun, a ship passed by, so near that I could see the figures on deck. I was suddenly seized with a mad impulse to jump overboard and swim across to her. She would take me back to Europe.

This little incident brought me to my senses again. I was acting the coward, I had no business to look backwards or waste my energies in vain regrets. I was on my way to build a new future for myself. This time I must make a success.

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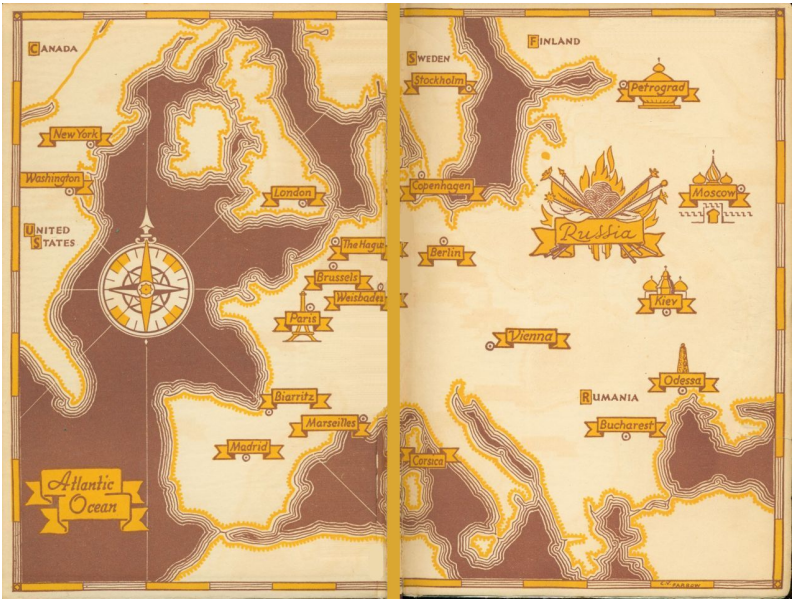
THE END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Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

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[The end of *A Princess in Exile* by Marie Pavlovna Romanova (as Marie, Grand Duchess of Russia)]