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THE DIARY OF NICHOLAS II, 1917-1918,  
AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

by

Kent D. Price

B. A., University of Montana, 1965

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

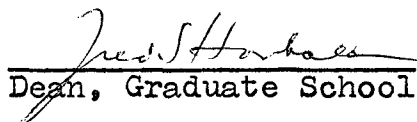
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In the house of the Romanovs, as in that of the Atrides, a mysterious curse descends from generation to generation. Murder and adultery, blood and mud, the fifth act of a tragedy played in a brothel. Peter I kills his son; Alexander I kills his father; Catherine II kills her husband...The block, the rope, and poison - these are the true emblems of the Russian autocracy.

Merejkovsky commenting on the 1905 Revolution.

(i)

Never trouble thy mind for anything  
that shall happen to thee in this world.  
Nothing can come but what God wills.

Sir Thomas More.

PREFACE

Nicholas II kept a diary in which he wrote an entry nearly every day. This diary has never been translated into English, and there is only a partial translation into French which appeared in 1925 under the title Journal Intime de Nicolas II. Sections of the diary are translated here from Krasnyi Arkhiv--Red Archives-- vol. 20, pp. 123-52; vol. 21, pp. 79-96; vol. 22, pp. 71-91; vol. 27, pp. 110-38; and vol. 64, pp. 130-38. The translation from the Russian was done by Mr. Arlo Furnis, a student of Russian language at the University of Montana. Mr. Furnis and the writer worked closely to ensure the accuracy of the translation.

To give some understanding of the character of the Tsar, the writer has prefaced the diary with a picture of the Tsar's habits, family background, and personal life.

The Tsar wrote in his diary at 11:00 nearly every night. To it he confided family events, people who visited him, and items of interest in his personal life. Nicholas has been criticized by many for saying little of importance in the diary. But the reader should remember that his entries were meant to be read by no one outside the family. Important events would, of course, be recorded in official

court journals, of which Nicholas could retain a copy. This is only a daily log of the events of the life of the Tsar from his abdication to the time of his death. These are not memoirs. This is not a political commentary.

Proper names which may be spelled in several different ways in Russian appear here as they appear in the diary. All dates given in the diary are according to the Julian calendar, which was thirteen days behind the Gregorian in the twentieth century.

I wish to thank Professor Robert T. Turner for his inspiration and his steadying hand over the past five years. Professor Melvin C. Wren, my mentor, has given me much encouragement. I appreciate his kind and understanding guidance. He has spent many hours working with me on the thesis, and for this I shall ever be grateful.

I dedicate this work to my father and mother, Colonel Derek William Price, U.S.M.C. (Ret.) and Martha Eleanor de Mers Price.

Kent de Mers Price

MAJOR EVENTS OF THE REIGN OF NICHOLAS II

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| May, 1896           | Khodynka catastrophe  |
| 1897-1901           | partial strikes in St. Petersburg, Moscow, throughout the provinces; numerous attempts on the lives of ministers, governors and chiefs of police; extraordinary measures of precaution are taken to guard the young Tsar.   |
| 1902                | assassination of Sipyagin, Minister of the Interior   |
| 1904                | assassination of Plehve, Minister of the Interior   |
| 1904-1905           | disastrous Russo-Japanese War.  |
| January 9, 1905     | revolutionary agents, ignoring the orders forbidding all demonstrations, lead St. Petersburg workers toward the palace, to present a petition to the Tsar. The group is led by a police agent, Father Gapon. Police open fire and kill hundreds and wound thousands. "Bloody Sunday." |
| February 5, 1905    | assassination of Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich, Governor-General of Moscow; the members of the imperial family are asked by the police not to attend the funeral because the city is infested with terrorists.  |
| June 6, 1905        | mutiny in the Black Sea Fleet.  |
| October 12, 1905    | declaration of the general strike by the St. Petersburg Soviet.   |
| October 17, 1905    | the Grand Duke Nicholas and Count Witte persuade the Tsar to issue a manifesto convoking a Duma.  |
| October 20-25, 1905 | Jewish pogroms  |
| Autumn, 1905        | extraordinary measures have been taken to assure the unhindered   |



(v)

return of the army from the Japanese front and to protect the safety of the Trans-Siberian Railroad from the revolutionaries.

December 1905

the revolt in Moscow assumes tremendous proportions. The Semenovskiy Regiment of the Guards is sent from St. Petersburg to restore order.

April 27, 1906

the opening of the first Duma.

Spring and summer, 1906

the Tsar dissolves the first Duma. Several hundred parliamentarians refuse to be dissolved and issue a proclamation from Vyborg calling for the population to stop paying taxes. Stolypin appointed President of the Council of Ministers, inaugurates an organized offensive against the revolutionaries.

August 12, 1906

the explosion of a bomb planted by the revolutionaries in Stolypin's summer house wounds his children, but he escapes injury.

Winter, 1906-1907

an epidemic of robberies, organized by the revolutionaries to bolster their treasuries. Necessary to proclaim partial law in most of the larger cities.

June 3, 1907

Nicholas dissolves the Second Duma.

Autumn, 1907

the new election laws are put into effect which gives larger representation to the agricultural elements of the nation which the government hopes will make it more conservative.

1908-1911

the measures taken by Stolypin restore order and the industries and banks begin to flourish. Stolypin is preparing a new law which will increase the land

holdings of the peasants and do away with the community property of the villages.

September 14, 1911

Stolypin is assassinated in Kiev.

1912-1914

the government is headed by Kokovtsev, a colorless bureaucrat, incapable of constructive ideas.

July 30, 1914

Sazonof and the Grand Duke Nicholas advise the Tsar to sign the order for a General Mobilization.

1915-1916

the revolutionaries dominate the "auxiliary organizations of the front" and lead a hidden propaganda campaign against the "influence of Rasputin."

February, 1917

strikes break out in St. Petersburg.

March, 1917

Nicholas abdicates.

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## A CHARACTER SKETCH OF NICHOLAS II

This work is neither an apology for nor a condemnation of Nicholas II, the last Tsar of Imperial Russia. It is rather a review of the man, his character, daily life, personal habits, education and relations with other people as he revealed himself in his diary after his abdication. This introductory chapter seeks to provide a background to the diary.

Nicholas was born on May 18, 1868, in a palace at Tsarskoe Selo, not far from St. Petersburg. An ignorant nurse and a negligent physician were responsible for his becoming the Heir Apparent. They overlooked an illness in his elder brother, Alexander, and the infant succumbed to an otherwise simple infirmity. Thus, Nicholas, like his father, became Heir Apparent by accident.<sup>1</sup> Members of the Romanov family had often died at an early age. The eldest brother of Alexander III and two of his cousins died when they were young. Grand Duke George, Nicholas's younger brother, died of tuberculosis at the age of nineteen. Nicholas was never in good health as a child, and he spent a great deal of his time exercising to strengthen his body. While Alexander III was a physical giant, Nicholas was weak.

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<sup>1</sup>Grand Duke Alexander, Once a Grand Duke, (New York, 1932), 165.

NICHOLAS AND HIS FATHER

Nicholas grew up in Gatchina, one of the palaces at Tsarskoe Selo. The private apartments of the Imperial family did not have the lofty and airy rooms like those in the State apartments, but had ceilings so low than one felt he could touch them with his hands. The apartment was dark with the sun rarely filtering in through the small windows and was inexpensively furnished.

Alexander III did not approve of spare bedrooms, private dressing rooms and baths, nor did he like modern extravagances. His own study was a nearly bare room, poorly furnished like the rest of the house. The palace reflected the tastes and habits of a simple man who did not like to live in the usual monarchical style. Alexander's favorite costume at home was a soldier's uniform, which he would wear until threadbare.<sup>2</sup>

Family life was simple and secluded. Physicians prescribed plenty of exercise for Alexander and the entire family participated with their father. Building snow houses, chopping wood and shoveling snow entertained the family during the winter months, while riding, hiking, tennis and planting trees occupied them during the warmer months. Conversations dealt upon family happenings, but never a word about politics. While at

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<sup>2</sup>Poliakoff, V., Empress Marie and Her Times, (London, 1926), (Hereafter cited as Marie), 177-178.

home the Tsar would not be bothered with the affairs of State.<sup>3</sup>

Alexander and Marie had five surviving children, Nicholas born in 1868, George in 1871, Xenia in 1875, Michael in 1878 and Olga in 1882.<sup>4</sup>

The Imperial family respected and feared Alexander III, who ruled the household as a veritable patriarch.

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<sup>3</sup>Alexander, 166-167.

<sup>4</sup>George died in the Crimea in 1899. He suffered a tubercular hemorrhage while riding a motorcycle and died in the arms of a peasant woman who did not know his identity. George had some strong opinions about his brother's capabilities to be Tsar. In February of 1892, Grand Duke Alexander, the cousin and brother-in-law of Nicholas, visited George, who by this time had tuberculosis and was taking a cure at Abbas-Tuman in the Crimea, and their discussion turned to Nicholas. "We never stopped talking, reminiscing over the days of childhood, trying to guess the future of Russia and discussing the character of Nicky. We both hoped that his father would reign for many years. We both feared that Nicky's total unpreparedness would handicap him stupendously should he ascend the throne in the near future." Alexander, 120.

Xenia married her cousin Grand Duke Alexander and was able to escape the Bolsheviks.

Michael--nicknamed "Misha"--was the favorite of his father, and the only one who did not fear him. He loved to pull pranks and was constantly the topic of the family discussions. He and Nicholas were quite close, but later trouble was to separate the two. Michael, who was as weak willed in many ways as his brother, fell in love with a twice-divorced commoner and married her. Nicholas exiled Michael and he thus remained detached from Russia until the War began, and only then was he permitted to return. He was killed by the Bolsheviks in early July, 1918.

Olga married Prince Peter of Oldenburg (Russian line) whom she divorced in 1916 to marry Colonel Kulikowsky. She escaped the Bolsheviks.

(4)

He felt that the Imperial family should set the moral example for all of Russia in their private as well as in their public lives. Alexander led an impeccable life, at least after his marriage; and he expected the same from the rest of the family. A typical father in the Victorian sense, he raised his family to respect and fear God. He was a stern taskmaster and his children, with the exception of Michael, were uneasy and constrained in his presence.<sup>5</sup> The Emperor insisted upon punctuality from his family. His military training had drilled respect into him for a fixed schedule. He, in turn, imparted this to his children. Their lives were run on a fixed timetable. Alexander planned family life well in advance and detested any deviation from this plan.

The family spent most of the year at Gatchina. Then every year on the same date they moved to the seaside at Peterhof to spend the summer. From here they took a cruise to the coast of Finland. In the autumn they stayed at Livadia, in the Crimea, or journeyed to Copenhagen to visit the parents of Marie.<sup>6</sup> Life did not vary or change from this pattern set by Alexander.

Nicholas, as with most people who knew the Tsar,

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<sup>5</sup>Yarmolinsky, A., ed., The Memoirs of Count Witte, (New York, 1921), 40.

<sup>6</sup>Poliakoff, Marie, 186-188.

fell under the influence and domination of the old Emperor. His father never took him into his confidence but expected him to accept his decrees and views, with a feeling similar to reverence.<sup>7</sup> Later when he became Tsar his father's influence was always present. He would ask himself the questions; what would father do in this instance, how would he have acted in this case, or if I were father how should I act? When Nicholas attained manhood, he still stood in awe of his overpowering father. He always approached him with humble respect, never forgetting that his father was the Tsar. He told a story which illustrated this strange relationship between father and son. One day, when Nicholas had joined the Hussars, he was carrying out the duties of an orderly at Gatchina. Being quite tired, he decided to go to his room and rest. Unhooking the collar of his uniform and taking off his boots, he began to doze when he felt a hand on his shoulder. He looked up and, as he later reported: "The Emperor was standing near my bed."<sup>8</sup> Note that Nicholas used the word "Emperor" instead of the usual expression of "Papa."

Alexander personified the idea of autocracy and governed Russia with an iron grip for thirteen years. His advisors were reactionaries who helped him formulate

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 238.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 178.



policies which made him the pillar of autocracy. After his death, Nicholas retained these advisors out of respect for the memory of his father. They did everything they could to preserve the young Tsar's respect for what they called "the traditions bequeathed by the Tsar Pacificator."<sup>9</sup> Any attempt on the part of Nicholas to free himself from their influence was quickly stifled by reference to the memory of his dead father. Thus Nicholas ruled Russia in the early years of his reign in the shade of his father's ghost.

To the time of his death, Alexander always treated his son as a child. When Witte asked Alexander to make Nicholas the chairman of the committee for the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, Alexander replied: "Do you know what you are asking? The Tsarevich is still a boy, and his judgments are those of a perfect child."<sup>10</sup> This happened two years before Nicholas became Tsar.

On October 17, 1888, Alexander saved the lives of his children and relatives by holding on his shoulders the roof of the wrecked dining car in which they had been riding when revolutionaries derailed the Imperial train. Alexander shrugged off the feat which the entire

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<sup>9</sup>Iswolsky, A., Recollections of a Foreign Minister, (Garden City, N.Y., 1921), 262.

<sup>10</sup>Radziwill, C., The Intimate Life of the Last Czarina, (New York, 1928), (Hereafter referred to as Intimate), 9-10.

nation applauded, but his body did not. Six years later the strain which had been placed on his kidneys took its toll. Alexander died, as he lived, a tower of strength to his family and the nation. On that gloomy day, October 20, 1894, no one felt the loss as much as did Nicholas. Grand Duke Alexander described Nicholas's reaction.

For the first and last time in my life I saw tears in his blue eyes. He took me by the arm and led me downstairs into his rooms. We embraced and cried together. He could not collect his thoughts. He knew he was Emperor now, and the weight of this terrifying fact crushed him.

"Sandro, what am I going to do, what is going to happen to me, to you, to Xenia, to Alix, to mother, to Russia? [I know nothing of the business of ruling. I have no idea of even how to talk to ministers.] Will you help me, Sandro?"<sup>11</sup>

Nicholas had been a devoted and admiring son and he was determined to follow in the footsteps of his father. He had assimilated the autocratic doctrines which his father had bequeathed to him, and he felt bound to preserve that heritage intact. The representatives of the Zemstvos were told to dismiss from their minds the "senseless dreams" of representative government, for it was his firm intention to continue the autocratic policies of his beloved father.<sup>12</sup>

#### NICHOLAS AND HIS MOTHER

Marie Fedorovna loved her husband and accepted his way of life, although she appeared to have suffered from

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<sup>11</sup>Alexander, 168-169.

<sup>12</sup>Buchanan, G., My Mission to Russia, (Boston, 1923), II. 78-79.

the pent-up atmosphere of Gatchina. Marie smoothed life at home and played the part of trying to maintain a healthy atmosphere between Alexander and his children. Alexander was not an easy man to get along with, for he had a quick temper and did not like to be contradicted. Marie was able to soften his temper and to stop his use of the terrific strength which made him so dangerous. As a youth he had twisted horse shoes with ease, and it was said that he could bend silver coins between his fingers. Afraid of their father, the children would see Marie about their wishes, who would then talk to her husband.

Marie had a playroom for her children in which she spent a great deal of time. At one end was a complete gymnasium. Placed along each wall were two wooden mountains with a trolley on which the children could slide. There were toy trains, doll houses, rocking horses, merry-go-rounds, kitchens equipped with real appliances, menageries with all types of animals, toy soldiers and great fortresses of wood and cardboard.<sup>13</sup> Marie spoiled her children and felt no remorse.

Nicholas felt closer to his mother than to his father, and she held a great deal of influence over him. She constantly suggested what he should do, and Nicholas

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<sup>13</sup>Poliakoff, Marie, 177-181.

did not appear to mind. In a letter dated June 25, 1887, he wrote from Krasnoe Selo: "I will always try to follow your advice, my dearest darling Mama. One has to be cautious with everybody at the start."<sup>14</sup>

Marie had certain dislikes which she implanted in the mind of her son at an early age. One of her bitterest hatreds was that of the Germans. Marie had hated them from early childhood for their cruel behavior toward her father. Alexander III strengthened this feeling in the mind of his boy by also disliking them. Imbued with the ideas of Pobiedonostsev and the Slavophiles, he aspired to free Russia entirely from German influence. Nicholas grew up to distrust Kaiser William II, and traces of this attitude appear in his diary. The entry for August 30, 1895 notes: "I received the German Emperor's aide-de-camp, Moltke. He brought me a letter and an engraving from that bore, Herr Wilhelm."<sup>15</sup> On October 24, 1895, he wrote: "After tea, I labored composing an answer to William. What an obnoxious occupation, when there are so many other

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<sup>14</sup>Nicholas and Marie, Bing, E., ed., The Letters of Tsar Nicholas and Empress Marie, (London, 1937), (hereafter cited as Letters), 14.

<sup>15</sup>This engraving is the famous picture of the Yellow Peril.

<sup>16</sup>Pierre, A., ed., Journal Intime de Nicholas II, (Paris, 1925), (hereafter cited as Journal Intime), 134.

things and more important to be done."<sup>17</sup> On July 23, 1897, Nicholas wrote to his mother:

Dear Mama, I'm sorry to tell you we shall have to give Wilhelm the rank of Admiral in our Navy. Uncle Alexei reminded me of it; and I think, no matter how disagreeable it may be, we are obligated to let him wear our naval uniform; particularly since he made me last year a Captain in his own navy, and, what's worse, I'll have to greet him as such at Kronstadt.

It makes me sick to think of it!<sup>18</sup>

After the death of Alexander, Marie remained influential in her son's decisions. When Nicholas married, Marie maintained her dominant role, until the birth of a son in 1904, which weakened her hand. With the advent of Rasputin, to whom Marie was violently opposed, the relationship between mother and son cooled until the war, when he needed her for comfort.

#### THE EDUCATION OF NICHOLAS

Possessed of many gifts which would have suited him to play the role of a constitutional monarch, Nicholas did not receive the training required to take over one of the most unmitigated autocracies in Europe. [ A severe lack of higher education and exposure to intellectual contacts counteracted his natural intelligence. ]<sup>19</sup> He was

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 134.

<sup>18</sup>Letters, 18.

<sup>19</sup>Iswolsky, 257.

not stupid, but [he had neither the ambition nor the desire to acquire knowledge.] He spent his childhood in the gloomy palace where his father elected to seek refuge from assassins, and, as far as contact with real Russian life was concerned, the children grew up in a vacuum. [Nicholas never understood the Russian society from which he also elected to isolate himself.]<sup>20</sup>

His cousin Alexander identified the teachers of the tsarevich as "a simple-minded Russian general, a sentimental Swiss tutor, and a young Englishman who was extremely fond of outdoor life." He goes on to say: "None of the three had the remotest idea of the task facing the future Tsar of Russia. They taught him all they knew, which proved to be little."<sup>21</sup> Pobiedonostsev, his father's tutor, attempted to teach him craft, and from him Nicholas learned about Autocracy, Orthodoxy and Nationalism. His education focused upon the military, which he really enjoyed, and he received the training of a cavalry lieutenant in one of the regiments of the Imperial Guards.<sup>22</sup>

Heath, an Englishman, instructed the young boy English and taught him to keep physically fit. The

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<sup>20</sup>Poliakoff, V., Tragic Bride, (New York, 1928), (hereafter cited as Tragic Bride), 181-182.

<sup>21</sup>Alexander, 165.

<sup>22</sup>Iswolsky, 257.

instructor did well in both, although he did not possess a college education.<sup>23</sup>

When Nicholas was fifteen, he received General Danilovich as a tutor in the social graces and basic military discipline. Danilovich was a commoner and a nonentity.<sup>24</sup> In effect, the Tsarevich's education ended at the age of fifteen, although ostensibly it continued for another few years. His teachers had been able to give him a fluency in French and English, a rudimentary knowledge of secondary school subjects and a grasp of social etiquette. But all this was no preparation for the hard task of governing the Russian Empire in the twentieth century.

From Constantine Pobiedonostsev Nicholas learned the supposed art of governing. Pobiedonostsev had also been the tutor of Alexander III and was a philosopher of reaction. Born in 1827, he spent his entire life reacting against the evils of the French Revolution of 1789. He detested rationalism, progress, liberalism, personal liberties, constitutions and popular sovereignty, "the erroneous principle that. . .all power comes from the people."<sup>25</sup> As to the changes which were taking place in Western Europe, he felt that they would never work in

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<sup>23</sup>Iswolsky, 258-259.

<sup>24</sup>Poliakoff, Tragic Bride, 30.

<sup>25</sup>Taylor, E., The Fall of the Dynasties, (Garden City, N.Y., 1963), 59.

Imperial Russia. Pobiedonostsev felt that the Tsar was anointed by God to be the supreme commander of the Russian forces, guardian of the Russian Orthodox Church and the all-powerful ruler of the Empire. He received his power from God and he was responsible only to God. Peter the Great was the example which the young Tsar was told to copy. He instilled in his young charge's mind the Great-Russian racism expressed in the Slavophile movement. He taught Nicholas to feel that the Great-Russian was the dominant native stock of the Empire and that all others were inferior, even if they were pure Slavic in origin. Pobiedonostsev taught Nicholas to consider Russia as the third Rome and to consider the need of expanding the Russian Empire so that it extended from the Balkans to the China Sea.

At the end of his formal education and on the eve of receiving his commission in the Hussar Guards, Nicholas had a fluent command of English, a similar command of German and French, and a misguided idea of how the Empire should be run.<sup>26</sup> Now he moved from the tedious work of the classroom to his military education. He developed an immense fondness for military service, for it appealed to his passive nature. Orders were given and carried out. There were no questions and no worries, for the problems would be handled by one's superiors. He began his

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<sup>26</sup>Alexander, 165.



training as squadron commander in a regiment of the Hussar Guards. He spent two years in the First Horse Battery and with his father's death he had risen to the rank of colonel, commanding the Preobrazhensky Regiment. He kept this rank for the rest of his life. It reminded him of the carefree days of his youth when everything was so simple.<sup>27</sup>

His shyness, which made him appear modest, made him popular with his fellow officers. He participated in all their frolics, drinking, singing the latest French songs, discussing horses and keeping company with the ballerinas. But this training, although enjoyable for him, did not prepare him in any manner for the job of Tsar.<sup>28</sup> He gave little or no attention to this matter and enjoyed the best years of his life.

His father did not introduce Nicholas into the operations of the government, for the physical strength of Alexander precluded any sudden change in reign. Although he did attend the Imperial Council meetings twice a week, they always bored him. Being shy and reserved, his presence at the meetings was not felt and no one bothered with him. He was treated as a child by his parents and friends, and to the day of his father's death he was simply charming, sports-loving "Nicky."

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 166.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

When Alexander III died his heir was a complete stranger to the political life of the country.<sup>29</sup>

In 1890, the Emperor sent young Nicholas on a voyage around the world. Ostensibly the journey was to complete his education; but actually it was to separate him from the ballerina Krzesinska,<sup>30</sup> to whom he had grown attached and by whom he had fathered two sons.<sup>31</sup> He did not enjoy his trip, traveling on a Russian battleship. He met his cousin Alexander on the Island of Ceylon and expressed his dislike for the trip in the following words. "My trip is senseless, palaces and generals are the same all the world over, and that's all I am permitted to see. I could just as well have stayed at home."<sup>32</sup> His brother George went as far as India but was forced to return when his case of tuberculosis was discovered. Prince George of Greece, another cousin, also accompanied him on the trip.

On May 11, while riding in a jinrikisha in a street

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<sup>29</sup>Iswolsky, 260.

<sup>30</sup>Although the trip was successful in separating the two, Nicholas took care of her. He gave her a palace across the River Neva from the American Embassy and put her in charge of the Imperial Ballet. Reeves, F., Russia from the American Embassy, (New York, 1921), 18.

<sup>31</sup>Radziwill, C., Confessions of the Last Czarina (New York, 1918), (hereafter cited as Confessions), 8.

<sup>32</sup>Alexander, 167-168.

procession, one of the constables, Tsuda Sanzo, ran out into the street and swung at Nicholas with his samurai sword. The blow was aimed at the back of his neck, but Nicholas was able to duck before the blade landed. Although his grey bowler hat broke the impact, the weapon inflicted two wounds. Nicholas jumped out of the jinrikisha and ran down the street with Tsuda Sanzo in chase. One of the jinrikisha men tackled the assailant while another picked up Tsuda's sword and began to strike him with it. Prince George used his bamboo cane on the man, while Nicholas hovered in a corner.<sup>33</sup>

Doctors dressed the wounds, which were only minor. Located on the crown of the head, the wounds formed a sign of the cross. Covered completely by his hair it could not be seen.<sup>34</sup>

Nicholas had never been fond of the Japanese, "the yellow peril," and with this incident, his feelings did not change. Nicholas cut short the rest of the journey and traveled to Vladivostok to lay the first stone in the eastern terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railway.

Nicholas returned to Gatchina and to his duties as a young officer. He attended an occasional meeting of the Imperial Council, content in the presence of his powerful father, who, he felt, was there to protect him.

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<sup>33</sup>Lensen, G., "The Attempt on the Life of Nicholas II in Japan," The Russian Review, vol. XX, no. 3, (July, 1961), 238-239.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 240.

NICHOLAS'S PERSONAL CHARM

A slender youth, five feet seven inches, Nicholas had brown hair and blue eyes. At about the age of twenty-two he grew a beard in the style of the day. He had simplicity in his bearing, yet some say that he appeared regal in the eyes of his subjects. Because of his height, he had been advised to appear on horseback when making public appearances. He always appeared in a military uniform. He had a sweet expression in his clear blue eyes, which Iswolsky compared to those of a gazelle.<sup>35</sup>

The years took no toll of Nicholas until the war. The American ambassador Reeves was impressed on first appearance by his poise and his apparent excellent physical condition.<sup>36</sup> After twenty years on the throne, Nicholas appeared young and alert. He kept in excellent physical shape by taking vigorous exercise. A strong walker and an indefatigable rower and tennis player, Nicholas had not lost the ability to enjoy life to the fullest. He romped with his children as if he belonged to their age group. However, time had not added to his intellectual powers but had simply given him a working knowledge of the government.<sup>37</sup> Age began to tell with the outbreak of the war. His face began to line, he lost

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<sup>35</sup>Iswolsky, 256.

<sup>36</sup>Reeves, 49.

<sup>37</sup>Poliakoff, Tragic Bride, 193.

weight, his hair began to fall and turn grey. His eyes lost their boyish appeal and instead his expression became grave and distant.<sup>38</sup>

Those who met Nicholas almost unanimously referred to his charm. He could put his guests at ease and make them feel as if they were talking to a friend rather than the Emperor.<sup>39</sup> He did his utmost to be liked.

Nicholas was polite, exasperatingly so. His politeness often got him into trouble, for he did not like to offend anyone. He preferred to let others have their way rather than openly hurt them. On July 11, 1905, Nicholas invited William II, the German Emperor, aboard the imperial yacht anchored off Bjoerke in Finland. When William arrived aboard the Polar Star, he decided to combine business with pleasure. He brought with him a detailed plan for a Russo-German alliance. Nicholas showed interest, but insisted that he had to show the treaty to his foreign minister, Iswolsky. But when William insisted, Nicholas decided to sign rather than to insult his guest with rudeness. Calling in the captain of the ship, Nicholas asked him to witness the signing of the treaty but not to read it. Later

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<sup>38</sup>Paleologue, M., An Ambassador's Memoirs, (London, 1925), II, 15-16.

<sup>39</sup>Buchanan, I, 170; Botkin, G., The Real Romanovs, (London, 1931), 19; Iswolsky, 256; Reeves, 49.

when Nicholas returned to Tsarskoe Selo and William to Berlin, he instructed Iswolsky to inform William that the Russians would be unable to live up to the Treaty of July 11, 1905.<sup>40</sup>

Not everyone was captivated by Nicholas's charm. Count Witte, although he admitted that Nicholas did possess a good amount of personal charm, did not like Nicholas and did not try to hide his disdain. Witte discussed the reluctance of Nicholas to talk about anything unpleasant:

Our Tsar is an Oriental, a hundred per cent Byzantine. We talked for two solid hours. He shook my hand. He embraced me. He wished me all the luck in the world. I returned home beside myself with happiness and found a written order for my dismissal lying on the desk. [Witte had just been dismissed from the post of President of the Council of Ministers.]

Witte felt that Nicholas "is incapable of playing fair and he always seeks underhand means and underground ways. He has a veritable passion for secret notes and methods."<sup>42</sup> Witte did not feel that Nicholas had the manly attributes which many had seen in him. "The Emperor's character may be said to be essentially feminine."<sup>43</sup> On this score Bernard Pares agreed with Witte by saying: "he had a remarkable personal charm, proceeding from an almost

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<sup>40</sup>Alexander, 179.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 178-179.

<sup>42</sup>Witte, 183.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 182.

feminine delicacy."<sup>44</sup> Witte felt Nicholas's outstanding weakness to be his lack of any will power, and that this disqualified him from being effective as Tsar.<sup>45</sup>

Paleologue believed Nicholas to be dedicated in the service of his people and his nation. He was often heard saying, "I like nothing better than to feel myself in touch with my people."<sup>46</sup> But Witte denied that Nicholas had any care for what his people felt. Witte reported that Nicholas once angrily snapped: "What have I got to do with public opinion?" He felt that public opinion was the opinion of the intelligentsia. While dining one night, someone referred to the intelligentsia. Nicholas heard the word and muttered: "How I detest that word! I wish I could order the academy to strike it off the Russian dictionary."<sup>47</sup> Count Witte's dislike for Nicholas apparently stemmed from his dismissal after a life's work in public service.

Nicholas did not like Witte, and had retired him after the conclusion of the Treaty of Portsmouth of 1905. He advised Witte to take a prolonged vacation outside of Russia. To his mother Nicholas wrote early in November, 1906:

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<sup>44</sup>Pares, B., My Russian Memoirs, (London, 1931), 236-237.

<sup>45</sup>Witte, 181.

<sup>46</sup>Paleologue, II, 19.

<sup>47</sup>Witte, 189-190.

To my great regret Count Witte has returned from abroad. It would have been more sensible of him and convenient for me if he had stayed away. As soon as he was back a peculiar atmosphere full of all sorts of rumours and gossip and insinuations began to form around him. Some of the wretched papers are already beginning to say he is coming back to power, and that only he can save the country...As long as I live, I will never trust that man again with the smallest thing. I had quite enough of last year's experiment. It is still a nightmare to me [here Nicholas is referring to the October Manifesto which Witte advised him to accept.]

Thank God I have not seen him yet!<sup>48</sup>

Paleologue, the French ambassador, lunched with Nicholas on March 13, 1915, and they talked of Count Witte's death from a cerebral tumor.

"And we haven't said a word about poor Count Witte! I hope his death hasn't distressed you too much Ambassador!"

"No indeed, Sire! When I reported his death to my Government my funeral oration over him was confined to the words: With him a great hotbed of intrigue has gone!"

"But that's exactly what I think! Listen gentlemen."

"Count Witte's death has been a great relief to me. I also regard it as a sign from God." <sup>49</sup>

In these words, Nicholas eulogized a man who had served both his father and himself.

#### NICHOLAS AND RELIGION

Alexander III maintained a very religious household. Marie Feodorovna embraced the faith of her husband and zealously raised her children in the Orthodox Church.

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<sup>48</sup>Letters, 221.

<sup>49</sup>Paleologue, I, 302-303.



As with everything at Gatchina, religious duties were carried out punctually.

Nicholas developed a deep and sincere faith. He believed that his fate was in the hands of God and nothing could change it. He viewed the future with humility and in calm confidence that God controlled his destiny.

Upon entering married life, both Nicholas and his wife , who had converted from Lutheranism to Orthodoxy, observed with extreme punctuality the rites of the Russian Orthodox Church. During Lent no meat appeared on the Imperial table. On all religious days and on Sundays the entire family attended all the services celebrated in the chapel in the palace.<sup>50</sup> Nicholas expressed his religious views in a letter to his mother:

What a joy it is to us, dear Mama, to prepare for Holy Communion here in the Kremlin, with all its various churches and chapels in the Palaces. We spent the best part of the day visiting them and deciding which church we shall attend for Morning Service or Mass or Evensong. We also read a good deal of history about "The Times of Moscow." I never knew I was able to reach such heights of religious ecstasy as this Lent has brought me to. The feeling is now much stronger than it was in 1896, which is only natural. <sup>51</sup>

However, stemming from this firm belief, Nicholas became a fatalist. He would accept anything which God might send. God controlled his existence and nothing

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<sup>50</sup>Viroubova, A., Memories of the Russian Court, (New York, 1923), 102.

<sup>51</sup>Letters, 143-144.

he could do would change events.<sup>52</sup> Often accused of indifference, this was the key to his total resignation to his fate. When deciding to sign the October Manifesto granting Russia a Duma, Nicholas wrote to his mother:

From all over Russia they cried for it, they begged for it, and around me many---very many---held the same views. I had nobody to rely on except honest Trepov. There was no other way out than to cross oneself and give what everybody was asking for. My only consolation is that such is the will of God, and this grave decision will lead my dear Russia out of the intolerable chaos she has been in for nearly a year. 53

Not only was Nicholas prone to fatalism, but he was extremely superstitious and susceptible to mystics. A firm believer in God, nevertheless, he was taken with mysticism as were many of the court society in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. An incident occurred during his coronation which produced a profound effect upon him. As Nicholas approached the altar wearing the Imperial mantle, the collar of the Order of St. Andrew fell from his neck and landed at his feet. He regarded this as a divine warning of terrible events in the future.<sup>54</sup> Nicholas's mysticism, although not as strong as that of his wife, was very pronounced. His total attachment to his father may, in part, explain this strange behavior.

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<sup>52</sup>Buchanan, II, 89.

<sup>53</sup>Letters, 188.

<sup>54</sup>Buchanan, II, 79.

In 1900, a magician, Papus, came to St. Petersburg and established a following in court circles. In the following years, he was often seen with his good friend Dr. Phillips, a fellow Frenchman. Papus enjoyed the complete confidence of both the Tsar and his wife.

During the troubled months of the Russo-Japanese War and the Revolution of 1905, Nicholas felt he needed spiritual help, but not the type one received in a church. Papus answered a call from Tsarskø Selo and, after a talk with him, Nicholas arranged a seance for the next day. The seance was attended by both the Tsar and his wife. By an amazing amount of concentration and a great deal of "fluid dynamism," the "Spiritual Master succeeded in calling up the spirit of the most pious Tsar Alexander III."<sup>55</sup> Nicholas asked the spirit of his father for guidance and if he should give in to the demands of the revolutionaries. The spirit replied:

At any cost you must crush the revolution now beginning; but it will spring up again and its violence will be proportionate to the severity with which it is put down today. But what does it matter! Be brave my son! Do not give up the struggle! <sup>56</sup>

After the Tsar and his wife heard this horrifying news, Papus informed them that he could prevent the catastrophe to which the ghost of Alexander had referred. He created

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<sup>55</sup>Paleologue, III, 97.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 98.

a spell which he put on both Nicholas and Alexandra and told them the spell would be good only as long as he lived. Papus died on October 27, 1916.<sup>57</sup>

This strange combination of fatalism and mysticism exemplified itself in the person of Gregory Rasputin at Tsarskoe Selo. The Tsar first met the "man of God" on November 1, 1904, during the hectic days of the Russo-Japanese War, and he soon became a favorite with the Imperial couple. He addressed them with a crude familiarity which appeared not to offend them. They felt he was a true representative of the Russian peasantry and delighted in his peasant tales. He impressed them with his apparent stern religious convictions and felt that this "man of God" was a successor to their friend Phillips. The source of Rasputin's power lay in the Empress's belief that he could save their hemophælic son. Rasputin seemed to have the ability to arrest the flow of blood from the boy's wounds.<sup>58</sup> As she convinced herself that Rasputin was a man of God and that he could save her son, the "mad monk" became a familiar sight at Tsarskoe Selo.

Rasputin soon developed into a dominant force at court. To the Imperial couple he was a true representative

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 99.

<sup>58</sup>Poliakoff, Tragic Bride, 139. The standard work on Rasputin is: Fulop-Miller, R., Rasputin, the Holy Devil, (New York, 1928).

of the Russian people. Neither Nicholas nor his wife could abide court life or courtiers. They felt a strange affinity with the common folk and delighted in talking to them whenever the occasion arose. In Rasputin they saw the true Russian. To them he became the voice of the people, and they listened to what he said with fascination and reverence.

The holy man never captivated Nicholas as he did the Tsaritsa, but the Tsar followed her wishes. When Alexandra gave him one of Rasputin's combs to use before he attended a Council of Ministers meeting, he used it, to feel the power of Rasputin in his decisions. When Alexandra sent him crumbs of bread from which Rasputin had eaten, he ate them.<sup>59</sup>

By the end of the reign, Nicholas felt totally helpless to face the ever-changing situation and put all his faith in God. He felt helpless to struggle against destiny and resigned himself to the fates.<sup>60</sup>

Imbued with a tremendous amount of religious conviction and his rigorous Salvophile training from Pobiedonostsev, Nicholas became a bigoted man. The Emperor was surrounded by avowed Jew-haters such as

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<sup>59</sup>Chernavin, T., "The Home of the Last Tsar," Slavonic and East European Review, vol. LI, (April, 1939), 666.

<sup>60</sup>Youssoupov, F., Lost Splendor, (New York, 1954), 260.

Trepov, Plehve, Ignatyev and the leaders of the Black Hundreds. Nicholas hated the Jews, as he felt they were anti-Christ. All his enemies were lumped into one group, Jews. At the time of the Russo-Japanese War, Nicholas became upset with the British attitude toward the Japanese. The Japanese he referred to as macacoes (monkeys), even using this expression in official documents. The English were referred to simply as Jews. He often said at this time, "An Englishman is a zhid (Jew)."<sup>61</sup>

#### NICHOLAS'S WEAK WILL

Being a weak-willed and vascillating man, Nicholas lacked the basic requirement for leadership -- self-confidence. Essentially a passive and reflective monarch, he let others influence him. Modest and timid, he fell under the spell of strong men and then resented them for their strength. Count Kokovtsov told the French Ambassador a story which illustrated this point:

He [the Tsar] received me most kindly: "I'm very pleased with you, Vladimir Nicholaievich," he said with a friendly smile. "I know you've gathered good men around you and are working in the right spirit. I feel that you won't treat me as your predecessor, Peter Arkadievich, did! Speaking personally, Stolypin was not a friend of mine: there was plenty of mutual respect, but little sympathy between us." But I couldn't help answering: "Peter Arkadievich died for Your Majesty, Sire!" "He died in my service, true, but he was always so anxious to keep me in the background. Do you suppose I liked reading in the

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<sup>61</sup>Witte, 189.

papers that the President of the Council had done this...the President of the Council has done that? Don't I count? Am I nobody?" 62

When he tried to exert his will, he came out with a strong statement in the most brutal manner, which turned men against him; and he became reluctant to say anything at all.<sup>63</sup>

During the first ten years of his reign, Nicholas sat behind a massive desk and listened to the "well-rehearsed bellowings of his towering uncles."<sup>64</sup> He did not like to be left alone with them, for they constantly tried to influence him in one way or the other, and he was helpless in the presence of his father's brothers. When advised to dismiss them and act like a Tsar, he exclaimed: "Fancy my discharging Uncle Alexis! The favorite brother of my father."<sup>65</sup>

His first impulse was usually correct, but he could easily be swayed in another direction, and did not have the confidence to stand by his original idea.<sup>66</sup> Being extremely reluctant to choose between two conflicting ideas, he would sometimes agree to both sides of an

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<sup>62</sup>Paleologue, I, 298.

<sup>63</sup>Radziwill, 215.

<sup>64</sup>Alexander, 173.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 175.

<sup>66</sup>Gilliard, P., Thirteen Years at the Russian Court: A Personal Record of the Last Years and Death of Czar Nicholas II and His Family, (New York, n.d.), 205-206.

argument, simply to escape the unpleasantness of ill-feelings.<sup>67</sup> The last one talking to him could often change his mind.<sup>68</sup> One can understand why he enjoyed the military service, where orders were given and needed only execution, not discussion.

Deciding what his father would have done in a particular instance was always on his mind. The Council of Ministers discussed policies of his father's reign, for Nicholas felt he could find a key in his father's reaction to certain problems. During the first decade of the reign Pobiedonostsev presided over these meetings and was always anxious to point the young Tsar back in the direction of his father's policies and not forward.<sup>69</sup> With no mind of his own, Nicholas tried to rule Russia with ideas and policies over thirty years old.

If Nicholas had been stronger, he might have controlled his wife, who instead controlled him. She constantly nagged at him to act like the Tsar. She recognized his weakness even before they were married and insisted that she be allowed to read and write in his private diary. On October 15, 1894, she made the following entry in his diary:

Darling boysy, me loves you, oh, so very

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<sup>67</sup>Reeves, 17-18.

<sup>68</sup>Iswolsky, 290-291.

<sup>69</sup>Alexander, 176.



tenderly and deeply. Be firm and make the doctors, Leyden or the other G. [Grube], come alone to you every day and tell you how they find him [at this time Alexander III was on his death-bed and Alexandra had just arrived in Russia to see her future father-in-law before he died], and exactly what they wish him to do, so that you are the first always to know. You can help persuading him then, too, to do what is right. And if the Dr. has any wishes or needs anything, make him come direct to you. Don't let others be put first and you let out. You are Father dear's own son and must be told all and asked about everything. Show your mind and don't let others forget who you are. Forgive me lovy. 70

As time passed in their married life, the influence of the Tsaritsa became even more apparent. Nicholas found himself helplessly under her control.

Nicholas had the reputation for being indifferent to all that went on around him. Having a slow temper, his self-control was one of his proud possessions.<sup>71</sup> His fatalistic outlook on life may in part explain his indifference. When he listened to people, it was not with a bored look, but one of absolute indifference. Prince Serge Volkonski, who for two years directed the Imperial theaters and saw him almost every day, said of him: "that when talking to him one stood in the presence of an empty place."<sup>72</sup>

He showed indifference at times when ordinary men would have cracked under the strain. During his coronation at Moscow, a public fete had been planned at Khodinsky,

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<sup>70</sup>Journal Intime, 103-104.

<sup>71</sup>Viroubova, 61.

<sup>72</sup>Radziwill, Intimate, ix.

where souvenirs were to be handed out. In respect for his father's memory, the plans of his father's coronation were copied to the last detail. This included the preparation of Khodinsky meadow. Inadequate precautions were taken, there was a panic and stampede, killing about two thousand people. When Nicholas heard of the disaster, he did not display the slightest emotion and that night attended a ball given in his honor.

On May 14, 1905, the Japanese destroyed the Baltic fleet, commanded by Admiral Rozhestvinsky, at Tsushima Bay. The Tsar received the news as he was about to play a set of tennis. He read the telegram, said: "What a horrible catastrophe!" and asked for his tennis racket.<sup>73</sup>

He showed the same indifference upon hearing the news of the death of Plehve, the Minister of Interior, in 1904, and Stolypin, the President of the Council of Ministers, in 1911. He appeared indifferent to death even in his own family. When Grand Duke Serge, his uncle and the governor-general of Moscow, was assassinated in 1905, Nicholas received the news at the Peterhof Palace, as he was about to sit down to a family dinner with a royal visitor, young Prince Frederick Leopold of Prussia. The Tsaritsa did not appear, for the widow was her sister, but Nicholas insisted the dinner continue. Frederick Leopold later reported to the German Chancellor von Bulow

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<sup>73</sup>Botkin, 22.

that Nicholas appeared in good humor and the assassination was not discussed. After dinner, Nicholas and his brother-in-law, Grand Duke Alexander, "amused themselves by trying to push each other off the long, narrow sofa on which they were sitting."<sup>74</sup>

A close friend of the family who had known Nicholas since childhood told the French ambassador: "Nicholas Alexandrovich has no heart."<sup>75</sup> However, Nicholas was very devoted to his immediate family and had a fond attachment to animals, especially dogs. For many years he had a pet collie named Iman. When the dog died he cried all day and was inconsolable. After that he kept a fine kennel of collies but never picked a special one.<sup>76</sup> [Nicholas was not heartless. He simply accepted indifferently and fatalistically everything that happened to him.]

The Emperor was always very close to his brothers, sisters, and the cousins he liked. However, he was Tsar and the head of the Imperial family. All the Grand Dukes and Duchesses took an oath to obey him, as did every official and member of the armed forces. His own idea of duty often brought about an apparent indifferent display of affections. His younger brother, Grand Duke Michael, fell in love with a twice-

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<sup>74</sup>Taylor, 64.

<sup>75</sup>Paleologue, III, 33-34

<sup>76</sup>Viroubova, 84.

divorced commoner by the name of Mrs. Wulfert. When Michael asked his brother's permission to marry her, Nicholas refused. Nicholas described his feeling to his mother in a letter:

Dearest Mama,---Three days ago Misha wrote asking my permission to marry. He said too, that he cannot wait any longer than the middle of August.

I will of course never give my consent to such a marriage. ...With all my being I feel that dear Papa would have done the same. ??

The woman who gained the affections of Michael was the wife of one of his fellow officers in the Regiment of Cuirassiers. She had been married in 1902 to a Moscow lawyer. She divorced him three years later and married Captain Wulfert. Through her husband she met Michael and became his mistress. A son born to the couple made Michael determined that he would marry her, but Nicholas refused permission. In July, 1913, the Grand Duke and his mistress took up residence in Berchtesgaden, on the border of Upper Bavaria and the Tyrol. One morning they went to Vienna, where an Orthodox priest married them. When Michael returned to Berchtesgaden, he informed his brother. Nicholas's fury knew no end, and in an official manifesto he deprived his brother of the regency he had conferred upon him at the birth of the Tsarevich. Michael was forbidden to reside in Russia. He went to London and returned to Russia

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?? Letters, 213-214.

only when the war started.<sup>78</sup> Nicholas described his anger to his mother in a letter of November 7, 1912.

Between him and me everything is now, alas, at an end; because he has broken his pledged word. How many times he promised of his own free will, not because I pressed him, not to marry her! What revolts me more than anything else is his reference to poor Alexi's illness which, he says, made him speed things up. [In the event of the Tsarevich's death, Grand Duke Michael would have become heir to the throne.] And then the disappointment and sorrow it brings to you and all of us and the scandal of it all over Russia means absolutely nothing to him. <sup>79</sup>

The relationship between the two brothers was never again the same. To many it appeared that Nicholas was showing his typical heartlessness or indifference, but he was simply carrying out the responsibility he felt as head of the family.

#### NICHOLAS AND ALEXANDRA

At the age of twenty-six, Nicholas was still a carefree bachelor, enjoying the company of ballerinas and the stag dinners with his fellow Guards officers. However, his father's prolonged illness necessitated a marriage for the young Tsarevich. According to Romanov traditions, the heir apparent should be married before his father's death to ensure the succession of the line. Still considered a boy by both his parents,

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<sup>78</sup>Mouchanow, M., My Empress, (New York, 1918), 135-136; Paleologue, II, 172.

<sup>79</sup>Letters, 284.

however, the possibility of marriage had never seriously been discussed. Whenever a candidate had been mentioned, Marie had always found some objection. She did not want to lose her son to another woman. Nicholas had some serious flirtations, but none of which his parents approved.

During one of his visits to Germany Nicholas fell in love with Princess Margaret of Prussia, the sister of William II, and told his parents he would marry no one else. Alexander III objected, however, vowing that he would not tolerate a Hohenzollern wearing the Russian crown. Alexander made the point clear to his dominated son, and soon thereafter Nicholas left on his trip around the world. William, of course, was slighted and immediately married his sister to the Prince of Hesse. Nicholas declared to his friends that if he could not marry Princess Margaret, he would not marry at all.<sup>80</sup>

In 1892 the Grand Duke of Hesse traveled to Russia to see his daughter, who had married Grand Duke Serge, the brother of Alexander III. His youngest daughter, Princess Alix, accompanied him on the trip. Rumors floated around St. Petersburg that she was a possible candidate, and it was well known that her sister, Grand Duchess Elizabeth, favored the plan. Again Marie found objection, for she hated the Germans and would not favor

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<sup>80</sup>Radziwill, Confessions, 5.

one as a daughter-in-law. When presented to Marie, Alix did not receive a cordial welcome. St. Petersburg society took the cue from their Tsaritsa and pronounced Alix "awkward, disagreeable, impolite, and abominably dressed."<sup>81</sup> People snubbed her and the great ladies of the country gave her only token recognition. Stories circulated throughout St. Petersburg that young Nicholas was not impressed with her, and during a dinner of the Hussar Regiment in which Nicholas was a captain, he told his comrades he would sooner marry his mistress, Krzesinska, than Princess Alix.<sup>82</sup>

Princess Alix did impress Nicholas and had done so for some time. He first met her when she had traveled to Russia to attend the marriage of her sister. On December 21, 1891, he confessed to his diary:

My dream is to marry one day Alix of Hesse. I have loved her a long time, but more deeply and fervently since the year 1889, when she spent six weeks in St. Petersburg. I have struggled for a long time against my feelings, and tried to persuade myself that it was an impossible thing, but since Eddy [the Duke of Clarence] gave up the idea of marrying her, or was refused by her, it seems to me that the only obstacle standing between us is the religious question. There is no other one, because I am convinced that she shares my feelings. Everything is in God's hands, and, relying on His mercy, I await the future with calm and humility. 83

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 7.

<sup>83</sup>Radziwill, Intimate, 8. (This entry is not in the edited version of Nicholas's Diary by Pierre.)

Alix Victoria Helen Louise Beatrice of Hesse was born on June 6, 1872, at Darmstadt. She was the youngest child of Grand Duke Louis IV of Hesse and Princess Alice Maud Mary of Great Britain, the second daughter of Queen Victoria. Her mother died when she was six years old, and she spent her youth partly in England with her grandmother and partly in Darmstadt. She had no friends her own age while growing up and was a sad, lonely little girl. Her father felt no concern for the education of his daughters, and she received very little formal instruction. Although Queen Victoria considered her one of her favorite granddaughters, "Granny" was not one to lavish affection upon anyone. She grew up in an adult's world with no one really caring about her.

When Alexander III realized the extent of his illness, he decided to send his young son off to England to court Alix. Nicholas did not look forward to spending a month at Windsor Castle under the constant surveillance of the formidable Queen Victoria, but he was overjoyed at the prospect of spending time with Alix. He traveled from Russia to England in the Imperial yacht, Polar Star.<sup>84</sup>

Although very attracted to the young Tsarevich, Alix was reluctant to change her religion, and the problem appeared insurmountable. A devout Lutheran, Alix felt

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<sup>84</sup>Polliakoff, Tragic Bride, 34.



that Orthodoxy and Lutheranism were too far apart and she could not bring herself to any change. However, she consented to talk to the Tsar's confessor, who had made the trip with Nicholas. Finally, she was won over by the astute priest and promised to change her creed and accept Orthodoxy. After a talk with William II, she could no longer hold off the insistant Nicholas. On April 8, 1894, Alix consented to be his wife. Nicholas could not restrain his joy. On that day he wrote in his diary:

A beautiful day in my life which I shall never forget. The day of my betrothal with my dearest and incomparable Alix. About ten o'clock this morning she came to Aunt Michen [the Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna] and after having talked with her we came to an understanding together. My God, what a joy, what a load of anxiety was lifted from my shoulders. With what joy I shall be able to gratify dear papa and mama! I remained the whole day wrapped in a kind of cloud, and could not realize what really had happened to me. Wilhelm sat in the next room awaiting the end of our conversation with my uncles and aunts. I went immediately with Alix to see the Queen, and then Aunt Marie, where there was a long scene of tenderness, and we kissed one another. After lunch we went to Aunt Marie's [the Duchess of Edinburgh] private chapel, where a service of thanksgiving was celebrated. I cannot believe yet that I have a bride. 85

These were the happiest days of Nicholas's life, and he spent every waking hour with Alix. On April 10, 1894, he wrote of his joy to his mother:

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<sup>85</sup>Journal Intime, 51-52.

No, dear Mama, I can't tell you how happy I am and how sad at the same time that I am not with you and can't take you and dearest Papa to my heart at this moment. The whole world is changed for me; nature, mankind, everything; and all seem to be good and lovable and happy. 86

His love grew every day. The couple spent the days together, getting to know one another. On June 14, 1894, he wrote his mother to tell her what they did:

We were out all day long in beautiful summer weather, boating up and down the river, picnicking on shore for tea. "A veritable idyll"...Granny [Victoria had given him permission to call her "Granny"] has been very friendly, and even allowed us to go out for drives without a chaperone! I confess I didn't expect that! 87

In Russia the condition of Alexander fast deteriorated, necessitating the recall of Nicholas. Leaving Alix behind, he traveled to the Crimea where the family was staying. Nicholas spent his days dreaming of Alix and worrying about his father. Realizing death was close at hand, Alexander sent a message to his future daughter-in-law inviting her to come at once to Livadia. Alix's sister, Grand Duchess Elizabeth, hurried to the border to meet her. Nicholas commented in his diary:

Papa and mama have allowed me to bring my dearest Alix over here from Darmstadt. Ella and Uncle Serge are going to bring her here. I was deeply touched by the love they showed me and by their desire to see her. What a

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<sup>86</sup>Letters, 76.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 82.

happiness to meet her again so unexpectedly!  
It is only sad that this meeting takes place  
under such circumstances. 88

Nicholas's joy was short-lived, for the "Tsar Pacificator"  
died on October 20, 1894. Immediately the entire country  
went into mourning.

Alix entered the country behind a funeral cortege.  
Usually the future Tsaritsa had time to learn what her  
role would be, for it was normal for her to be married  
many years before her husband became Tsar.

Under different circumstances, Marie might have  
helped her daughter-in-law and guided her through the  
intricacies of Russian court life. But she was entirely  
absorbed in her own grief. Alix stayed in the back-  
ground as much as possible and tried to learn what others  
required of her. She did not speak Russian and, while  
other Tsarevnas had had time to learn the language and  
get acquainted with Russian customs, Alix had four  
days.<sup>89</sup>

Nicholas married Princess Alix on November 13,  
1894. The wedding took place in St. Petersburg, scarcely  
a week after the funeral. The honeymoon consisted of  
attending two masses a day and receiving visits of  
condolence. But even amid all the sorrow Nicholas could

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<sup>88</sup>Journal Intime, 98.

<sup>89</sup>Alexander, 169.

find joy, for he was now married to "a person in whom I have absolute faith."<sup>90</sup>

Alix found joy only with her husband, for her mother-in-law's grief overshadowed her. The attention of the entire country focused upon the grieving Dowager Empress, and Alix was unhappy and lonely. She expressed her feelings to a friend in Germany, a lady-in-waiting to Princess Henry of Prussia:

I feel myself completely alone, and I am in despair that those who surround my husband are apparently false and insincere. Here nobody seems to do his duty for duty's sake, or for Russia, but only for his own selfish interests and his own advancement. I weep and I worry all day long, because I feel that my husband is so young and so inexperienced. He does not realize how they are all profiting at the expense of the state. What will come of it in the end? I am alone most of the time. My husband is all day occupied and he spends his evenings with his mother. 91

Alexandra Feodorovna -- when she accepted the Orthodox religion her name was officially changed -- did not forget the snubbing she had received on her last visit to St. Petersburg. She mistrusted the court society and refused to take part in the formalities expected of her. This aversion to society proved to be her undoing. The gay world of St. Petersburg

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<sup>90</sup>Witte, 198.

<sup>91</sup>Radziwill, *Intimate*, 44. This last statement of spending all her time by herself is incorrect. Nicholas spent all the time he could with his bride. He makes constant references to it in his diary.

reproached her for refusing to provide it with the pleasure which it expected from the Tsaritsa. The number of Imperial balls held in the Winter Palace was drastically cut. Nicholas with his passive and secluded attitude did not object to his wife's curtailment of official court functions.

Alexandra did not care for the ladies of Russian society, and they showed their disapproval by continuing to snub her. She felt that the women were frivolous and unconcerned about serious things. An old dowager informed Alexandra that in fact the ladies were very busy with charitable functions, such as running hospitals and so on. To this Alexandra replied that "probably they were exceptions, because she did not see how women who danced every night during the winter could think of anything serious in the summer, and that, besides, they spent most of their time abroad buying dresses for the coming season."<sup>92</sup>

She showed no tact and could not fit into court society. At a ball, she observed a woman wearing a low cut dress and sent one of her ladies-in-waiting to rebuke the woman.

"Madame, Her Majesty wants me to tell you that in Hesse-Darmstadt we do not wear our dresses that way."

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<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 82.

"Really?" said the young woman, and pulling the front of her dress still lower, she added with a giggle: "I want you to tell Her Majesty that in Russia we wear our dresses this way."<sup>93</sup>

Alexandra was distraught at what she considered to be the low moral standard of St. Petersburg society. She acquainted herself with all the gossip in town, and then decided to reform the morals of the empire. From the invitation lists, she struck all the names of any women she heard discussed in the gossip circles. St. Petersburg society women retaliated by boycotting all court functions. Nicholas finally had to intervene and put his mother in charge of invitations.<sup>94</sup>

All these childish actions impaired her popularity with Russian society and made her reluctant to enter it. Her sharp tongue got her into trouble not only with court society but also with her immediate family. She was a vindictive woman and had a satirical sense of humor. She drew caricatures and liked to show them to her guests. One day she produced a sketch of the Tsar, sitting in a baby chair, his mother scolding him for not eating a bowl of soup. She passed the picture around to the members of the family who were present. Her mother-in-law was in the group, and it did not improve

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<sup>93</sup>Botkin, 26.

<sup>94</sup>Mouchanow, 118.

their already deteriorating relationship.<sup>95</sup>

The Imperial couple decided to live in the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. The palace, however, was in need of renovation and unsuitable to the young Tsaritsa who wished to refurnish the apartments which they would occupy. The newly married couple stayed with the Dowager Empress while the necessary arrangements were completed and lived in the small rooms which Nicholas had occupied as a bachelor. The two women could not agree on how to manage a house, and the friction increased.<sup>96</sup>

Alexandra became dominant in everything that concerned her domestic life.<sup>97</sup> Nicholas did not want to anger her by opposing her wishes and left to women all matters of the household. She recognized his weakness and with a little show of force usually received what she wanted.

Nicholas, not caring for the pomp of court life, preferred to live the life of a country gentleman after they moved to Tsarkoe Selo. There home life was simple and undisturbed.

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<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 51.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., 20-21.

<sup>97</sup>The influence of the Dowager Empress upon her son began to wane soon after his marriage, and Nicholas fell more and more under Alexandra's influence. Count Witte felt that this was one of the most unfortunate aspects of Nicholas's character. Witte, 196.

\* During the first years of their married life, Alexandra concerned herself only with domestic matters. Nicholas and his ministers felt that women had no place in politics. However, with the birth of her long-awaited son, she interested herself in his political destiny.<sup>98</sup> She felt obliged to help her weak-willed husband maintain autocracy intact so that they could pass it on to their son without any changes.\*

Alix recognized Nicholas's weakness and constantly urged him to act like a Tsar. A man with the character of Nicholas needed a wife capable of giving him the strength he needed. But he had a mate as narrow-minded as himself, with far more authoritarian ideas. She had a high opinion of her own qualities and tried to substitute her will for his weak one. During the war, she encouraged Nicholas to go to the front to assume supreme command of the Russian forces. He agreed, and left the government in her hands. To the British Ambassador she expressed her determination:

"I have no patience with Ministers who prevent him doing his duty. The situation requires firmness. The Emperor, unfortunately, is weak; but I am not, and I intend to be firm." 99

As she began to control her husband more and more, she became less and less popular with her relatives.

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<sup>98</sup>Mouchonow, 95-96.

<sup>99</sup>Buchanan, I, 238.



She had never been friendly with her mother-in-law, who constantly gave Nicholas advice which Alexandra resented. With the hermit-like withdrawal of the Imperial family into Tsarskoe Selo, Marie became less influential. Alexandra made jokes about Marie which infuriated the dowager empress.

Alexandra did not approve of her brother-in-law, for he was a threat to her position. Nicholas's health had never been good, and on several occasions he had been seriously ill. Once in the Crimea, when the Imperial family gathered around his sickbed, it appeared that Nicholas would die. At this time Alexandra was pregnant, but there still was no male heir. The family council decided that, if Nicholas should die, Michael, his oldest brother, would be proclaimed Tsar, without taking into account the possibility of Alexandra having a male heir. After this decision, Nicholas's condition began to improve, but Alexandra never forgave the family for overlooking her.<sup>100</sup>

Although the marriage was a very happy one, Nicholas's choice of a wife was an unfortunate one. Despite the few good qualities she possessed, her love for her husband and her ill-advised attempts to promote firmness in his character made her not a fitting spouse. She

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<sup>100</sup>Radziwill, Intimate, 165.

failed to win the affection of her subjects, and she misjudged all the political situations in which she involved herself. Alexandra proved to be Nicholas's undoing. His weak-willed character fell under the influence of her unsound and unfortunate advice. Her determination to pass the autocratic rule intact to her son made her look back into the nineteenth century rather than forward into the twentieth. Had Nicholas, subject as he was to a stronger influence, been blessed with a consort with broader and more liberal views, the history of the reign might have been different.

#### LIFE AT TSARSKOE SELO

After this marriage, Nicholas and Alexandra decided to live with his mother until their own apartments at the Winter Palace were ready. Living in four small rooms, Alexandra and her mother-in-law constantly competed for the affection of Nicholas. With the completion of the apartments at the Winter Palace, the Imperial couple left Tsarskoe Selo, much to the relief of Alexandra. However, the stay at the Winter Palace was not prolonged and soon they decided to move back to Tsarskoe Selo, away from the court and society of St. Petersburg.

Tsarskoe Selo, or the Tsar's village, although situated only fifteen miles southwest of St. Petersburg,

shone with palaces, parks, lakes, canals and flower gardens. Everything was man made. The lakes, which were large enough to accomodate small sailboats, had been dug by Turkish prisoners of war and could be emptied and refilled like a bathtub. Catherine the Great ordered two hills, called the "big and small Catherine's caprices,"<sup>101</sup> to be constructed on level ground across the highway, and then ordered tunnels to be dug through the hills.

Catherine I founded Tsarskoe Selo in 1712 as a country house to escape the society of St. Petersburg. Later Tsars and Tsaritsas added to it, and finally Catherine II ordered the famous Italian architect Rastrelli "to make Tsarskoe Selo more beautiful than Versailles."<sup>102</sup> The Palace itself, with its gallery of mirrors copied from Versailles and its walls inlaid with amber and agate covered with Chinese silks and French tapestry, was a monument to Russian autocracy.

From Alexander I on, the Tsars considered the big Palace to be a bother and built or lived in smaller dwellings scattered around the main palace or in its wings. Nicholas I lived in a "cottage at Peterhof." Alexander II lived at his "farm," and Alexander III

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<sup>101</sup>Botkin, 16.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., 16.

chose the service floors of Gatchina, with rooms so small that he could almost touch the ceiling with his mighty outstretched arms.<sup>103</sup>

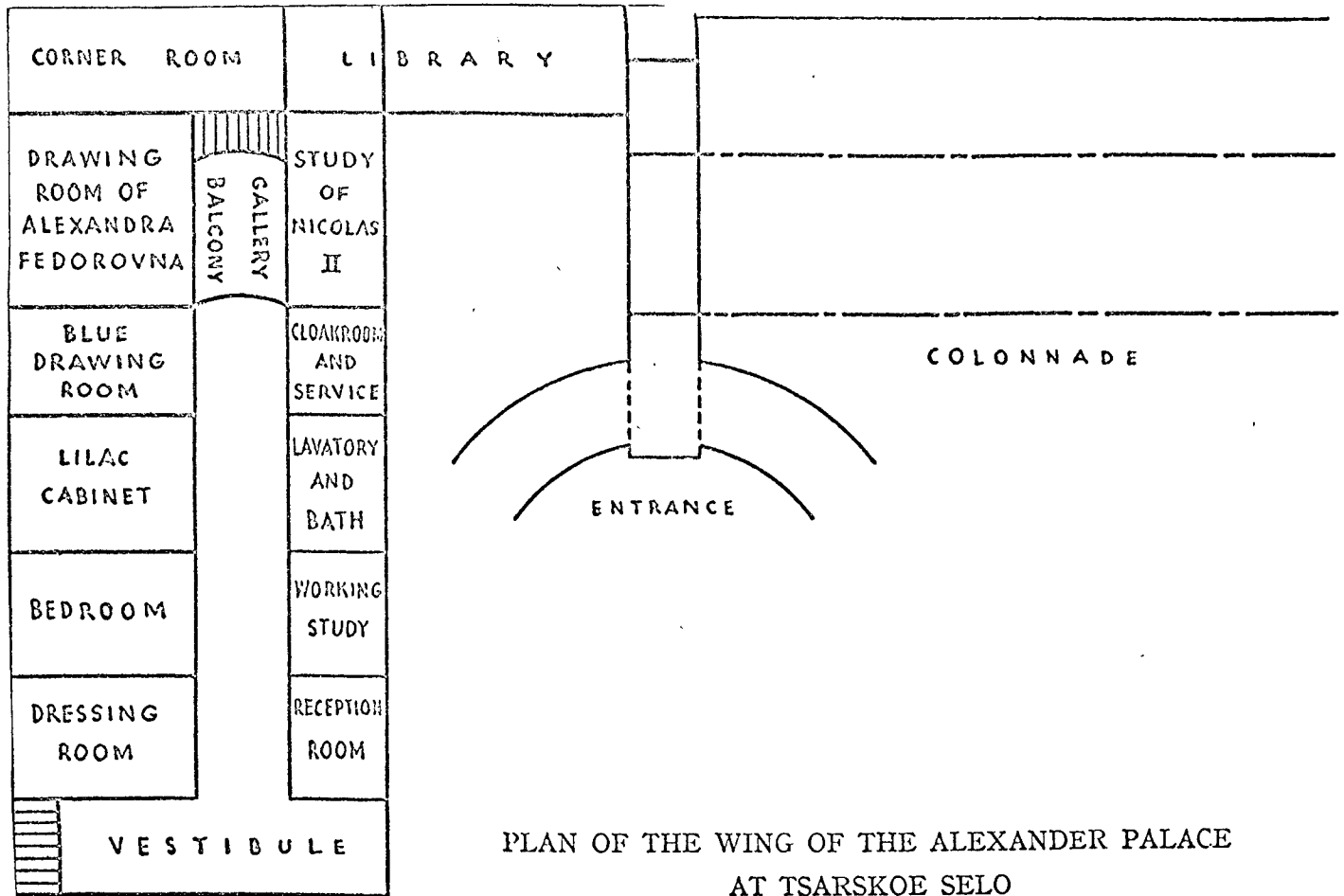
Nicholas and Alexandra chose the Alexander Palace, built by Catherine the Great for her favorite grandson, Alexander I. Designed by an Italian architect, Quarenghi, it was a beautiful palace with its classical lines. However, the spacious halls, which Alexander I and his brother Nicholas had enjoyed so much, were later deserted for a wing of the Palace which had originally been meant to service the main hall. The wing was divided into two parts, one half for the Tsar, the other half for his wife.

The Imperial couple's private apartments, situated quite closely together, allowed them to be close to one another all day. The Tsar's study, billiard, sitting and dressing rooms with a fine bath, adjoined the apartments of the Tsaritsa. Nicholas insisted the study be kept in immaculate condition. The big writing table had every pencil and pen in a precise position. The large calendar on the desk had all Nicholas's appointments written carefully in his own hand. Nicholas liked to feel that he could go into the room in the dark

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<sup>103</sup>Chernavin, T., "The Home of the Last Tsar," Slavonic and East European Review, vol. LI, (April, 1939), 659.

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and be able to find anything by simply reaching out his hand. Nicholas never allowed a telephone in his study until the war, for he thought it a nuisance. The dressing room and the white-tiled bathroom, separated from the sitting room by a corridor and a small staircase, were always freshly cleaned after every use, for the Tsar could not tolerate a valet who would not keep his rooms in perfect order.

Nicholas used the billiard and sitting room very little, for he spent most of his free time in his wife's apartments. This room, however, contained all the family albums of photographs and records of the reign. The albums, bound in green with the Imperial monogram, were filled with pictures taken over a period of twenty years. Nicholas took more care than anyone else in the family in pasting the photographs into the albums. He was neat about everything he did. A simple letter took him hours to complete.

Alexandra had her rooms furnished in the same simple manner, except in a feminine character. The drawing-room, with its pink walls and furniture and grey-green carpets, was a favorite meeting place for Nicholas and Alexandra during the day. The room, as all rooms in the Imperial suite, was crammed with cheap, tasteless furniture. On the walls of this room, like the rest, hung family photographs. On every table and shelf,

the family piled photograph albums. Every month new ones appeared, until the entire wing was literally covered with family happenings.<sup>104</sup>

A total disregard for artistic works permeated the entire household. This disregard for art was not a typical Romanov trait, but rather it started with Alexander III and carried on with his son. Nicholas's taste was that of a middle-class banker, who filled his room with everything he could. The only fine articles in the room were the oriental carpets. The furniture, with no set pattern, was in bad taste. There were enormous sofas, divans with high backs, large writing tables, and cloth-covered or leather-covered armchairs. The paintings, by second-rate artists, showed no taste or design.

The people of Tsarskoe Selo saw the Imperial family no more than did the residents of St. Petersburg. All they saw were the Imperial carriages, ministers, army officers and newly-arrived ambassadors coming and going from the Palace. To the Imperial family, life at home was quiet and uneventful. Like his father, Nicholas ran his life on a tight schedule, with hardly any deviations.

Nicholas rose before his wife and went to his study to begin the day's work. Officials placed government

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<sup>104</sup>Viroubova, 55-56, 75, 104.

documents on his desk in neat piles, and Nicholas looked at them while waiting for his wife to dress. When Alexandra had finished her preparations, a servant would inform Nicholas that his wife waited in the dining room, and he immediately went to her. Breakfast never began without the Tsar. It consisted of eggs, cold meat, cakes, biscuits and hot rolls. Nicholas, a gourmet, insisted that everything be prepared with the utmost care. After breakfast, Nicholas returned to his study and Alexandra watched over the children.

Lunch began at one o'clock and Nicholas partook of this meal most freely. The Tsar, his wife, the children, his aide-de-camp and an occasional guest ate together. The meal consisted of five or six courses, beginning with caviar, and relishes, and always ending with fresh fruit, no matter what the season. After lunch the adults sat, drinking very strong coffee, and talked. Then Nicholas returned to his study or received guests.

Before tea, Nicholas went for a long walk with his aide-de-camp. Tea time never varied. Seated at a little white table with a beautiful silver service, the Tsar and his wife sipped tea and ate hot bread and butter or English biscuits. Alexandra often complained that while others had exciting teas, her routine never changed. Nicholas would not allow it, for it was



served to him just as it had been served to his father. Every day at the same moment, Nicholas opened the door, came in, sat down at the table and buttered a piece of bread. He always had just two cups of tea. As he drank he read the paper or glanced over telegrams.

Nicholas met his ministers from six to eight and then went directly to dinner. On Sunday a military band outside the window played Nicholas's favorite marches. Dinner consisted of mainly Russian dishes, for Nicholas did not like French cuisine. A fish called sterlet was his favorite dish, and he was also fond of pudding. Alexandra did not care what she ate, and preferred oatmeal and eggs to anything else.<sup>105</sup>

After dinner the Tsar returned to his study and the Tsaritsa, in her rich dinner gown and jewels which she always wore to dinner, tucked the children in and then stayed with the Tsarevich until he fell asleep. During some evenings Nicholas worked in his study, and during others he read in a clear and pleasant voice to Alexandra,

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<sup>105</sup>Mouchanow, 98-100; Viroubova, 57.

the older Grand Duchesses and Anna Viroubova.<sup>106</sup> He enjoyed Tolstoy, Turgenev and his favorite, Gogol. Evening tea, served at eleven o'clock, marked the close of the day. Viroubova went home, the Tsaritsa and children to bed, and Nicholas went to his study to write in his diary. This routine hardly ever changed.

Nicholas hardly ever drank around his family. Before each meal he would have a small bottle of vodka, which was the Russian custom at the time. Occasionally he sipped Crimean wine. Occasionally Nicholas dined with the Hussars and toasted them freely with champagne.<sup>107</sup>

Nicholas and Alexandra enjoyed each other's company. They teased each other, constantly jested and enjoyed being left to themselves.<sup>108</sup> When they did have visitors, Nicholas sipped the always present tea and Alexandra chatted and played with the children. Nicholas went through official documents while talking to his guest, and when he found an interesting one he would pass it to Alexandra who, after reading it, passed it back.

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<sup>106</sup>Viroubova held no official office and was seldom seen in public. Yet she was a constant companion to the Tsaritsa. She never accepted money for her function at court. She was a young, fat, ugly woman with a round head. She was no intellectual, but this appealed to Alexandra. Her marriage to an army officer, which lasted only a few days, had been arranged by Alexandra, but Nicholas had the marriage dissolved when she told the Tsaritsa she was unhappy. She spent every evening with the Tsar and his family. Paleologue, I, 228-229; Viroubova, 58, 61.

<sup>107</sup>Mouchanow, 99.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., 94-95.

Guests and visitors never heard official business discussed in their presence, for it was considered to be in bad taste.<sup>109</sup>

However, guests were seldom welcome to the family circle. They entertained, but only on the rarest occasions. This seclusion which the Imperial family insisted upon keeping helped to destroy the respect for the Tsar which had been very strong in the past. Even the grand-ducal clan hardly ever visited or were invited. The Grand Dukes saw the Tsar and his family several times a year, and only then on state occasions. To this Nicholas made a few exceptions, such as his uncles and Grand Duke Alexander.<sup>110</sup>

Nicholas preferred outdoor exercise to indoor entertainment. Walking was his favorite pastime. He was an accomplished tennis player and enjoyed riding, hiking, building snow houses with his children, and hunting. He hunted elk, deer and wild boar; and one day in Poland he bagged 1,400 head of pheasant, which he considered to be a good day's catch.<sup>111</sup>

Blessed with four daughters in quick succession,

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<sup>109</sup>Grand Duchess Marie, Education of a Grand Duchess, (New York, 1930), 35.

<sup>110</sup>Charques, The Twilight of Imperial Russia, (New York, 1958), 51; Buchanan, I, 174; Paleologue, I, 229.

<sup>111</sup>Buchanan, I, 168.

the Imperial couple waited with anxiety for the birth of an heir. At last, during the Russo-Japanese War, the long-awaited Tsarevich arrived. Dr. Ott, the presiding physician, announced to the Tsar: "I congratulate Your Majesty on the birth of a Tsarevich."<sup>112</sup> The long-awaited son had been born; the succession of the line would continue. The Tsaritsa recovered from the effects of the chloroform, and read the expression on her husband's face. She cried, "Oh, it cannot be true; it cannot be true. Is it really a boy?"<sup>113</sup> Nicholas fell on his knees and began to cry.

The son, so long awaited, had hemophilia; and his parents lived in constant fear for his life. Because of this, Rasputin held the Tsaritsa under his power; for she believed only he could save the boy's life. Everyone in the family loved and adored young Alexis. Extremely lively, he gave his parents constant fear that he might fall and start the dreaded bleeding. He spent many months in bed and became a very spoiled child. Nicholas loved his son; and in the Abdication Manifesto he stated that he did not want to part with his dear son, and thus gave the throne to his brother.

Alexis had a personal surgeon attached to him in

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<sup>112</sup>Mouchanow, 155.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., 155.

case he began to bleed. Derevenko, a sailor, played with the boy and constantly watched him. Whenever Alexis became sick, he would carry him in his arms from place to place. Although treated well by all members of the Imperial family, Derevenko became a Bolshevik Commissar during the Revolution.

Vasiliev, the confessor of the Imperial family, was constantly at the side of the children giving them religious instructions. Although he failed to graduate from the Academy of Theology, the Tsaritsa liked the way he made a showy performance of the Orthodox rituals.<sup>114</sup>

And so the Imperial family lived in splendid isolation. Never bothering to tour the Empire, they remained at Tsarskoe Selo, content with their way of life. Events would happen, however, which would shake them out of their complacency.

#### THE ABDICATION

Nicholas left Tsarskoe Selo early Friday morning, February 24, 1917 (O.S.), for Moghilev. Persuaded not to extend the power of the existing Duma, Nicholas returned to the front.

When the food riots broke out in Petrograd, Nicholas decided to return to the capital, but his advisors persuaded him to return to Tsarskoe Selo. They refused

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<sup>114</sup>Botkin, 78-79; Viroubova, 72-73.

to tell him the true situation in Petrograd. Finally, Admiral Nilov, commanded by Nicholas to tell him the truth, relented and told the true situation in Petrograd. General Tsabel, the Imperial train commandant, filled in the rest of the story. Nicholas became very angered and in explosive terms attacked all those who had betrayed him. Finally, after cooling off, he became indifferent, saying: "Well, thank God. I'll go to Livadia. If the people want me to, I'll abdicate and retire to Livadia to my garden. I love flowers."<sup>115</sup>

Forced to abdicate by the Provisional Government, Nicholas did not write in his diary on the day of his abdication and did not start again until March 6, 1917.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup>Reeves, 75-76.

<sup>116</sup>The first words the Tsar spoke after the deputation from the Provisional government had left were addressed to the Cossacks standing guard at his door: "It is time now for you to tear my initials from your shoulder straps." The Cossacks saluted and one of them said; "Please your Imperial Majesty, please allow us to kill them." But Nicholas replied: "It is too late to do that now." Viroubova, 215.

THE DIARY

1917

March 6, Monday.

In the morning I was very happy. I received two letters from dear Alix [the Tsaritsa] and two letters from Marie [one of his daughters]. The wife of Captain Kalobkin from the Finnish regiment brought them. I took a walk in the garden. Mama came to breakfast. We sat together until 3 o'clock. I took a walk; again it started snowing. After tea I received Williams.<sup>117</sup> At 8 o'clock I took Mama to the train.

March 7, Tuesday.

I received two more letters from dear Alix brought by officers from the regiment. At 11 o'clock I received Williams, Janin, Ryckel: all were warm and sympathetically

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<sup>117</sup>Major-General Sir John Hanbury-Williams, K.C.B., K.C.V.O., C.M.G., was Chief of the British Military Mission in Russia, 1914-1917. Nicholas told Williams that the letters which he referred to on this date were smuggled in by an officer under his tunic. Nicholas in this discussion expressed a desire to stay in Russia. He did not express any anxiety for his own safety. He hoped to be able to go to the Crimea, but if he had to leave Russia, he would prefer England. He felt the right thing was to support the new government, as that was the best way to win the war. John Hanburg-Williams, The Emperor Nicholas II As I Knew Him, (London, 1922), 169-171.

treated.<sup>118</sup> I had breakfast with Mama, and sat with her until 2:30. I received Coanda, Romei, Marcengo, and Lontkevich. I took a walk for about an hour. The weather was mild but all day it had been snowing. After tea I began packing things. I had dinner with Mama and played bezik<sup>119</sup> with her.

March 8, Wednesday.

I was at Moghilev during the day. At 10:15 I signed the farewell notice to the Army.<sup>120</sup> At 10:30 I came to the duty house where I said goodbye to all the ranking staff members and the management.<sup>121</sup> At home I said goodbye to the officers and Cossacks of the Convoy and the Composite (reserve) regiment. My heart almost broke. At

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<sup>118</sup>General Janin, member of the French military mission to Russia; General DeRyckel was a member of the Belgian military mission.

<sup>119</sup>Bezik is a Russian parlor game.

<sup>120</sup>This farewell address to the Army was never published by the Provisional Government.

<sup>121</sup>Grand Duke Alexander described the day: "General Alexiev invited all to assemble in the main hall of the GHQ. Nicholas is to address all the members of his former staff. By eleven a.m. the hall is packed. Generals, officers, and persons in attendance on the Emperor are present. Nicholas entered--calm, reserved, bearing the semblance of a smile on his lips. He thanked the staff and begged them to continue their work 'with the same loyalty and in a spirit of self-sacrifice.' He invited them to forget all feuds, to serve Russia and lead the armies to victory. He says good-bye in curt, soldier-like sentences. His modesty made a tremendous impression. Those present shouted 'Hurrah' as we never had in the last twenty-three years. Elderly generals cry. Nicholas bowed and walked out of the room." Alexander, 290.



12:00 I went to the railroad car with Mama. I had a short breakfast with her in her suite and remained with her until 4:30. I said goodbye to her, Sandro, Sergei, Boris and Alexis.<sup>122</sup> They did not allow poor Muloa with me. At 4:45 I left Moghilev, a touching crowd of people saw us off. Four members of the Duma accompanied me on my journey!<sup>123</sup> We went to Orsha [at 9 a.m.] and Vitebsk [they made a short stop]. The weather was cold and windy. I felt miserably sick and depressed.

March 9, Thursday.

Quickly and happily we arrived at Tsarskoe Selo at 11:30. Good Lord, what a difference in the streets and the palace surroundings, within the park were sentries, and on the porch such insolence! I went upstairs and there I saw dear Alix and our dear children.<sup>124</sup> She appeared well and healthy. They were all together in a dark room, but all felt well except Marie, who had just caught the measles. We had dinner and joked with Alexis. I saw

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<sup>122</sup>Sandro (Grand Duke Alexander) embraced his cousin knowing that he would not see him again. Nicholas boarded the train wearing a simple khaki blouse, with the cross of St. George [founded by Catherine the Great for military service] in his buttonhole. Dowager Empress Marie kissed her son goodbye and was finally led away when the train could no longer be seen. She never saw her son again. *Ibid.*, 292.

<sup>123</sup>The four men were: A. A. Bublikov, V. Vershinin, S. Gribunin, and S. Kalinin.

<sup>124</sup>Olga, 1895-1918; Tatiana, 1897-1918; Marie, 1899-1918; Anastasia, 1901-1918; Alexis, 1904-1918.

dear Benckendorf. I took a walk with Dolgorukov and then worked with him in the garden. T.K. also arrived somehow. After tea I unpacked my things. In the evening we all sat around talking.<sup>125</sup>

March 10, Friday.

I slept well. Bonda, Romei, Marcengo, Lontkevich and I took a walk for about an hour. The weather was mild, but all day it had been snowing. After tea I began unpacking things. I had dinner with Alix and played bezik with her.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup>When Nicholas arrived home, his wife flew like a school girl to his side. Nicholas sobbed like a child and then gained control of himself. When walking and working in the garden, Nicholas and Dolgorukov were surrounded by six soldiers. With their fists and the butts of their rifles, they pushed Nicholas back and forth. "You can't go there, Gospodin Polkovnik [Mr. Colonel], we don't permit you to walk in that direction, Gospodin Polkovnik. Stand back when you are commanded, Gospodin Polkovnik." Nicholas appeared unmoved and finally turned with dignity and returned to the palace. Viroubova, 212-213.

<sup>126</sup>Nicholas, at this time, related none of his feelings to his diary; however, he was quite bitter. Mrs. Viroubova related his feelings: "After he had returned to Tsarskoe Selo he was treated quite badly and was bitter. He told me, 'If all Russia came to me on their knees I would never return.'  
"With tears in his voice he spoke of the men, his most trusted relations and friends, who had turned against him and caused his downfall. He read me telegrams from Brusiloff, Alexieff... Nicholai Nicholaievich...on their knees begged [him] to abdicate." Ibid., 214.

March 11, Saturday.

In the morning I received Benckendorf.<sup>127</sup> I learned from him that we had stayed here long enough. It was a pleasant realization. I continued to burn my letters and papers. Anastasia had an earache, so now she went with the rest of them [the sick children]. From 3 o'clock until 4:30 I walked in the garden with Dolgorukov<sup>128</sup> and worked in the garden. The weather was unpleasant with a wind at about 2 degrees above frost.<sup>129</sup> At 6:45 we went to vespers in the camp church. Alix took her bath before I took mine. I went to see Anna, Lili Dehn and the rest of our friends.<sup>130</sup>

March 12, Sunday.

It began to thaw. In the morning Beckendorf and Apraksin were with us; as they left they said goodbye. At 11:00 we went to Mass. Alix got up today. Olga and Tatiana are much better today, but Marie and Anastasia are worse. They have headaches and earaches and are vomiting. I took a short walk and worked in the garden for a while

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<sup>127</sup>General Count Pavel Konstantinovich Benckendorf was Grand Marshal of the Imperial Court before the February revolution. Kerensky, A., Russia and History's Turning Point, (New York, 1965), 328.

<sup>128</sup>Prince Dolgorukov was the second marshal of the court.

<sup>129</sup>The Russians measure temperature from thirty-two degrees. ~~of frost.~~

<sup>130</sup>Anna Viroubova was arrested on March 21, 1917, and then removed from Tsarskoe Selo to St. Petersburg. She escaped the Bolsheviks. Lili Dehn, wife of Captain von Dehn. Both were arrested and later released by the Provisional government. Viroubova, 225.

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with Dolgorukov. After tea I continued to put my papers in order. In the evening we all gathered together.

March 13, Monday.

It continued to thaw; the day was overcast. I took a walk in the morning for half an hour. Everyone here is busy. Marie continued to have a high temperature, 40.6 degrees, and Anastasia's ears ached. Everyone else felt fine. I took another short walk during the day and worked for a while. In the evening we sat with Anna and Lili Dehn.

March 14, Tuesday.

It was a cloudy day and thawing. In the morning I took a walk with Dolgorukov for three or four hours. Now there is plenty of time to read for my own enjoyment, there is sufficient time to sit up with the children. Marie's strong temperature continued at 40.6 degrees. Anastasia has complications with her ears, though yesterday they punctured her right ear drum. During the day I took a walk to the old park.

March 15, Wednesday.

It was a wonderful cold sunny day. I sat with Dolgorukov as always now with the accompaniment of one of the officers of the guard. I took a good walk. Marie and Anastasia's condition was the same as yesterday. They slept badly

and Marie's high temperature broke the record, since during the day her temperature was 40.9 degrees. The rest improved quite a bit. During the day I walked a long way and worked. Until dinner, I read, and in the evening I sat with the children until 10:00 and we drank tea twice.

March 16, Thursday.

It was a clear cold day. During the morning I took a walk. Marie and Anastasia were in the same condition, lying in a dark room and coughing badly; they have such bad colds. Marie's and Anastasia's high temperatures were high and alternatively rose and fall. They also were weak. During the day I took a long walk and worked; Dolgorukov and I finished the path to the old summer house. In the evening I stayed up with Anna and Lili Dehn.<sup>131</sup>

March 18, Saturday.

It was a cloudy day and thawing. During the morning

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<sup>131</sup>The first two days of Nicholas's return to Tsarskoe Selo the Tsar and Tsaritsa were allowed to have private conversations. But after they were separated during the remainder of the stay. This was ordered by the Provisional government because Kerensky felt that Alexandra was a bad influence on Nicholas and they should be separated. They were permitted to see each other at meals and with a member of the guard present. Nicholas occupied his evenings with others. Reeves, 79-80.

while I was taking my walk a wet snow was falling. During the day Marie had a temperature of 40.9 and was at the time delirious, towards evening her temperature fell to 39.3. During the day Anastasia had a temperature of 37.8, in the evening 39.3. I worked for a while during the day. At 6:30 I went with Olga to Vespers. In the evening we went to bed early.

March 19, Sunday.

It was a bright day. At 11 o'clock I went to Mass with Olga, Tatiana and Alexis. Marie and Anastasia's temperature fell to normal, but towards evening Marie's rose a little bit. I went for a two hour walk; I walked and worked and delighted in the weather. I returned home at 4:30. I sat for a long time with the children. In the evening we sat with Anna and others.

March 20, Monday.

Marie and Anastasia apparently have passed the crisis, for their temperature remained normal; all day they intermittently sleep and wake. I took a walk after 11 o'clock. Outside it was melting very much. During the day I worked quite a while. In the evening I sat with Anna.

March 21, Tuesday.

Today Kerensky, the present minister of Justice, came.

He went through all the rooms and wanted to see us. He talked to me for five minutes. He introduced the new Palace commander and then left.<sup>132</sup> He ordered the arrest of poor Anna and took her to the city together with Lili Dehn. This happened between 3 and 4 o'clock while I was walking. The weather was disgusting and it corresponded

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<sup>132</sup>Kerensky described the visit: "I clearly remember my first interview with the former Tsar, which took place in the middle of March at the Aleksandrovsky Palace. Upon my arrival in Tsarskoe Selo I inspected the entire palace thoroughly and inquired about the regulations of the guard and the general regime under which the imperial family was being kept. On the whole, I approved of the situation, making only a few suggestions for improvement to the commandant of the palace.

"Then I asked Count Benckendorf, former marshal of the court, to inform the Tsar I wished to see him and Alexandra Fyodorovna...The old count, who sported a monocle, listened to me gravely and answered: 'I shall report to His Majesty.' In a few moments he returned and announced solemnly: 'His Majesty has graciously consented to see you.'...

"A small man in uniform detached himself from the group [the whole family was in the room] and moved forward to meet me, hesitating and smiling weakly. It was Nicholas II. On the threshold of the room in which I waited him, he stopped as if uncertain what to do next...I quickly went up to Nicholas II, held out my hand and with a smile said abruptly, 'Kerensky,' as I usually introduce myself. He shook my hand firmly, smiled, seemingly encouraged, and led me at once to his family...

"I inquired about the health of the members of the family, informed them that their relatives abroad were solicitous of their welfare and the King and Queen of England had notified the Provisional Government of their concern for the Imperial family.

Nicholas inquired about the military situation and wished me success in my new and burdensome office. Throughout the spring and summer he followed the military events, reading the newspaper carefully and interrogating his visitors."

Colonel Korovichenko assumed command of the Palace on this day. He had been a military lawyer and a veteran of the Japanese and European wars. Kerensky, 328-331.

to our mood! Marie and Anastasia slept almost all day. After dinner the four of us calmly passed the evening away with Olga and Tatiana.

March 22, Wednesday.

During the night there was a storm and a lot of snow fell. The day became sunny and quiet. Olga and Tatiana went out into the air for the first time and sat around the balcony while I walked. After breakfast I worked for a long time. The youngest [Anastasia and Alexis] slept a little more and felt better. We passed all the time together.

March 23, Thursday.

It was a clear day after 2 o'clock and thawing. During the morning I took a short walk. I collected my books and things and began to pack all that I wanted to take with me if I happened to go to England.<sup>133</sup> After breakfast I took a walk with Olga and Tatiana and worked for a while in the garden. We passed the evening as always.

March 24, Friday.

A wonderful quiet day. During the morning I took a walk. During the day, Marie and Anastasia were taken to the playroom. I worked with Dolgorukov; now almost all of the path is clean. At 6:30 I went to vespers with Olga

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<sup>133</sup>Nicholas's talk with Kerensky appeared to have given him the attitude that he might go to England.



and Tatiana. During the evening I read Chekov aloud.

March 25, Saturday.<sup>134</sup>

An unprecedented event happened; we were placed under house arrest, without the slightest possibility of communication with Mama or others.<sup>135</sup> At 11 o'clock I went to Mass with Olga and Tatiana. After breakfast I read and worked with them on the island. The weather was cloudy. At 6:30 we were at Mass and returned with pussy willows. Anastasia got up and went down to the dining room.

March 26, Palm Sunday.

All day it was foggy. I walked and worked on the island. Tatiana also came out with me. I put my books and things in order. In the evening the guards came and sat around with us.

March 27, Monday.

We began to fast. After Mass, Kerensky arrived and ordered the limiting of our encounter [between Nicholas and Alexandra at dinner], with the children sitting

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<sup>134</sup>On this day the United States of America declared war and Nicholas made no mention of the event.

<sup>135</sup>Kerensky had the family put under house arrest, for rumors were spreading through Petrograd that the guards were counter-revolutionary and the Imperial family was getting too many privileges. Kerensky felt the 'prisoners' should be strictly isolated and be made to respect authority. Ibid., 331.

separately; supposedly in order to teach us to keep discipline, the same as Soviet workers and soldiers. We accepted and submitted ourselves to avoid any kind of violence. I took a walk with Tatiana. Olga was better, although she had a sore throat. The rest of us felt fine. At 9:45 I lay down and Tatiana sat with me until 10:30. Then I read for a while and tried to eat. I took a bath and went to sleep.

March 28, Tuesday.

I slept very well. The weather was warm and that is why the road had already become worse; I took a walk. At 11 o'clock we went to Mass. Olga still had a sore throat and a temperature around 39.4, how boring -- she is still not far from having the measles. I took a walk and worked on the island with Tatiana. At 6 o'clock Anastasia went with us to services. I again passed the evening with Tatiana and passed the night by myself.

March 29, Wednesday.

It was a nice warm day. I got up at 9:30 since I had slept poorly. I walked to Mass. O. Afansy Belyaev held services for us in the camp church. At the confession were: Vasili, the confessor, the deacon, the sexton and four choir boys who managed their duties very well. It's a pity that not all the children could go with us to the church. I walked with Tatiana on the

island; two of the officers of the guard also helped us. After dinner we passed the evening together.

March 30, Thursday.

A strong wind was blowing and during the day it drove away the storm clouds. At 10 o'clock I went to Mass, after which many of us received the Eucharist. I took a short walk with Tatiana. Today was the funeral of "victims of the revolution." It was held in the park opposite the center of Alexander's Palace not far from our windows. We could hear the sound from the funeral march and the Marseilles. Towards 5:30 everything was finished. At 6 o'clock we went to the service of the Angels. Belyaev read them very well alone. The evening went the same as last evening.

March 31, Friday.

It was a very nice sunny day. I took a walk with Tatiana until 11 o'clock. At 2 o'clock the shrouds were carried out.<sup>136</sup>I walked and worked near the ferry. At 6:30 I went to services. In the evening I confessed to O. Belyaev.

I forgot to mention that yesterday we said goodbye to 46 of our employees, who finally were released from

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<sup>136</sup>The covers had been left for a day to discredit the Tsar. On March 30, the crowds had marched in front of the Palace yelling: "Death to the Tsar." Kerensky relates that Nicholas became furious and said the whole ordeal was in bad taste. Ibid., 334.

Alexander's Palace to their families in Petrograd.<sup>137</sup>  
The weather was fine, with a strong south wind. At 9 o'clock we went to Mass and received the Eucharist, the greatest of Christian mysteries, with the rest of the people. I took a walk until breakfast. During the day the ice began to break up near the bridge. I walked with friends and Tatiana. I slept for a while until dinner. We gave presents to each other, eggs and photographs.<sup>138</sup>At 11:30 we went to the Midnight Easter Service.

April 2, Easter Sunday.

Mass finished in an hour and forty minutes.<sup>139</sup>We broke our fast with 16 other people. I laid down and went to sleep. The day became radiant, genuinely festive. In the morning I walked. Before breakfast, I gave -- but without Alix -- all our employees photographs of the eggs which were preserved from our former supply.<sup>140</sup>There were 135 people here during the day. We began to work

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<sup>137</sup>These servants were not released but rather asked the Provisional Government if they could be dismissed. Even the children's nurses deserted and the Provisional Government had to provide necessary medical assistance. Ibid., 328.

<sup>138</sup>This was a Russian custom to exchange gifts on Easter Eve.

<sup>139</sup>When the priest prayed for the Provisional Government, Nicholas crossed himself piously. Gilliard, 225.

<sup>140</sup>Many jewelled and painted eggs had been presented to the Tsar and his family over the years and these had been photographed.

at the bridge, but soon a large crowd of idlers began standing at the railings and we had to leave.<sup>141</sup> It was boring to spend the rest of the time in the garden. Alexis and Anastasia went out into the air for the first time. At 7 o'clock vespers were held up above the playroom. After dinner I passed the time away until 11 o'clock. I read aloud to Tatiana. I went to bed early.

April 3, Monday.

It was a wonderful spring day. At 11 o'clock, I went with Tatiana and Anastasia to Mass. After breakfast I went walking with them and all during that time the ice was breaking up near our summer dock; a crowd of idlers again collected at the railings and from the beginning to the end observed us. The sun was shining warmly. During the evening I played "Mill" with Alexis and then read aloud to Tatiana.

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<sup>141</sup>Every day the Tsar and his children went into the garden, to cut ice and clear snow. The guards usually chose a place close to the fence of the park, and the inhabitants of Tsarskoe Selo gathered on the other side of the fence to stare and make remarks. Often crude and rude, the Tsar continued his work as if he heard nothing. They spoke to him as if he were a caged animal unable to hear or do anything about it. Marie, 308. On this day, the officer of the guard warned Nicholas the crowd was ugly, but Nicholas replied he wasn't frightened. Gilliard, 220.

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April 4, Tuesday.

It was a marvelous spring day, 12 degrees in the shade. I walked for about an hour. During the day the ice continued to break up, and a crowd watched us from the railing. I began to read a little bit of the History of the Byzantine Empire; it is a very interesting book. The evening passed like the last ones.

April 5, Wednesday.

During the night it rained; almost all of the snow has disappeared. The day became overcast and cool. I slept poorly and got up late. During the morning I took a walk. During the day I worked for a while with Alexis and the staff on both bridges. We did not see too many people near us as there was very much water. Till dinner I read from my books, and in the evening I read aloud to Tatiana.

April 6, Thursday.

I slept poorly; the weather has become overcast. I took a walk with Alexis and during the day chopped ice at the dam under the bridge. We were accompanied by six infantry men besides the officers! The evening went as usual.

April 7, Friday.

The weather cleared up and was fine. I took a long walk during the morning because it was nice. During the day I worked with Tatiana and Alexis. The faces of the guards have not been as free and easy as before. They usually talk with us and give us their impressions of the revolution. I read for a long time. At 10:15 I laid myself down.<sup>142</sup>

April 8, Saturday.

We quietly celebrated our 23rd wedding anniversary. The weather became warm and spring-like. During the morning I walked for a long time with Alexis. I learned why yesterday's guards were so mean. They were completely from the staff of the Soldier's Soviet and had replaced the guards from the 4th Infantry Reserve Battalion.<sup>143</sup> We worked near the dock under a warm sun and were watched by a large crowd. At 6:30 I went to vespers with Tatiana, Anastasia and Alexis. The evening went as before.

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<sup>142</sup>On April 7, Nicholas and his family were given the privilege of going out twice a day; in the morning from eleven until noon and in the afternoon from half past two until five. Ibid., 226.

<sup>143</sup>The Government had been bothered by complaints from the Soviet and decided to replace the guard with members of the Soviet.

April 9, Sunday.

It was a surprisingly nice spring day. I took a walk in the morning for half an hour. We went to Mass from 2 o'clock until 4:30. We worked and broke up the ice between the two bridges in front of the center house. I read for a long time after tea. Towards evening storm clouds gathered. I was very warm; Alexis took down the winter storm windows.

April 10, Monday.

The day became cool. Alix's throat hurt a little, and she continued to have a cold. Olga is still in bed and Marie got up for a few hours. During the day I worked for a while with Tatiana between the bridges. The evening went as before.

April 11, Tuesday.

Again it was a wonderfully quiet day. I took a walk from 11 until 12 o'clock. During the day Alix finally went outside with us on our walk. She watched as we worked on the ice. The sun shone pleasantly. I read until dinner. Alix said vespers for the children. I sat with Tatiana until 11 o'clock.

April 12, Wednesday.

It was a cold day with a wind blowing. I took a walk for half an hour and then sat with the children while



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Alix was at Mass. During the day Kerensky came and distracted me from the work on the ice. At first he spoke with Alix and then with me.<sup>144</sup> After tea I read. During the evening I sat alone -- we drank tea together and slept in the same place.<sup>145</sup>

April 13, Thursday.

During the night it got cold, down to 3 degrees above frost; and the day became cold and unpleasant with a wind. I took a walk for an hour with Dolgorukov, as every morning. During the day I took a walk with Tatiana and Alix's staff but without Alix. Until dinner I read, and in the evening I read aloud to the children until 11 o'clock.

April 14, Friday.

Temperature of the air was wintery, together with rain and wet snow. I took a walk for 3/4 of an hour. During the day on my walk none of the children were with me, for fear of catching a cold. After tea, I examined all my

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<sup>144</sup>On one of Kerensky's visits, Alexis went up to the Minister and identified himself. Then he asked Kerensky if he were the Minister of Justice. "Yes," said Kerensky, "I am." "I want to know," said the Tsarevich, "if my father had any right to abdicate for me when he abdicated for himself." Reeves, 81.

<sup>145</sup>Although there had been a change in guards, the rules at this time were relaxed, for Nicholas and his wife were allowed to walk and sleep together, which had been forbidden.

boots and threw away the old and useless ones. In the evening I began to read aloud the book by A. C. Doyle, The Valley of Fear, to the children.

April 15, Saturday.

It was a cold day, but a little better and without snow. I took a walk and read for a while. During the day I went out with Tatiana. When we were about done working, a crowd of off-duty infantrymen from the guard came up to us and watched with curiosity as we took out the blocks of ice. At 6:30 we went to vespers. During the evening I read aloud from a book.

April 16, Sunday.

During the night the temperature went down to 3 degrees of frost; beside that, a cold wind was blowing. At 11 o'clock we went to Mass. I walked with Tatiana and read until dinner to myself and in the evening to the children.

April 17, Monday.

Involuntarily I recalled that it was the holiday of the 1st and 2nd Infantry Regiments; but human eyes and trumpets did not announce this day today through the walls of the large palace. During the morning I thought about this.<sup>146</sup> From 12 o'clock until dinner I gave Alexis

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<sup>146</sup>One of the few times Nicholas comes close to complaining about his existence before he is moved to Siberia.

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geography lessons.<sup>147</sup> I took a walk and worked with Tatiana. The weather was clear and fine. The evening went as yesterday.

April 18, Tuesday.

Abroad, today is the first of May. Our "blockheads" decided to celebrate the day by processions through the streets with musicians and red flags. They came openly to us in the park and placed garlands on the graves. The weather got worse up to the time of the celebration. I think wet snow started to fall. I went out to walk about 3:45, when all this started. I worked for an hour and a half with Tatiana. During the evening I read to the children, A Millionaire Girl.

April 19, Wednesday.<sup>148</sup>

The weather was the same as yesterday but a little warmer. From 12 o'clock until dinner I sat with Alexis and gave him a history lesson. During the day I took a walk with

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<sup>147</sup>Nicholas took a great deal of interest in his son's education when he found it shockingly lacking. In the words of Naryshkin: "The little Tsarevich said to me the other day: 'Papa has examined us. He was very much dissatisfied and said: "Is that all you have learned?"' The daughters have volunteered to teach him and the parents are following their example. The Emperor has chosen History and Geography, the Empress Religion and German." Browder, P. and Kerensky, A. (ed.), The Russian Provisional Government, 1917, (Stanford, 1961), I, 188.

<sup>148</sup>The Provisional Government changed the Gregorian calendar to correspond with the West; thus, it was May 1 in Russia.

him and Tatiana. For the first time all the family ate at the same table. Olga and Marie were the last ones to get better.

April 20, Thursday.

This extraordinary spring weather continues; the sun appeared, but a heavy snow was falling and a strong wind was blowing. During the morning between 10 o'clock and 11 o'clock, I gave Alexis a geography lesson. Then I took a walk. During the day we worked on the ice. I saw a sentry sleeping on a bench wrapped up in his sheepskin coat. Until dinner and after dinner I read for a long time.

April 21, Friday.

The weather was warmer, and it appeared as if there would be an absence of precipitation. I took a walk with Alexis on the Children's Island.<sup>149</sup> And then I occupied myself with his Russian history. During the day, Anastasia also went out on a walk for an hour and a half. We worked on the ice between the bridges, until dinner. I read History of the Byzantine Empire; during the evening I read it aloud.

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<sup>149</sup>One of the many little islands in the artificial lakes which were scattered all through Tsarskoe Selo.

April 22, Saturday.

It was a wonderful spring day. I took a walk with Alexis from 10 until 12. He played on the island, but sentries stood on the other side of the garden and watched. During the day we worked in the previous place. The sun got a lot brighter. At 6:30 the whole family went together to vespers. During the evening I read aloud.

April 23, Sunday.

Wonderful weather presented itself for dear Alix. Before Mass one of the men living in the palace and also our servants congratulated her.<sup>150</sup>I ate, as always, alone. At 2 o'clock the whole family went out into the garden. We worked on the pond around the Children's Island. We broke up all the ice. We returned home at 4:30. I read to myself till dinner and in the evening read aloud. At 9 o'clock I started reading again.

April 24, Monday.

During the night it again got worse; during the day squalls came up, but the sun was shining and there was a wet snow. During the morning I took a walk while Alexis played on the Island. Afterwards, I gave him a lesson in geography. During the day we worked on the

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<sup>150</sup>April 23 was Alexandra's saint's day.

ponds. Yesterday the ice successfully melted. The evening went as usual.

April 25, Tuesday.

Again we had quite spring-like weather. During the morning, I took a walk while Alexis played on the island. After we returned, a thick snow fell and covered everything with a white shroud. During the day I walked for three hours and then came home to finish an interesting book, History of the Byzantine Empire by Uspensky, 870 large pages. After dinner, as usual, we worked on the puzzle and then I read aloud to the children until 11 o'clock.

April 26, Wednesday.

The weather was cold but dry. About 5 o'clock the sun came out. After my walk I gave Alexis his history lesson, going up through the reign of Vladimir. During the day with Tatiana, Marie and Anastasia, we pushed large blocks of ice from the dam to the end of the bridge. Until dinner I read a book.

April 27, Thursday.

The day of the birth of dear Georgie.<sup>151</sup> The weather

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<sup>151</sup>Georgie, Grand Duke George, was the late brother of Nicholas.

improved slightly. During the morning I walked a little farther after Alexis's geography lesson. I had breakfast with E. A. Naryshkin.<sup>152</sup> From 2:30 till 4:30 I walked and broke up the remaining ice still there. Until dinner I read to myself and in the evening aloud.

April 28, Friday.

The day became nice and sunny. I walked between 11 and 12 and gave Alexis a history lesson. During the day we walked and began working on the arrangement of the vegetable garden in the garden opposite Mama's window.<sup>153</sup> Tatiana, Marie and Anastasia actually dug up the ground, and the commander of the infantry officers watched and occasionally gave advice. During the evening I finished A Millionaire Girl.

April 29, Saturday.

It was very nice clear weather. I took a walk. During the day the whole family went out into the garden; Alix sat in a lawn chair and watched us work, digging up the garden. At 6:30 we went to vespers. The last two days we have eaten without electric lights. Evenings are becoming lighter. I began to read aloud from the book

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<sup>152</sup>Major General Naryshkin, an army associate and close friend, Ibid., I, 180.

<sup>153</sup>With the coming of spring and the disappearance of the ice, Nicholas decided to take up gardening, to insure his daily exercise.

by Sherlock Holmes, The Hound of the Baskervilles.

April 30, Sunday.

It was wonderful weather. I walked to Mass. At 2 o'clock we all went out into the garden, and many of our people helped us with the work. With a great deal of diligence and even joy, the whole group was occupied with the land and worked constantly until 5 o'clock. The weather was delightful. I read up to dinner and afterwards.

May 1, Monday.

It was a nice warm day. During the morning I took a nice long walk. At 12 o'clock I gave Alexis a geography lesson. During the day we worked again in our vegetable garden. Even though the sun was scorching, we continued working successfully. I read until dinner time to myself and in the evening I read aloud.

Yesterday we learned of the resignation of General Kornilov as Commander-in-Chief of the Petrograd Military District and this evening about the dismissal of Guchkov. All of this happened because of the irresponsible interference in the direction of military power by the Soviet workers' deputation, which is very far to the



left.<sup>154</sup>

What has providence prepared for poor Russia?  
Well, it will be as God wills it.

May 2, Tuesday.

It was a warm, overcast day. I took a walk for a while. I finished reading the book by Kasso, Russia in the Duma, and I started reading the many-volumed composition by Kuropatkin<sup>155</sup> called Problems of the Russian Army. The evening went as usual.

May 3, Wednesday.

Alexis's arm hurt, and he stayed in bed all day. From morning to evening it rained; this was very good for the appearing vegetables. I took a short walk in the morning

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<sup>154</sup>General Kornilov had not been able to win the support of the soldiers and the Soviet officials. Kerensky replaced him with a young officer, General P. A. Polovtsev, who had been in the Duma Military Commission at the outbreak of the Revolution. His relations with the soldiers were fairly good. Kerensky, 273.

Alexander Guchkov had been the Minister of War. He was not popular with the sailors and soldiers; and on May 1, 1917, he sent the following message to Prince Lvov: "In view of the situation in which the Government, particularly the War Minister, now finds itself, a situation which I am unable to alter and which jeopardizes the defense, freedom and existence of Russia, I can no longer conscientiously continue as Minister of War, nor share responsibility for the grievous harm that is being done to my country."  
Browder and Kerensky, III, 1267.

<sup>155</sup>Kuropatkin, Alexis, was Russian war minister during the Russo-Japanese War. Wren, M.C., The Course of Russian History, (New York, 1963), 485.

and during the day with Marie and Anastasia. I read for a long time. During the evening I finished the English book aloud.

May 4, Thursday.

The weather became clear but cool. Alexis's arm didn't hurt any longer, but he stayed in bed all day and didn't do anything. After my morning walk I read for a long time. During the day everyone again worked in the garden. During the evening I read aloud a book in French, Le mystère de la chambre jaune.

May 5, Friday.

After my morning walk I gave Alexis a history lesson. His arm had quit hurting, and he got up after breakfast. We continued to work in the garden; Alix went outside for an hour. At 6:30 we all went to vespers. Until dinner I received presents. I read to the girls aloud.

May 6, Saturday.

I turned 49 years old. I do not have long to go until 50. My thoughts were particularly on dear Mama. It is difficult to not even be able to write. I do not know anything about her other than what I read in the stupid and offensive state newspapers.<sup>156</sup>The day went like

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<sup>156</sup>The Dowager Empress Marie was at the grand-ducal estate in the Crimea. Forbidden to write or telegraph her son, she was in constant fear for the life of the Tsar.

Sunday; Mass, breakfast upstairs, the puzzle. We all worked in the vegetable garden; we began to dig up the flower beds; after tea vespers were served, dinner and evening reading -- it is much better with my dear family than ordinarily.

May 7, Sunday.

It was cold, windy weather with snowy squalls. But we went to Mass. I took a walk during the day with Tatiana, Marie, and Anastasia, while Alexis played on the island. Until and after tea, I read to my heart's content. Towards evening the weather finally turned like winter. Snow fell and the temperature was 2 degrees below frost.

May 8, Monday.

During the morning everyone went out into the fresh snow. A cold wind was blowing and it was unpleasant to walk in. From 12 o'clock on, I gave a geography lesson to Alexis. At 2 o'clock the sun came out; it got warm and quiet. I took a walk with the girls and sat with them on the island. I saw the commander of Tsarskoe Selo, Colonel Kobylinsky, who took a walk with the Palace Commander, Lt. Colonel Korovichenko, and me.<sup>157</sup> The evening went as usual.

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<sup>157</sup>Col. Korovichenko had replaced the first Palace Commander, Colonel Kotsebue, who had been accused of being too friendly with the Imperial Family and Anna Virubova. Korovichenko was determined not to make the same mistake. Colonel Kobylinsky tried to

May 9, Tuesday.

It was a very nice sunny day. I took a walk for almost an hour with Alexis. During the day we again worked on the vegetable garden; to dig up the beds was difficult because of the dampness of the soil after the snow. I read Kuropatkinsky book with interest until dinner and during the evening a French book aloud to the girls.

May 10, Wednesday.

It was a nice warm day. I spent an hour out in the air with Alexis, but afterwards I gave him a history lesson. During the day everyone was out in the garden. We worked on the vegetable garden and began to plant some things. At 6:30 vespers were held. I finished the

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save the family from unnecessary indignities, but his authority was never very certain. Guards repeatedly demanded to see the Tsar and his family at any hour of the day or night. On such occasions, Nicholas invariably received the men in a most friendly manner. On one of these occasions, Nicholas held out his hand in a friendly way to shake the man's hand. The officer turned away and Nicholas went up to him, with tears in his eyes and said: "Why did you do that?" The guard turned around with hate in his eyes and said: "I was born of common people; and when they stretched out their hand to you, you did not take it, so now I will not shake hands with you."

The guards swore at and blew smoke into the face of Alexandra and her daughters, pushed the little boy and took his toys away; and once, when Nicholas was riding a bicycle, one of the guards inserted his bayonet into the spokes and laughed as the Tsar tumbled to the ground. Frankland, N., Crown of Tragedy, (London, 1960), 128-129.

French book.

May 11, Ascension Thursday.

It was a nice light day. I took a short walk until Mass. After breakfast I went with Alix to visit E. A. Naryshkin, who apparently had pneumonia. We worked in the vegetable garden and perspired a lot. I read until 7:15 and then for the first time I went for a ride with the children on bicycles. It was very pleasant to get out and breathe the evening air.

May 12, Friday.

I took a walk with Alexis during the morning. We went to see if the work was finished on the grounds for our tennis court in its old place. Before lunch I gave Alexis a history lesson. At 2:30 we went out into the garden. I helped the others dig up the beds in the flower garden between the first and the fourth porches, and then I returned to the garden and continued to work on our vegetable garden. The weather became cloudy and cool. In the morning we rode in the hospital car to the large palace of E. A. Naryshkin, at his request, to see some of our relatives.

May 13, Saturday.

It was a nice sunny day, with a cool breeze. I took a walk for an hour with Alexis. During the day, we worked

in the garden. I watched as they brought the canoe and the boat to our pond. Tatiana and Alexis helped, and we went for a boat ride.<sup>158</sup> At 6:30 we went to vespers. During the evening I read the book Le parfum de la dame en noir, which I had started the 11th of May.

May 14, Sunday.

It was in different surroundings that we celebrated the 21st anniversary of my coronation! The weather was 15 degrees in the shade. Until Mass I took a walk with Alexis. During the day from 2:00 until 4:30 we spent the time out in the garden; I went for a ride in the canoe, and in the boat; and I worked for a while in the vegetable garden, where I prepared the new beds, and later we were on the island. After tea and during the evening I read.

May 15, Monday.

It was a clear, warm day. After my walk I gave Alexis a geography lesson. We went out into the garden at 2:15. I worked all the time with the others in the vegetable garden; Alexis and the girls planted various things in the beds which we had prepared. At 5 o'clock we returned home perspiring. After tea I read. At 7:00 I went out with Tatiana, Marie and Anastasia and

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<sup>158</sup> Colonel Korovichenko gave them the privilege of boating, though they were constantly watched. Franklin, 129.

went for a ride on the bicycle until 7:15. The evening went as always.

May 16, Tuesday.

It was a nice light day. After noon it got to be 20 degrees in the shade. I took a walk for an hour during the morning while Alexis played on the island. I finished the first volume of Problems of the Russian Army by Kuropatkin and started the second. From 2:15 until 5:00 I worked very hard in the vegetable garden and perspired.

May 17, Wednesday.

A guard from the Reserve Battalion of the 2nd. Tsarist Infantry Regiment (commanded by Ensign Belyakovsky) conducted themselves as they should, not one of the guards was loafing about the garden, and the conduct of the sentry was decent.<sup>159</sup> Before dinner it was a splendid hot day, 20 degrees in the shade and in the sun 33 degrees with a light southern breeze. I took a walk for more than an hour with Alexis and gave him a history lesson. During the day we took a walk, worked, and went for a

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<sup>159</sup>Nicholas was very concerned about the army and the discipline problems. Kerensky abolished the death sentence, one of the reasons being to protect the lives of the Imperial family. Nicholas heard about this and exclaimed: "It is a mistake. The abolition of the death penalty will ruin the discipline of the army. If he is abolishing it to save me from danger, tell him that I am ready to give my life for the good of the country." Buchanan, II, 73.

ride on the pond and sat on its bank. Until dinner time I took a ride with the girls on the bicycle. About 9:30 storm clouds came up and poured necessary life-giving moisture on the ground.

May 18, Thursday.

It was such a nice day. It was very fresh after yesterday's rain. The whole park had become very green. The weather was wonderful during my walk, after a geography lesson with Alexis. During the day I again worked very hard cutting the grass and preparing the new flower beds. Until dinner we took a ride on the bicycles. During the evening it became quite cool, 9 degrees.

May 19, Friday.

During the morning there were a lot of storm clouds, but at 11 o'clock the sun came out and the weather became quite clear and immediately warmer. After my walk I gave Alexis a history lesson. During the day I diligently dug in the beds with the others. Sixty-five guards of the 2nd. Infantry Regiment were again undisciplined, and the officers were indifferent. Until dinner time we took a ride on the bicycle.

May 20, Saturday.

It was an ideally warm day, with no breeze. I took a walk for an hour and a quarter during the morning with Alexis. During the day I worked with the others in the



vegetable garden, and we rested and took a ride in the canoe. At 6:30 we went to vespers. The aroma from the garden was wonderful while sitting at the window. In the evening I began to read aloud Le fauteuil hanté.

May 21, Sunday.

It was nice weather, without any clouds in the sky. I took a walk with Alexis until 10:00. At 10:30 we began Mass and then vespers, which lasted until 12:30. During the day we went out into the garden for three hours. In the garden we sawed up some wood into firewood and went for a ride in the canoe and on the bicycles. I read until 7:30 and then took a short walk with the girls until dinner.

May 22, Monday.

It was a warm, overcast day. I went for a walk until 11 o'clock with Olga, Anastasia and Alexis. We had lunch at 12 o'clock. During the day we spent three hours in the garden, on the island and the pond. Towards the end it started to rain, and it continued until 8 o'clock. The aroma coming in through the windows was wonderful. Today is the anniversary of

the Army attack on the south-western front.<sup>160</sup> How different my sentiments were from what they are now.

May 23, Tuesday.

It was also a cloudy day; only towards evening the sun came out. During the day we chopped down three dry trees, a birch tree on the island and two large fir trees in the park. Before dinner I took a ride on the bicycles with the girls. The evening was wonderful.

May 24, Wednesday.

It was a warm day with a cooling rain. During the morning I took a walk with Alexis. Until lunch I gave him a history lesson. In an hour we chopped up one of yesterday's fir trees. We returned home a little early because of the rain. At 6:30 we went to vespers. Before dinner, Alix received modest presents.

May 25, Thursday.

The birthday of my dear Alix. May God grant her health and a calm spirit. Before Mass all of the servants offered their congratulations. We had breakfast upstairs

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<sup>160</sup> Brusilov offensive of 1916, in which General Brusilov carried out a two-pronged attack on the Austrian flank. It was designed to knock Austria-Hungary out of the war. The Russians made giant gains through the summer months of 1916, but were finally pushed back after Austria-Hungary received help from her German ally. Wren, 538.

as usual. During the day Alix went out with us into the garden. We chopped down and sawed up trees in the park. At 7:30 I went for a ride with the girls on the bicycles. The weather was fine. During the evening I began to read aloud Le comte de Monte Christo.

May 26, Friday.

About the time of my morning walk, the new commander-in-chief of the Petrograd Military District -- General Polovtsev -- detained Alexis and me from our walk in the garden for 20 minutes. The weather was fine. At 3:15 everyone went for a walk; we chopped down another two trees.

May 27, Saturday.

Korovichenko just got here to say goodbye and bring with him his successor. None of us was sorry about his leaving and just the opposite; all were glad about the appointment of a new guard officer.<sup>161</sup>The day became very nice. During the day I took a walk further in the park still looking for dry trees. During the day we chopped many down and sawed them up. I went sailing in the boat with the children. At 6:30 we went to vespers. During the evening I read aloud.

May 28, Sunday.

I walked to Mass with Tatiana, Marie and Anastasia.

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<sup>161</sup>Korovichenko was one of the officers of the army guards.

The weather had become lovely. During the day we went out for two hours. I went with the children to work in the forest. Alix, as always, sat near the wall opposite the Children's Island on which Alexis was playing. After 4 o'clock we returned here and went for a ride in the canoe. At 7:30 we went for a bicycle ride. Before dinner Tatiana received some presents.

May 29, Monday.

Dear Tatiana turned 20 years old today. During the morning I took a long walk with all the children. At 12 o'clock there were public services. During the day we spent three hours in the garden, after which I worked two hours in the forest. Then we went for a ride in a sailboat. During the day it was wonderful. Until dinner we walked again and visited the island. During the evening I read aloud as always.

May 30, Tuesday.

It became wonderful weather, although it was a cooler day. I took a walk from 11 to 12 while Alexis played on the island. After breakfast we went out into the garden at 2 o'clock. Some of the workers helped me, chopping and sawing firewood. Today we added a lot more to the pile. Tatiana, Marie, and Anastasia helped to carry the firewood; two officers and four enlisted men of the guard also helped. We returned home for tea at

5 o'clock. Until dinner we took another walk for half an hour.

May 31, Wednesday.

It was a wonderful day, warm and cloudless. I took a walk with Alexis and then gave him a history lesson. During the day we worked successfully along the path, going into the shade; we chopped down five dry trees and sawed them up into firewood. After tea, Benckendorf and I unsealed a small cupboard in Father's study and examined all the papers and things we found there. I walked until dinner time with my daughters. During the evening I began to read the second volume of Le comte de Monte Christo.

June 1, Thursday.

It was a wonderful and warm day. From 10 o'clock on I gave Alexis a history lesson, and then we took a good walk in the park. After lunch we chopped down a huge fir tree in about the same place we were yesterday. It was very hot work, and the flies bothered us a lot. I also took a walk until dinner time.

June 2, Friday.

During the morning I took a walk around the park where it was very nice and shady. Until lunch time I gave Alexis a lesson. During the day Alix assisted us in

our work in yesterday's place; we finished sawing up all the firewood. We went for a canoe ride. After an hour and a half of reading, I took a walk with Olga, Marie and Anastasia. The weather was startling.

June 3, Saturday.

After tea Kerensky suddenly came by car from the city. He stayed with me for a while. He asked me to send to the investigating committee some papers and letters having relations to internal policies. After my walk and until lunch I helped Korovichenko in an analysis of those papers. During the day he was helped by Kobylinsky.<sup>162</sup>

We sawed up the tree trunks in the first place we cut. During that time something happened to Alexis's toy rifle. He was playing with it on the island; the sentry walking in the garden saw him and asked the officer to take it away from him.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>162</sup>The Provisional Government was carrying out an elaborate inquiry into the regime it had overthrown. Kerensky supervised the investigation, and that is the reason for his many visits to Tsarskoe Selo. He carried on an investigation of the private letters and papers of Nicholas and Alexandra. The purpose was to try and incriminate them as pro-German. Nicholas and Alexandra burned many of their private papers, but the investigation proved unfruitful. After the inquiry Kerensky had a more friendly attitude to his prisoners, but they still remained prisoners. Kerensky, 328-338.

<sup>163</sup>Prisoners were not allowed to have arms, and under this pretense Alexis had his toy rifle confiscated. When Colonel Kobylinsky saw the sobbing boy, he managed to have the rifle returned. Franklin, 129.

June 4, Sunday.

It was a nice warm day with a breeze. I walked to Mass with the girls. For the first time we were accompanied by the guards from the 3rd. Infantry Batallion. There was a great deal of difference between them and the others. During the day we finished sawing up the stumps of the trees that were already chopped down. We went for a ride in the canoe. Till dinner time I took my ordinary walk.

June 5, Monday.

Today dear Anastasia turned 16 years old. I took a walk with all the children until 12 o'clock. We all went to prayer services. During the day we chopped down some big fir trees at the crossing of the three roads along the Arsenal. There was a colossal fire, the sun was reddish, and in the air was the smell of burning, probably from peat burning somewhere. We went sailing for a little while. During the evening we walked until 8 o'clock. I started the 3rd volume of Le comte de Monte Christo.

June 6, Tuesday.

Today Kerensky reviewed all the emergency infantry battalions. He did not call on us. During the day we chopped up in large pieces dried-up fir trees, very close to the place we were yesterday, and others on the Children's

Island. The weather was ideal.

June 7, Wednesday.

It was a very warm day with a very strong smell of burning in the air. During the morning I took a walk around the park. After lunch we chopped up three dry trees; all of them were at the place near the Arsenal. I took a ride in the canoe while the others bathed at the end of the pond. The head officer of the Guard, Shymovich, of the 2nd Infantry Regiment, is generally disliked.<sup>164</sup>

June 8, Thursday.

The same sort of hot day; it was 24 degrees in the shade. Before my morning walk I gave Alexis a history lesson. During the day, despite the tropical heat, we chopped down two fir trees. Again, it was the wonderful guard from the 3rd Infantry Regiment that guarded us. I drank a lot of tea after the work. As always, I read until my evening walk; and in the evening I read aloud.

June 9, Friday.

It has been exactly three months since I came from Moghilev

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<sup>164</sup>It is strange for Nicholas to express himself in this way. He usually spoke with equal warmth about all his guards, regardless if they called him "Your Imperial Majesty" or "Colonel Romanov." It bothered him when they would not speak to him at all. Nicholas wanted to be liked by his guards. Ibid., 129.



and we have been prisoners. It is difficult to be without news from dear Mama, but as to the others I am indifferent.<sup>165</sup> Today the day was still hotter than hot -- 25 degrees in the shade and in the sun 36 degrees. Again there was a strong smell of burning. After our walk I gave Alexis a lesson in history in my new reading room because it was cooler there. We worked well in the place where we were yesterday. Alix did not come out with us. Until dinner time all five of us took a walk.

June 10, Saturday.

During the night and during the day until 3 o'clock the fire, the heat and the stuffiness continued. During the morning we took a long walk and had breakfast as before in the children's dining room. During the day we walked in the same place as yesterday. A large thunderstorm came up and the rain was very cold. At 6:30 we went to vespers. During the evening, about 11 o'clock, I heard a gunshot in the garden. Within 15 minutes the officer of the guard asked to enter to explain that one of the sentries fired shots because it appeared to him that someone was signalling with a red lantern from the window of the children's bedroom. Examining the arrangement of the electric lights and the movement of Anastasia's

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<sup>165</sup>Nicholas was still embittered by his family's turning against him at the time of the Revolution. Viroubova, 215.

head, who was sitting near the window, one of the guards accompanying him surmised the situation and they left.

June 11, Sunday.

Yesterday, Teteriatnikov left and was replaced by Chemodurov.<sup>166</sup> During the morning I took a walk with the children. At 11 o'clock we went to Mass. The day became comparatively nice, 17 degrees in the shade. To chop down and saw up trees was quite easy. We worked on two more dry fir trees. I went for a ride in the canoe while Alix took a swim in the pond. Until dinner time we took our usual walk.

June 12, Monday.

After a pleasantly cool night, the day turned hot. During the morning I took a nice walk with Valya Dolgorukov. I gave a geography lesson to Alexis. During the day we dug up a large flower bed in our garden, after which we rested in the canoe. During dinner a thunderstorm came up, with a refreshing shower.

June 13, Tuesday.

It became a nice day with approaching thunder clouds. During the morning I took a nice walk. Alix's neck still hurts a little bit, and therefore she didn't come out

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<sup>166</sup>Chemodurov was one of Nicholas's faithful valets, who consented to stay after the Revolution. Kerensky, 157-158.

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with us into the garden. Today we chopped down three dry trees and cut them up into firewood. After tea I read in my reading room. Until dinner time Marie received presents.

June 14, Wednesday.

Dear Marie today is 18 years old. During the morning I took a walk with all the children; we went all around the park. The weather was wonderful. At 12 o'clock we went to prayer services. During the day Alix came out with us. We worked in the park for a while. We chopped down three large trees. After tea, I finished reading a work by Kuropatkin called Problems of the Russian Army. It was very interesting to me. I began a French book, La maison des hommes vivants.

June 15, Thursday.

It was a hot, clear day. I took a long walk in the morning. I gave Alexis a geography lesson. Alix remained home. We chopped down and sawed up trees in the same place as before. We knocked over a large fir tree near the small path. I took a refreshing bath until tea time. We walked before dinner. During the evening I began to read aloud the 5th. part of Le comte de Monte Christo. Benckendorf, Valya [Dologrukov] and both maids of honor received information about their release from service.

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June 16, Friday.

The morning was grey and windy. During the day the sun came out for a while. After our walk I gave Alexis a history lesson. During the day we worked a little while longer in the same place as yesterday, but on the left side of the road. We cut down two old birch trees. I finished La maison des hommes vivants.

June 17, Saturday.

During the morning I took my usual walk throughout the park. The heat became unusual. I began to read Julian by Merezhkovsky. During the day we cultivated two more flower beds in front of the marble vase in the center garden. I went for a ride in the canoe. I took a bath before tea. At 6:30 we went to vespers. Thunder clouds were gathering and thunder could be heard. During dinner it began to rain like a stream for 10 minutes.

June 18, Sunday.

During the night it continued to rain, reviving the air. The day started wonderfully. We walked to Mass. At 2 o'clock we went to the park to get good soil and then worked in the vegetable garden. Before dinner I helped the gardener water the flower beds. Towards evening the temperature dropped to 9 degrees and there was a light breeze.

June 19, Monday.

The weather was comparatively cool. The day went as usual. Before dinner itself came a good piece of news about the beginning of the assault on the southwestern front. After two days of artillery fire, our army took the hostile position and took into captivity about 170 officers and 10,000 troops, six vehicles and 24 machine guns. Thank God! What good luck! I slept differently after that glad news.<sup>167</sup>

June 20, Tuesday.

After yesterday, the battle waged successfully; during two days our army took 18,600 prisoners. During the evening, thanksgiving services were held at church. During the day we chopped down four dry trees behind the tennis court and then we worked for a while in the vegetable garden until 4:30. All day the weather was overcast; at 4 o'clock the welcome rain started. I read until dinner time.

June 21, Wednesday.

The rain had stopped before my morning walk, and at 3 o'clock the weather cleared up. Until dinner I gave

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<sup>167</sup>With the intensive pleadings from the allies, Kerensky ordered an offensive. The Russians attacked in Galacia. The attack went smoothly until the Austrians were reinforced by German forces. Russian ranks split and retreated in disorder. ~~When,~~ 235-930, 235-932.

Alexis a history lesson. We worked in the park, and Alix was there sitting in her chair. I finished Julian; I liked it. Until dinner we took a walk. During the evening I read aloud the sixth book of Le comte de Monte Christo.

June 22, Thursday.

It was a nice day with a refreshing wind. From 10 o'clock until 11 o'clock I gave Alexis a geography lesson. I took a walk. I began the second volume of Merezhkovski, Christ and Anti-Christ, "Leonardo da Vinci." During the day all of us worked in the park across from the Arsenal. We cut down and sawed up an enormous fir tree. During the evening we continued doing the same thing until 8 o'clock. We watered the garden.

June 23, Friday.

It was a nice, cool day. I took a long walk. I gave Alexis a history lesson. During the day we worked in the same place as yesterday. We cut down another two fir trees. A light rain fell for a while. After tea I read until dinner time.

June 24, Saturday.

It was a rainy day and slightly cold. During the morning I didn't go outside. At 3 o'clock I went for a walk with the children around the park accompanied by an

infantry man of the Third Regiment. Some of them, along with our people, cut the grass by the walk. At 6:30 we went to vespers. During the evening I read aloud.

June 25, Sunday.

During the morning I went outside with Alexis. The weather was cold. We went to Mass. We went for a walk until 2 o'clock. We were drenched by a short rainstorm. We cut down and sawed up a small fir tree. We watched as our people cut the grass. We sat in the garden a while and then returned home. I read aloud until dinner time.

June 26, Monday.

The day became splendid. Our good regiment commander, Kobylinsky, asked me not to wave at the officers and not to greet the infantrymen. Before this, there have been times when they have not answered.<sup>168</sup>I gave Alexis a geography lesson. We cut up a huge fir tree not far from the railing behind the greenhouse. The guards wanted to help us with our work. During the evening I finished reading Le comte de Monte Christo.

June 27, Tuesday.

I forgot to mention on the 26th. of June that our army

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<sup>168</sup>An Ensign insisted to Kobylinsky that the guards be not allowed to speak to or with Nicholas and his family. Kobylinsky complied with the man's request. Franklin, 129-130.

broke a new gap and seized 131 officers, 7,000 men and 48 vehicles; among them there were some heavy vehicles. All the children came out in order to collect the cut grass. I took my usual walk. During the day we worked in the same place as yesterday. We cut down and chopped two fir trees. Until dinner, we spent time in the vegetable garden. During the evening I began reading aloud stories about Sherlock Holmes.

June 28, Wednesday.

Yesterday we lost 3,000 troops and about 30 vehicles. Word of God!<sup>169</sup>The weather became cloudy and warm. After my walk I gave a history lesson to Alexis. We worked out there again and cut down three fir trees. After tea and until dinner I read.

June 29, Thursday.

It became a nice day. At 11 o'clock we went to Mass. Alexis stood at the altar. We took a walk from 2 o'clock until 4:30. We worked at the same place as yesterday and finished yesterday's fir and cut down a new one. I went for a ride with Tatiana in the canoe. Until tea time I took a bath, and before dinner we went into the garden.

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<sup>169</sup>With each bad report, Nicholas became more and more depressed. Gilliaud, 233.



June 30, Friday.

It was a nice day, with a lot of smoke from burning peat. During the walk I went with Valya to the Chinese theater. I gave Alexis a history lesson. We worked in the same place as before. We chopped down three trees. Towards night we set all the clocks one hour ahead.<sup>170</sup>

July 1, Saturday.

The day became excellent. I walked around the whole park while the children cut hay and played in the haystacks. We worked during the day in the garden. We came across some dry trees and fallen timber from the storm of 1914, hidden in the bushes and high grass. At 6:30 we went to vespers. Late in the evening it started raining.

July 2, Sunday.

It was a very warm, overcast day. I got up late and read until dinner time. At 2 o'clock we went into the garden. At first I walked around the park with Tatiana and Anastasia and then cut up the same tree we were working on near the summer house. We cut down some dead and rotten bushes. During that time the others were finishing mowing the lawn and the garden. Until dinner time I read and finished Leonardo. After dinner Alexis

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<sup>170</sup>World War One was the first time daylight savings time was used. It was an economy measure to preserve coal, oil and electricity.

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ran the cinematograph [movie projector] and did a good job. During the evening I began to read L'homme a l'oreille cassée.

July 3, Monday.

It was a warm, windy and cloudy day; but it only rained during dinner. During the morning I walked, and during the day we cut down a large pine tree by the railing. All four children got haircuts, and they look as if they belong in a choir.

July 4, Tuesday.

I began to read, for the third time, Peter by Merezhkovsky. During the morning I took a walk in the warm rain. During the day we worked and finished cutting up the pine tree. During the evening it rained again.

July 5, Wednesday.

All morning it rained, but at 2 o'clock the weather cleared up; by evening it had become cool. The day went as usual. In Petrograd, these days, there is much confusion and gunfire. Yesterday a lot of soldiers and sailors from Kronstadt started to go against the Kerensky government. There is utter confusion. But where are the people who could take this confusion in hand and stop the discord and bloodshed. The root of this is

in Petrograd and not in a part of Russia.<sup>171</sup>

July 6, Thursday.

In part, the overwhelming number of troops remained loyal to the government and took to the streets to support it. The weather was wonderful. I took a long walk with Tatiana and Valya. During the day we worked with some success in the forest chopping and sawing up four fir trees. During the evening I read.

July 7, Friday.

I took a walk in the morning with Marie, Valya, and the guard from the 3rd. Infantry Regiment. There was a drizzling rain. At 2 o'clock the weather cleared up, but it was windy. We worked near where we were before, only along the small path. During the evening we glued

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<sup>171</sup>On July 2, a revolt broke out in Petrograd among the soldiers who heard that they were to be sent to the front. On that evening soldiers and sailors appeared in the streets calling for the downfall of the Kerensky regime. On one truck there was a red flag with the words: "The First Bullet is for Kerensky." On the evening of July 4, a strong detachment of soldiers and sailors from Kronstadt appeared in Petrograd. Prince Lvov, the minister-president, resigned; and Kerensky became the head of the government. Rumors were spread that Lenin was a German spy, and the troops again began to support the Provisional Government. The Bolsheviks were blamed for the uprising and Pravda, their party newspaper, was closed; and many of their leaders, including Trotsky, were arrested. Lenin escaped into Finland. Lenin called these days "something more than a demonstration and less than a revolution." Kerensky, 289-297; Wren, 538-540.

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photographs from our "Life Under Arrest" into our album.

July 8, Saturday.

It was a nice, hot day. I went around the park with Tatiana and Marie. During the day I worked with them in the same place as before. Yesterday and today the guards from the 1st. and 4th. Infantry Regiments were punctual in their performance and were not roaming around in the garden as we took our walk. In the staff of the government there have been some changes: Prince Lvov has resigned and the President is now Kerensky. That man is in the right place at the present time. If he had more power, then things would be better.<sup>172</sup>

July 9, Sunday.

It was a sunny day, with a cool wind. I walked to Mass. We walked for two hours. We worked in the second place of yesterday and chopped down three fir trees. We stacked the wood in the clearing. During the evening Alexis showed his cinematograph. I read aloud Tartarin de Tarascon.

July 10, Monday.

The weather was overcast and pleasant without being hot.

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<sup>172</sup>Nicholas, obviously impressed with Kerensky, felt that he was the strong man Russia needed to bring about domestic tranquility and bring the war to a successful ending.

I took my morning walk around the park. During the day we cut down three dry fir trees and cut everything into firewood. We returned home exactly at 5 o'clock. I read a lot. Before dinner Olga received presents. During the evening I read aloud, Tartarin sur les Alpes.

July 11, Tuesday.

During the morning I took a short walk with Alexis. Upon returning with him, I learned of the arrival of Kerensky. In the conversation he mentioned our likely journey to the south, in view of the proximity of Tsarskoe Selo to the restless capital.<sup>173</sup> Because of her birthday, Olga went to services. After lunch we worked outside for awhile cutting down two fir trees. We are approaching our seventh dozen tree that we have cut down. I finished reading the 3rd. volume of Peter. It is well written, but it makes a heavy impression.

July 12, Wednesday.

The day was windy and cold -- only 10 degrees. I took a short walk with all my daughters. During the day we

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<sup>173</sup>Nicholas was mistaken about the destination of the trip. He expressed to Kerensky a desire to go to the Crimea. Kerensky, however, felt that a trip to the Crimea would be too dangerous, for it would cross unsettled territory. Tobolsk in Siberia had been chosen, because it was without railway communications and the governor's mansion was adequate to house the family. Nicholas was not informed where the family would go, but was instructed to pack warm clothes. Kerensky, 328-338.

worked as before. We chopped down four trees. We all thought and talked about the forthcoming journey; it seems strange to leave here after four months of seclusion.

July 13, Thursday.

For the last two days bad information has come from the front. After our attack in Galicia, many units, thoroughly infected with bad defeatist teachings, not only refused to go forward but are retreating with no pressure from the enemy. Making use of these favorable circumstances for themselves, the Germans and Austrians, though weak in strength themselves, made a drive against southern Galicia so that they could force all the southwestern front to move east. It is disgraceful and disgusting. Today, finally, there was a declaration from the temporary government in the theater of military action. The death sentence is being introduced again against those guilty of treason to the government. It would seem that those measures were belated.<sup>174</sup> The day became cloudy and warm.

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<sup>174</sup>The offensive which had opened on June 18 had been greeted with universal approbation, with only the Bolsheviki and their allies voicing opposition. Initially, the advance, at least on the Southwestern Front, was successful and sustained. But, on July 6, the Germans struck back with a counterattack that drove them back in retreat and confusion. In an effort to save the day, General Kornilov, whose units had been among the few to maintain discipline in the face of the advancing Germans, was appointed Commander in Chief of the Southwestern Front, and in time the line was stabilized after the loss of almost all of Galicia.

We worked as before, beside the clearing. We chopped down three trees and cut up two fallen trees. I began to collect my things and my books.

July 14, Friday.

It was a little warmer, but the sun was not out. During the morning, as usual, I took a nice walk with my daughters. After breakfast we worked near the Arsenal. We cut down three fir trees and cut up still another tree which had fallen in the grass. I packed some books and then read. During the evening I read aloud.

July 15, Saturday.

It was warmer today. During the morning I went around the park with Olga, Marie, Tatiana and Anastasia. Alexis played in the vegetable garden. Only the officer of the Third Infantry Regiment walked with us. Today we chopped down seven trees along the small walk. We all worked together. At 6:30 we went to vespers. During the evening we pasted photographs in our album. During the evening I began to read aloud The Luck of the Vails.

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Following the rout at the front and after the repression of the uprising of July, the death penalty was restored in the army, military censorship tightened, and the institutions of commissars and committees at the front more carefully defined and regulated. On July 18, Kerensky appointed General Kornilov Supreme Commander, replacing General Brusilov. Kornilov demanded that harsh measures be taken to restore order both at the front and on the home front. Ibid., 296, 298, 326, 342.

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July 16, Sunday.

The morning was overcast, but the weather was warm. At the end of Mass, Belyaev, as usual, told us the remarkable truthful words of experience with Christ. During the day, we worked in the same place as before. We cut up those four trees from yesterday and chopped down another four fir trees in one heap. Until dinner I walked with Tatiana and Marie. The evening became charming.

July 17, Monday.

Wonderfully warm weather began. I took a walk with Tatiana. The guard from the First Infantry Regiment is in good order, and today the guard from the Second Infantry Regiment is changing places with them. We sawed up the four fir trees from yesterday which were along the same path. Work was hot. I took a bath until tea time. I looked through some old albums in my new writing room.

July 18, Tuesday.

The weather got nice, with a deep blue sky. I read a lot until dinner time. The smell of lime trees in bloom drifted in the air. During the morning I took a good walk. During the day we worked for a while to the right of the path near yesterday's place. We chopped down four dry fir trees, but we only cut two of them up into firewood because they were rather rotten. The sun felt hot and healthy. I took a bath until tea time.



July 19, Wednesday.

Three years ago Germany declared war on us; how I wish all had survived those three years! God help and save Russia.<sup>175</sup> It was very hot. I took a short walk with Tatiana, Marie and Anastasia, and again a whole patrol from the Third Infantry Regiment came along. We worked in the same place as before. We cut down three trees and finished yesterday's fir tree. Now I am reading the novel by Merezhkovsky, Alexander I.

July 20, Thursday.

During the night a life-giving rain fell. The morning was foggy. During my walk I went with my daughters and Valya to the Arsenal, where we examined the lower floor; the upper one appeared locked. After breakfast it rained

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<sup>175</sup>On that night, three years before, the family waited a long time for Nicholas to come to dinner. The Empress had told one of the daughters to go call her father, when Nicholas entered the room, looking very pale, and told them what had happened. The next day, the Tsar went to St. Petersburg, where the crowds greeted him with cheer after cheer. The crowds knelt as one man and sang "God Save the Tsar."

The Manifesto declaring war had been read to the crowds. Nicholas knelt before the altar with all his military men surrounding him and took the following oath: "Officers of my guard, here present, I greet in you my whole army and give it my blessing. I solemnly swear that I will never make peace so long as one of the enemy is on the soil of the Fatherland.

The Russian people, after receiving a copy of the oath, broke into wild cheering, for it was the same one that Emperor Alexander I had taken in 1812 with the French invasion. Buchanan, I, 212; Paleologue, II, 51.

for a while. We worked, as before, sawing up two of yesterday's thick fir trees. Afterwards we all rested. The girls received a letter from Olga, who is in the Crimea.<sup>176</sup>

July 21, Friday.

During the morning it became an ideal day, with a wonderfully moonlit night. During the morning, I waited for Kerensky because I wished to know where we are to be sent and when. I took my normal walk from 11 o'clock to 12. Again we worked as before and finished the four remaining trees. After tea I finished the first volume of Alexander I. Before dinner, Marie received presents.

July 22, Saturday.

It is the birthday of dear Mama and our Marie. The weather was delightful and hot. During the day we cut down three small trees and sawed them up and another two older ones which had fallen. The work was hard. At six o'clock we went to services and vespers. I read aloud as usual. Yesterday evening Kerensky suddenly came from the city and stopped in person. It appears that the whole government is falling apart; he himself has tendered his resignation and is awaiting a decision which

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<sup>176</sup>Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna, the sister of Nicholas, was staying in the Crimea with her husband, Colonel Kulikovsky, and her mother.

must come at the conference meeting of the different parties which are all meeting in the Winter Palace.<sup>177</sup>

July 23, Sunday.

During the night it rained, and the day was considerably fresher. During the day we worked on the small path; we cut down and sawed up two small fir trees. Alix sat with us in the forest. After dinner, the Benckendorf couple visited us. During the evening The Luck of the Vails.

June 24, Monday.

The day became cool and overcast. During the morning I took my normal walk. During lunch it rained. When we went out at 2:30 it was not raining. We chopped down four fir trees across from yesterday's place. After dinner I read aloud The Poison Belt by C. Doyle.

June 25, Tuesday.

The new temporary government has been formed with Kerensky at the head. We will see if he can do any better [than Prince Lvov]. The first problem consists of the strengthening of the discipline in the army and

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<sup>177</sup>Kerensky, in a move to consolidate his power, submitted his resignation on July 21. He was being pressured from both the right and left. After resigning, he journeyed to Finland. The next day members of the Provisional Government sent him a telegram asking him to come back. By July 25, Kerensky was able to form a workable cabinet, showing a slight preponderance of Socialists over non-Socialists. Browder and Kerensky, 1333, 1389.

building up its courage, and also in bringing the position of internal Russia into some sort of order. The weather was very warm. We chopped down four fir trees and sawed up quite a few. I finished Alexander I. The last guard was good, thanks to the sending of 300 men from each Infantry Regiment to the front, and thus there is the absence of the reserves of many drafted men doing nothing.

July 26, Wednesday.

Again it was a startlingly hot day. On account of the stuffy air Alix did not go out. In the rooms it was considerably fresher. We sawed up and split all the fallen and chopped fir trees; it was hard work.

July 27, Thursday.

Such enjoyable weather. Not windy. We took a good walk. During the day we worked near the small path and sawed up three trees. I read the book, The Maritime Idea in the Russian Land by Lt. Kvashnin-Samarin.

July 28, Friday.

It was a wonderful day, and we took a walk with a great deal of pleasure. After lunch I learned that we are being sent, not to the Crimea, but to one of the distant provincial towns three or four days' journey to the east. But where I could not learn. The Palace Commander does

not know. We all tried to guess. We chopped down and knocked over a large fir tree in the clearing near the path. There was a short, warm storm. During the evening I read aloud A Study in Scarlet by C. Doyle.

July 29, Saturday.

Such wonderful weather. During my morning walk, as we were passing by the gate of the path that leads straight to the greenhouse, we noticed one of the sentries asleep in the grass. The officer who was accompanying us went over and took the man's rifle. During the day we chopped down nine trees and sawed up one fir tree. All of these were along the same path. It was steaming hot, and the storm clouds gathered around us and we could hear thunder; but toward evening the sky cleared up. After vespers, Alexis received presents. I packed and removed my things so that now the room has a deserted look.

July 30, Sunday.

Today our dear Alexis turned 13 years old. May God give him health, patience, strength of spirit and body in the coming difficult times. We went to Mass and after lunch to the service in which they presented the image of the Virgin. Somehow it was especially warm to offer prayers to Her Holy Image together with all our dear people. She was brought in and taken out across the garden by the guards of the Third Regiment. We worked

for a while in the clearing. We chopped down a fir tree and began to saw another in two. It was very hot. Everything is packed; now only the pictures on the walls remain. I saw Benckendorf until dinner, and in the evening I saw the commander.

July 31, Monday.

It is the last day of our sojourn in Tsarskoe Selo. The weather became wonderful. During the day we worked in the same place and sawed down four trees and sawed up yesterday's. After dinner, we awaited the time of our leaving, which keeps being put aside. Unexpectedly Kerensky arrived and told us we were leaving.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>178</sup>Preparations for the departure were kept secret. Most members of the Provisional Government did not know that a move was about to take place, for only six people in Petrograd knew of it. About eleven that evening, Kerensky went to Tsarskoe Selo to supervise the departure for Tobolsk. He inspected the guards who had been chosen for the journey. Rumors spread that the Tsar was leaving, and a crowd gathered around the palace. Nicholas was allowed to visit with his brother, Michael, before his departure. The brothers met in the Tsar's study about midnight. They both appeared nervous and dejected by the events of the last few months. For a long time they stared at each other and then began to carry on a casual conversation. They parted with a long embrace, never to see each other again.

Preparations for the train progressed slowly, and the Imperial family and the servants who would travel along did not get on the train until daylight. After more farewells from those staying behind [Count Benckendorf was unable to go because of his advanced age] the train pulled out of the station. Kerensky, 336-338.

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August 1, Tuesday.

The whole family was lodged in a good sleeping car, with guards on both sides. I went to bed at 7:45 [a.m.] and slept lightly until 9:15 [a.m.]. It was very windy and dusty in the car. It was 26 degrees. We took a walk during the day with our guards and gathered flowers and berries. We ate in a restaurant, with food cooked by an excellent East Chinese cook.

August 2, Wednesday.

We walked and it began to rain. We had to curtain off all the windows in all the rooms by the order of the commander; this is both stupid and boring.

August 3, Thursday.

We came to Perm at 4 o'clock, and I walked with Mr. Kunger along the river. There was a very beautiful valley.

August 4, Friday.

The train went almost to the pier, so that we only had to get off and go down to the ship. Our ship was called "Rus." They began the transfer of our things and it continued all night. Poor Alexis was again resting, God knows how. The pounding and uproar lasted all night and almost overcame me. They left Tiumen about

six o'clock.<sup>179</sup>

August 5, Saturday.

During the trip along the Tura, I slept very little. Alix and I had one very uncomfortable cabin, and all the girls were together in the fifth cabin down the corridor. Further toward the bow was a good sitting room and a small cabin with a piano. Second Class is under us, and this is where all the soldiers from the First Regiment who are traveling with us stay. All day we went topside, and stayed in the pleasant air. The weather was overcast but dry and warm. In front of us was a mine sweeper and behind another steamship with the soldiers from the 2nd and 4th Infantry Regiments and the rest of the baggage. We stopped two hours to load firewood. Toward night it got cold. We have our kitchen staff here on the steamship. Everybody went to sleep early.

August 6, Sunday.

We navigated toward the Tobol. I got up late because I did not sleep very well with all the pounding and stopping. During the night we went from the Tura to the Tobol.

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<sup>179</sup>As the royal family transferred from the railway cars to the steamer, a large crowd watched in quiet respect. When the family passed, members in the crowd bowed and crossed themselves. Franklin, 139.



The river was wider and the banks were higher. The morning was fresh and during the day it got quite warm when the sun came out. I forgot to mention that yesterday before dinner we passed by the village of Pokrovskoe, the home of Gregory [Rasputin]. All day we walked and sat on the deck. At 6:30 we came to Tobolsk,<sup>180</sup> although we could only see it for fifteen minutes. On the bank many people were standing; that must mean that they knew about our arrival.<sup>181</sup> I remember the view over the houses and churches on the mountain. As soon as the ship had put into shore, we began to unload our baggage. Valya, the commissar, and the commander<sup>182</sup> started off to examine the house which was our destination and the accommodations. On their return we learned for the first time that our lodgings were empty, without any furniture, dirty; and that we could not move in. Therefore, we had to wait back on the ship for them to bring in the necessary baggage for sleeping. We ate a little and joked about the strange

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<sup>180</sup>Tobolsk, formerly the capital of Siberia, was a town of 20,000, more than two hundred miles from the nearest railroad. With its dirt roads, wooden planks for sidewalks and several whitewashed churches, it looked like any other little Siberian town. Botkin, 156.

<sup>181</sup>The local people appeared full of respect for their new neighbors. Isolated from any type of transportation system other than the river, news traveled slowly and with little effect.

<sup>182</sup>Colonel Korovichenko was appointed Governor-General of the district of Kazan in which Tobolsk was located.

inability of the people to arrange even our lodging and went to sleep early.

August 7, Monday.

I slept well. The rain and cold had returned. We decided to remain on the ship. Some squalls came up, but at 1 o'clock the weather cleared up. The crowd continued to build up on the pier and the nearby bank. Some had their feet almost in the water and went back inside only when it rained. A lot of work has gone into both houses, cleaning and bringing the rooms into presentable appearance.<sup>183</sup> All of us and the guards wanted to go some place farther up the river while we waited. We ate lunch at 1 o'clock and dinner at 8 o'clock. The kitchen in the house had already been fixed up, and our food was brought to us from there. All evening I went with the children around our cabins. The weather was cold, with a northwest wind.

August 8, Tuesday.

I slept well and got up at 9:15. The morning was clear, and later the wind began to blow and again it swept up some squalls. After lunch we went up along the Irtysh River about ten miles. We landed on the right bank and went for a walk. We went through the bushes and crossed

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<sup>183</sup>The Imperial family occupied the entire first floor of the Governor's mansion. The guards and some of the servants lived in the Kornilov House, which belonged to a rich merchant and faced the Governor's mansion on the opposite side of the street. Gilliard, 240!

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a small stream. We climbed a small bank, from where we had a wonderful view. The ship came up to us, and we went back again to Tobolsk. We landed at 6 o'clock on the other pier. Until dinner I took a bath -- the first since the 31st. of July -- thanks to that I slept wonderfully.

August 9, Wednesday.

The weather became nice and warm. During the morning as always a train of people came into town. Marie had a fever and Alexis's left arm hurt a little. Until lunch I spent all my time and pleasure talking in the sunshine. At 2:30 our ship went to the other side of the river and was laying in a supply of wood, and we went for a walk. The walking was very hot. We came back to the ship at 4:30 and returned to the other side. Some of the inhabitants were boat riding and sailed in front of us. The guards from Kronstadt went to stay in their lodgings in the city.

August 10, Thursday.

Bad weather has returned. It was raining, and there was a wind. Marie still had her fever and besides Alexis's arm also hurts. During the day it was absolutely boring without a walk or anything to do. At 5 o'clock the weather cleared up again.

August 11, Friday.

Alexis only slept a little. During the night he moved in with Alix. His ear was better, and his arm only ached a little now and then. Marie is better. The day became quiet. All morning I walked around the deck. We went up the Tobol and put ashore on the left bank and went along the road and returned along the river with various difficulties but in a good mood. At 6 o'clock we returned to Tobolsk, and with a loud crash ran into the pier, breaking some of the railings on the side. The day was hot.

August 12, Saturday.

It was another nice day without the sun but very warm. During the morning I went on deck and read there until time for my lunch. Marie and Alexis got up and during the day were out in the air. At 3 o'clock we went down along the Irtysh; and we landed at the foot of a high bank, where I had wanted to climb for a long time. We quickly climbed it with the guards and sat for a long time on a bald hill with a nice view. We returned to Tobolsk at tea time.

August 13, Sunday.

We got up a little early, and the last things were quickly packed. At 10:30 I went with the children, the commandant

and the officers to our new dwelling. We surveyed the entire house from basement to roof. We occupied the 2nd. floor and the sitting room beneath it. At 12 o'clock the furniture arrived, and a priest sprinkled all the rooms with holy water. We had lunch and dinner in our new house. We set about to examine the house in which we are living. Many of the rooms were still not furnished and had an unattractive look. Then we went to the so-called garden, a poor vegetable garden. We examined the kitchen and the sentry's quarters.<sup>184</sup> Everything had a strange, abandoned appearance. I unpacked our things in the reading and dressing rooms, which are half mine and half Alix's. We passed the evening together. We played bezik.<sup>185</sup>

August 14, Monday.

After yesterday's thunderstorms until dinner, today's weather was cold and rainy with a strong wind. All day we unpacked photographs of the journey of 1890-1891 [his trip around the world]. I brought them on purpose so that in my spare time I could put them in order. We said goodbye to the commissar, who is leaving for

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<sup>184</sup>The facilities were very cramped, and the family suffered from want of space. Ibid., 242.

<sup>185</sup>Nicholas suffered from a lack of exercise. He complained to Colonel Kobylinsky, who then brought in some beech trunks and saws so that Nicholas could cut firewood. Ibid., 242.

Moscow. I took a walk in the garden; the children were swinging in the new swings. We spent the evening by ourselves.

August 15, Tuesday.

Since they did not allow us to go on the streets, we could not go to the 11 o'clock service at church.<sup>186</sup> After lunch we went into the garden for almost two hours; Alix went out, too. The weather was warm, and about 5 o'clock the sun came out; we sat on the balcony until 6:30. I continued to sort the photographs of my long journey.

August 16, Wednesday.

It was a nice, warm day. Now every morning I drink tea together with the children. We spent an hour in the so-called garden and the larger part of the day on the balcony, which is warm from the sun. Until tea I pattered around in the garden. The children played on the swings.

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<sup>186</sup>The Imperial family was not permitted to walk in the streets. Dr. Botkins, the family physician, wrote to Kerensky complaining that this practice was unhealthy. Kerensky sent a reply granting the family the privilege of walking in the streets; however, Pankratov felt that such privileges were unheard of and refused them permission. Pankratov declared that he was unable to control the mobs, which harbored a deep hatred for the family. Far from showing any hatred, the citizens of Tobolsk doffed their hats and sent presents to the Tsar and his family. Botkin, 157-158.

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August 17, Thursday.

It was a wonderful day -- in the shade 19 degrees and on the balcony 36 degrees. Alexis's arm hurt. During the morning we spent an hour in the garden and during the afternoon two hours. Yesterday I began to read L'île enchantée. During the evening we played dominoes, Alix, Tatiana, Botkin, and I. During tea time, a large thunderstorm came up. It was a moonlit night.

August 18, Friday.

The morning was overcast and cold; about one o'clock the sun came out and the day became nice. Alexis got up. During the evening Khitrovna appeared; she came from Petrograd and visited Nastenki Gendrikov, and they had to search for him. The devil knows what happened.

August 19, Saturday.

On account of yesterday's incident Nastenki was deprived of the right of walking on the streets for a few days, and poor Khitrovna had to go back again on the evening ship. The weather became nice, with a hot sun. During the morning we went and sat in the garden for an hour and for two hours in the afternoon. I made a swinging bench in the garden for myself. I began the book The Scarlet Pimpernel.

August 20, Sunday.

It was ideal weather. During the day the temperature went down to 21 degrees in the shade. At 11 o'clock we had church services in the hall.<sup>187</sup> I went out into the garden to work. I chopped down a dry pine tree. After tea, as on all these days, I read to my daughters on the balcony under the burning rays of the sun. The evening was warm and moonlit.

August 21, Monday.

With delight we sunbathed all day on the balcony and in the garden. During the day I chopped down a dry birch tree and cut it into firewood. During tea a thunderstorm came up and brought a little fresh air. I began to read In the Forest by Pechersky.

August 22, Tuesday.

Such a nice day. An annoying wind made it impossible to take a walk along the banks of the river or in the forest. We read on the balcony and passed three hours in the garden. In the evening, as usual, we played dominoes.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>187</sup>The religious services were at first held in the house in a large hall on the first floor. The priest of the Church of the Annunciation, his deacons and four nuns from the Ivanovsky Convent were allowed to attend. With no consecrated altar, Mass could not be held; and this troubled the family. Gilliard, 241.

<sup>188</sup>Dinner was served at half-past seven. After the meal games were organized to break the monotony. Often Nicholas read aloud while the Grand Duchesses did needlework. Alexandria listened to her husband and joined in the games. Ibid., 243.



August 23, Wednesday.

Today it has been two years since I went to Moghilev.<sup>189</sup> Much water has passed under the bridge since then. The day became excellent. Twenty-three degrees in the shade. The day passed as before. We dug beds for the garden. There was a warm cloud burst.

August 24, Thursday.

It was a nice day. V. N. Derevenko and his family arrived and that was the biggest thing that had happened for days. Unfortunately, bad news from the front was confirmed. We learned that Riga still stood but that our army had retreated far into the northeast.<sup>190</sup>

August 25, Friday.

The weather was warm, with a strong eastern breeze. My walk in the garden was incredibly boring; here I feel much more strongly in seclusion than I was in Tsarskoe Selo.

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<sup>189</sup>On August 23, 1915, Nicholas issued the following Manifesto:

"Today I have assumed the command of all the military and naval forces operating in the theatre of war.

"With firm trust in divine mercy and unshakable confidence in ultimate victory, we shall fulfill our sacred duty of defending our country to the death, and we will never allow Russian soil to be dishonored." Paleologue, II, 70.

<sup>190</sup>The retreat of the army bothered not only Nicholas, but also the Supreme Commander, General Kornilov. Incapable of telling shades of political difference, he looked suspiciously at the Socialists and Bolsheviks and planned to "hang them all." Wren, 540.

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I worked in the flower beds. During the evening it rained.

August 26, Saturday.

After a good rain during the night, the weather changed again for the better. I read to the children until time for our walk, and then before lunch and after tea I worked in the garden. Alix continued to have a fever and an earache, but during the day she went out for a little while. From the front there is little news. By the time the newspapers get here they are six days old.<sup>191</sup>

August 26, Sunday.

Today it was a little fresher. At 11 o'clock church services were held. We all liked the priest very much who offered the services for us and the four nuns who helped. Alix continued to stay in bed for reasons of caution.

August 28, Monday.

This morning I learned of the death of E. Tatishchev from his son, who had received a telegram eight days after his father's death.<sup>192</sup> The weather was fresh but

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<sup>191</sup>There was an almost complete absence of news in Tobolsk. Letters arrived very irregularly and after long delays. The family read the local newspaper, which was printed on packing paper and often wrong. Gilliard, 243.

<sup>192</sup>General Tatishchev, in the War, represented Nicholas at the German Court, then became his aide-de-camp and followed him into exile, Letters, 304.

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overcast. Alix got up and walked around her room. The girls also had colds, but they went out into the garden. Naturally no one was sitting on the balcony. I read a lot.

August 29, Tuesday.

Today it has been ten years since we engraved the stone [dedicated] on the Standard.<sup>193</sup> Alexis slept only a little during the night, and he moved in with Alix. His ear was better, and his arm only ached a little now and then. Marie is better. The day was quiet. All morning I walked around trying to keep active. During the day we went along the Tobol River. We put ashore on the left bank. We went up the river by road and came back down by boat. There were some difficulties, but the whole day put me in a good mood.

August 30, Wednesday.

At 11 o'clock Mass was held. During the day we all took a walk in the garden. The weather got a little warmer, but in the evening it rained. The day passed as usual. After dinner we played dice.

August 31, Thursday.

The day passed as usual.

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<sup>193</sup>The Standard replaced the Imperial yacht Polar Star.

September 1, Friday.

The new commissar, Pankratov, arrived with his assistant sent by the Provisional Government, and they set up their residence in a suite of the house. The assistant is a disheveled ensign, apparently either a worker or a poor teacher. He is the censor of our correspondence.<sup>194</sup>

The day became rainy and chilly.

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<sup>194</sup>The Commissar Pankratov and his assistant, Ensign Nikolsky, were both members of the Socialist Revolutionary Party. They were instructed to allay extremist criticism that the Tsar and his family were being treated with undue leniency. Pankratov, hardly likely to be well disposed to the family, had killed a policeman while defending a woman. For this crime he had been in jail for fifteen years and then exiled to the Yakut country, where he had lived for twenty-seven more years. Regardless of his crime, Pankratov had an easy-going manner and a weak character. Nicholas referred to him as the "little man."

Nikolsky, whom Pankratov had met during his exile, was a different type of man. Embittered, ill-mannered, obstinate and vindictive, he was an impassioned revolutionary who was appalled by the casual and friendly relations between the Tsar and his guards. He lectured the soldiers upon the iniquities of the Tsarist regime. Many of the guards found it hard to act in the manner upon which Nikolsky insisted. This brought about a general collapse of military discipline, and Colonel Kobylinsky found himself without effective authority. Nikolsky insisted that the house arrest be changed to one of a real prison. The privileges of the family were withdrawn and eventually they could not even go to church. Their movements were constantly watched, with more petty regulations thrust upon them every day. The Tsar lost the use of his dagger, the children could not use the snow slide, and the soldiers began cursing in the presence of the whole family. The soldiers acted like criminals, especially after the pay which Kerensky had promised did not arrive. Botkin, 159-160; Franklin, 141-143.

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September 2, Saturday.

The weather was clear and warm. I began to walk in the fenced yard in front of the house;<sup>195</sup> it was better here than in the damp garden because here the sun shines all day. I climbed with the children on the roof of the greenhouse. In the evening I read aloud The Ninth Rampart by Danilevsky.

September 3, Sunday.

It was a nice warm day. Mass was at 11 o'clock. We took a walk both during the morning and during the day. During the morning I finished the book In the Forest and began On the Mountain; they were both well written.

September 4, Monday.

It was a splendid bright day. There was much in the air. The last few days have brought a great deal of unpleasantness, owing to the absence of proper sewage facilities. The lower W.C. is filled with waste from the upper W.C.; therefore, we had to refrain from visiting the upper one and abstain from bathing; all this because the cesspool pit was too small and because nobody wanted to clean it. I asked E.S. Botkin to bring this to the attention of the commissar, Pankratov, who came and was dismayed at

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<sup>195</sup>A cut-off portion of the street, it had been converted into a yard by surrounding it with an eight-foot-high wooden fence. Botkin, 157.

the state of things.

September 5, Tuesday.

Telegrams arrive here twice a day; many of them are composed so obscurely that it is difficult to understand them. Evidently in Petrograd there is great confusion. Again there has been a change in the staff of the government. Evidently no one escapes from the enterprises of General Kornilov; he himself sides part of the time with the generals and officers who are prisoners to their own army and part of the time with the army. He goes to Petrograd and then leaves again.<sup>196</sup> The weather became wonderfully hot.

September 6, Wednesday.

It was a very nice day and all went well. We dug dams across the rows in the garden. The girls played "bumble puppy."

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<sup>196</sup>General Kornilov expressed his desire that the Soviets should be pushed aside and all the Socialists and Bolsheviks hanged. In the early hours of August 27, Kornilov declared martial law and announced his intention to march on Petrograd. Kerensky relieved him from the office of Supreme Commander, but Kornilov continued his march. The coup collapsed, for he failed to win the support of the troops and the other generals. By the afternoon of August 29 the situation was under control. On August 30, Kerensky appointed himself Supreme Commander. Nicholas supported Kornilov, for he felt he was the only hope against the Bolsheviks. Gilliard, 243; Kerensky, 350-352.

September 7, Thursday.

The morning was cloudy and windy; afterwards the weather cleared up. There was a lot in the air. We filled the rows in the garden from the pond and cut firewood for our baths.

September 8, Friday.

For the first time we attended church. It was at the Church of the Annunciation, over which our old priest served.<sup>197</sup>The pleasure was spoiled for me by the idiotic conditions which took place during our procession there. Along the road through the village where there was nobody, guards were set up, but at the church there was a huge crowd of people. This bothered me a great deal. The weather became fine, not too cool.

September 9, Saturday.

During the night and during the morning it rained and a cold wind was blowing. About 3 o'clock the sun came out from behind the clouds. I paced a lot up and down the yard. During the evening while we played dominoes and bezik, Botkin read aloud The Ninth Wave.

September 10, Sunday.

The morning was clear, but towards midday it rained.

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<sup>197</sup>On the festival of the Nativity of the Virgin, Pankratov allowed the family to attend a church service; however, this practice was not often repeated. Gilliard, 241.

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The service of the Mass was held at home. I went into the backyard and then into the garden about 2 o'clock. During the evening Valya read aloud quite well and distinctly.

September 11, Monday.

Again it was a nice sunny day, during which everything went as usual.

September 12, Tuesday.

The weather was warm and overcast. During the day I cut firewood, and the girls played on the wooden bridge with tennis balls.

September 13, Wednesday.

It rained for half the day but it was warm. I finished the book On the Mountain and began a novel by Leskov. At 9 o'clock in the evening, church services were held for us in the hall. We went to bed early.

September 14, Thursday.

In order to avoid the crowds of people in the streets and at the church we asked for Mass to be held at 8 o'clock. Everything went well; the sentries were arranged along the fence of the village park. The weather became bad -- cold and damp -- but we still took a lot of walks. They permitted Kola Derevenko to



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come to see Alexis.<sup>198</sup>

September 15, Friday.

It was a nice clear autumn day; it went like all the other days.

September 16, Saturday.

The weather became quite warm. It was pleasant to walk and work in the backyard. I finished the story Oboidennie and began reading The Islander.

September 17, Sunday.

It was a nice warm day, 13 degrees in the shade. After Mass we walked, and during the day we stayed out in the fresh air for a long time. Olga was bedridden with a light fever. Tatishchev was also not well.

September 18, Monday.

Autumn this year has been remarkable here; today it was 18 degrees in the shade and the air was quite warm, much like the south. During the day I talked with Bali in the garden, in which nothing has grown for many years. Olga, who is sick, came out and sat on the balcony for a long time with Alix.<sup>199</sup> I finished The Islanders by Leskov.

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<sup>198</sup>The son of Dr. Derevenko was permitted to play with Alexis. Ibid., 256.

<sup>199</sup>Alexandra, who constantly complained of a heart condition and was usually transported by a wheelchair, seldom came downstairs or went outside. She never rose before lunch and usually ate upstairs with her son. Franklin, 140.

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I wrote a letter to Mama and gave it to the censor, Pankratov.

September 19, Tuesday.

It was half clear but a rather warm day. About 12 o'clock a short, light rain fell. Anastasia was bedridden. Tatishchev was a little better. During the day I cut up firewood and passed the time in the garden. I began to read the novel Nowhere by Leskov.

September 20, Wednesday.

The weather suddenly changed. A storm blew in with rain and afterwards it turned to sleet and finally snow. We spent a lot more time walking back and forth in the backyard. The girls got better, but they still had to remain at home.

September 21, Thursday.

During the night everything became covered with snow. But by 12 o'clock everything had melted. I chopped firewood.

September 22, Friday.

During the morning a lot of snow fell again. The weather was overcast toward evening. We took a walk at 2 o'clock as usual. The other day our good Baron Bode arrived with a cargo of some of our things from Tsarskoe Selo.

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September 23, Saturday.

Among the things that he brought were three or four boxes of wine, which the soldiers of the detachment saw and then started arguing over. They began to demand the destruction of all the bottles in the Kornilovsky house. After a long admonition on the part of the commissar, it was decided that all the wine be taken out and poured into the Irtysh. The departure of the cart with the boxes of wine, on which sat the commissar with an axe in his hand and all the armed soldiers behind, we saw from the window before tea. During the evening it rained; and after an hour it cleared up, and the weather became nice with about 11 degrees in the shade.

September 24, Sunday.

Following last week's incident in church, they wanted to avoid any excitement and Mass was held for us at home. The day became cool -- 11 degrees in the shade with a wind. We went for a long walk and I played for a while with Olga in the garden and then chopped wood. During the evening I began to read aloud The Engraved Angel.

September 25, Monday.

It was nice weather, 14 degrees above frost in the shade. During our walk the Commissar, his fowl assistant commissar, Ensign Nikolsky, and three sentries searched

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our house looking for wine. Not finding any, they came out in half an hour and left. After tea we began to move our things which had arrived from Tsarskoe Selo.

September 26, Tuesday.

It was such a cool day without any clouds. I took a walk in the morning and read on the balcony until lunch. During the day I chopped wood and passed the time in the garden. After tea I took the rugs which had arrived and placed them in our rooms. I finished the novel Nowhere by Leskov.

September 27, Wednesday.

The weather was cool, 14 degrees in the shade. I began to read Ramuntcho by R. Loti.

September 28, Thursday.

Since the beginning of the week I have continued the history and geography lessons with Alexis. The weather was beautiful. Much was in the air.

September 29, Friday.

Several days ago E. S. Botkin received papers from Kerensky, which we knew of, that gave us permission to walk in the city. Botkin asked when we could begin this and Pankratov, the rascal, answered that now he could not talk about walks because of some misunderstood fear for

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our safety. Everyone was very indignant about this answer. The weather became cooler. I finished Ramuntcho.

September 30, Saturday.

The day became sunny and fine. During the morning we walked for an hour and during the afternoon for two and a half hours. I played with the children in the garden and also chopped wood. I began to read the fifth volume of Leskov; it certainly is a long story. At 9 o'clock vespers was held for us. In the evening Baron Bode left.

October 1, Sunday.

We got up at 7 o'clock before services and today we went to Mass. After the second tea we took a long walk; the weather became wonderful, but with a wind from the west. During the day I puttered around in the garden for a long time. I learned from a telegram that the enemy has made further advances.

October 2, Monday.

It was a warm day; about 4 o'clock a short rain fell. Now all of us want to take a walk, but we are obliged to go around town accompanied by the sentries.

October 3, Tuesday.

The weather was absolutely like August -- 13 degrees in

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the shade but in the sun on the balcony it went up to 29 degrees. The day passed as usual. During the evening I read aloud the story The Robbery by Leskov.

October 4, Wednesday.

We remembered today the holiday of last year which we spent in the Crimea. It was warmer in Tobolsk than it was in the Crimea that day! The day passed as usual. After vespers, Alexis received presents. We ate dinner at 7:30.

October 5, Thursday.

On Alexis's name day we did not go to church because of the stubbornness of Pankratov, but at 11 o'clock church services were held here. During the morning a fog came in which lasted until one o'clock. For a long time we stayed out in the fresh air. During the evening Alexis showed us motion pictures.

October 6, Friday.

It was a clear, cold day. I learned of the arrival yesterday of Mr. Gibbs, but I still have not seen him, probably because he brought some things and letters which have not been inspected.<sup>200</sup>I began the sixth volume of Leskov.

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<sup>200</sup>The arrival of Mr. Gibbs, a tutor of the Tsarevich, greatly pleased Nicholas, who pumped him for all outside information.

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October 7, Saturday.

During the night it went down 9 degrees. The day was clear but fairly cold, especially on the hands. Finally Mr. Gibbs appeared, who told us much of interest about life in Petrograd. At nine o'clock vespers was held for us.

October 8, Sunday.

At 8 o'clock we went to Mass. All morning it was snowing; it was not too cold during the day although it went down to one degree. We took a walk until and after breakfast. I read for a long time. I laid down for an hour or so until dinner time. In the evening we played bezik.

October 9, Monday.

It is still snowing; during the day it got nicer. Toward evening it went down to nine degrees. During the day I went with the children to the wooden bridge for a walk. We could hear the whistle of a steamship.

October 10, Tuesday.

The weather became pleasant, about one degree above frost. Klavakia Mikhailovna Bitner, who came here two days ago, gave me a letter from Ksenin.<sup>201</sup> Today she started to take

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<sup>201</sup>I. K. M. Bitner was a nurse and tutor.

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care of the children.

October 11, Wednesday.

It thawed and the day became clear, almost like spring. I began to read La Reine Margot. Tatishchev is again sick and has lain down.

October 12, Thursday.

It was a nice sunny day, after a light, cold night. We have started taking our walks again at 4 o'clock since the children have an added number of lessons.<sup>202</sup>

October 13, Friday.

It has already been two months that we have lived in this house. It was a wonderful, sunny day and it passed as usual.

October 14, Saturday.

During the night it was six degrees above frost, and in the morning it was foggy. It was nice weather at noon, for it went up to 13 degrees in the sun; but in the evening it was cold again. At 9 o'clock vespers.

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<sup>202</sup>Lessons began at 9 o'clock in the morning and were recessed at 11 for an hour's walk. As there were no class rooms, the lessons were given in the large hall on the first floor or in Alexis's room. As the days became shorter the lessons were held in the afternoon. Ibid., 242.



October 15, Sunday.

At 8 o'clock we went to Mass. The morning was very nice; and then it got cloudy. The day became miserable. In the evening we watched motion pictures.

October 16, Monday.

It was a very overcast day without thawing. I finished La Reine Margot. In the evening, as usual, we played bezik.

October 17, Tuesday.

Twenty-nine years have passed from the day of our salvation from the train wreck; no one here other than myself was in it.<sup>203</sup> I began the eighth volume of Leskov. Alexis receives lessons from me only in Russian history, for Bitner is teaching him Russian geography. Kastritsky<sup>204</sup> arrived from the Crimea.

October 18, Wednesday.

Finally the sun came out, the day was fine and the snow melted. During the evening I read aloud The Marriage by Gogol.

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<sup>203</sup>This was the wreck in which Alexander III put the strain on his kidneys from which he died six years later.

<sup>204</sup>Kastritsky was the dentist of the Imperial family who carried news of the family as he traveled from residence to residence. Letters, 303.

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October 19, Thursday.

It was warm, with a wet snow falling. Before breakfast I sat for a while with Kastritsky. I read for awhile. During the evening I began to read aloud Dracula.

October 20, Friday.

Today is already the 23rd. anniversary of the death of dear Papa. Such circumstances he never lived to see! God, how trying for poor Russia! In the evening before dinner we attended vespers.

October 21, Saturday.

During the morning we saw from the window a procession with the body of one of the infantrymen of the 4th. Battalion. In front of the procession was a bad performance by a small group of gymnasts. At 11 o'clock church services were held for us. Until tea time I sat with Kastritsky. At 9 o'clock we went to vespers and then we went to confession. We went to bed early.

October 22, Sunday.

At 8 o'clock we went to Mass and the whole family received the Eucharist. It was a very sincere and consoling experience. The weather grew mild but it snowed all day. For a long time we worked in the garden.

October 23, Monday.

The morning was clear and fine. I began the ninth

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volume of Leskov. Today is the 27th anniversary of my departure on the overseas voyage.

October 24, Tuesday.

It was a very nice sunny day. Very much was in the air. Until tea time I gave a history lesson to Alexis.

October 25, Wednesday.

It was another wonderful day but slightly colder. During the morning I showed Kastritsky all our rooms. During the day I chopped wood.

October 26, Thursday.

From 10 o'clock to 11 o'clock I was with Kastritsky. During the evening I said goodbye to him. He left for the Crimea. The day became nice; in the sun it was 11 degrees. For a long time I chopped firewood.

October 27, Friday.

It was a wonderful sunny day. During the day I helped three infantrymen dig holes for the erection of poles for the new shed. I was covered with sweat. I wrote to Mama.

October 28, Saturday.

It was nice weather -- four degrees above frost during the night and up to 10 degrees above frost during the day. We walked a long time and I chopped firewood for a long time.

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October 29, Sunday.

We got up at 7 o'clock when it was still completely dark and at 8 o'clock we went to Mass. After the second tea we took a walk. The weather was mild and overcast. I wrote to Olga [Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna, sister of Nicholas]. I began the tenth volume of Leskov. Today we repaired a collection of things donated by the people for use of the army on the front.

October 30, Monday.

The day went as usual; the weather was warm. During the evening I finished aloud Dracula in Russian.

October 31, Tuesday.

It was another mild day and thawing during the day. At 4:30 I gave a history lesson to Alexis. During the evening I read aloud Sea Stories by Belomov.

November 1, Wednesday.

During the night a lot of snow fell but during the day it almost all melted. We stocked firewood in the new shed -- it was dirty work. I began the book I Will Repay and a continuation of the Scarlet Pimpernell.

November 2, Thursday.

Suddenly during the night it turned cold, going down in the morning to one degree below frost. During the day

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it was sunny with a north wind. We took a walk as always; during the day we carried in more firewood. In the evening Olga received modest presents.

November 3, Friday.

Dear Olga turned 22 years old today; it is a pity that the poor child had to spend her birthday in the present surroundings. At 12 o'clock services were held for us. The weather was again mild. I chopped firewood. I began an interesting book, The Elusive Pimpernel.

November 4, Saturday.

During the morning I was cheered by a letter from Kseny. A lot of snow fell. I cleared a path for my walk and during the day stacked firewood in the shed. It has already been two days since any telegrams have come into the station; it must be that no important events have occurred in the large cities. At 9 o'clock vespers was held.

November 5, Sunday.

We went to Mass in the dark. I wrote a letter to Kseny. During the morning it rained. During the day we stacked firewood. I rested before dinner.

November 6, Monday.

It was a Hussar holiday. I began a new book, Fire in the Stubble. During the morning it was snowing and it

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warmed up until 8 o'clock in the evening. A strong wind blew for awhile and after dinner it went up to 13 degrees above frost and the barometer went down to 735.

November 7, Tuesday.

It was a sunny day, 14 degrees of frost. During the day until tea I gave Alexis a lesson in Russian history. During the evening we played bezik and I read aloud two stories by Bélomov.

November 8, Wednesday.

It was a nice cold day. During the morning it was 14 degrees [i.e., 14 degrees "of frost," or 14 below freezing, or 18 degrees F] and toward evening it was 17 degrees of frost. I took a walk and brought in firewood.

November 9, Thursday.

During the morning at 8 o'clock I gave a lesson to Alexis. During the day we brought in all the firewood to the shed and finally filled it.<sup>205</sup> The weather was milder. I began to read 1793 by Victor Hugo.

November 10, Friday.

It was a warm day. It went up to zero degrees [i.e., 32 degrees F.]. During the day I chopped firewood.

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<sup>205</sup>There was a great need for firewood. The house was extremely primitive, with no central heating system.

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I finished the first volume of 1793 by Victor Hugo. During the evening I read aloud Sketches of a Sportsman by Turgenev.

November 11, Saturday.

A lot of snow fell. For a long time no newspapers from Petrograd have arrived, neither have any telegrams. In such difficult times this is terrifying.<sup>206</sup> The girls were playing on the swings and jumping down on each other in a heap of snow. Vespers was at 9 o'clock.

November 12, Sunday.

At 8 o'clock we went to Mass. I took a long walk. The day was not very cold. I began General History by Jaeger.

November 13, Monday.

There was a very big thaw, up to three degrees and this in Siberia! Finally a telegram from the army arrived, but not from Petrograd.

November 14, Tuesday.

Today was the 23rd anniversary of our wedding! At 12 o'clock services were held; the choir got confused and went astray. It must be that they had not been practicing. The weather was sunny, warm and with gusts of wind. After tea, I re-read my last diary. It was a pleasant occupation.

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<sup>206</sup>Nicholas did not know that the Bolshevik Revolution had taken place in Petrograd.

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November 15, Wednesday.

The day was cold and sunny. Outside it was unbelievably slippery. I took a long walk and chopped firewood.

November 16, Thursday.

For 24 hours there was a storm and it did not let up once. During the morning I gave a lesson to Alexis.

November 17, Friday.

It was such unpleasant weather with a piercing wind. It was disheartening to read in the paper accounts about what happened two weeks ago in Petrograd and Moscow. It was a very bad and disgraceful event.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>207</sup>On October 10, 1917 (O.S.) the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party met in secret session to map out their strategy. After long debate Lenin convinced the others that the time was right for a Bolshevik take-over and plans were made. Although their plans became known, no steps were taken by the Provisional Government to prevent it. On October 22, the Military Revolutionary Committee, controlled by the Bolsheviks, instructed the Petrograd Garrison to obey only their orders. The Provisional Government decided to take repressive steps. The Bolshevik newspaper would be suppressed, the leaders arrested, the Military Revolutionary Committee dissolved and loyal troops called to Petrograd to support the Provisional Government. These plans were not carried out and Kerensky was forced to flee in a car belonging to Secretary Whitehouse of the American Embassy. Steps were taken to restore the city to order, but they failed and at ten o'clock in the morning of October 25, the Military Revolutionary Committee issued the following triumphant message:

"The Provisional Government is overthrown. State power has passed into the hands of the organ of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies --



November 18, Saturday.

Disheartening news was received that about three envoys from our Fifth Army had gone over to the Germans at Dvinsk and had written the preliminary conditions of an armistice with them.<sup>208</sup>

November 19, Sunday.

At 8:30 we went to Mass and the road was very slippery.

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the Military Revolutionary Committee, which stands at the head of the Petrograd proletariat and garrison.

"The cause for which the people fought -- immediate proposal of a democratic peace, abolition of landlords' property rights in land, workers' control over production, the creation of a Soviet Government -- this cause is assured.

"Long live the Revolution of the workers, soldiers and peasants."

The Bolsheviks won the battle in Petrograd by firing a few artillery shells. Although opposition in Moscow was more intense, the city fell after a week of fighting. The Bolsheviks controlled only a small part of the former Empire, but they did control the two political centers.

The following day the Congress of Soviets renounced the war and made it clear to the belligerents that Russia was withdrawing from the war. Chamberlin, I, 306-319; Trotsky, III, 294-325; Wren, 549-551.

<sup>208</sup>On November 11, General N. N. Dukhonin, who was the actual Commander-in-chief of the army (Kerensky merely bore the formal title), received a message from General Boldirev, commander of the Fifth Army to the effect that Krilenko, who was an ensign and had been appointed Commander-in-chief by the Bolshevik government, had arrived at his section of the front and was about to carry out peace negotiations; Boldirev added: "Not possessing force I cannot interfere with him; even the more tranquil units in such case will refuse to maintain neutrality," Chamberlin, I, 344-346.

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The morning was sunny and then it got cloudy. During the day I carried firewood into the shed. In the evening as always we played bezik.

November 20, Monday.

The cold grew stronger and during the day it got clear. The guards were restless because they had not received their wages from Petrograd.<sup>209</sup> This was quickly brought to an end by borrowing the necessary sum from a bank. During the day I worked on the firewood. At 9 o'clock vespers was over.

November 21, Tuesday.

The holiday of the introduction to the Temple passed without service because Pankratov was disagreeable about allowing us to celebrate it. The weather was warm. Everyone worked outside.

November 22, Wednesday.

I did not feel quite well; my head hurt and I had pain along different joints; therefore, I stayed in the house. The weather was sunny as if on purpose. I finished the first volume of General History by Jaeger. It was a very

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<sup>209</sup>Payment of the guards was always a chronic problem for Pankratov and Nikolsky; however, by the end of February, Lenin assured the guards they would be paid and raised their pay from fifty kopeks a day to three roubles. This made Bolsheviks out of the lot. Franklin, 143.

well-compiled book.

November 23, Thursday.

I felt a little better and was without fever; I did not go outside into the air. From a book I made a list of my roles for our coming presentation of the French play, "Les Deux Timides." Toward evening I finished that task -- it took one and a half writing tablets.

November 24, Friday.

I had a headache for half the day, particularly when I was reading. I sat in the house. The weather was unattractive. I began to read the second volume of General History by Jaeger, The Middle Ages. During the evening as usual I played bezik for a little while with Tatiana and read aloud from Turgenev.

November 25, Saturday.

It was a nice cold day. During the day I finally went outside and took a walk and chopped wood for a little while. The sun shone and warmed things up, especially in the rooms. At 9 o'clock we attended vespers.

November 26, Sunday.

At 8 o'clock we went to Mass. Today is a Georgian holiday. The citizens gave a dinner and other amusements for the cavalry in their homes. But in the staff

of our infantry guards from the Second Battalion there were very few Georgian cavalymen whose friends were not cavalymen and did not want to change, but they were forced to go with the people to services -- such a day! Freedom!!! We took a long walk and the weather was mild..

November 27, Monday.

The holiday of the Crosses. Where are they and what about them? It was sunny and cold weather, 13 degrees of frost during the day and 18 degrees of frost toward evening. I walked only back and forth. I moved the divan into the hall from the corner by the wall.

November 28, Tuesday.

It was cold sunny weather and the day passed quickly as always. From 4 o'clock to 5 o'clock I was occupied with Alexis. After tea, we all read together our parts in "Les deux timides." Tatiana, Anastasia, Valya and Mr. Gilliard were present.

November 29, Wednesday.

The cold had decreased but today was overcast. I felt as though my head cold had completely passed.

November 30, Thursday.

It was a nice clear day, eight degrees of frost. From 11 o'clock until lunch I was occupied with Alexis. During the day I piled firewood in the shed. After tea

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Olga was playing cards with Alix and she showed four bezikes.

December 1, Friday and December 2, Saturday.

Both days went absolutely the same. It was fairly cold but the sun was out. After my daily walk both days we got together with Mr. Gilliard and practiced our roles and rehearsed aloud. Vespers was at 9 o'clock.

December 3, Sunday.

Alix and Alexis did not go with us to Mass because of the cold. It was 16 degrees of frost. All morning we rehearsed our parts in the hall, where with the help of a great many people the scenes and all the furniture were placed like it would be on the stage. During the evening it was all taken away again. I took a walk while it was light. During bezik I read aloud The Day Before by Turgenev.

December 4, Monday.

It was not quite as cold as yesterday. The day went as usual.

December 5, Tuesday.

It appears to be turning colder; it was 15 degrees of frost in the morning and went down to 20 toward evening. Until tea time I was occupied with Alix. Vespers was at 9 o'clock.

December 6, Wednesday.

My name day passed quietly and not as it had in other times. At 12 o'clock services were held.<sup>210</sup> The infantrymen from the 4th Battalion congratulated me in the garden and I them on a Battalion holiday. I received three birthday pies and one from the guards. During the evening Marie, Alexis and Mr. Gilliard played very well the small parts in the play, "Le eluide john." It was very funny.<sup>211</sup>

December 7, Thursday.

The cold went down to 22 degrees with a strong wind which cut the face; it was not a much better condition when I went out in the morning and in the evening. In my study and in the hall with the girls it was very cold, 10 degrees. Therefore, during the day and until night I sat with my Circassian coat wrapped around me. I finished the second volume of General History.

December 8, Friday.

During the morning on my walk I saw two infantrymen of

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<sup>210</sup>Grand Duchess Tatiana described in a letter to Anna Viroubova, dated December 9, the events of her father's name day: "We had to have home service on the 6th (St. Nicholas's day), and it was sad on such a big holiday, not to be in church, but one can't have everything one wants, can one?" Viroubova, 307.

<sup>211</sup>In a letter dated December 8, Alexandra described the play to Viroubova: "On the 6th. Alexis, Marie, and Gilik (Mr. Gilliard) acted a little play for us. The others are committing to memory scenes from French plays." Ibid., 302.

the First Battalion coming from Tsarskoe Selo in order to verify the truth of rumors concerning us and about the detachment here. One of these infantrymen had served in our house. It was clear and 21 degrees of frost.

December 9, Saturday.

The day went as usual. The weather was quiet and toward evening the cold began to decrease. But in my study it did not change and the temperature remained constant at 10 degrees of frost. Vespers was held in the evening.

December 10, Sunday.

At 8 o'clock we went to our church for Mass. The weather was by comparison clear and mild, 10 degrees of frost. Until lunch I was at the dentist's, Mr. Rendl. Before tea we were very happy to receive the first letter from dear Mama.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>212</sup>In a letter written at Aitodor in the Crimea on November 21, 1917, Marie sent the last letter her son would receive from her. The letter read in part:

"My Dear Nicky, -- I have received your letter of October 27th, which has filled me with joy...I think of you by day and night and sometimes feel so sick at heart that I believe I cannot bear it any longer. But God is merciful -- He will give us strength for this terrible ordeal...Misha has also written to me about your last meeting in the presence of witnesses...and of your ghastly and revolting departure...I am sorry you are not allowed to go for walks. I know how necessary it is for you and the dear children; it is an incomprehensible cruelty!

I well understand how you must enjoy re-reading your old letters and diaries, although these memories of a happy past rouse deep sorrow in the heart. I have not even got that consolation, for mine were taken away from me in the spring when they searched

December 11, Monday.

It was a beautiful sunny day -- 15 degrees of frost. After lunch I again sat for half an hour with Rendl. Until tea time we practiced our parts for the play as usual.

December 12, Tuesday.

During the morning there was an incident involving the swing on which was written an indecent expression by one of the infantrymen of the 2nd. Regiment. After my daily walk I gave a lesson to Alexis. During the evening I finished The Day Before by Turgenev.

December 13, Wednesday.

During my morning walk we went to the guards' barracks of the First Platoon of the 4th. Regiment to warm ourselves and have a smoke and then we left. Then the new guards from the 1st Regiment arrived.<sup>213</sup>

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the house -- all your letters...and nothing has been returned yet, which is revolting, and for what reason, if I may ask?

On December 6th. all my thoughts will be with you, my dear darling Nicky, and I send you my warmest wishes. God bless you, send you strength and peace of mind, and may He not allow Russia to perish.

I kiss you tenderly. May Christ be with you.  
-- Your fondly loving old Mama. Letters, 301-304.

<sup>213</sup>The men of the 1st and 4th Regiments were the most favorably disposed toward the family and especially the children. The Grand Duchesses completely captivated the men and Alexis was referred to as "the Heir." One section of the 4th. Regiment was especially attached to the family and when these men were on duty, Nicholas



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It was 16 degrees of frost out and it was in our rooms, but in my study the temperature was steady, 12 degrees. During the evening I began to read aloud, Smoke by Turgenev.

December 14, Thursday.

The wind changed and it became a little warmer. I gave Alexis a lesson until lunch time. Before tea we rehearsed.

December 15, Friday.

After breakfast I went to the dentist. From 4 until 5 o'clock we rehearsed our parts to the end. After we played bezik and I read aloud.

December 16, Saturday.

It got a little warmer, 10 degrees. The morning was overcast but the day was sunny. I chopped up a lot of small firewood for our baths. At 9 o'clock vespers was held.

December 17, Sunday.

During the morning we went to Mass. The weather was warm; a wind was blowing with snow. Until lunch I was

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and his children would sneak to the guardhouse to converse or play games with them. On one such occasion they were surprised by Pankratov sitting around a table playing cards. He stood by the door with his mouth open, hardly believing what he saw. Nicholas in his polite manner asked him to join them. He turned and stalked from the room. Gilliard, 244-245.

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with the dentist. We took a long walk; the children, as always, romped a lot with Dolgorukov and Mr. Gilliard. Before dinner we rehearsed our roles in the play.

December 18, Monday.

The weather was not too cold, 5 degrees. It was windy and snowing. I stayed outside in the fresh air for a long time. I chopped firewood.

December 19, Tuesday.

Yesterday I received a nice letter from Olga. It became cold, a wind was blowing and then it became clear. After my walk I occupied myself with Alexis. Finally the big furnace made warmth in the rooms.

December 20, Wednesday.

It was a nice sunny day but windy. Today I finished the third volume of General History. From six o'clock on we rehearsed all our parts; they went smoothly.

December 21, Thursday.

The weather was very pleasant. Until lunch time I gave Alexis his lesson. I wrote to Olga at Aitodor.<sup>214</sup> During the morning Anastasia received some modest presents.

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<sup>214</sup>This was a Grand-ducal estate in the Crimea where Dowager Empress Marie, Olga and other members of the Imperial family were being held captive. Youssoupoff, 265.

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December 22, Friday.

We finished celebrating Anastasia's birthday with church services at 12 o'clock. During the day we worked on the hill and chopped up some firewood.<sup>215</sup> After tea we held rehearsal.

December 23, Saturday.

The weather became mild, and a wet snow fell. We all worked up on the hill. At 9 o'clock vespers was held.

December 24, Sunday.

During the morning I was at the dentist's for half an hour. At 12 o'clock Mass was held in the hall. Up to the time of our walk we got the presents ready for everybody and decorated the Christmas tree.<sup>216</sup> From tea time to 5 o'clock I went out with Alexis to the guard barracks and got the tree ready for the 1st. Platoon of the 4th Regiment. We sat with the guards and their replacements until 5:30. After dinner all the people came to see the Christmas tree, and we received them until 8 o'clock. Vespers was very late -- they did not start until 10:30

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<sup>215</sup>Nicholas and his children built a snow mountain with a slide which was later destroyed by more belligerent guards. Franklin, 142.

<sup>216</sup>Alexandra and her daughter knitted woolen waistcoats which they distributed to the servants and some of the guards. When all the company assembled for vespers the children delighted in passing out "surprises." Gilliard, 246.

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because the priest did not have time to come earlier from services in the church. All the infantrymen who were off-duty were present.

December 25, Monday.

We went to Mass at 7 o'clock in the dark.<sup>217</sup> After the liturgy, church services were held before the image of the Sacred Mother brought on Christmas Eve from the monastery 24 miles away. During the day I worked in the snow until dinner time. We rehearsed our parts thoroughly.

December 26, Tuesday.

It was a quiet cold day, 16 degrees of frost. Everyone slept for a long time. During the morning I went down with the children to the guard barracks. It was the First Platoon of the 2nd Regiment that sent us the Christmas tree yesterday and sweet pies and checkers. The other day Iza Buxhoevden came to see us. He had not been allowed to see us by some whim of Pankratov.

December 27, Wednesday.

It was a nice warm overcast day, four degrees. During the morning and during the day I worked at clearing up

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<sup>217</sup>At the Mass the priest ordered the deacon to intone Mongoletie (the prayer for the long life of the Imperial family). Some of the soldiers threatened the deacon with death unless he revoked the prayer. The whole incident made Christmas unpleasant for the Imperial family. Ibid., 247.

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the firewood on the extension of the hill. After tea we rehearsed our parts. During the evening Alix had a headache.<sup>218</sup>

December 28, Thursday.

It was a warm sunny day, two degrees of frost cold. I was outside in the air a long time during the morning and during the evening. We learned with indignation that our dear Alexis had been taken in for investigation and that he had been placed under house arrest. This happened because after the church service of the 25th of December the deacon addressed us with our titles and in the church there were many infantrymen of the 2nd Regiment as always. Everything started with this and very likely with the assistance of Pankratov and his associates.

December 29, Friday.

It was also a nice sunny day today, four degrees of frost. We worked on the wood pile which we had prepared. I chopped while the girls slid down the hill on skies.

December 30, Saturday.

It was a quiet clear day. Alexis's ankle was somewhat swollen and he stayed in bed. We took a long walk; the girls also went out after dinner.

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<sup>218</sup>Alexandra constantly complained of some type of infirmity; often it was her head or her heart. Franklin, 140.

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December 31, Sunday.

It was not a very cold day with a gusty wind. Toward evening Alexis got up, although he could not put on his boots. After tea we sat up and waited for the New Year.

January 1, Monday.

At 8 o'clock we went to Mass without Olga and Tatiana, regretfully, because they both had a fever. The Dr. thinks they probably have the German measles. The Mass was held by a different priest and deacon. The weather became magnificent, quite March-like.

January 2, Tuesday.

It was confirmed that they both have measles, but fortunately today they both felt a little better; but they had a considerable rash. The day became overcast, not too cold and with a strong wind. I went out into the garden but did not work. Today was absolutely boring.

January 3, Wednesday.

Alexis also got the measles, but they were quite mild; Olga and Tatiana themselves feel fine; the latter even got up. All day it snowed. The detached committee of the infantry today decided to take off their shoulder straps so that they would not have to endure insults and

attacks while in the village.<sup>219</sup> Incomprehensible!

January 4, Thursday.

Today Marie got sick. She had a rash which gave her face a raspberry crimson hue. In the meantime her temperature went up. Tatiana was quite all right. I took a walk with Anastasia alone. It was 10 degrees of frost outside and there was a wind. We rehearsed our parts. I received a letter from Kseny.

January 5, Friday.

Almost everybody is better; Marie was still bedridden during the day. At 3:00 vespers was held and all the rooms were sprinkled with holy water. I was talking with some of the First Platoon of the 4th Regiment about their taking off their shoulder straps and about the behavior of some of the guardsmen of the 2nd Regiment who were cruelly denounced.<sup>220</sup>

January 6, Saturday.

At 8:00 we went to Mass; I wore both an overcoat and a sheepskin coat. All the girls were better but none of

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<sup>219</sup>At 2:00 p.m. the committee decided by a vote of 100 votes to 85 to prohibit the wearing of epaulettes. Gilliard, 251.

<sup>220</sup>The removal of the epaulettes bothered the Tsar immensely, for General Tatishchev and Prince Dolgoruky had to beg him to remove them to avoid trouble with the guards. He consented after talking it over with his wife. Ibid., 252.

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them went outside. The weather became holiday-like, the sun shining and the day quiet. During the morning we sat for a long time with the guards while they unburdened their souls to us. We could not see the crossing of the Irtysh, regretfully, because of the houses which were in the way.

January 7, Sunday.

The day passed like every day. We did not go to church. The weather warmed up to 18 degrees. I finished the 4th volume of General History by Jaeger which she had compiled herself. I wrote to Kseny.

January 8, Monday.

All during the night and part of the day a storm was blowing. During the morning it was 18 degrees and toward evening it went down to 4 degrees and quieted down. The rooms were cold because of the wind. After my walk back and forth I again dressed in my Circassian coat. We took a walk and worked in the snow.

January 9, Tuesday.

It was a nice quiet day from 6 to 10 degrees of frost. The last two days I have read a book from the library here at the gymnasium about Tobolsk and its environs by Galodnikov.



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It had a very interesting historical background. During the day I worked for a little while. I cleaned up the yard and then filled up the shed with wood; an old guard from the 1st Regiment named Orlov who is an ex-reformer helped me.

January 10, Wednesday.

During the morning I worked with him again, and during the day Tatishchev helped. It became quiet and sunny, with 16 degrees of frost. From 6:00 o'clock on we had a dress rehearsal.

January 11, Thursday.

Since the holidays the children have again started their lessons. Alexis is continuing to have Russian history lessons. I worked with the infantrymen of the 4th Regiment carrying wood into the shed. Before dinner Tatiana received her presents from us.

January 12, Friday.

Tatiana's birthday was celebrated by church services in the hall at 12:00 o'clock. During the day it became a wonderful 14 degrees with a warm sunshine. Our priest, Father Alexei, was set free from house arrest.

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January 13, Saturday.

It was such nice weather, quite March-like. During the morning everything was warmed up by sunshine, and I sat on the roof of the greenhouse. During the day after tea we had a large performance, wearing our costumes. At 9:00 vespers was served for us by the other priest.

January 14, Sunday.

During the morning we did not go to church, but Mass was held for us. I walked to it and during the day I took a long walk. The weather was mild. Before dinner we put on the play "Les deux timides." I believe that everything went smoothly and well. During the evening, as always, we played bezik and read aloud.

January 15, Monday.

Today Anastasia got the measles. The weather was overcast, 4 degrees of frost and windy. I finished reading the eleventh volume of Leskov.

January 16, Tuesday.

Anastasia felt a little better; her temperature was 37.4. She broke out in a large rash all over her face. The weather was very damp--almost thawing from 4:00 to 5:00 o'clock. I gave a lesson to Alexis. Until dinner I read aloud to Anastasia.

January 17, Wednesday.

During the night the weather warmed up to 15 degrees, but it was windy and unpleasant. Nevertheless we went for a walk twice. The guard was nice--the First Platoon of the 4th Regiment.<sup>221</sup> Alexis visited them during the evening to play checkers.

January 18, Thursday.

The cold was stronger and towards evening down to 24 degrees of frost. During the day it got better, and the sun was shining. Today Alexis and I finished the history of Peter the Great. I started to recopy the play by Chekhov called "The Bear," so that Olga and Marie could learn it with us. The evening went as always.

January 19, Friday.

It was a sunny cold day, 20 degrees of frost and quiet. I finished copying the play toward evening. Anastasia finally recovered and came down to the sitting room for breakfast. Toward night the cold increased to 27 degrees of frost.

January 20, Saturday.

During the day it got very cold because of a wind. It went

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<sup>221</sup>The soldiers of the 4th Regiment were the most friendly of all to the family. Ibid., 252-53.

down to 23 degrees of frost. It was enough to cut your face. I worked for a while putting firewood in the shed.<sup>222</sup>  
At 9:00 o'clock vespers.

January 21, Sunday.

There was a snow storm and it was 24 degrees of frost. About 12:00 Mass was held. During the day I walked for about an hour. In the hall and in the girls' room the air was cold-- 8 degrees of frost; in my study it was 9 degrees of frost. After dinner Tatiana, Alexis and Mr. Gilliard had a good time practicing in "A la Porte." During the evening as always we played bezik.

January 22, Monday.

It was an unpleasant cold day. There was a north wind blowing and the cold was 25 degrees of frost. It was unpleasant to walk in the rooms, as the temperature got quite low. From past experience we now dress warmly.

January 23, Tuesday.

The weather got a little better. The wind quieted down and for two hours the sun shone, but in the rooms the cold still continued. I cleaned out the snow that had gathered in the greenhouse.

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<sup>222</sup>Prince Dolgoruky and Gilliard finished the snow mountain. The weather was so cold that the buckets of water they carried from the kitchen froze before they reached the mountain. Ibid., 253.

January 24, Wednesday.

It was Kseny's birthday and I wrote her a letter. The weather became quite pleasant; it was quiet and sunny, with 12 degrees of frost, and particularly pleasant to the extremities of the face.

January 25, Thursday.

It was a nice pleasant day, and today as Tuesday I gave Alexis a lesson. The children went for a drive up in the hills.

January 26, Friday.

I finished reading the writings of Leskov--12 volumes--and began The Garden of Allah in the Russian translation. During the day I worked for a while on the firewood and sawed some up. At 9:00 vespers. By decision of the detachment committee Pankratov and his assistant, Nikolsky, were dismissed from their posts and sent away from Kornilovsky's house.<sup>223</sup>

January 27, Saturday.

It was an overcast day, 8 degrees of frost. During the day I chopped wood with Tatishchev. Valya Dolgoruky was not well.

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<sup>223</sup>Nikolsky, with his harsh treatment of the prisoners, started something he could not control. The soldiers began to disregard orders and take the law into their own hands. They dismissed Pankratov, Nikolsky, and the members of the 4th Regiment who had continued to treat the Imperial family with kindness and respect. Franklin, 142-43; Gilliard, 253.

Alexis was also in bed. At 9:00 vespers.

January 28, Sunday.

During the morning I took a short walk. At 11:30 Mass was held for us. I worked for a long time in the garden. The weather was overcast, about 5 degrees of frost. It was pleasant. After dinner we put on our household performance. Olga, Tatiana, Marie, Nastenka G., and Tatishchev together performed "La bete noire." It started at 8:15 and ended at 10:00.

January 29, Monday.

It was a nice quiet day. Our guard was the First Platoon of the 4th Regiment. I took a walk. I worked and talked with the infantrymen. I finished reading Turgenev aloud during the evening. I started reading some stories by Leskov.

January 30, Tuesday.

During my morning walk I said goodbye to the infantrymen who were going home. They were some of the best we knew. They were unwilling to leave now during the winter, and would gladly have remained until the rivers open to navigation. Alexis stayed in bed all day because he had a swollen ankle.

January 31, Wednesday.

The wind blew and again it was blizzarding, but it was not very cold. Alexis still stayed in bed all day.

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February 1/14, Thursday.

We learned from instructions which we received in the mail to change our calendar from the 1st of February and count as if today were already the 14th of February. This misunderstanding and confusion will not be the last! During the morning from the hill we watched the farewell and departure of many of the infantrymen who were our old acquaintances. It was warm, but a storm added a lot of snow which I cleaned out of the yard. Alexis stayed in bed again today. At 9:00 we attended vespers.

February 2/15, Friday.

During the day the weather became radiant. Vespers was at 11:00. We went out into the air about 3:00; it was wonderful. I worked all the time up to the end cleaning the balcony. I finished The Garden of Allah and yesterday I started The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes. With Olga and Marie I practiced our parts in the play "The Bear." Tatishchev has a cold.

February 3/16, Saturday.

It was such a nice light day, like yesterday, but the cold had increased. Alexis finally got out of bed. At 9:00 we attended vespers.

February 4/17, Sunday.

It was a sunny cold day. At 11:30 we attended Mass. I took a long walk, taking pleasure in the weather. Marie fell down the hill and got a huge lump over her right leg. After dinner we performed the play--a repeat of "A la Porte"--and the English play "Packing Up," in which Marie, Anastasia and Alexis played very well and musically.

February 5/18, Monday, and February 6/19, Tuesday.

During both days the weather was pleasant. Tatishchev got better. I began to read Les trois Mousquetaires by Alexandre Dumas. For the last three days we have had our daily tea in my sitting room because it is lighter and we can see the sunset, and it is warmer in the room.

February 7/20, Wednesday, and February 8/21, Thursday.

It has been such nice weather with warm sunshine and very warm dazzling moonlight during the night. Judging from the telegrams, the troops from Germany are resuming their advance as if the period of truce had elapsed; and on the front it appears that we have nothing--the army demoralized, tools and supplies wasted on foolish gambles, and the enemy on



the offensive! Shame and disgrace!<sup>224</sup>

February 9/22, Friday, and February 10/23, Saturday.

It was such nice sunny weather both days. There are still much of the enlistment terms left to serve since 1914, so that all our good fighting men will leave our detachments. I said goodbye to them. This morning they already had a large party. At 9:00 vespers.

February 11/24, Sunday.

At 11:00 we attended Mass. After lunch I took a walk, then sat for a while with Rendel and again went outside. I watched from the hill the departure of the soldiers. The whole caravan was in sleighs. During the evening we presented

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<sup>224</sup>On November 22 a Soviet delegation suggested an armistice for six months, the evacuation of Dago, Ossel, and Moon Islands by the German forces, and an agreement that no troops advance along the front. Finally, the agreement read that no troops would move after November 22. Peace talks were opened at Brest-Litovsk, but the Germans realized the position of the Soviet regime. General Hoffmann felt that "the Bolsheviki must accept the conditions of the Central Powers, however harsh they may be." The peace talks dragged and, when Trotsky refused to sign a peace, the Germans interpreted this refusal as an automatic denunciation of the armistice; their advance began again on February 5. On February 9 new peace conditions were sent by the German Government, stating that the Bolsheviks had three days to send representatives and sign the peace. Lenin decided to accept these harsher terms because to fight a war Russia needed an army and this she did not have. The Soviets signed the peace on February 18. The standard work is Wheeler-Bennett, Brest-Litovsk, the Forgotten Peace (London, Macmillan, 1938). See also Chamberlin, 361-405.

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"Le fluide de John" and the English play "In and Out of a Punt," in which Tatiana and Mr. Gibbs played. Everything went quite well and was amusing.

February 12/25, Monday.

Today I received a telegram informing us that the Bolsheviki, or whatever they call themselves, sovnarkom<sup>225</sup> must agree before the world to the humiliating conditions of the German Government; it appears that the hostile troops are moving forward and there is nothing we can do to detain them. What a nightmare!

February 13/26, Tuesday.

The weather was a little unpleasant; a wind was blowing and the sun was hidden. I finished Les trois mousquetaires and started This Woman to This Man. After my walk I gave a lesson to Alexis.

February 14/27, Wednesday. We have had to reduce our expenses significantly for food and servants because the use of personal capital is reduced to only 600 rubles a month.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>225</sup>Sovnarkom was the Council of People's Commissars.

<sup>226</sup>Colonel Kobylinsky received a telegram informing him that from March 1 "Nicholas Romanov and his family must be put on soldiers' rations and each member of the family will receive 600 rubles per month from the interest of their personal estate." The family consisted of seven persons, and the entire household had to be run on 4,200 rubles per month. Nicholas asked Gilliard to help him draw up a

All the last few days we have been occupied calculating the minimum which we would be allowed to take, all in all.

February 15/28, Thursday.

For this reason we had to let many of the people go, since we could not maintain all that we had in Tobolsk. This was very difficult but necessary. By our request Tatishchev, Valya D., and Mr. Gilliard took upon themselves the troubles of the household and managing superintendent of the servants; under them was the valet. The weather became cloudy, but quiet. During the evening I read aloud The Temple by Leskov.

February 16/March 1, Friday.

Today I began to read Anna Karenina. The day was not very cold; during the morning it thawed after the sun came out. These last few days we have begun to live again, with the curtailment of the regime. After tea we rehearsed our parts.

February 17/March 2, Saturday.

During the day it snowed and the weather became damp. I shoveled out the walk to the hill and sawed firewood. At

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family budget. Nicholas informed his family that, since everyone else was forming committees, he was going to appoint one himself to look after the welfare of his own community. The committee met and decided that ten servants would have to be dismissed in order to meet the budget. Gilliard, 254-55.

9:00 we attended vespers. On the 15th of February I received a letter from Olga A. [his sister]

February 18/March 3, Sunday.

Mass was at 11:30. The weather became nice, warm, and quite wonderful; during the day it thawed. I sat with Rendel. We worked in the garden and sawed wood. After tea we rehearsed. During the evening we put on the play. First was the English play, "The Crystal Gazers," with Marie and Mr. Gibbs; then ours in which Olga played, and again Marie and I. Everyone was nervous at the start of the performance but it appeared that it went well.

February 19/March 4, Monday.

I read Anna Karenina with enthusiasm. Today I received a letter from Kseny. For a large part of the day it snowed. I chopped firewood in the shed--it is dry there.

February 20, March 5, Tuesday.

During the morning we saw out the window a break in the hill; it turned out that the stupid committee of the detachment had made it in order to stir us up and not let us climb up on it to see over the fence.<sup>227</sup> Today was clear after a

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<sup>227</sup>The soldiers' committee decided to abolish the snow mountain on which the children amused themselves because Nicholas and Alexandra watched the 4th Regiment depart from it. Ibid., 255.

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snowy night and a fresh south breeze was blowing. I chopped wood in the shed and wrote a letter to Mama.

February 21/March 6, Wednesday.

It was a surprising cold day but with a very warm sun. During the morning I cleaned the yard and during the day I chopped a lot of wood.

February 22/March 7, Thursday.

Today they brought in a huge quantity of wood and we helped unload it from the sleigh. The day was warm, but in the meantime a squall swooped in with snow.

February 23/March 8, Friday.

The morning was bright and warm; it was hot to work. During the day it got fresher. Alix sat on the balcony so that she did not have to run up and down stairs often.

February 24/March 9, Saturday.

It was a nice quiet day. We stayed for a long time out in the air and worked a lot chopping and splitting firewood. Vespers at 9:00.

February 25/March 10, Sunday.

The cold increased to 12 degrees of frost, in spite of the warm sun. During the morning we walked until vespers, and

for two and a half hours during the day; we chopped and split wood and carried it into the shed. During the evening Marie and Anastasia for the second time played together with Alexis in the play "Packing Up."

February 26/March 11, Monday.

It was dear Papa's birthday. It was cold and stormy outside. Nevertheless the children and I worked diligently on the firewood. Three young guards with Orlov helped me quite well carrying the firewood into the shed.

February 27/March 12, Tuesday.

It was a cold day with a wind, and the morning was clear. We worked hard for two hours. Until tea I was occupied with Alexis.

February 28/March 13, Wednesday.

It was the same sort of day, about 12 degrees of frost. I finished Anna Karenina and began to read Lermontov. I chopped a lot of wood with Tatiana. For the last few days we have begun to receive butter, coffee, pastries for tea, and cooking from the various dear people who know about the reduced expenditures for rations. It is very touching.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>228</sup>On February 15 Nicholas received orders that butter, coffee and other "luxuries" were to be excluded from the dinner table. The townspeople, hearing of it, sent eggs, butter, coffee, sweetmeats and other delicacies. Ibid., 255.

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March 1/14, Tuesday.

It is the 38th anniversary of the demise of Grandfather.<sup>229</sup>  
At 12:00 Requiem Mass was held for us. The weather was  
as always cold and sunny. I worked diligently on the fire-  
wood.

March 2/15, Friday.

Remember those days last year at Iskov and on the journey.  
How much longer must our unfortunate homeland be torn and  
lacerated on the inside and outside by enemies. It some-  
times appears that there can no longer be strength. You do  
not know, anymore, what there is to hope for and what there  
is to await. And so there is no one but God. Let it be as  
He wills it.

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<sup>229</sup>Members of a terrorist organization, the People's Will, killed Alexander II with a bomb on March 1, 1881. The assassination had a deep effect upon Nicholas. Grand Duke Alexander described the day: "The Emperor lay on the couch near the desk. He was unconscious. Three doctors were fussing, but science was obviously helpless. It was a question of minutes. He presented a terrific sight, his right leg torn off, his left leg shattered, innumerable wounds all over his head and face. One eye was shut, the other expressionless. Every instant member of the imperial family came in. The room was packed. I clung to the arm of Nicky, deathly pale in his sailor's suit. His mother, stunned by the catastrophe, was still holding a pair of skates in her trembling hands. I recognized the heir apparent by his broad shoulders; he was looking out the window." Alexander, 59-60.

March 3/16, Saturday.

The day became partly clear with 14 degrees of frost. I paced back and forth during the morning and during the day I worked to my heart's content. At 9:00 we attended vespers.

March 4/17, Sunday.

I walked to Mass. The weather was very nice; in the sun it was thawing. During the day we worked a lot. Guards from the First Regiment also helped us. All the time we could hear bells in the streets--the residents of Tobolsk have been riding in sleighs of all sorts with their horses harnessed for the last few days in a carnival.<sup>230</sup>

March 5/18, Monday.

At 9:30 Alix and the girls began chorus rehearsal with the deacon and it lasted until noon. They sang for both services, since the choir could not sing. The weather was brilliant. I spent a long time out in the air, and diligently chopped and split firewood. After dinner everyone went into the living room and the family spent the evening together.

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<sup>230</sup>The captivity was especially hard on the children who became very bored. They watched in envy the procession of sleighs pass their window. After the guards tore down their snow mountain, all they could do was cut wood and walk. Gilliard, 256.



March 6/19, Tuesday.

The day became quiet and overcast. We took a long walk and everyone is getting fairly well sun-tanned. The singing for the services improved today.<sup>231</sup>

March 7/20, Wednesday.

Finally, after two months of interruption, we again found ourselves in church for the Pre-Consecration liturgy; the priest, Father Vladimir Khlymov, served it and not Father Alexei. The choir sang our familiar beloved tunes.<sup>232</sup> The weather was wonderful; we stayed out in the air for four hours.

March 8/21, Thursday.

Today it has been a year since I parted with dear Mama at

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<sup>231</sup>Gilliard described a discussion the family had after lunch. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk had just been signed and Nicholas was depressed, saying: "It is such a disgrace for Russia and amounts to suicide. I should never have thought the Emperor William and the German Government could stoop to shake hands with these miserable traitors. But I am sure they will get no good from it; it won't save them from ruin!" A little while later Prince Dogorukov remarked that the newspapers were discussing a clause in which the Germans demanded that the Imperial family should be handed over to them unharmed. Nicholas said: "This is either a maneuver to discredit me or an insult." Alexandra added, "After all they have done to the Tsar, I would rather die in Russia than be saved by the Germans." Ibid., 257.

<sup>232</sup>Vocal music is indispensable in Russian church services where there is no instrumental music. All priests are trained musicians, and there is much congregational singing. Viroubova, 337.

Moghilev and left for Tsarskoe Selo. I received a letter from Kseny. The weather was changing, now sunshine, now snow, but in general it was warm.

March 9/22, Friday.

Today is the anniversary of my arrival at Tsarskoe Selo and the confinement of the family at Alexandrovsky palace. Involuntarily I recalled that past difficult year. What do we still have before us. Everything is in the hands of God! All our hopes are on that.

March 10/23, Saturday.

At 7:30 we went to Mass. The day went as always: we ate dinner at 7:00, and afterward, evening Mass and then confession in the hall. After that we all received the Eucharist of the Holy Christian mystery. There was a rare quality in the choir. At 9:00 we returned home. After tea we took a walk. The weather was quite spring-like, thawing in the sun. During the day we worked for a long time. At 9:00 vespers. I wanted to sleep very badly.<sup>233</sup>

March 11/24, Sunday.

It was a wonderful spring-like day. I slept very well both

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<sup>233</sup>On this date a detachment of over a hundred Red Guards arrived from Omsk. They were the first Bolshevik guards to be sent. Gilliard, 257.

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days. At 11:30 Mass was held. On the first of the week I began to read the Bible from the beginning.

March 12/25, Monday.

Vladimir Shtein arrived from Moscow for the second time, bringing from there a fairly good summary of information about our dear people, some books and tea. He was the second vice-governor for me at Moghilev. Today we saw him coming along the streets.

March 13/26, Tuesday.

The day became overcast but thawing. Since I could not read the Bible all the time, I also began The History of the English People by J. K. Green. During the evening I again read from Turgenev--now I am reading Spring Waters. Today it has been seven months that we have lived in this house.

March 14/27, Wednesday.

The bodyguards here were dismissed when their term of service was finished. But nevertheless together with the guard detachment they had to be sent to the city. From Omsk they sent a command for this village. The arrival of this "Red Guard," as it is now called, or any armed detachment, excites ;

rumors and fear here.<sup>234</sup> It was simply amusing to hear what they say these last few days. The commander of our detachment apparently also was confused, since the last two nights the guards detachment and machine guns were brought in the evening. Hope remains above all in these present times!

March 15/28, Thursday.

During the night it got fairly cold, down to 12 degrees of frost; the day became sunny and windy. I chopped up and split firewood.

March 16/29, Friday.

All day there was a huge storm and snow piled up in heaps. During the morning I took a walk and during the day I worked for a while on the firewood.

March 17/30, Saturday.

The storm quieted down and during the day it began to get cold and clear. During the morning I had a hard time clearing the snow off the walk, and it was also difficult to walk.

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<sup>234</sup>Commissars came from both Omsk and Ekaterinburg and tried to influence the guards to their own way of thinking. The soldiers guarding the house demanded a commissar from Moscow to give them orders. In the middle of March they sent one of their men, Peter Lupin, to Moscow to see that their demands were met. A commissar was promised and rumors floated through Tobolsk that Trotsky, himself, was coming. The first detachment of Red Guards came from Omsk under the command of Lt. Degtiarev. Botkin, 185; Franklin, 150.

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After breakfast I chopped wood and the girls split it. At 8:45 we attended vespers. Alexis had a cough and because of that for the last few days he has not gone for a walk.<sup>235</sup>

March 18/31, Sunday.

The weather improved, and during the day it became nice and quiet. At 11:30 Mass. I stayed outside in the air for a long time; the sun shone very warmly. After dinner as usual I played bezik and afterward I read aloud. In the past few days I have won all four beziks.

March 19/April 1, Monday.

The weather was absolutely ideal: the sun shone, but in the shade it went down to 4 degrees of frost. I learned from our usual informer, Kirpichnikov, much of interest about the arriving Bolsheviks from Omsk. I worked a lot for a long time.

March 20/April 2, Tuesday.

The morning was greyish; about 11:00 the sun emerged and the day became like yesterday, except that it was even warmer. After breakfast I went out on the balcony and

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<sup>235</sup>Alexandra wrote to Viroubova and described the boy's condition: "Sunbeam (Alexis) has been ill in bed for the past week. I don't know whether coughing brought on the attack, or whether he picked up something heavy, but he had an awful internal hemorrhage and suffered fearfully. He is better now, but he sleeps badly and the pains, though less severe, have not entirely ceased." Viroubova, 358.

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stayed for a long time. In the sun it was 21 degrees and in the shade 6 degrees. We dug ditches in the garden and chopped and split wood.

March 21/April 3, Tuesday.

It was also a very nice day. During the morning I spent almost 2 hours out in the air, and during the day more than 2 hours. The air was very clean and clear. During the evening three of our people, freed a month ago, came to say goodbye before their departure to their homelands (Makarov, Mikhailov, and Konichev).

March 22/April 4, Thursday.

The weather became overcast but thawing well. During the morning we heard from the yard, like they were coming from Tobolsk, the robber-Bolsheviks in fifteen troikas with bells and whooping and hollering. The Omsk detachment drove out here.

March 23/April 5, Friday.

It was a very nice day; the morning was clear and warm. From the open window of the barracks from 10:00 until 5:00 could be heard the singing of the guards and the sound of balalaikas, owing to having nothing to do and boredom. Everyone went out into the air for  $4\frac{1}{2}$  hours, also on the balcony.

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March 24/April 6, Saturday.

It was a wonderful day. The snow quickly vanished and almost all of the paths in the yard are dry. During the morning and the rest of the day I chopped a lot of wood. After tea I read in the light of the sunset until 7:00. Vespers began at 9:45 with the worship of the Holy Cross.

March 25/April 7, Sunday, Annunciation.

We did not get to church on this holiday. We rose early, but at 8:00 the Father came and served Mass without the singers. Alix and the girls sang again without practice. The weather was unpleasant--overcast and cold. During the morning I paced back and forth and talked with the guards. During the day I chopped wood.

March 26/April 8, Monday.

The weather was overcast but warm. From time to time a light snow fell. I worked and walked as always.

March 27/April 9, Tuesday.

Suddenly it became cold with a north wind. The day became clear. During the evening I began to read aloud the book by Nilusa about the anti-Christ, with a supplementary "report" on Jews and Masons. It was very contemporary reading.

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March 28/April 10, Wednesday.

It was a wonderful sunny day without a wind. During the evening some excitement occurred in our detachment, under the influence of rumors about the arrival from Ekaterinburg of another "Red Guard" detachment, and toward night the guards were doubled, sentries posted, and pickets sent into the streets.<sup>236</sup> We talked about the imaginary attack on us in the house and our chance of crossing to the Bishop's house.<sup>237</sup> All day everyone talked about this in their rooms and elsewhere. Finally during the evening everyone calmed down. I received a report about this at 7:00 from Kobylinsky.<sup>238</sup> They even asked Alix not to sit on the balcony and read for three days.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>236</sup>The guards of Tobolsk vowed that they would not give up their prisoners to the guards from Ekaterinburg. If necessary they would use force to resist. Botkin, 185-87.

<sup>237</sup>Although the Tsar stayed very calm, certain members of the Imperial party were in constant fear. Gleb Botkin felt there would be a repetition of the tragedy which had befallen the family of Louis XVI, and Gilliard felt they would be killed in their sleep. Ibid., 190-92.

<sup>238</sup>Although still the nominal commander, Kobylinsky had no power. He had little influence over the guards, and if the Tsar had not begged him to stay on as his last friend, he would have resigned to fight the Bolsheviki. He later did so. Franklin, 151.

<sup>239</sup>On this date the Bolshevik guard sat in committee and the commissar explained that he had the right to shoot, within twenty-four hours, anyone opposing his orders. Gilliard, 258.



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March 29/April 11, Thursday.

During my morning walk I saw the supreme commissar, Demianov, who with his assistant, Degtyarev, with the accompaniment of the commander and guards, inspected the sentry barracks and the garden. Because of him (Demianov) and of the reluctance of the sentries to let him pass, there was trouble for three days. The day became wonderful and sunny.

March 30/April 12, Friday.

What a day, what a new surprise. Today Kobylinsky brought a copy of yesterday's paper from Moscow from the Central Executive Committee for our detachment, an order to transfer all of us living in the house and placing us under house arrest as in Tsarskoe Selo. Now they have begun moving the women from one room to another below, in order to clean the place out for the new arrivals.<sup>240</sup> Alexis's hips hurt from the cold and he lay in bed.

March 31/April 13, Saturday.

He /Alexis/ could not quite sleep at night, and during the day he suffered, the poor dear. The weather was, as if on

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<sup>240</sup>A soldier from the detachment, sent to Moscow for instructions, returned with a memorandum from the Central Committee, ordering Colonel Kobylinsky to be more strict with the family. General Tatishchev and Prince Dolgorukov were transferred to the Tsar's house. Ibid., 258.

purpose, lovely and warm, and the snow quickly disappeared. I took a long walk. The furniture and things from the Kornilovsky house were carried over until lunch time, and the occupants were already moved into the new apartments. Vespers at 8:15.

April 1/14, Sunday.

Today the detachment committee decreed, in the verification of the paper from Moscow, that all the people who inhabited our house and also the large one would not be put into the street but in the town. Therefore, all day we talked about it--how to accomodate them without overcrowding the house. We had to move five people.<sup>241</sup> All this was done quite successfully in view of the rapid barrival of the new detachment which came with its instructions. Because of this, our sentries, to keep themselves from unnecessary trouble, waited in order to find out about us from the harsh regime. At 11:30 Mass was held. Alexis stayed in bed all day; his pain continued, but with long interruptions. The weather was overcast and windy.

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<sup>241</sup>The five were: Countess Hendrikov, Miss Schneider, General Tatishchev, Prince Dolgorukov, and Mr. Gibbs. Ibid., 259.

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April 2/15, Monday.

During the morning the commander from the commission of the officers and guards [Kobylinsky] went around inspecting our house. The result of that "search" was the taking away of Valya's and Mr. Gilliard's and my dagger [the dagger which he always wore with his Cossack uniform]. Again Kobylinsky explained that this measure was only necessary to reassure the critics. Alexis was better, and at 7:00 p.m. he fell into a deep sleep. The weather became overcast and quiet.

April 3/16, Tuesday.

He [Alexis] slept with small interruptions for twelve hours. There was almost no pain. The weather became unpleasant. A wet snow fell and a cold wind blew. The day went as usual.

April 4/17, Wednesday.

The weather was grey, overcast and quiet, but about 4:00 the sun came out. During the morning I walked for an hour and during the day I walked and chopped wood for two hours. Alexis is better, but he gets tired of lying in the same position; his fever, as always, is not very high--38.4 degrees. Vladimir Derevenko [one of the doctors] said that such a temperature is necessary, since he is trying to recover from a swelling.

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April 5/18, Thursday.

It was a wonderful day. For half a day I left the windows open. Alexis slept fitfully, for the pain from time to time disturbed him when he changed positions in the bed. But in general he was happy and conversive. His temperature was 37.8 degrees.

April 6/19, Friday.

Today Alexis suffered a lot and did not sleep at all. The day became nice; about 5:00 a wonderful spring rain fell-- I finished the English history by Green and began to read a novel by V. Solovev.

April 7/20, Saturday.

Alexis slept well, and during the day the pain let up quite a bit. The morning was warm and sunny; at 2:00 a wet snow fell, and toward evening it began to get colder. At 9:00 vespers.

April 8/21, Sunday.

It is the 24th anniversary of our betrothal. The day became sunny with a cold wind. All the snow is still here. At 11:30 Mass was held. After that Kobylinsky read a telegram from Moscow to me which confirmed the instructions of the detachment committee about taking off Alexis's and my

shoulder straps. Because of this we decided that on the walks we would not put them on, but wear them only in the house. <sup>242</sup> This swinishness I shall not forget! I worked in the garden for 2 hours. In the evening I began to read aloud Magi and also Vsevolod Solovev.

April 9/22, Monday.

We learned of the arrival of the commissar extraordinary, Yakovlev, from Moscow. <sup>243</sup> He took up residence in the Kornilovsky house. The children imagined that today he was going to perform a search, and they burned all their letters, and Marie and Anastasia even burned their diaries. The weather was terrible with a wet snow. Alexis felt better and even slept for two or three hours during the day.

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<sup>242</sup>The order to remove the shoulder straps was a shock to both Nicholas and his son who, since the start of the war, had dressed in a soldier's uniform. The shoulder strap was considered an emblem of military honor, and every officer had the right and duty to shoot anyone who touched them. The shoulder straps became a constant source of worry for all those attached to the Tsar. The straps were extremely important to Nicholas, for he was a military man and, being a colonel in his father's suite, could wear his father's initials on the strap. Botkin, 174-81.

<sup>243</sup> Commissar Yakovlev was a good-looking man who came to Tobolsk dressed in a sailor suit and fully armed. A man of some education, he spoke several languages. Botkin, 194; Chamberlin, II, 88.

April 10/23, Tuesday.

At 10:30 this morning Kobylinsky came with Yakovlev at his side. I received them in the hall with the girls. We waited for them until 11:00 because Alix still was not ready. He came in with a plain face, smiling and embarrassed. He asked if we were well guarded, well encamped, and well accomodated. Afterwards, almost running, he went down to see Alexis, and then, not stopping, he went on to inspect the rest of the rooms and apoligizing for our anxiety he went out below.<sup>244</sup> In the same manner he went through the rest of the floors. Within a half hour he was back again, in order to see Alix again. He again hurried over to Alix and then went down-stairs. For the present he limited himself to inspecting the house. We took a walk as usual, and the weather was beautiful.

April 11/24, Wednesday.

The day was fine and comparatively warm. For a long time I sat on the roof of the greenhouse. It was very warm up there in the sun. I worked up on the hill and cleared the deep ditch along the fence.

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<sup>244</sup>Dr. Botkin described Yakovlev with the Tsar to his son:  
"I'm at a complete loss as to what all this means. That man, Yakovlev, is dressed like a plain soldier, but he is certainly masquerading. His speech is that of a man of culture. Most remarkable of all, he talked to the Emperor standing all the time at attention and actually addressed him several times as 'Your Majesty.'" Botkin, 194.

April 12/25, Thursday.

After lunch Yakovlev came over with Kobylinsky and announced that he had received orders to take me away, he did not say where. Alix decided to go with me and take Marie. It was impossible to protest. The other children and Alexis were to stay behind. The present circumstances are very hard, but this is worse than that!<sup>245</sup> Now we have started to pack our necessities. Yakovlev said that he would probably be back for Olga, Tatiana, Anastasia and Alexis, and that probably we would see each other within a week or two. The evening passed very sadly; during the night naturally no one slept.

April 13/26, Friday.

At 4:00 a.m. we said goodbye to the dear children and got into the carriage--myself with Yakovlev, Alix with Marie, Valya with Botkin. Among the servants Anna Demidov,

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<sup>245</sup>Kobylinsky insisted that as long as he lived he would not let anyone take the Tsar if he meant to harm him. But Yakovlev showed him all his papers, mandates, and secret instructions. Kobylinsky reluctantly agreed to release the Tsar as he had no other choice. The boy, because of his illness, and three of his sisters were to be left behind. Alexandra, deeply disturbed, told Gilliard: "The commissar says that no harm will come to the Tsar, and that if anyone wishes to accompany him there will be no objection. I can't let the Tsar go alone. They want to separate him from his family as they did before...."They're going to try to force his hand by making him anxious about his family....The Tsar is necessary to them; they feel he along represents Russia." Ibid., 194; Gilliard, 260. e

Chemodurov and Seniev [the footman to the Grand Duchesses] went with us along with eight soldiers and a convoy from the stable (Red Guard) and ten men.<sup>246</sup> The weather was cold with an unpleasant wind. The road was very difficult and terribly bumpy because of the frozen ruts. We crossed the Irtysh over the deep water. We changed horses four times. In the first day we made 130 versts. For our lodgings for the night we stopped in the village of Yevlevo. We spent the night in a large clean house, and slept well on our coats.

April 14, 27, Saturday.

We got up at 4:00, since we had to leave by 5:00, but there was a delay because Yakovlev was fast asleep; beside that, he had to wait for a lost package. We went through Tobolsk on foot on the board walks, and on the other side we took a ferry one at a time. I got acquainted with Yakovlev's assistant, Guzakov, who is in charge of guarding us on the

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<sup>246</sup>At 11:30 the servants assembled in the big hall to bid farewell to the Tsar. The Tsar embraced the men and Alexandra embraced the women. Then they retired to their rooms where everyone cried. At 3:30 the convoy arrived. All the members of the family were crying with the exception of Nicholas, who was very calm and had a word of encouragement for everyone. At 4:00 they climbed into the tarantass, a vehicle used by the peasants which consisted of a large wicker basket hung from two long poles and which had no seats, and left. Gilliard, 266.



journey up to Tiumen. During the day it got nice and very warm. The road became muddy and, when the bumps became worse, I was rather afraid for Alix. In the open places it was very dusty, and in the forest it was muddy. In the village of Pokrovsky we changed horses. For a long time we stood directly across from the house of Gregory and watched his entire family looking out the window. The last change of horses was in the village of Borki. Here E. S. Botkin had a strong pain in his kidney. He had to go to bed in the house for one hour and a half, and then he got better, but slowly. We drank tea and talked with the servants and soldiers in the village schoolhouse. We made the last stage slowly and with all measures of caution. We arrived in Tiumen at 9:15 with a beautiful moon and a whole squadron around our vehicles for the entrance into the town. The entrance into the train was pleasant, although it was not very clean; we had an unpleasant dirty view. We lay down to sleep at 10:00 without undressing. I was above Alix's bunk, and Anna and Marie were in separate compartments.

April 15/28, Sunday.

Everyone slept soundly according to the men at the station. We suspect that we are going in the direction of Omsk. We started to guess where we would be taken after Omsk. To Moscow or Vladivostok? The commissar naturally did not talk

with anyone. Marie often went to see the soldiers--their lodgings were in the end of the coach. Four of them were stationed here and the rest of them were in the next car. We ate during a halt at the Vagai station at 11:00; it was very delicious. At the station we had to close the curtains over our windows because there were many curious people. After a cold snack and tea, we went to sleep early.

April 16/29, Monday.

During the morning we noted that we were travelling again. It was rumored that they did not want to take us through Omsk.<sup>247</sup> On the other hand, we were freer; we even took a walk for two hours for the first time alongside the train, and the second time a long way in the fields together with Yakovlev. Everyone was travelling in good humor.

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<sup>247</sup>Yakovlev was not a reliable Bolshevik, and later joined the White Armies. His mission was to take the Tsar to Ekaterinburg, an industrial town in the heart of the Ural Mountains which the Soviet authorities believed would be safer than the remote town of Tobolsk. However, he chose an easterly direction toward Omsk. When the Ural Soviet heard of what he was doing, they proclaimed him a traitor to the Revolution and sent instructions to have him stopped. P. Bikov, President of the Ekaterinburg Soviet in 1918, has written his impressions of Yakovlev's actions: "Later it was revealed that Yakovlev, knowing that the Romanovs would be shot in the Ural Territory, decided to save them and planned to take them out of the train on the way to Samara and hide them for a time in the mountains." Chamberlin, II, 88-89..

April 17/30, Tuesday.

It was another nice warm day. At 8:40 we arrived at Ekaterinburg. For three hours we sat at the station. There was a strong argument between the people here and our commissars. It was finally settled and the train went to another station--the commercial station. After an hour and a half we got off the train. Yakovlev transferred us to the local commissar, with whom we got into cars and drove through the deserted streets to a house prepared for us--the Ipatiev house.<sup>248</sup> Little by little, they gathered our things, but Valya was not admitted.<sup>249</sup> The house was nice and clean. We were given four large rooms: a corner bedroom, a dressing room, a dining compartment with window into the garden and a view of the low-lying part of the city, and finally a spacious hall with an arch without doors. For a long time we could not unpack our things, since the commissar, the commander,<sup>250</sup> and the officers of the guard were unsuccessful in inspecting our trunks, and

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<sup>248</sup>The Ipatiev house belonged to a rich engineer. Around it a huge stockade had been built. Franklin, 159.

<sup>249</sup>The Soviet ordered the imprisonment of Prince Dolgorukov. Gilliard, 264.

<sup>250</sup>The commander was a factory worker, Avdeiev, whom Colonel described as dirty and uncouth. Avdeiev called the Tsar a "blood drinker" and lectured to the guards that Nicholas delighted in war and thrived upon shooting down Russian workers. Franklin, 159.

the inspections afterward were like a customs inspection--very strict, right down to Alix's first-aid supplies. At this I blew up and abruptly expressed my opinion of the commissars. At 9:00 finally everything was arranged. We had supper at 4:00 from the hotel, and afterward we had a snack with tea. The accommodations were as follows: Alix, Marie, and I together in one bedroom, with a common dressing room in the dining room; Anna Demidov in the hall; Botkin, Chemadurov and Sedniev in the porch rooms with the officer of the guard. The guards were quartered in two rooms by the dining room. In order to go to the bathroom and W.C., we had to pass by the sentry post by the door of the guard quarters. Around the house there was a very high fence with two saplings outside the window; there were chains on the guard house in the garden, also.

April 18/May 1, Wednesday.

We slept very well. We had tea at 9:00. Alix slept late in order to rest from the travelling. On the occasion of the first of May we listened to music from some parade. They would not allow me to go into the garden today. I would like to wash myself in the bath. The water pipes are not operating, and we cannot use the water in the barrel. This is bad, because I suffer when I am not clean. The

weather became wonderful. The sun shone warmly. It was 15 degrees in the shade, and I breathed the air in the open window.

April 19/May 2, Thursday.

The day became nice, but windy and dust blew about the entire town. Later the sun shone through the window. In the morning I read a book to Alix--La sagesse et la destinée by Maeterlinck--and I also continued the Bible. We had lunch late at 2:00, then all of us except Alix took advantage of our permit to go out into the garden for an hour. The weather became cooler, and even a little rain fell. It was very nice to breathe the fresh air. We heard the sound of the melancholy bells and our thoughts were that now we lacked the possibility to go to those wonderful services; beside that, we could no longer fast. Until tea time I took a nice bath. We ate supper at 9:00. In the evening all of us, the inhabitants of the four rooms, sat together in the hall, where Botkin and I took turns reading the Twelve Evangelists, after which we went to bed.

April 20/ May 3, Friday.

During the night it got a lot colder; together with a rain, snow fell from time to time, but it is thawing now. The sun came out from time to time. It has been two days since our

guards have been changed. Their quarters have been changed to the next floor, so that now it is undoubtedly better for us--now they do not shoot back and forth between the bathroom and the W.C. and, moreover, they do not smoke in the dining room. Dinner was very late because of the influx of people into the city for the holiday.<sup>251</sup> After dinner I took a walk with Marie and Botkin for an hour. We had tea at 6:00. During the morning and evening, as I have all these last days here, I read from the Gospel aloud in the bedroom. From the unclear hints and the surroundings it appears that again poor Valya will not be free and that he will have to work as a consequence, after which he will be liberated. There is no way for someone to go for him and handle the affair because Botkin will not try. We had a wonderful dinner at 9:30.

April 21/May 4, Saturday.

I woke up late. The day was overcast, cold, and with snowy squalls. All morning I read aloud, and wrote a little in a letter to the girls from Alix and Marie. I drew a picture of the plan of this house. We had dinner at 1:30. We took a walk for 20 minutes. At the request of Botkin, they let

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<sup>251</sup>The family received tea and black bread in the morning, and their dinner was served from a Soviet restaurant. Chamberlin, II, 89.

the clergyman and the deacon in to see us at 8:00. They held services and it was wonderful to offer prayers, even in these circumstances, and to hear the "Cross of Christ." After services we had supper and went to bed early.

April 22/May 5, Sunday.

All evening and part of the night we listened to the sound of the fireworks, which were being set off in various parts of the city. During the day it got colder, about 3 degrees of frost, and the weather was overcast. During the morning we celebrated Easter by ourselves, and after tea we ate an Easter cake and beautiful Easter eggs, but we could not have Easter services. We had dinner and supper at that time. I took a walk for half an hour. I talked for a long time with Botkin.

April 23/May 6, Monday.

I got up late and it was a cold, overcast morning. For the second time we passed the birthday of dear Alix in seclusion, but this time without the whole family. I learned from the commander that Alexis had already gone out into the air five days ago--word of God! I took a walk in the sunshine and in the snow. The cold continued to be about 3 or 4 degrees of frost. Before dinner we wanted to light the fireplace in the dining room, but it put out so much smoke that

we had to put out the fire, but in the rooms it remained cool.

April 24/May 7, Tuesday.

The day became better and a little warmer. Today we received allowances from the assembly, but I do not know how much. Both dinner and supper were an hour late. I walked a little farther than usual because of the sunshine. Avdeiev, the commander, took out the plan of the house which was in my letter to the children, and kept it for himself, explaining that I could not send this. During the evening I took a bath.

April 25/May 8, Wednesday.

Today I pleaded with the guards for our original property and clothing. In the staff there were some of our original officers, and the majority of the soldiers were Lettish, dressed in different jackets, with all types of attire. All of the officers had their swords with them and rifles. When we went out to walk all of the free soldiers went out into the garden to watch us; they talked among themselves and walked between us. Until dinner time I walked for a long time with an ex-officer, a native of Zabaiklya; he spoke of many things of interest, also about the small ensign who is stationed here; he was originally from Riga.



The Ukrainians brought us our first telegram from Olga before dinner. Thanks to this we felt a little better toward them.<sup>252</sup> Beside that, from the duty rooms could be heard sounds of singing and playing on the piano, which had lately been taken from our hall. The food was fine and plentiful and on time.

April 26/May 9, Thursday.

Today in the duty rooms and among the sentries there has been some concern about us and telephones have been ringing. The Ukrainians were about all day, although they were off duty. Of course, no one told us what had happened; it could be the arrival of some detachment here and the people are in confusion. But the mood of the guards was jolly and very obliging. Together with the Ukrainians was my enemy "lobster eyes" [Avdeiev] who had to go on our walks with us. He was always silent, since no one would talk to him. During the evening during bezik he became amiable. I went around the rooms with him and he left.

April 27/May 10, Friday.

At 8:30 we had to get up and dress, in order to receive yesterday's deputy commander, who was transferred to us anew, with a kind face reminiscent of an artist. During

the morning a wet snow fell, and during the day the sun came out. It was nice to walk. After tea "lobster eyes" again arrived and asked each one of us how much money we had, and then he asked us to sign for the exact amount and took all the unnecessary money from the servants into custody as the treasurer of the Regional Soviet. Unpleasant history! During the evening games the kind little ensign sat with us; he followed the games and talked a lot.

April 28/May 11, Saturday.

Today nothing unpleasant occurred. The weather was a little warmer. We took a walk for two hours. I got acquainted with some of the guards. We received a telegram from Tobolsk; there everything is fine, and they received our letters. We do not know when they will come here. We had to wait until 9:30 in the evening for supper. I played bezik.

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<sup>252</sup>After the transfer from Tobolsk, the living conditions of the family became very harsh. Avdeiev answered any questions about the Tsar with the expression, "let him go to hell." He would lurch in a drunken state into the bedroom of Alexandra at any hour of the night to inspect it. He posted sentries at the bathroom who would watch every movement of the family while they were in the bathroom, and he helped himself to the personal possessions of the family. They took the abusive treatment with little complaint. While the guards downstairs sang obscene and revolutionary songs, the family upstairs sang hymns and prayed. Franklin, 163-64.

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April 29/May 12, Sunday.

It was nice sunny weather, but slightly cool. During the night the nice ensign was absent for an hour or two. He went dancing at the ball. All day he went around looking tired and sleepy. Alix sat in the garden on a bench during our walk. Dinner and supper were brought on time.

April 30/May 13, Monday.

The day became nice, cloudless. During the morning we took a walk for an hour. Dinner was unscrupulously late--instead of 1:00 it was brought at 3:30. Therefore, I went for a walk for a second time at about 4:00. Some old women and later some boys were at the fence watching us over the ditch; they were driven off, but everyone was laughing. The rascal Avdeiev came out into the garden, but he stayed in the distance. We had supper at 8:30. During the day I read aloud a good story by Leikin called Undespondent Russia. During the evening, bezik with Alix.

May 1/14, Tuesday.

We were happy to receive letters from Tobolsk; I received one from Tatiana. I read them one after the other all morning. The weather became nice and warm. Toward noon the guard was changed and both commands were front-line

soldiers, Russian and Lettish. The ensign of the guard was a dignified young man. Today they gave a pass to Botkin, so that during the day he is allowed to walk with us in areas where we are allowed to walk for only an hour; at the question why, the commander on duty replied: "So that it would resemble a prison regime." The food was on time. We purchased a samovar as an extreme measure so that we would not have to depend on the guard. During the evening while we were playing I took four beziks.

May 3/16, Thursday.

The day was overcast but warm. In the rooms, especially on the second floor, it felt damp; the air coming through the windows was warmer than that in the room. I taught Marie how to play backgammon. Sednev's fever was lower, but he stayed in bed all day. During the day we walked for exactly an hour. The number of sentries has been considerably increased. Most of them loaf around in the garden when we are not there. During the day I received coffee, Easter eggs, and chocolate from Ella in Perm. The electricity went out in the dining room, and we ate by the light of candles, inserted in bottles. There was no electricity in the hall, either. I took a bath after Marie at 7:30.

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May 4/17, Friday.

It rained all day. We learned that the children had left Tobolsk, but Avdeiev did not say when.<sup>253</sup> During the day he opened the doors of the locked room, which was for Alexis. It was large, and lighter than we expected, since it had two windows; our stove heated it well. I walked for only half an hour because of the rain. The food was plentiful, as it has been lately, and it was on time. The commander, his assistant, the commander of the sentries, and the electrician were all trying to be of assistance to fix the wire, but we nevertheless ate in darkness.

May 5/18, Saturday.

The weather remained overcast and rainy. The lighting in the rooms was poor, and the boredom in the rooms was incredible. While playing with Marie I regularly won at backgammon. It is really like a poor bezik. I walked

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<sup>253</sup>Colonel Kobylinsky was no longer in command at Tobolsk. On April 28 he had been relieved of his position and replaced by Rodionov. The new commander showed little sympathy for the prisoners. Ordered to move the rest of the family to Ekaterinburg as quickly as possible, he pressed Dr. Derevenko, who was treating Alexis, to declare the boy fit to travel. The doctor insisted that Alexis was far from being able to travel; however, when Rodionov saw the young boy sitting in a chair, he gave orders for the journey to begin on the next day, May 16. The doctor persuaded Rodionov to postpone the trip for four days. Botkin, 206-10; Franklin, 160-61; Gilliard, 264-65.

for an hour and a half during the day.<sup>254</sup> We had to wait for dinner from eight to nine o'clock. The electric lighting is fixed in the dining room, but in the hall it is not yet fixed.

May 6/19, Sunday.

I have lived for fifty years, and even to me it seems strange. The weather remained wonderful, as if it were made to order. At 11:30 the priest and deacon held services, which was very nice. I walked around with Marie until dinner. During the day we sat for an hour and a quarter in the garden basking in the warm sunshine. We have not received any news about the children, and we are beginning to wonder whether they left Tobolsk.

May 7/20, Monday.

It was a quiet day with good weather. In the morning I walked for half an hour, and during the day for an hour and a half. The guard was changed. Yesterday I began to read aloud a book by Averchenko called The Blue With The Gold. I took a bath until dinner time. During the evening the electric lights were again playing tricks on us, and while Sednev fixed them we played bezik by the light of candles stuck in bottles.

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May 8/21, Tuesday.

We could hear thunder toward the city. There was a thunder storm, and we had a light shower. I read for four hours until dinner time--War and Peace, which I had not read before. I walked for an hour with Marie. The sentries are now lodged in the basement. Dinner and supper were delayed for the better part of an hour. I received a congratulatory telegram from Olga for the sixth of May.

May 9/22, Wednesday.

It was a slightly overcast day with a few showers. Both Marie and I became engrossed in War and Peace, and before tea we played a game of backgammon. We took a walk for an hour. None of us yet knows where the children are, or when they will arrive. It is irritating to be without news.

May 10/23, Thursday.

In the morning during the course of an hour they explained in succession that the children were a few hours distant from the town; then, that they had arrived at the station; then, that they had arrived at home, although their train had been here for almost two hours!<sup>254</sup> It was a great joy

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<sup>254</sup>On May 20 the family and a few of the servants boarded the Rus. Rodionov, the commander for the trip, announced to the prisoners that life in the future would be much

to see them again and embrace them after four weeks of separation and uneasiness. There was no end to our mutual questions and answers. Very few letters had passed between us. They had suffered a lot, poor things, in their stay at Tobolsk and during the course of their three-day journey. During the night snow fell and it stayed on the ground all day. Of all those who had arrived with them, they [the guards] admitted only the cook Kharitonov and the nephew of Sednev.<sup>255</sup> During the day we went out for twenty minutes

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more difficult for them. Alexis could not walk, and was carried by the sailor Nagorny, who cared for him. Rodionov allowed the girls no privacy. Also on board were several of the faithful servants and friends: General Tatishchev, Dr. Derevenko, Countess Hendrikov, Baroness Buxhoevden, Miss Schneider, Mr. Gilliard, Mr. Gibbs, and several servants. The ship travelled to Tiumen, where they transferred to a dingy train. When they reached Ekaterinburg Gilliard described the scene: "About nine o'clock the next morning several carriages were drawn up alongside our train, and I saw four men go towards the children's carriage. A few minutes passed and then Nagorny, the sailor attached to Alexis Nicolaievich, passed my window, carrying the sick boy in his arms; behind him came the Grand Duchesses, loaded with valises and small personal belongings. I tried to get out, but was roughly pushed back into the carriage by the sentry. I came back to the window. Tatiana Nicolaievna came last, carrying her little dog and struggling to drag a heavy brown valise. It was raining, and I saw her feet sink into the mud at every step. Nagorny tried to come to her assistance; he was roughly pushed back by one of the commissars....A few minutes later the carriage drove off with the children in the direction of the town." Botkin, 207; Franklin, 161-62; Gilliard, 269.

<sup>255</sup> Leonid Sednev, a kitchen boy of fourteen, and Volkhov, a lady-in-waiting, were the only ones to escape from the Bolsheviks. The rest were to die. Ibid., 270.



into the garden; it was cold and terribly muddy. We waited until night for them to bring the bed and the necessary things from the railway station, but it was in vain, and all the girls had to sleep on the floor. Alexis spent the night on Marie's cot.<sup>256</sup> In the evening, as if on purpose, he injured his knee, and all night suffered a lot and prevented us from sleeping.<sup>257</sup>

May 11/24, Friday.

In the morning we waited for the admittance of our servants from Tobolsk and the bringing of the remainder of our baggage. I decided to let my old helper Chemodurov go for a rest. We all sat together in the bedroom and I read a lot; I began Unfinished Story by Apukhtin.

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<sup>256</sup>Not only did the girls sleep on the floor, but for the want of mattresses, they were forced to sleep on piles of rags. Franklin, 165.

<sup>257</sup>Alexis arrived at the Ipatiev house--by a strange coincidence, the first Romanov, Michael, had been called to the throne three centuries earlier from the Ipatiev Monastery--in poor health. He had not recovered from a severe attack of haemophilia which he suffered at Tobolsk. After arriving in Ekaterinburg, he suffered another attack. Nagorny, his attendant, had been removed and was soon thereafter murdered. Dr. Derevenko visited only a few times under the supervision of the guards. Alexis never walked again. His father or one of his sisters carried him from room to room when he needed to be moved. His father would carry him to his death. Ibid., 165.

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May 12/25, Saturday.

Everyone slept well except Alexis who toward evening yesterday had to go to his room. He continued to have sharp pain, although it decreased periodically. The weather corresponded fully with our mood--a wet snow fell and it was about 3 degrees of frost. We held talks through Evgenii Sergeevich with the Regional Soviet about allowing Mr. Gilliard to be with us. The children brought some of his things after an unbelievably prolonged discussion. I walked for twenty minutes. Supper was delayed almost an hour.

May 13/26, Sunday.

We all slept very well except Alexis. He continued to have pain, but only every once in a while. He stayed in the bed in our bedroom. There were no services. The weather was as usual. There was still snow on the roof. As usual lately, V. N. Derevenko came to examine Alexis; he was accompanied by four people whom we met yesterday. After a short walk I went with the commander, Avdeiev, to the shed in which they had stored all our large baggage. We inspected several trunks which were open. I began to read a work by Saltykov-Shchedrin from the book case here in the house. During the evening we played bezik.

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May 14/27, Monday.

The weather was warm. I read a lot. Alexis in general was better. We took a walk for an hour during the day. After tea Sednev and Nagorny were stopped and questioned by the Regional Soviet. I continued to examine the things the girls brought for us. The sentry under our window took a shot at our house and then explained that there was someone moving about near the window about ten o'clock. I believe now that he was simply playing with his rifle; sentries always do.

May 15/28, Tuesday.

Today it has been a month since our arrival here. Alexis has completely recovered; only his intervals of rest are longer. The weather was hot and stuffy, but in the rooms it was cool. We had dinner at 2:00. We took a walk and sat in the garden for an hour and a quarter. Alix cut my hair very well.

May 16/29, Wednesday.

The day was wonderful. We took a walk during the morning and again during the day and basked in the sunshine. Alexis was better. Derevenko made him a plaster cast. We had supper at 8:00 during the light of day. Alix went to bed

early because of a migraine headache. We have not heard of or been told about Sednev and Nagorny.

May 17/30, Thursday.

It was a very warm day. All evening, after cleaning the rooms, we became engrossed in our books until dinner time. The meal was served on time.<sup>258</sup> Alexis was very much quieter, and he only had pain for a little while in the evening. We took a walk before tea. I took a bath before supper.

May 18/31, Friday.

During the night it rained and also again during the day. I began to read the second volume of Saltykov-Shchedrin, Mr. Golovlevy. In the rooms it was dark and boring. We took a walk for half an hour. They are still raising a fence in front of Alexis's window.

May 19/June 1, Saturday.

The weather was overcast and warm. I read all morning. I took a walk for a few minutes less than an hour before tea. Alexis had almost no pain at all. The vegetables are growing little by little. Dinner was again served after two

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<sup>258</sup>The food was of very poor quality; moreover, the sentries removed the better pieces of it right before the family. Ibid., 165.

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o'clock--Kharitonov warmed it up at 8:00. I played backgammon with Marie.

May 20/June 2, Sunday.

At 11:00 Mass was served for us; Alexis was present, lying on the bed. The weather was nice, hot. We took a walk after Mass. It is unbelievable to sit so secluded and not be able to go into the garden when you wish, and spend the wonderful evenings out in the air. Prison regime!

May 21/June 3, Monday.

It was a nice warm day. We took a walk for two hours. Down below in the sentry quarters here again there was a shot; the commander came upstairs to ask if the bullet came through the floor. Alexis was not well; as usual he spent the day in the bed in our room. I finished the second volume of Saltykov. During the evening we played bezik.

May 22/June 4, Tuesday.

It was hot and stuffy in the rooms. We took a walk only during the day. About five o'clock a storm came, and another one during the evening. Alexis is quite a bit better and the swelling in his knee has gone down quite a bit. My feet and the small of my back hurt, and I slept poorly.

May 23/June 5, Wednesday.

Moved the clock two hours ahead. Today Alexis got dressed and was carried out into the air by the front door. The weather was wonderful. Alix and Tatiana sat with him for half an hour. We took a walk in the garden during this time. I myself felt poor. We lay down to sleep while it was still light.

May 24/June 6, Thursday.

All day I suffered pain from hemorrhoids; consequently, I lay on the bed because that was more comfortable than applying a compress. Alix and Alexis spent an hour and a half out in the air, and after them we spent an hour. The weather was wonderful.

May 25/June 7, Friday.

I spent dear Alix's birthday in bed with great pain in my feet and other places. The last two days I have felt a little better. I have been able to eat sitting in the easy chair.

May 27/June 9, Sunday.

Today I got up and abandoned the bed entirely. The day was bright. We took a walk twice with Alix, Alexis, Olga, and Marie before dinner. I walked with Tatiana and Anastasia

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before tea. The vegetables are very nice and juicy, and their smell is pleasant. I am reading with interest the twelfth volume of Saltykov--The Wise Old Man.

May 28/June 10, Monday.

It was a very warm day. In the shed where our trunks were stored they are constantly opening boxes and taking various objects and provisions from Tobolsk, and they take them without explanation or excuse. All this makes me think that they could easily take the things they like from the house, and then they would be lost from us. It is sickening! Their behavior during the last week has also changed: our wardens are trying not to speak to us, as if they feel rather uneasy or afraid of something about us. Incomprehensible!

May 29/June 11, Tuesday.

Dear Tatiana turned 21 years old today. During the night a strong wind blew straight into the basement window, thanks to which the air in our bedroom was finally clean and healthfully cool. I read for a long time. We walked again twice in succession. For breakfast Kharitonov served stewed fruit to the pleasure of everyone. During the evening, as usual, bezik.

May 31/June 13, Ascension Day.

For a long time during the morning, but in vain, we waited for them to bring the priest to hold services; everyone was occupied at church. During the morning, therefore, everyone went out into the garden. Avdeiev came and talked a long time. According to what he said he and the Regional Soviet are apprehensive about the performance of the anarchists and, therefore, it could be that we might have to leave quickly, probably to Moscow.<sup>259</sup> He ordered preparations for the departure. We quickly started packing, but quietly, in order not to attract the attention of the sentries. About 11:00 he returned and said that we still had a few days. Consequently, we are still bivouacing with everything packed. The weather was fine; I took walks as always, twice a day. Finally after supper Avdeiev, slightly drunk, explained to Botkin that the anarchists had been captured and we were no longer in jeopardy, so our departure was cancelled. After all our preparations, this was very annoying. During the evening we played bezik.

June 3/16, Sunday.

All during the last few weeks I have been reading, and

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<sup>259</sup>Rumors spread during the entire time of captivity that Nicholas would be taken to Moscow for trial. Franklin, 154.



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today I finished Emperor Paul I by Shilder; it was very interesting. Everyone is waiting for Sednev and Nagorny who were to be released.

June 5/18, Tuesday.

Dear Anastasia turned seventeen years old today. It was hot outside and upstairs ;it was terrible. I continued to read Saltykov's 'third volume; it is 'fascinating and witty. The whole family took a walk before tea. Since yesterday Kharitonov has been preparing food for us from the provisions brought in every two days. The girls are learning to cook from him; during the evening they prepared the meal, and in the morning they baked bread. It was not bad.

June 9/21, Saturday.

For the last few days the weather has been nice, but very hot; in our rooms the stuffiness was incredible, particularly at night. At the request of Botkin, they will allow us half an hour walks. Today during tea six men came, probably from the Regional Soviet. Maybe we can open some of the windows. The authorization for that will probably take about two weeks! They quickly went over various subjects and quietly examined the windows for us. The aroma from all the vegetable gardens and flower gardens is wonderful.

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June 10/23, Sunday.

Today we celebrated an odd event; this morning they opened the windows for us one by one. Evgenii Sergeevich was having trouble with his kidney and suffered a lot. At 11:30 regular Mass was held and later vespers. For the last few days Alix and Alexis have eaten with us in the dining room. In addition to that they went for a two-hour walk.<sup>260</sup> The day was splendid. It appears that yesterday's visitors were commissars from Petrograd. The air in the rooms became fresh toward evening and a little cooler.

June 12/24, Tuesday.

Yesterday and today it was amazingly hot. In the rooms it was also hot in spite of the windows being open all the time. We took a walk during the day for two hours. After dinner two severe thunderstorms came up. It freshened the air. Evgenii Sergeevich is much better, but he is still bedridden.

June 14/26, Thursday.

Our dear Marie turned 19 years old today. The weather was almost tropical, 26 degrees in the shade and in the rooms 24 degrees. It is very difficult to endure. We spent an

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<sup>260</sup>Alexis was still sick, and his father carried him for the walks in the garden. Gilliard, 284.

uneasy night and stayed awake with our clothes on. All this was because the other day we received two letters, one after the other, in which it was reported that we should get ready to be taken away by some of our devoted friends.<sup>261</sup> However, the days passed and nothing was heard, but the waiting and absence of news were very agonizing.

June 21/July 4, Thursday.

Today there was a change of commanders. During the dinner Belorodov and someone else came in and told us that Yurovsky was being appointed instead of Avdeiev.<sup>262</sup> During the day until tea he [Belorodov] and his assistant drew up a list of our and the children's gold objects; the larger objects (rings, bracelets) they took themselves. They explained

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<sup>261</sup>The family knew that it was in line of the advancing army of the anti-Bolsheviks. They heard of loyalist plans to rescue them and they felt that there was a chance of escape. By the beginning of July they heard the sound of artillery fire of the approaching Czech Legion. Franklin, 165-66.

<sup>262</sup>Commissar Belorodov was president of the Divisional Soviet of the Urals. On this day Avdeiev and his adjutant Mochkin were arrested and replaced by Jacob Yurovsky and his assistant Nikulin. The factory worker guards were transferred, for Yurovsky brought ten men with him, nearly all of them Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war and belonging to the Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Speculation, or Cheka. From here on, these men were the inside guards and dealt only with the prisoners. The Ipatiev house became the "house destined for a special purpose." Franklin, 169; Gilliard, 284-86.

that an unpleasant story about our house had been heard. They mentioned that the loss of our goods, which I believed and which I wrote about on the 28th of May, was confirmed. I pity Avdeiev, but he is guilty in that he did not keep his men from stealing from the trunks in the shed.

June 23/July 6, Saturday.

Yesterday the commander Yurovsky brought a box containing all our jewels and asked us to verify its contents. He asked us to sign a receipt for them and left them in our custody. The weather is cooler, and in the bedroom it is easier to breathe. Avdeiev and his assistant were not only guarding us but also robbing us. And, speaking of property, they even kept for themselves the larger part of the goods brought for us from the convent. It is only now, after the new change, that we learned about that, because a large quantity of provisions was found in the kitchen. Lately, as usual, I have been reading a lot. Today I began the seventh volume of Saltykov. I like his writing very much, both his articles and his stories. The day was rainy. We walked for half an hour and returned home to dry off.

June 25/July 8, Monday.

Our life is not changed much by Yurovsky. He came into the

bedroom to verify the seal on the box and glanced out the open window. Today all morning and until 4:00 they checked and repaired the electric lighting. Upstairs in the house the Letts are standing sentry and also outside the house-- sometimes soldiers and sometimes workers. According to the rumors some of Avdeiev's followers are already under arrest. The door to the shed containing our baggage was sealed off. Oh, if that had only been done a month ago! During the night there was a storm and it got a little cooler.

June 28/July 11, Thursday.

During the morning about 10:30 three workers came to open the window and raised a heavy grating and fastened it to the frame, without any warning to us from Yurovsky. Decidedly this individual pleases us less and less.

June 30/July 13, Saturday.

Alexis took his first bath since Tobolsk. His knee is healed, but he still cannot straighten it. The weather was warm and pleasant. We have no news from the outside whatsoever.

EPILOGUE

The Ural Territorial Soviet decided on June 29, 1918, to kill the entire imperial family and the servants. The military branch of the Soviet announced that Ekaterinburg could hold out against the advancing White Army for only three more days.<sup>1</sup> The family would not be given a trial nor forewarned of their fate.

Jacob Yurovsky, a Jew, was ordered to carry out the killing. He had been born in Siberia, had lived for a time in Berlin and become a Lutheran, and later had returned to Russia as a photographer. During the war he served as a hospital assistant and took an active part in the revolutionary movements at the front. He was a member of the Ural Soviet.<sup>2</sup>

Specially trained men from the Cheka replaced the factory workers who had been guarding the imperial family. Around midnight, on the night of July 3, Yurovsky woke the imperial family and told them to dress, that they were to be moved to a safer place. The dressing and preparation for the move took about an hour. The Tsar, Tsaritsa, Tsarevich,

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<sup>1</sup>Ekaterinburg fell about two weeks later, on July 25.

<sup>2</sup>Chamberlin, II, 90, based upon the report of Sokolov, the official investigator for the White Army.

the four daughters, the family doctor Botkin, the cook Kharitonov, the butler Trupp, and the chambermaid Demidov moved to the basement to await the three cars which were to take them away.<sup>3</sup>

The Tsar stood in the middle of the room, with his son and wife seated next to him. The four daughters and the servants lined themselves along the walls. Yurovsky told the Tsar that he was to die. Nicholas said, "What?" and began to move toward Yurovsky. Yurovsky aimed his pistol at the Tsar's head and fired point-blank. He turned the weapon on Alexis and shot him. The rest of the men in the room began to fire and soon the room ran with blood and smelled of gunpowder. The room filled with groans and shrieks. After the first volley, three victims remained alive. The chambermaid Anna Demidov was only slightly wounded and ran around the room shielding herself with a pillow. She was clubbed with rifle butts and bayoneted. Anastasia screamed and tried to get to her feet. A soldier pinned her foot to the floor and then killed her with a blow from his rifle butt. Young Alexis groaned and Yurovsky fired two more bullets into his head. The rest of the victims were bayoneted to insure their death.

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<sup>3</sup>Botkin, 231-32, based upon the Sokolov investigation.

The assassins stripped the bodies and piled them into waiting trucks. Yurovsky and his men took the bodies to an abandoned mine in the vicinity of the little village of Koptyaki about thirteen miles from Ekaterinburg. Surrounded by troops for two days, the men put the bodies into benzine and sulphuric acid and then burned the remains.

To prevent the bodies from falling into the hands of the White Army, Yurovsky and his men took the bodies to a distant swamp.

When the White Army arrived, the investigators neglected to search this swamp area, and in the words of the President of the Ekaterinburg Soviet, "the corpses remained and have now happily rotted."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Chamberlin, II, 90-92.



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