

Elizabeth turned away with a shudder, she felt her heart rent, she had not strength for an answer.

Lestocq beckoned the soldiers, and commanded them to remove the traitress, Anna Leopoldowna.

Thirty warriors took possession of the regent, who calmly and proudly submitted herself to them and suffered herself to be led away.

In the corridor they encountered another troop of soldiers, who were escorting the regent's husband, Prince Ulrich of Brunswick, and Anna's favorite, Julia von Mengden.

"Anna!" sorrowfully exclaimed the prince, "oh, had you but listened to my warning! Why did I not, in spite of your commands, what I ought to have done? I alone am to blame for this sad misfortune."

"It is no one's fault but mine," calmly responded Anna. "Pardon me, my husband; pardon me, Julia."

And so they descended to the sledges in waiting below. They placed the prince in one, and the regent, with Julia, in the other.

"Ah," said Julia, throwing her arms around Anna's neck, "we shall at least suffer together."

Anna reclined her head upon her friend's shoulder.

"God is just and good," said she. "He punishes me for my criminal love, and mercifully spares the object of my affections. I thank God for my sufferings. Julia, should you one day be liberated and allowed to see him again, then bear to him my warmest greetings; then tell him that I shall love him eternally, and that my last sigh shall be a prayer for his happiness. I shall never see him again. Bear to him my blessing, Julia!"

Julia dissolved in tears, and, clinging to her friend, she sobbed: "No, no, they will not dare to kill you."

"Then they will condemn me to a life-long imprisonment," calmly responded Anna.

"No, no, your head is sacred, and so is your freedom. They dare not attack either."

"Nothing is sacred in Russia," laconically responded Anna.

The sledges stopped at the palace of the Princess Elizabeth. Hardly two hours had passed since Elizabeth, in those same sledges, had left her palace as a poor, trembling princess; and now, as reigning empress, she sent them back with the dethroned regent.

The latter entered the palace of the princess as a prisoner, while Elizabeth, as empress, took possession of the palace of the czars.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SLEEP OF INNOCENCE.

ANNA LEOPOLDOWNA had hardly left the room in which she had been surprised and captured, when Lestocq turned to Grünstein with a new order.

"Now," said he, in an undertone to him—"now hasten to seize the emperor. This little Ivan must be annihilated."

Elizabeth had overheard these words, and remembering Anna's last prayer, she exclaimed with vehemence:

"No, no, I say, he shall not be annihilated! Woe to him who injures a hair of his head! I will not be the mur-

derer of an innocent child! Take him prisoner, get him in your power, but in him respect the child and the emperor! Tear him not forcibly from his slumber, but protect his sleep! Poor child, destined to suffer so early!"

"No weakness now, princess," whispered Lestocq; "show yourself great and firm, else all is lost! Come away from here, that the sight of this child may not yet more enfeeble your heart. Come, much more remains to be done."

And, reverently taking Elizabeth's hand, he led her to the door.

"Now do your duty," said he to Grünstein. "Seize young Ivan."

"But remember my command, and spare him," said Elizabeth, slowly and hesitatingly leaving the chamber.

"Now to Ivan!" Grünstein commanded his soldiers, and with them he hastened to the sleeping-room of the young emperor.

There deep stillness and undisturbed peace yet prevailed. Only the waiting-women were awakened, and had hastily fled in search of concealment and safety. They had left the young emperor entirely alone, and he had not been awakened by the disturbance all around him.

He lay quietly in his splendid cradle, which was placed upon a sort of estrade in the centre of the room, dimly lighted by a lamp suspended from the ceiling by golden chains. This slumbering, smiling, childish face, peeping forth from the green silk coverings of the pillows, resembled a fresh, bursting rosebud. It was a sight that inspired respect even in those rough soldiers.

Devoutly staring, they at first remained at the door of



THE SLEEP OF INNOCENCE.

the room ; then slowly, and stepping on the points of their toes, they approached nearer and surrounded the cradle. But, remembering the words of their new empress, " Spare his sleep," no one dared to touch the child, or awaken him from his slumber.

In close order the bearded warriors pressed around the cradle of the imperial child, leaning upon their halberds, watching for his awaking.*

It was a rare and admirable picture. In the centre, upon its estrade, was the splendid cradle of the slumbering child, and all around, upon the steps of this child-throne, these soldiers with their wild and threatening faces, all eyes expectantly resting upon the smiling infantile brow.

The door now opened, and, her face pallid with terror, Ivan's nurse rushed into the room and to the cradle of her imperial nursling. The soldiers, with imperious glances, beckoned her to await in silence, like themselves, the awaking of the emperor. The poor woman spoke not, but her fast-flowing tears indicated the depth of her grief.

Time passes. As if under enchantment, earnest, immovable, silent, stand the soldiers. Behind the cradle, her eyes and arms raised imploringly toward heaven, stands the nurse, while the child continues to slumber, smiling in its sleep.

At the expiration of an hour thus passed, the imperial infant moves, throws up its little rosy arms, opens its eyes—it is awake !

A cry of triumph escapes the lips of the soldiers—all

* Levecque, vol. v., p. 227.

arms were stretched forth to seize him who, an hour before, had been their lord and emperor.

The child, frightened by the aspect of these rough soldiers, bursts out into a cry of alarm, and stretches out its little arms toward its nurse.

She takes him in her arms and weeps over him. The frightened child buries its little face in the bosom of his nurse, and the soldiers now convey them both to the waiting sledges. The dethroned emperor is quickly transported to the dethroned regent at Elizabeth's palace, who, with hot tears, clasps her son to her heart.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE RECOMPENSING.

MEANWHILE, Elizabeth had made herself absolute mistress of the imperial palace. Hastening to the throne-room, she had taken possession of the throne of her father, and administered the oath of allegiance to the guards surrounding her.

They lay upon their knees before her, these cowardly instruments of despotism; they bowed their heads in the dust, and these four or five thousand slaves, to which number the followers of the empress already amounted, swore fealty to Elizabeth, ready to strangle the regent and the young emperor at her command, or to serve her the same if, peradventure, the regent should regain a momentary power.*

* "L'Abbé Chappe d'Auteroche," vol. i., p. 138.

While the guards were doing homage in the palace, Grünstein and Woronzow, by Lestocq's command, led their men to Münnich's and Ostermann's, and both were imprisoned; with them, a great number of leading and suspected persons, who, perhaps, might have been disposed to draw the sword for Anna Leopoldowna. Lestocq had thought of every thing, had considered every thing; at the same time that he entered the regent's palace with Elizabeth, he sent to the printer the manifesto which proclaimed Elizabeth as empress. With the appearance of the sun in the horizon, Elizabeth was recognized as empress in the capital, and soon after throughout the whole empire. Who were they who recognized her? It was not the people, for in Russia there are no people—there are only masters and slaves. Elizabeth had become empress because fortune and Anna Leopoldowna's generous confidence had favored her; not the exigencies of the people, nor the tyranny of her predecessor had called her to the throne, but she had attained to it by the cunning and intrigues of some few confederates. She had become empress because Lestocq was tired of being only physician to a poor princess; because Grünstein thought the position of under-officer was far too humble for him, and because Alexis Razumovsky, the former precentor in the imperial chapel, found it desirable to add to his name the title of count or prince!

When St. Petersburg awoke it heard with astonishment the news of a new revolution. From mouth to mouth flew this astounding announcement: "We have changed our rulers! We are no longer the servants of the Emperor Ivan, but of the Empress Elizabeth! A