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Nicky, Diary - 21 December - Gatchina

In the evening I sat with Mama and Aprak¹ discussing the family life of the young people of society today.

Inevitably this conversation touched the most sensitive string of my heart, and touched that *dream* and that *hope* I live with from day to day.

It is already a year and a half since I talked about it to Papa at Peterhof, and since then nothing has changed either for better or worse!

My dream - one day to marry Alix Hesse! I have loved her for a long time, but more deeply and strongly since 1889 when she spent six weeks in Petersburg during the winter! For a long time I resisted my feelings, and tried to deceive myself about the impossibility of achieving my most cherished wish! ~~But now that I have withdrawn or been rejected~~ the only obstacle or gulf between us - is the question of religion!

It is the one and only barrier; I am almost certain that our feelings are mutual! Everything is the will of God. Relying on His mercy I resign myself to the future with equanimity.

¹ Princess A. Obolensky (born Countess Apraksine), lady-in-waiting and close friend of the Imperial family.

² Prince Albert Victor (Eddy), the Duke of Clarence, eldest surviving son of the Prince of Wales, had, with his grandmother Queen Victoria's consent, asked Alix to marry him, but was turned down.

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From now on
I'll leave it
to you to be
the winner

Nicky, Diary - 29 January - St Petersburg

While I was talking to Mama this morning she made several hints about Helene, the daughter of the Comte de Paris,¹ which puts me in an awkward position. I am at the crossing of two paths: I myself want to go in the other direction, while Mama obviously wants me to take this one! What will happen?

After tea I crept into Xenia's room and watched from behind the curtain as she had her gymnastic lesson with a certain young and attractive person.

1 April - Gatchina ~~Sasha's birthday, it is twenty-six! And I am following close on his heels, there are only two years between us.~~

I have noticed something very strange within myself: I never thought that two similar feelings, two loves could co-exist at one time within one heart.

I have already loved Alix H[esse] for three years and constantly hope to marry her one day, God willing! The following year I fell very much in love with Olga D.² but that however has now passed! And since the camp of 1890 until now I have been madly (platonically) in love with little K.³ What a surprising thing our heart is! At the same time I never stop thinking of Alix!

Would it be right to conclude from all this that I am very amorous? To a certain extent: yes; but I must add that I am a severe judge and very choosy! This is the reason for the mood I described yesterday as not very pious.

Intell - have
eight lines
of speech
before this
comment

24 yrs old
and so innocent
was it unaccuse
that the D. he now
desired.

¹ Helene, second daughter of the Comte de Paris (Louis Philippe d'Orleans).

² Princess Olga Dolgorukaya, whom Nicky was in love with for a short time.

³ Matilda Kshesinskaya, a famous Russian ballerina. Nicky was her first love.

there are a lot of people riding in the morning. At one o'clock I again changed into full uniform, and set out with Uncle Alfred and the rest of the family for Windsor by train, to see the Queen. There was again a formal welcome: an escort of the King's own Dragoons, already familiar from India, and a guard of honour in the inner courtyard of the castle. A typical old building - ~~the best of its kind.~~

~~The Queen - a round ball on unsteady legs - was remarkably kind to me. We~~
~~lunched with her and the Battenbergs, the whole was playing in the courtyard. She~~
~~is attended by two Indians. Then she presented me with the Order of the Garter,~~
~~which I certainly had not expected!~~

After taking my leave of her, I looked around the castle, and went into the chapel where poor Eddy's body has been laid to rest. Returned to London at 5 o'clock for tea. After dinner we went to the Drury Lane theatre. The Comédie Française were playing *Les Effrontés* - excellent. Uncle Bertie took Uncle Valdemar and I to the Marlborough Club, to which we were elected as members on the day of our arrival.

20 June Got up late, Uncle Valdemar and Georgie took turns to come and see me while I was lying in bed. After coffee I went with Aunt Marie to our church; the service and singing were very good, the choir having been sent from Paris. Read until luncheon.

The heat was terrible, the sun like some red spot and the air was hazy, presumably from the London fumes. At 2 o'clock we all gathered for luncheon at Uncle Alfred and Aunt Marie's. I made the acquaintance of the Mecklenburgs. After changing into light clothes, we drove by carriage beyond the town. The outing turned out to be a long one, as we went to visit the Teck family at their residence - White Lodge. We had tea with them in the garden. People kept arriving the whole time to congratulate May. We returned to Marlborough House and an hour later set off for a family dinner with old man Cambridge.

A string orchestra was playing. Everyone finds a great resemblance between Georgie and myself - I am getting quite tired of hearing the same thing all the time.

21 June After coffee, had my picture taken with Georgie in the garden. At about 11 o'clock went into town with Clarke in a 'handsome' - a splendid vehicle - to look at the sights of London. We saw Westminster Abbey, St Paul's Cathedral and the Tower. We returned home just in time for luncheon.

Visited Georgie's new home, where he will live as a married man - St James's Palace; the rooms are not yet completely furnished. ~~From the outside the building~~
~~looks like a prison.~~ After that I went with Uncle Bertie and Uncle Valdemar to Hurlingham Park, where there is a club and every possible outdoor activity and game: polo, lawn-tennis, cricket, clay pigeon shooting etc., I was fascinated to watch the first of these games, it reminded me of India. At 8.30 there was a dinner

² Augusta, wife of Frederick, Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, was the sister of May of Teck's mother, Mary Adelaide, Duchess of Teck.

³ Baroness Buxhoeveden, lady-in-waiting to Alix, recorded in her memoirs that the likeness was such that at a garden party many guests shook Nicky warmly by the hand, taking him for his cousin the bridegroom. The greatest joke, however, was when one of the gentlemen of the Court made the contrary mistake, and coming up to the Duke, whom he took for the Tsarevich [Nicky], begged him not to be late for the wedding the next day.

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at our Embassy with Staal,⁹ and afterwards a reception upstairs, what they call here a 'party' – what a crush, not to mention the heat. Luckily it did not last too long.

25 June The day was even hotter than yesterday. I went with Uncle Bertie to Buckingham Palace to say goodbye to the Queen. At about two I went with him to have luncheon with the Marquess of Londonderry. There were quite a lot of people and a string orchestra was playing. The house is not big, but the rooms are beautiful and filled with a mass of magnificent pictures and objects. Our hostess was delightful but a ferrible flirt. We left soaked through as we had been sitting in frock coats. Half an hour later I set off with Clarke for the House of Lords and the House of Commons. I heard Gladstone¹⁰ speaking in the latter. Returned home for tea and then went riding in the garden on three-wheeled bicycles with Victoria and Uncle Valdemar. At 8 o'clock went to dine with Fife.¹¹ A lot more people arrived during the evening and there was a concert. Returned home at 12.30.

26 June It was still very stuffy in the morning. After coffee I received: Lord Rosebery, Mackenzie Wallace and said goodbye to Uncle Alfred. At 12.43 we all (that is the inhabitants of Marlborough House) set off for the City in state coaches with an escort of the Blues. The Lord Mayor met us at the entrance, surrounded by his aldermen in wigs and the most amazing gowns.

In the council chamber he gave a speech for Apapa on the freedom of the City, but I simply could not understand what it was. Then we went to another hall, where luncheon was laid for 700 people. After a very bad meal there were toasts for the first time in my life I had to make quite a long speech, in English of course; they snapped loudly and banged their knives to show their spontaneous appreciation – I was dripping with sweat – but then I was dressed in a cossack coat. I returned sooner than expected and at around 4 o'clock, in the simplest clothes, we set off in two cabs – I with Victoria and Uncle Valdemar with Maud – to see Captain Boyton's World's Watershow for a second time. We dined and then went to the opera at Covent Garden theatre, where there was a gala performance. The Reshke brothers were singing. It dragged on until 12 o'clock.

27 June There was a strong wind blowing, and almost every hour it rained and then cleared up again. At 11 o'clock I went with my three gentlemen to the Greek church, where the service went on for a long time, but the singing was very good. We lunched at home after 2 o'clock, as the arrival of Aunt Augusta Mecklenburg and Aunt Mary Teck held everyone up.

At 4.30 we took the same road as for White Lodge and went to Sheen to see Louisa and Fife. It's completely country, you can't believe London is so near. We drank tea in the Chinese pavilion to Hungarian music. There were a few other people apart from us – some very pleasant ladies – 'our friend Julie' and 'Bena Hardinge', with their husbands. After dressing for dinner, we gathered downstairs in the lovely dining room. The same music played. I have to say that I am very sorry to be leaving England, and particularly Marlborough House.

⁹ Russian Ambassador.

¹⁰ W. E. Gladstone, enjoying his fourth term as Prime Minister.

¹¹ The Duke of Fife married Louise, daughter of Edward VII.

28 June Got up early in order to have time to put away my last things. At 10 o'clock the whole family gathered for breakfast, and an hour later I was accompanied to the station by Apapa and all the Waleses.

I took the same way back to Port Victoria. I took my leave of Clarke on the yacht, and when the luggage had been loaded, we started up and passed out into the sea.

It was remarkably calm, the sun was warm and in general the crossing was remarkably good. We met a mass of ships. I read a lot to dispel my sadness.

4 October - Fredensborg, Denmark The weather on our last-but-one day was rainy, the morning was still but towards evening a strong wind got up. After coffee we went for a walk. All the heavy luggage was sent aboard the yacht and the rooms took on a mournful look. There was fog by the time we went out again, and the air was so damp that it was difficult to breathe as we walked.

We stopped to rest in the summer house on the mound in the park, and lit a small fire. Sadness has imprinted its mark on each one of us; involuntarily the question poses itself - when, and where and in what circumstances will the family next meet again?

5 October The horrible day of departure! Got up early to pack my last things, which were sent on to town ahead of us. At 11 o'clock we left Fredensborg in warm weather and a downpour.

From the station we went to Amalienborg, where we said goodbye to dear Amama and the whole family. Apapa accompanied us as far as Tolboten where we boarded the *Polar Star* in pouring rain. We sat down to luncheon at 1.30, at the same time as Aunt Alix was having luncheon on the *Osborne*. At about 3 o'clock they all came over to us, it was strange to see each other again after the tearful farewells. We sat around the cabins and chatted.

At 5 o'clock Mama and the others left the yacht and went back to Amalienborg, where Papa, Misha and I followed after the lowering of the flag. We sat down to dinner in the small dining room. Poor Amama was so disturbed by all the protracted farewells that she had to leave the table and lie down on the couch in her room.

In the evening we wandered around the rooms and gathered at about 9 o'clock for tea with Amama. After saying a final goodbye to her we returned to the *Polar Star* with Aunt Alix, Victoria and Maud. After that we took them with Mama over onto the *Osborne* and having said goodbye we came back. At 12 o'clock I went into the ward room, where we sat down to a *zakuska*. I presented the officers with a loving cup with three handles, which was successfully put into use.

Ella to Nicky - 20 October - Darmstadt
Dearest Nicky,

Here at last is my letter about Pelly I.¹² He is just as ever *no changement* and you remember our conversations before, well I wish you to know all *perfectly clearly*, after different conversations *he gave in to see Pelly II* but wishing her to understand that in spite of *the depth and unaltering* sentiment he has not the *courage to change* his [religion] only I repeated that *Pelly II longed to see him and speak it out* - well

¹² Ella had adopted Nicky and Alix's private nicknames.

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dear much hope there is not and he begs me to tell you not to *misunderstand* him but that my idea is that *seeing Pelly II talking with her* perhaps God will give him the courage to do a thing for love which now seems to him impossible. I don't mention the Pellys' names as really one never knows if the post does not read the letters and as I know how important and what deep interest you take in their fate I write thus. *Please tell Pelly's parents all I say* so that in case (God grant it may not be so) nothing comes of their meeting they may *not reprove Pelly I* of having given false hopes. I promised to write all as it is and hope you understand, in spite of all I hope that love may conquer and be too strong and his love is so *deep and pure* and the poor creature so utterly miserable that it makes ones heart ache that R[eligion] should come between, they must both pray, and oh I do so hope as *all other difficulties* have passed.

If *Pelly II consents* telegraph to me *all right* then *Sergei* will write to the person who invited for Easter and we would go together to pay a visit and meet Pelly II there. You must answer *directly*. Pelly II might do as if she were travelling in different towns or simply pay a visit of congratulations as they are reigning now, papers will always talk if they meet or do not meet so that must not be the trouble. May I now say my opinion this is her *last and only chance* she must come now or it is a finished thing forever whereas if they meet who knows it is so difficult to refuse accepting the only being you love since years for whom the heart has been suffering to be separated. *Pelly I said he would die for his love* and if they speak perhaps the real barrier which has kept them apart will melt before the words of love from Pelly II don't you hope so and pray so for their happiness may God bless those poor darlings.

Ask the Father Ioann of Kronstadt to come and *see Pelly II bless her and pray with her* she wants God's help more than ever usually in life please please do tell her so now dear courage to speak to her and say all and may she come and we meet her soon. Kind messages from all to you, and a hearty kiss from your old friend and Aunt Ella.

in Union

Nicky, Diary - 26 October - St Petersburg

A great misfortune happened yesterday - our wonderful composer Tchaikovsky died

Nicky to Alix - 31 October - Gatchina

Dearest Alix

Please excuse this boldness of mine of writing a few lines to tell you how sorry I was and how I deeply regret not to have been able to come and see you while Ella stayed with you. But after our returning from Denmark, a lot of important matters - one about Georgy [brother] - who luckily is quite well now, kept me back from going. You may well imagine my disappointment at losing such a splendid and easy chance of flying off to Pelly, after such a long long time ...

Berlin and all those ceremonies and functions for Mossy [Margaret of Prussia]'s wedding, where we generally used to be about half a mile off from each other, cannot be called a pleasant meeting. And for you poor thing especially it must be of a disagreeable recollection, as you suffered so from an ear-ache!

I do hope you are quite well and that awful pain has not come back.

~~If you don't mind wouldn't you send me a photo of you, one of the new ones, like those you sent to Xenia lately? I would be so happy to have one near me. I have to go often to town to my regiment and whenever I look into our~~

edit.

[Signature]

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garden at Anichkov I always think of that lovely time on the ice, which seems now to be a dream.

And now goodbye my darling Pelly. God bless you and help you in all the troubles of life.

Ever your devoted Nicky

Alix to Xenia - 8 November - Darmstadt

Darling Xenia

A good kiss and fondest thanks for your dear letter.

It was such a pleasure hearing again from you. Yes, do continue writing to me, don't let what I am going to tell you, put a stop to our friendship and correspondence. My photo and a letter I have sent through Ella to Nicky. In it he will see, that I cannot change my decision.

~~and I have been torturing myself. To hurt one whom one loves is fearful, and yet I don't want him to go on hoping, as I can never change my Religion. God bless the dear, and may he not think ill of his old Pelly. I feel too upset to write any more.~~

Your old Alix

~~let me hear sometimes from you, may I? Don't let us quite drift apart, that would be too hard.~~

Alix to Nicky - 8 November - Darmstadt

Dearest Nicky,

I send you my very best thanks for your dear letter, and enclose the photograph you wished to have and which Ella will forward to you.

~~I believe it must have been a stronger will than our own, which ordained that we should not meet at Coburg, for like this it gives me the chance to write to you all my innermost feelings which perhaps on the spur of the moment might not have said, so that you may have misunderstood me.~~

Start You know what my feelings are as Ella has told them to you already, but I feel it my duty to tell them to you myself. I thought everything for a long time and I only beg you not to think that I take it lightly for it grieves me terribly and makes me very unhappy.

all of it. I have tried to look at it in every light that is possible, but I always return to one thing. I cannot do it against my conscience. You, dear Nicky, who have also such a strong belief will understand me that I think it is a sin to change my belief, and I should be miserable all the days of my life, knowing that I had done a wrongful thing.

I am certain that you would not wish me to change against my conviction. What happiness can come from a marriage which begins without the real blessing of God? For I feel it a sin to change that belief in which I have been brought up and which I love. I should never find my peace of mind again, and like that I should never be your real companion who should help you on in life; for there always should be something between us two, in my not having the real conviction of the belief I had taken, and in the regret for the one I had left.

It would be acting a lie to you, your Religion and to God. This is my feeling of right and wrong, and one's innermost religious convictions and one's peace of con-

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science toward God before all one's earthly wishes. As all these years have not made it possible for me to change my resolution in acting thus, I feel that now is the moment to tell you again that I can *never* change my confession.

I am certain that you will understand this clearly and see as I do, that we are only ~~tormenting ourselves, about something impossible and it would not be a kindness to let you go on having vain hopes, which will never be realized.~~

And now Goodbye my darling Nicky, and may God bless and protect you.

Ever your loving Ahx

Nicky, Diary - 17 November - St Petersburg

We left Ropsha in wonderful weather and complete stillness. There were 3 degrees of frost. I killed: 1 black grouse, 2 white partridges (for the first time), 6 grey hares and 8 white hares - 17 in all. The whole result was much inferior to previous times - 285 pieces.

Changed at Sandro's, dined with Uncle Misha [Sandro's father] and then went to see a marvellous *Sleeping Beauty*; it was danced by M. Kshessinskaya. At night there was fog.

18 November This morning I opened the packet which had been lying on my table since last night, and in a letter from Alix from Darmstadt I learned that everything is over between us - it is impossible for her to change religion, and all my hopes are shattered by this implacable obstacle, my best dreams and my most cherished wishes for the future. Such a short time ago, I perceived it as bright, attractive and imminently attainable - yet now it appears indifferent!!!

Yes, it is hard sometimes to submit to the will of God! All day I went about in a daze, it is terribly difficult to appear calm and carefree when the question affecting your whole future life is suddenly decided in this way!

The weather during our walk corresponded to my state of being: it was thawing and a gale was blowing. We dined downstairs.

~~25 November~~ At eight o'clock went to the first battery of His Majesty's, for their celebration dinner. The singers and the gypsies took turns.

26 November To my surprise I got up feeling quite fresh, and that after a four-day binge!

7 December Woke up at 11.30. For a long time could not decide whether to go to the Council of State or not. All the same I went - and for this reason stayed in town. At 3 o'clock left for the regiment, having wormed my way out of the Committee of Ministers.

15 December Slept late. Found out that the Cavalry Guard had left at 9 o'clock in the morning. The weather is not brilliant for the crossing: 4 degrees of frost and a strong wind blowing straight into their faces. Went to Petersburg at 5 o'clock; had tea with Aprak in the train. Dined at 7 o'clock at Countess Vorontsov's. We sat down to a game of 'poker'; and then were joined by the Trubetskoy's and Ferden. All the old friends are already married!!! Returned to Anichkov for the night.

17 December Walked in the menagerie. It was warm but terribly dark. After tea, with my face in a sweat, I finished a letter to Alix - in answer to the letter, in which I received her refusal! We dined upstairs at 8 o'clock - the same people as at luncheon.

We listened to the string orchestra in the arsenal - they played divinely. The Alexei came in the evening - we played *makashka* [matka, card game].

Nicky to Alix - 17 December - Gatchina

My dearest Alix

Please excuse my not having answered your letter sooner, but you may well imagine what a blow it proved to me.

I could not write to you all these days on account of the sad state of mind I was in. Now that my restlessness has passed I feel more calm and am able to answer your letter quietly. Let me thank you first of all for the frank and open way in which you spoke to me in that letter! There is nothing worse in the world than things misunderstood and not brought to the point.

~~I knew from the beginning what an obstacle there rose between us and I felt deeply for you all these years, knowing perfectly the great difficulties you would have had to overcome. But still it is so awfully hard, when you have cherished a dream for many a year and think - now you are near to its being realized - then suddenly the curtain is drawn and - you see only an empty space and feel oh! so lonely and so beaten down!!~~

I cannot deny the reasons you give me, dear Alix; but I have got one which is also true: you hardly know the depth of our religion. If you only could have learnt it with somebody, who knows it, and could have read books, where you might see the likeness and difference of the two - perhaps then! it would not have troubled you in the same way as it does now!

~~Your living quite alone without anyone's help in such a matter, is also a sad circumstance in the barrier that apparently stands between us! It is too sad for words to know that that barrier is - religion!~~

Don't you think, dearest, that the five years, since we know each other, have passed in vain and with no result? Certainly not - for me at least. And how am I to change my feelings after waiting and wishing for so long, even now after that sad letter you sent me? I trust in God's mercy; maybe it is His will that we both, but you especially should suffer long - maybe after helping us through all these miseries and trials - He will yet guide my darling along the path that I daily pray for

Oh! do not say 'no' directly, my dearest Alix, do not ruin my life already! Do you think there can exist any happiness in the whole world without you? After having involuntarily kept me waiting and hoping, can this end in such a way?

Oh! do not get angry with me if I am beginning to say silly things, though I promised in this letter to be calm! Your heart is too kind not to understand what tortures I am going through now.

But I have spoken enough and must end this epistle of mine. Thank you so much for your charming photo.

~~Let me wish, dearest Alix, that the coming Year may bring you peace, happiness, comfort and the fulfilment of your wishes. God bless you and protect you!~~

Ever your loving and devoted Nicky

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To be mailed at 1-10.
 487 Lin ~~5/10~~ 6/10/04
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Note
 And comments Sept. 10

Alix to Xenia - 30 March - Darmstadt
 Darling Xenia
 A tender kiss, best thanks for your dear letter and the charming photos. It seems too funny to think that you are about to be married - God bless you, my sweet Child, and may you have every possible happiness.

~~Darling, why did you speak about that subject, which we never wanted to mention again? It is cruel as you know it never can be - all along I have said so do you think it is not already hard enough, to know you are hurting first the person who is of all others your own flesh and blood. But it cannot be the least bit and so do not I pray you speak of it again. I know Ella will begin again, but what is the need of it, and it is cruel always to say I am ruining his life - can I help it, when to make him happy I should be committing a sin in my conscience. I am hard enough as it is and I am afraid to speak again is so unkind - You will have found what your heart has desired, this is only kind, for you that I am so very sure of.~~

just these 2 lines

One worry and sorrow follows the other - in 5 days we are off to Coburg for Ernie's wedding' - what my feelings are you can imagine. God grant they may be happy - she is such a dear.

I am going to England for two or three months, as I would only be in their way here. The heat is great, but everything is so green and lovely and all the fruit trees in bloom - too beautiful, we spend many hours in the woods.

Goodbye, my little Chicken, many a loving kiss from your ever devoted old Alix
 Best love to Sandro.

off to Coburg

Nicky, Diary - 2 April - Gatchina

Ideal weather. Went for a walk with Mama, Xenia and Sandro. The three of us went boating and revelled in the tranquillity and the quiet air. It was possible to sit with the windows open. At 3 o'clock we again went out round the lake and got into various boats. We were very successful at breaking up the ice and pulled large blocks into the middle of the lake. We had tea at 5 o'clock. At 10 o'clock I said goodbye to dear Papa and Mama and went with Sandro to the station. The train had already arrived from town with Uncle Vladimir, Aunt Michen, Uncle Sergei, Aunt Ella, Uncle Pavel and their ladies-in-waiting and adjutants. At 10.30 we set off for Coburg. We had supper; it was very pleasant to travel in the dining car in such company.

KR, Diary - 3 April

Here I learnt from the Empress that on the day of Nicky's departure Xenia received a telegram from Alix in which she warned that she remained adamant, that is to say that she did not agree to convert to Orthodoxy.

Nicky was very upset and wanted to stay, but the Empress insisted that he go. She advised him to turn for help to Queen Victoria, who has a great influence on her granddaughter.

✓ I think well

² The marriage of Alix's brother Ernie to Nicky's cousin Ducky took place at Coburg, the family seat of the Dukes of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in southern Germany. Ducky's father, Alfred, Duke of Saxe-Coburg, had assumed the title of Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in 1893.

487-3-16 = Roughly 20 pp. cut in half

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Returned and had coffee in our communal drawing room. Alix then arrived.

I touched as little as possible on yesterday's question, it was enough she still agreed to see me and talk to me. At 12 o'clock we went to have luncheon with Aunt Marie, the others had to wait until two for luncheon with the Queen.

Meeting again after a short wait, we went in two carriages to Rosenau, which belongs to Uncle Alfred. There we walked, visited the orangerie and the house itself, and had tea on the grass next to the lawn-tennis. We had a good laugh when the chief footman was at last persuaded to sing two or three songs; he started in the tower and ended behind the bushes. The rest of the family joined us at 4 o'clock from luncheon.

On the return journey we met the Queen, Empress Frederick, and Beatrice. Everyone got out and embraced on the road. Having changed into Prussian uniforms, we went to the station to meet Wilhelm [Kaiser Willy]. He arrived at 6 o'clock and also moved into our castle.

At 8 o'clock we gathered for a family dinner; after which there was a performance upstairs; they put on two beautifully acted plays, the tiny stage was in one of the halls. We all dispersed after having tea together. Wilhelm sat with us until 1 o'clock.

7 April The day of Ernie and Ducky's wedding. I began by being half an hour late for breakfast at Aunt Marie's, where the whole family had gathered, and I had to walk alone in front of the crowd in the square. We all gathered in the upstairs galleries, and after the civil marriage contract had been signed, we went to the church. The service did not last long, Ernie and Ducky make a lovely couple. The pastor gave a splendid sermon, which surprisingly went straight to the heart of my own problem. At that moment I terribly wanted to be able to look into Alix's soul. After the wedding there was a family luncheon, and the young couple left for Darmstadt. Went for a walk with Uncle Vladimir; in the end we reached the fortress and made a detailed tour of the armoury museum. We had just arrived home when a storm broke and it poured with rain all night. We dined with Aunt Marie, in uniform because of the Emperor, who never wears civilian clothes, and then walked, or rather ran because of the downpour, to the theatre. They were performing the first act of *The Clowns* and a good play. Drank beer and champagne in the billiard room.

8 April - Coburg A wonderful, unforgettable day in my life - the day of my betrothal to my dear beloved Alix. She came to Aunt Michen after 10 o'clock, and after they had talked, she and I had our discussion.

God, what a mountain has fallen from my shoulders; with what joy have I been able to delight dear Papa and Mama! I spent the whole day in a haze, not quite knowing what had happened to me!

Wilhelm sat in the next room with the uncles and aunts and waited for the outcome of our talk. I have just been with Alix to the Queen and from there to Aunt Marie's, where for a long while the whole family embraced each other in joy.

After luncheon we went to Aunt Marie's church for a service of thanksgiving.

¹¹ Empress Frederick, otherwise Princess Victoria, eldest daughter of Queen Victoria. Widow of the German Emperor, Frederick III. Their son Willy was now Emperor Wilhelm II. Princess Beatrice, Queen Victoria's youngest daughter, married to Prince Henry of Battenberg ('Liko'), was mother of the future Queen of Spain.

¹² Marie, Duchess of Edinburgh, sister of Tsar Alexander III. She remained Orthodox and therefore had her own private chapel.

D.T.
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his
impression
talk to
me
about
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Then we all went to Rosenau, where a ball had been arranged for the little baby 'Bee', on the occasion of her birthday. I did not feel like dancing, but walked and talked in the garden with my bride. I still cannot believe that I have a bride. Returned home at 6.15. There was already a pile of telegrams. We had dinner at 8 o'clock. We drove to the illuminations and then went upstairs for a court concert. The Bavarian regimental string orchestra played brilliantly. In the evening we sat again together in our sitting room.

9 April This morning the Queen's dragoon guards played a whole programme under my windows - very touching! At 10 o'clock wonderful Alix arrived and we went together to have coffee with the Queen. The day was cold and grey but our souls were light and joyful. At 11.20 at Marie's instance the whole family posed in the garden. After lunch, I sat with Alix answering telegrams. We went together by char-à-banc to Rosenau. I drove.

What a delight! It was not particularly fun there, we just wandered around not knowing what to do, while at home there were goodness knows how many telegrams. On the other hand I did not move from Alix's side, so I should not complain, except perhaps for the cold. Returned home at 6 o'clock in time for Palm-Saturday vespers. I again sat with my bride, because of which I was nearly late for dinner with the Queen. We wore evening dress as Wilhelm had already left. In the evening there was another court concert. Sat together until 1 o'clock.

George, Duke of York to Nicky - 9 April - York Cottage, Sandringham
My dear, old Nicky!

I wish you and dear Alix every possible joy and happiness now and in the future. I am indeed delighted to think that everything is settled at last and that the great wish of your heart is at last accomplished, as I well know that for some years you have loved Alix and wished to marry her. I am quite certain, that she will make you an excellent wife and she is charming, lovely and accomplished.

I am also so glad that your engagement has taken place at Coburg and I know it will have given Grandmama the greatest possible pleasure to be present on this happy occasion, she is very fond of Alix and has always told me how much she hoped that some day she would marry you. So Ernie and Ducky are married and Xenia and Sandro are engaged, what a lot of weddings there will be this year, you are all following my good example you see.
God bless you, dear Nicky.

Ever your most loving cousin George.

Nicky to Empress Marie - 10 April - Palais Edinburg, Coburg
My dearest darling Mama

I do not know how to start this letter, as there is so much I want to say that the thoughts are all mixed up in my head. So this is how my affair turned out, thanks to the mercy of our Lord God, when I was convinced the outcome was completely hopeless!

The day after our arrival here, I had a long and extremely difficult conversation with Alix, during which I tried to explain to her that she could not do otherwise

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than to give her consent! She was crying the whole time, and only answered from time to time in a whisper: 'No! I cannot.'

I just kept on repeating and insisting on what I had already said earlier. Although this conversation went on for more than two hours, it ended in nothing, because neither of us would give in to the other.

The next morning we talked more calmly; I gave her your letter and after that she could not say anything. This was already a sign for me of the final stage of the conflict which had arisen within her from our first conversation. The marriage of Ernie and Ducky was the final drop in her cup of suffering and hesitations. She decided to talk to Aunt Michen; this was also Ernie's advice. As he was leaving, he whispered to me that there was hope of a happy outcome.

I have to say here that during the whole of those three days I suffered terrible anxiety; all the relatives kept asking me in confidence about her and, expressing their sympathy in the most touching way, wished me all the best. But all this provoked in me even greater fears and doubts that perhaps things would not be resolved.

The Emperor (Wilhelm) also tried, he even had a talk with Alix and on that morning of 8th April brought her to us at home. She then went to Aunt Michen and soon afterwards came into the room where I was sitting with the Uncles, Aunt Ella and Wilhelm. They left us alone and ... the first thing she said was ... that she agreed! Oh God, what happened to me then! I started to cry like a child, and so did she, only her expression immediately changed: her face brightened and took on an aura of peace.

Not I cannot tell you how happy I am and yet how sad that I am not with you and that I cannot embrace you and dear Papa at this moment. My whole world has been transformed, and everything, nature, people, places, all seem attractive, good and full of joy. I simply was not able to write, my hands were trembling and from then on, in fact, I did not have a single moment free.

We had to do what the rest of the family was doing, there were hundreds of telegrams to be answered and - I was dying just to sit alone in a corner with my dear bride. She has completely changed and become gay, amusing, talkative and tender. I do not know how to thank God for His great mercy.

That same day we went to a service in Aunt Marie's church. She and all the sisters were present. At Alix's request we will go to Darmstadt for one night, now she will see her native land with quite other feelings. I had asked you if I could stay for two weeks, but now I think I will come earlier, towards the middle of Easter week. I so want to spend a little more time quietly with her.

But now, my dear Mama, I must finish. I am enclosing her letter to you. I embrace dear Papa and all the others,

You: Nicky

Nicky, Diary - 10 April - Palais Edinburg, Coburg

Celebrated Uncle Vladimir's name day; for the first time Alix and I took him a present together. Went upstairs with her at 10 o'clock to have coffee with the Queen. Made it to church in the middle of the service, and from there to Alix and the endless quantities of telegrams, which seem to increase rather than diminish. All the Russian gentlemen brought my bride a bouquet. Had luncheon at one. Today is simply cold with rain from time to time. Said goodbye to the Queen and Uncle

Bertie. At 4.30 Victoria, Aunt Ella, Irène,¹⁶ Alix, Uncle Sergei, Ludwig¹⁷ and I left for Darmstadt. Travelled by special train for precisely five hours. We changed into full uniform and pulled into Alix's native town at 10 o'clock. There was a triumphant welcome; Ducky and Ernie were our hosts for the first time. A guard of honour, a four-in-hand escort, illuminations and crowds of people. As soon as we reached the palace, we sat down to supper as we were very hungry. How strange and yet pleasant to find oneself here. Sat in Alix's rooms and examined them in detail. It is even a shame to part for the night.

NII's mother

Empress Marie to Nicky - 10 April - Gatchina

My dear sweet Nicky!

Words cannot express with what *delight* and *great joy* I received this happy news! I almost felt *faint* I was so overjoyed! But how sad not to be with you my beloved Nicky at this great moment in your life! Not to be able to kiss you and bless you from the depths of my soul! May God shower you both with his blessings and grant you every possible happiness on this earth; this is my most fervent and ardent prayer for you my Nicky. I was so happy, and shed tears of joy and emotion and ran to announce this happy news to Papa first of all then to Xenia and Sandro and there were nothing but shouts of joy and real jubilation!

We had parted with such a bad and desperate feeling on the evening of your departure that my heart bled as I saw you go and my thoughts and prayers never left you. But thank God the Good Lord has arranged everything for the best and now you are happy and content and we are overcome with joy knowing you to be so happy. Your greatest wish has been granted at last after so many vicissitudes. Also we are waiting with an almost *febrile impatience* for the first letter with the details of how it all happened. You cannot imagine how awful and painful it is to be separated from you at a moment like this and how envious and *furious* I am that the uncles and aunts were present while Papa and myself who are closest to you were excluded! It's horribly sad and hard for us. I kiss you both my dear children with all my heart and pray that God will bless and always keep you in under his sacred protection. I hope dearest Alix will look upon me as a loving mother who'll receive her with open arms like her own dear child. Papa embraces you warmly and lovingly and wishes you both happiness and every good thing. May God keep you!

Your ever-loving Mama

Xenia to Nicky - 10 April - Gatchina

Darling Nicky

You cannot imagine my joy, I am terribly happy and you will understand why... Imagine, when I last asked Mama yesterday when our wedding was going to be, and Mama answered 'I don't know' and repeated it twice, I was simply mad, it's unbelievable, you can't treat people like things. But when I asked her about your wedding, Mama replied that there was no reason to wait, in other words the sooner the better, now tell me where there is any justice, but I am of course overjoyed for you.

¹⁶ Alix's sister.

¹⁷ Louis of Battenberg, married to Alix's eldest sister Victoria (Toria). They lived at Elm Grove, Walton-on-Thames.

D. T. We wanted to shatter the concert in the Russian embassy that the best word has arranged everything for the best.

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KR, Diary - 10 April, Palm Sunday - Gatchina

There was a church service at Gatchina. I had not seen the Empress so radiant in a long time. Nicky's betrothal has delighted all Russians, who have been waiting for a long time for him to settle down to married life. I personally rejoice for him with all my heart, as I know his most cherished wish has come true. But my joy is tempered by some reservations: I imagine that he will no longer be able to serve in the regiment as he himself would have wished, and it seems certain that he will often be distracted from his military obligations. And so, just as there was no hope of the betrothal taking place suddenly a telegram arrives on April 8th from Nicky and Alix together: we are engaged.

Nicky, Diary - 11 April - Palais Edinburg, Coburg

Slept splendidly in Uncle Alfred's rooms downstairs to the left of the entrance. The weather was much warmer than in Coburg, everything was in full bloom and the scent wonderful. After coffee with the whole family, sat with Alix answering telegrams. Her attitude towards me has changed so much during the last few days, I am utterly entranced.

This morning she wrote three sentences in Russian without a single mistake! At 11.30 we went together by char-à-banc to Rosenau, where her late parents, a brother and sister, are buried in a pavilion.¹⁸ Picked flowers and lilac everywhere. Returned to town at about two and had luncheon with those of our relatives who were in Darmstadt. Afterwards we had our picture taken, as a group and in pairs - I with Alix. The public broke through into the garden, which made for a funny spectacle.

Georgy [brother] to Nicky - 12 April - Abas Tuman, Crimea

My dear Nicky!

Once again I congratulate you with all my heart on your engagement. You cannot imagine how pleased I was at this happy news, and not just I, but everyone. May God grant you happiness and all the best.

When I learnt that you had gone to Coburg, I was immediately sure that the trip would end in your engagement. And that's how it turned out! In fact it turned out very well: two engagements in the family in one year. It would be interesting to know when the weddings will be, and whether they will take place at about the same time.

Nicky, Diary - 12 April - Palais Edinburg, Coburg

Woke up to a beautiful day. Went with Alix to have coffee with the Queen; now I must call her Granny. The infantry played under my windows like the dragons. Wrote telegrams with Alix. At 11 o'clock went to church. Lunched at 3 o'clock with the Queen. Looked at the group photographs taken before and after Ducky and Ernie's wedding.

Alix and I went together to Rosenau by char-à-banc. Quite a number of people

¹⁸ Alix's mother, second daughter of Queen Victoria, had died in 1878 aged thirty-five, her father, Grand Duke Ludwig IV of Hesse, died in 1892, her brother Frederick died aged two in 1873, her sister Mary in 1878 aged four.

had gathered to play lawn-tennis and drink tea. Returned with her and went straight to church. Sat with my delightful bride. With Aunt Marie's permission have moved from the castle into the cottage in her garden, next to the villa where Alix is staying. I am in Alfred's rooms, as he left today for Potsdam. It's very cosy, convenient and, most importantly, near to her. At 9 o'clock we went to dine with the Queen also; but were allowed to miss the concert because of Holy week. We sat for a very long time in our former communal sitting room.

13 April From the morning it was a wonderful day. Went with Alix to have coffee with the Queen. It is not very convenient to keep to Lent abroad, and I had to refuse many things. After church a crowd of us went to visit Princess Clementine Coburg; she is so deaf that she always carries a hearing aid. At 3 o'clock Alix and I drove with the same horse up the hill past the fortress, and then along a beautiful roundabout road as far as Rosenau, where the rest of the family were preparing to have tea. Walked with my Alix, gathered flowers and sat with her for a long time on the bench by the pond - a delightful little corner.

Empress Marie to Nicky - 14 April - Gatchina

My sweet dearest darling Nicky,

I thank you with all my heart for your *dear kind* letter which I received yesterday with Aunt Michen and which moved me to tears.

Thank you thank you for each affectionate word which goes straight, straight to my heart which is so full of love for you and which has opened like a flower to receive your dear Alix whom I already regard as my own daughter and whom I await with such impatience. It was *such* a joy yesterday morning to receive your two dearest letters!

Tell Alix that I was so touched by hers - only she must not call me *Auntie* - *Mama* or *Motherdear*, this is what I am for her now. Poor children, what moral tortures you have both been through - it was a real battle! But God helped you to prevail and to win this great victory and now He will bless you both I am sure. May He hear your prayers and grant you every happiness in this world, and thereby our happiness and that of all our dear land! I am sending you a very little Easter egg.

Forever your Loving Mama

Emperor Alexander III to Nicky - 14 April - Gatchina

My dear sweet Nicky

You can imagine the feeling of joy and gratitude towards the Lord with which we learnt of your engagement! I have to admit that I did not believe the possibility of such an outcome and was sure your attempt would fail completely, but the Lord guided you, gave you strength and blessed you, many thanks to Him for His mercy. If only you had seen the happiness and rejoicing with which everyone greeted the news: we immediately started to receive a mass of telegrams, and are still being overwhelmed by them.

I am sure that you are doubly happy, and everything that happened, although forgotten, will surely have been useful in showing that not everything is so easy, particularly such an enormous step, which will decide your whole future and your ensuing family life.

The D.K. is the first Kaiser wedding

D.K. is the first Kaiser wedding

The D.K. is the first Kaiser wedding

The D.K. is the first Kaiser wedding

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Alix to Empress Marie - 18 April - Palais Edinburg, Coburg

Darling Motherdear,

Nicky tells me I may call you so, oh thank you so much - you are too kind and good to me. How can I thank you and dear Uncle enough for the magnificent present you were so awfully kind as to send me. It is much too beautiful for me! It gave me quite a shock when I opened up the case - saw those beautiful stones. I thank you ever so much for it, and kiss your hands most tenderly.

I feel so proud to have your lovely order, and am most grateful and thankful for it, and the sweet egg and dear letter - all touched me deeply.

Only two days still, and then darling Nicky and I have to part, it makes me feel miserable, but I am sure that his little Motherdear is longing for him. You will let him come to England this summer, won't you, because it would be too hard to be parted so long. ~~Grandmama is looking forward to his visit to him. He has~~ ~~her heart, as he has of all those who know him. He is in Church now,~~ and whilst he is kneeling there, my thoughts and prayers are with him. With God's help I will soon learn to love his Religion too, and I am sure he will help me. But I will not bother you with a long letter.

With very fondest love to dear Father, I am, Darling little Motherdear,

your deeply affectionate and Dutiful Child, Alix

Alix to Xenia - 18 April - Palais Edinburg, Coburg

My darling little Xenia

I send you my most tender thanks for the sweet little egg and lovely little brooch; I was deeply touched at your having thought of me.

The others are all in Church, and I am sitting alone, so use the opportunity for writing to my Chicken.

Alas! Only two days and then we part. I feel miserable at the idea - but what can't be cured must be endured. You are to be envied seeing Sandro every day, and I shall not see my Nicky for over a month.

I cannot describe my happiness - it is too great, I can only thank God on my knees for having guided me thus. And what an angel the dear boy is; how glad you will be to have him back again. You will write to me sometimes, won't you? Sandro is not the whole day with you. Give him my love.

We went for a drive yesterday in the rain, but not to the Rosenau, today I have no doubt we shall go there.

I am going to spend a night at Darmstadt on my way to England, so shall see the young couple again - they look so happy and content, but it does seem too funny Ernie being married. It is so damp today that I have had to have a fire made.

Now enough for today.

With many a loving kiss I remain ever your very loving old Hen Alix

Nicky to Empress Marie - 18 April - Palais Edinburg, Coburg

My dearest darling Mama,

Words cannot express how happy your kind letter made me, above all, you are both happy and pleased.

Now I also am completely happy and calm.

Alix is delightful and has been completely transformed from her state of constant

Faxed 6/10/04
Dwayne

Judy's
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corrected
it is
used
intermittently
to show
what
to type
with a
corrector
by
Tape Box

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Letter

see note D.T.

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Nicky to Alix - 20 April, this sad Wednesday - Palais Edinburg, Coburg
My sweet darling beloved Alix!

"Oh! it was too awful saying goodbye like that, with a lot of people looking on from all sides! I shall never forget the sweet sad and yet smiling expression of your angelic face looking out of the window as the train was beginning to move!

To know that you had to spend 9 hours in that small compartment nearly by yourself - was cruel to me and especially the thought that I was of no help any more! The coming home was more than unpleasant and when I came into my room, where you had just been a few minutes before, I could not keep back my tears. But then oh! what a delightful surprise - on my table in the bedroom there lay a note from you, my darling little girl. Thank you and thank you for the soothing comforting words that you wrote in it. Oh! really those few lines did me good! Certainly, my love, I shall speak with Papa about that question and I beg you always to remember that in everything where you shall need my help, you may be sure that I shall be there by your side and that also a deeply loving and thankful heart wherever it is, will always beat in time with yours my sweet one!

All these days I was so overcome with joy and happiness, being by my darling's side, that I could not say or tell you the hundredth part of what I might have spoken: I feel very deeply and then I cannot get the words out; it is stupid and tiresome, but so it is. I hope that this shyness or whatever it is will pass, for next time we meet we shall know more of each other than in the beginning.

So impatient I am for the moment when I can again press my lips to your sweet soft face! Alix, my own darling, you don't know how you have changed me - stretching out a fond hand and by making me rise up to you - the emblem of all pure love and faith! No! Do not think that these are vain words, no they come from my innermost feeling of admiration, trust and love that you have inspired me with. I must repeat again the same words I told you my precious little girl, the day of our engagement, that all my life belonged to you and that I could never be enough thankful to you dearest, for all you have done, are doing and are going to do, for me! May God help and protect you on the difficult beginning of your path! My prayers, blessings and thoughts are constantly with my darling little thing!

Of course then all my love and thoughts are with you. We drove in our pony-carriage. We drove up our nice road along the hill, down to Rosenau where we took tea. Before that we took a walk, I saw our bench where the hare came once, then I went along the stream, looked at the grotto, found these primroses on the side of the hill - and felt suddenly that I loved that place dearly! The weather was too fine for the occasion, the sun was bright, but I was so lonely!! I do hope the passage was a smooth one and that my sweet little owl did not suffer and is not too much tried by her journey. Give my best love to Granny. And now good-bye my own darling beloved Alix. God bless you once more! +

For ever your own deeply loving and thankful Nicky

Alix to Nicky - 20 April - Darmstadt

My own precious Nicky Darling,

I am lying in bed, but cannot go to sleep before I have written to you, as speak alas, we cannot. Oh, how I miss you, it is not to be described and I long for the two hours all alone with you. No goodnight kiss and blessing, it is hard. But our thoughts will meet won't they?

Not a letter
Comments
by D.T. and

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D.T. and

as signed
to the
letter
+ Alix

The Master
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vital part
in
Nicky's
life

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be stared at and made an object of curiosity which in her present position as your
Bride would be both unpleasant and improper.

As she has no Parents, I feel I am the only person who can really be answerable
for her. All her dear Sisters after their beloved Mother's death looked to me as their
second Mother, but they had still their dear Father.

Now poor dear Alix is an Orphan and has no one but me at all in that position.
Anything you wish, I hope you will tell me direct. I am so sorry not to be able to take
her to Balfour, which is the finest air in the world, but it was rather too bracing
for her 2 years ago. I hope in the autumn she might be able to do so.

Believe me with true affection, dear Nicky, your devoted (future) Grandmama

Victoria RI

Alix to Nicky - 22 April - Windsor Castle

My own precious Nicky dear,

I have just arrived and had breakfast with Granny. How it reminded me of
Coburg and made me miss you more than ever. But there the delight at finding
your sweet letter for which many tender kisses and thanks for the flowers. I am
going to put them in my Bible and Prayerbook - they smell still excellently. The
comfort of having your letter is great and I don't know how often I have read it in
these few minutes and covered it with kisses. How I miss your kisses and blessing.

The journey went off well and the crossing was splendid, not a movement and I
do not feel very tired. Everything is so beautifully green-bright of flowers. Granny
has a tiresome cough. The whole journey I kept your coin in my hand and played
with it and looked at the photo - a little comfort. Not only that I miss you, but
Ernie too, everything reminds me of a few weeks ago where we were here together
and I feel quite lost without him. Granny tells me she has written to you - she
wrote to me even to Darmstadt. Aunt Beatrice is going up to London for some
function, so Granny, I and the children will be left to ourselves.

Your letter has made me too awfully happy. I also feel shy to express my feelings.
I had such a lot I wanted to tell you and ask and speak about and I felt too shy. We
shall have to conquer this weakness, don't you think so? Oh, I want you ever so
badly my own beloved One my own and all. Oh dear, oh dear ...

So here I am again. I have been trying to arrange the room a bit, and have been
standing up all my photos and frog. I have unpacked my music and as soon as I
can, I intend playing, as I have neglected the piano too shamefully lately. All your
photos are looking at me with their beautiful big eyes. Oh, were you but here. I
could press you to my heart. And to think you are still rattling along, poor dear. I
shall anxiously wait your telegram this evening. You will write often, won't you, as
your letters will be my greatest joy, and what I shall look forward to the most in the
day. I have used a little of your scent, but the smell makes me sad.

Yes, sweet one, it was having to say goodbye so coldly at the station before every-
one. I had to think of when you arrived. I shall never forget those first days and
what a beast I was to you, forgive me, my love. Oh, if you only knew how I adore
you and the years have made my affection for you grow stronger and deeper; I wish
only I were worthier of your love and tenderness. You are much too good for me.
But I must stop, otherwise this letter won't reach the post in time.

God bless you, my own true love. Many a tender kiss,

Ever deeply devoted little girl, Alix

Your bride - how funny it sounds. Sweet one I cannot stop thinking of you.

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Same day As soon as I have finished one letter to you, I want to begin another. I am an old chatterbox, and when you are near me, I get numb like an old owl. If you could mention any nice book, a translation from the Russian, you would like your stupid frog to read, do tell me.

I went out driving with Grandmama this afternoon. She began by asking me so many questions, when, how, and where, and what had made me change my decision and so on, till I no longer knew what to say. She is very fond of you, my Love, you know. Then she dropped off to sleep, and I admired the beautiful natural Windsor Castle through the dark trees in the distance, with sunshine on it and brighter blue shades – like a beautiful vision. Then I took tea with her and the children came in and made a shocking noise. Now I am sitting all alone, after having stuck four of your photos in an alas, not very elegant red leather frame bought here.

What the post will think of me if I write so often to you, I cannot imagine, so I think I had better keep to one letter a day, but no, sometimes I must write more, because when I sit alone in my room my thoughts run madder than ever to you, so if I bore you with chattering, forgive me, my own sweet Nicky dear.

If you know of any little books about your Religion, do tell me, so that I might read more about it, before you ring the Priest. One book in French which belonged to Sergei and he sent me since 1890, I have with me. Oh, I wish you were here, you could help me, and you are so religious, you must understand how nervous it makes me, but God will help me, you too, my love, won't you, so as that I may always get a better Christian and serve my God as truly as hitherto and more. How can I thank him enough for having given me such a heart, as my Boysy, to call my own. May He bless and protect you – now and evermore. It is so sad sitting all alone, no Nicky, no Ernie; I could cry. I sit and gaze at your photos and wonder what you are doing and have read your sweet letter over and over again, and kiss you for it.

Now my own precious darling Nicky I must say goodbye. God bless you. Many a tender kiss.

I am, ever your loving and deeply devoted Alix

Today is a big drawing room. Georgie and May are coming to luncheon tomorrow, how I wish you were here. We are only Ladies for supper – not lively and I am tired. I must play the piano to wake me up a bit.

Sleep well my angel and dream of your 'little girly' who is praying to God for your happiness.

Nicky to Alix – 23 April – Gatchina

My own sweet beloved darling Alix,

We arrived yesterday 4.20 in the afternoon; fancy dear Papa and Mama came to the station and they seemed so happy. Of course I told them all what you wanted me to say and they gave in at once and said you would not have to *abschwören* [renounce] the old belief, but that it would be like with Ella. You don't know my darling how happy I felt that they understood your reason and that they consented at once; I am only too glad to be the first one who may comfort you by that. Everybody here is really touching, all the servants and people of the house came

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WV flying into my room and each has got a kind word to say. Oh! how happy I am to have taken such a lot of your dear photos; the dining table and cupboards are covered with them and wherever I look I see my sweet little girly-dear looking back at me, sometimes with a sly look, which makes me think of a certain house on the road from Coburg to Ketchendorf on the left!!!

24 April Good morning my own precious one! I am just aroused from my slumber, which had been disturbed at 3.0 in the night by an insolent bat. My man, my dog and myself hunted the beast for nearly half an hour before we at last managed to catch the brute in a corner. Then I went to bed again but could not by all possible means go to sleep as I became very hot. All that comes from staying up too late by night and from keeping an open window, but it is so warm you cannot pass a night without any fresh air! I know you agree with me little girly-dear because you also like cold fresh air in the rooms and open windows if possible.

'Noch einmal, noch einmal, noch einmal - nachtigall! (Once more, once more, once more - nightingale!)

Oh! that delightful sweet melody. For ever shall I love and remember those golden days in Coburg! Of you only knew how dreadfully I miss my darling little one. If I were allowed to go only on foot to see you again I would set out directly! It seems too cruel to be separated for such an endless time, I feel I cannot stand it, I shall try to get away earlier. Of course the most heavenly thing for me would be to come and live with you a bit at Walton, but there is no place I fear at Victoria's house and it would derange her greatly. Fancy we would be quite at leisure there. Oh! No that is too good to think of!

Yesterday we all drove out in the park and after that rowed about the lake in our canoes. Then there came a tremendous shower and we rushed home. It is so warm that we wear already our white uniforms; the weather is exactly like what we had in Darmstadt. Elia and Sergei came for tea and stayed till after dinner.

Alix to Nicky - 24 April - Windsor Castle
Dorogoy mili Nicky,

I have just come back from service, we had lovely singing and a fine sermon. I prayed most earnestly for you my darling - I wish you had been there, I think you would like the English service - the prayers are beautiful and elevating. This moment a letter has arrived from Aunt Alix, full of your praise and so kind. She wants me to go with them to Sandringham from Saturday to Monday - whether Granny can spare me I don't know, as she does not care for one going on visits whilst one is living with her. I shall ask her afterwards. I would have much rather waited and gone with you, it would have been less shy, as they have always such a large party, into which I so little belong.

I forgot to say yesterday that foolish Georgie says I am to insist upon you wearing high heels and that I am to have quite low ones. May, he says, won't change hers, but he wears much higher ones. At first they had been uncomfortable, now he did not mind it any more. I can see your face when you read this - really too mad! As if the higher made any difference, and a gentleman with high heels looks too absurd, and I am sure you would never do it.

Granny is alas very lame today, which depresses her, poor dear! I am also not to go to Ascot races without you, it would not be proper, well honestly I much prefer

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Mama's great wish to see you here at home. We might come together in July over from England for Xenia's wedding which is going to be celebrated at Peterhof. We would spend a nice fortnight together and then you would go back to Darmstadt.

Alix to Nicky - 26 Apr 1 - Windsor Castle

My mili, dorogoi Nicky,

I am just back from breakfast with Grandmama. And Vicky sent a long letter of Sophie's - poor thing it must be too terrible in Greece, these incessant shocks.¹⁹ She said what had made such a curious impression when on Good Friday night the procession on the streets with the carpet and the candles, all sang out: Lord have mercy on us! No really it must be too fearful for words and living in the constant dread of being shattered to atoms. It is as tho' they were being punished for some great sin - one cannot understand it - but God knows best why he is inflicting them with this nightmare and tho' we seem to think it cruel. What sorrows this life does bring, what great trials and how difficult to bear them patiently, and then again we are not half grateful enough for the joys this life brings us.

Darling, I am sure these five years have been good for both of us, I only know they have made me think far more of God than I did before. Suffering always draws one nearer to God, does it not, and when we think what Jesus Christ had to bear for us, how little and small our sorrows seem in comparison, and yet we fret and grumble and are not patient as He was.

Oh, my love, I wish I had you all to my side, how you might help me and teach me to be a better creature. I am not half worthy enough of you. I have still so much to learn, that is why I also say, do not let us marry just yet, this separation is hard. It is better not to hurry. And think only of the Religious question, you cannot expect me to know and understand it all immediately, and know a thing only half is not right and I must know the language a bit, so as to be able to follow the services a little. Today, I have answered came, but was sent to Aunt Alix, as I had

The ink is so watery that one makes blotches perpetually. Aunt Alix and the 2 girls are coming to luncheon - poor Victoria - God bless her and may He some day make her very happy, she deserves it, the dear Child, and little Maudy [Princess Maud]²⁰ too. When one is so happy, one longs to see others also joyous and grieves one cannot do anything for them - don't you too?

Oh, you sweet boy, my own, own precious darling, my Nicky dear. I feel another being since your letter has come and the dear words and little flower. God bless you, my love. You naughty thing, how dare you say that about the sly look and the house on the left!!!! Be ashamed of yourself, I wish I were there to pinch you for it. The monogram on your paper does not suit me, this monogram I have stamped on the paper with a thing that belonged to darling Mama.

I remain, ever your deeply devoted little girly Alix

¹⁹ Alix's cousin Sophie, a daughter of Aunt Vicky (Empress Frederick), married to the Crown Prince of Greece. Greece had suffered a series of devastating earthquakes.

²⁰ Second daughter of the Prince and Princess of Wales.

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Alix to Nicky - 25 May - Harrogate

Good morning my own precious Boysy - my Birthday! 22! Oh, how I wish you were here, beloved Darling! And your glorious bracelet, you naughty monkey, how could you dare to give me such a magnificent thing - I feel quite shy and your telegram. You do spoil one. I must flee to my water, and Goodbye. ~~We have been snowed out of flowers all the morning, which some kind angel has sent me. More tonight!~~

Queen Victoria to Nicky - 25 May - Balmoral Castle

Dear Nicky,

I write to you on this dear day, our darling Alicky's birthday which I am sure must be very dear to you and I also wish you many happy returns. Thank you for your very kind letter of the 20 May, for my birthday. It was the only very warm day since we came here. The weather has been quite unusually cold to last so long. And we had a great deal of rain. But it is much warmer . . .

The accounts of dear Alicky are upon the whole satisfactory, but she requires great quiet and rest and I send you the copy of a letter from the Doctor at Harrogate who is [a] very clever, nice man. She keeps a strict regime of life as well as diet. She has to lie down a great deal. This ought to have been done long ago but the family doctor, in whom [the family] unfortunately have great faith is a stupid man, who never will do anything and says yes to all they ask. Last autumn and winter she ought to have done what she is doing now.

Her dear Father's death, her anxiety about her brother, and the struggle about her future have all tried her nerves very much. You will I hope, therefore not hurry on the marriage as she ought for your as well as her sake to be strong and well before that.

~~You had better not make till 20 or 21 of July as we shall not arrive till the 21 or 22~~
and then Alicky would come to us and still rest a good deal.

Pray offer my affectionate respects to your Parents and believe me always your most affectionate (future) Grandmama.

Nicky, Diary - 25 May - Krasnoe Selo

Dear Alix's birthday. How much I thought of her all day, how terribly I wanted to embrace her and spend this day together with her. ~~She came to the barracks to congratulate me - I was very touched! There were no~~

works or drill today - I gave the day off to everyone as well as a glass of vodka.

29 May Wonderful weather all day. Went at 11 o'clock to the small church and lunched with Cherevin, Jukovsky and Benckendorff. Learned of the birth of Kostia [K3]'s sixth child - Igor. Went to congratulate him. On returning home, spent the whole evening writing to my dear bride.

Alix to Nicky - 26 May - Harrogate

Love-love - what is greater! Kissy kissy. Ta ta!

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Alix to Queen Victoria - 28 May - Harrogate

My darling Grandmama,

I send you my very fondest thanks for Your dear letter and kind wishes, which touched me deeply. Please accept also my best thanks for the nice photo: of You and Uncle Bertie, and for the delightful teabasket with which I am quite enchanted. The sun shone on purpose so that we could go for a long drive and use it. It is a most useful present, and I have long wished for such a thing. Victoria being here for my birthday, was a great pleasure, as it would have been too sad to have spent my Birthday without one relation. I have never been away like this without one before.

You must kindly excuse my writing so seldom, dear Grandmama, but the baths make one tired and I have to rest a great deal. As yet the pains are no better, but I hope in time that the good effect of the baths will show itself. It is pouring again today, which is distressing.

I will go to watch and dear Nicky would then join me there. His father is lending him his yacht, so he can go the whole way by sea, which is certainly the more agreeable way of travelling. Yes, darling Grandmama, the new position I am sure will be full of trials and difficulties, but with God's help and that of a loving husband it will be easier than we now picture it to ourselves. The distance is great but yet in three days one can get to England. I am sure his parents will often allow us to come over to You. Why I could not bear the idea of not seeing You again, after the kind Angel You have been to me, ever since dear Mama died, and I cling to You more than ever, now that I am quite an Orphan. God bless You for all Your kindness to me, beloved Grandmama dear. I have no words to thank you enough for all. Please do not think that my marrying will make a difference in my love to You - certainly it will not, and when I am far away, I shall long to think that there is One the dearest and kindest Woman alive, who loves me a little bit.

Goodbye dearest Grandmama,

Ever Your very loving, affectionate and dutiful Child, Alix

Alix to Nicky - 28 May - Harrogate

Dear Nicky,

Today 10 years ago we arrived at Peterhof, and I for the first time saw and kissed my sweet *Lansbub* [rascal]. How dear and always kind you were to me then - our windowpanes. After we left Russia that year 84, I used for some time to pray for you and then after 89 of course too, as soon as I like anyone I cannot help praying for them. To think that I know you already 10 years, a long time, is it not? I see you still at the Wedding service holding the crown over Sergei - how much has changed and happened since then, it makes one quite melancholy.

Nicky to Queen Victoria - 2 June - Peterhof

Dearest Grandmama,

Your third kind letter gave me such great pleasure which I thank you for most heartily. I leave tomorrow in the afternoon on board Papa's new yacht the *Polar Star* that he kindly lent me for coming to England.

You don't know, dearest Grandmama, how *happy* I am to come and spend some

²³ On 31 May 1884, ten years before, Nicky recorded 'Alix and I wrote our names on the rear window of the Italian house (we love each other).'

time with you and my beloved little bride. What a different impression for me this time - with my stay in London last year for Georgie's wedding. This separation from Alix has made my love for her still far stronger and deeper than it was before! Now, dearest Grandmama, I must end: with fondest thanks for your kind letter and hoping to see you very soon again believe me your most loving and devoted (future) grandson.

Nicky

Nicky to Alix - 2 June - Peterhof 1954

My own darling Alix,

I enclose a small photo of 'the monstrous cow' [Nicky himself] - the rest I bring with me! I wrote to Granny today explaining to her in detail about our plans for Walton. I hope it shall make her understand the reason why I could not come to Balmoral - but now that becomes quite impossible as she intends leaving about the same date for Windsor. So far it is all right - good!

Sweetie, you don't know how shy I can be - I coaxed Granny in the most shameful way possible - try and read it, when we are in Windsor, then you can judge and see what a creature you have been unlucky enough to be engaged to! I cannot stop reading your sweet letter over and over oh! you are the sweetest kindest angel! little girly in the whole world! And that I should possess such a treasure and be allowed to love you - not that is *too heavenly* for words. In all my life I have never dreamt that such happiness was possible - as this now. I feel completely changed, one's life seems useful, there is an object in living for others and for oneself too! Oh! my sweet one - all that I learnt through you!

I hung out of the window and breathed deeply and pulled the lovely warm pure sea-air, the wind brought in gushes to me - and I thought of my sweet girl-dear. It seemed as if she had brought me your tender kisses from so far off. But though I seem cold as a stone, *I love you, my own darling*, as few persons can only love! *Quel est l'amour véritable? Celui qui aime et ne parle pas!* [What is true love? That which loves and does not speak!] That is so perfectly true and is so exactly my case! I love you too deeply and too strongly for me to show it; it is such a sacred feeling. I don't want to let it out in words, that seem meek and poor and vain! But now I will try and break that habit of hiding my feelings, because I think it wrong and selfish in some occasions. You also do not know, my precious one, how long my whole heart belonged to you and what sufferings it has gone through these dreary years! Darling primrosy-mine, I love you my darling!!!!

3 June My pet, to think that I am coming to you and if God grants, shall soon clasp you, my beloved little girly, to my heart! Oh! what bliss, what joy, what happiness! Though the sea passage takes two days more than going by rail you will understand what a difference it is to me to be able to sail in Papa's lovely yacht leaving Berlin aside.

Nicky, Diary - 3 June - Polar Star

The morning was foul, with heavy showers and squalls! I was in a state of some disquiet over the departure - but I hate delaying decisions to leave, and was glad not

Type long

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X

terribly in the carriage. Sat with Alix until luncheon and played the piano. At 3 o'clock the six of us went down the Thames by electric boat, passing through two locks. The trip was wonderful, the banks remarkably beautiful, we met a mass of other boaters, mostly ladies. I loved all the buildings along the river bank. We had tea, which we had brought with us, in a rowing boat.

10 June Another wonderful, peaceful day like yesterday; in truth, what blissful existence! ~~Sat in the garden with my dear Alix, working under the chestnut trees: she worked, while I read Loti's *Mutuel* to her. Ludwig went to London for a few hours for his work. When he returned, the four of us went to the landing stage, where we got into a comfortable gig and sailed up the Thames. I enjoyed rowing. We moored at one place, got out onto the grass and brewed tea. This was all done by Alix, who has a wonderful new 'tea-basket' given to her by Granny. The evening was divine. I cannot say how much I enjoyed this outing!~~

11 June - Windsor Castle Unfortunately we have had to pack our things and leave behind the carefree life of Elm Grove. Victoria, Alix, Ludwig and I set out for Windsor in the Queen's tandem carriage, and arrived an hour later. We awaited Granny's arrival at Frogmore [near Windsor Castle], where we all had tea together. Returned to the castle on foot. I am staying in rooms upstairs, not far from my darling bride, and which give onto the gallery where we gather before and after dinner. We dined at 9, there were 14 of us, we wore stockings; my shoes rubbed my feet terribly! Spent a divine evening with dear Alix!

12 June Got up at 8.30 to wonderful weather. Had coffee in my room, and at 10 o'clock went with Granny and Alix to have breakfast at Frogmore. At 11 o'clock there was a service in the mausoleum, which I very much enjoyed! Returned to the castle and I sat with Alix until luncheon. I was at last able to see Aunt Alix, Uncle Bertie, Victoria and Maud, who came just for a few hours. We went together on foot to Frogmore, where we all had tea. Sat with my bride in the little pavilion by the pond. Returned by char-à-banc, and then sat with my Alix playing the piano until dinner. Dinner was, as yesterday, in stockings. Spent another, happy, peaceful evening

13 June Yesterday at 10 o'clock in the evening a son was born to George and May, there was general happiness and rejoicing.²⁶ Returning with Granny, I was struck by the size of the rhododendron bushes. Had dinner at 9.30. For the first time I wore the Windsor tailcoat with red collar and cuffs.

Nicky to Empress Marie - 14 June - Windsor Castle
 Darling Mama

She [Queen Victoria] insisted I order a tail-coat with a red collar and cuffs, and that I wear it like the others for dinner, with stockings and shoes. ~~I am in the same room as yesterday, your portrait (by Arthur) hangs on the wall.~~

It was a joy to see dear Aunt Alix and the cousins on the third day - she looks remarkably well - better than last year. In the morning we go to have tea with

The birth of the future King Edward VIII.

sketch line

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Put the
10 June
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up
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memoirs
can refer
to down
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the
pinner
diaries
R.T.
tusa
to
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what
his wife
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read one
was
been
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he was
was in
four, this
witnesses
suggests
to him
that he wants
10. (his call log.)

1894

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We are sitting together in her room and we love each other very much! Not less than you old birds. For dinner I am going to put on a red Circassian coat, which will absolutely drive Granny wild - she has already asked me several times when I am going to wear a cossack uniform, and so for dinner I shall appear in it. Afterwards there will be reveille with a ceremony, which the locals call a 'tattoo'!

N.

[in Alix's hand] I found this so I thought I must send it you - does not it remind you of that evening we sat together, you in white, looking more sweet than words can express that I longed to cover your face the whole time with kisses; that tiny little room, it was gemütlich [cosy] no, how I want to see you in that uniform again in the red dress over it, sweet manykiss very many kisses, all alone. A big kiss A.

Nicky, Diary - 30 June - Windsor Castle

Woke at 9 o'clock, having slept splendidly. Alix called me through the window from the garden to go to breakfast with Granny. The weather wasn't bad, there were clouds but the sun appeared from time to time. Changed into full Hussar uniform, and at 10.45 we all followed the Queen's carriage on horseback to the parade ground. There were 10,000 men gathered in all. After the 'royal salute' the parade began, first the horse artillery, the cavalry, the foot artillery and then the infantry. I was full of admiration for the horses, the harnesses and the fittings of the cavalry companies! The Scots foot regiment are also handsome in their kilts. The parade finished with a general attack on the flank and a hymn. We rode to the station. At 5.30 we went to have tea at Frogmore, and from there I went for a char-à-banc drive with my Alix. The evening was clear and warm. At 8 o'clock went in uniform to the Horse Guards for dinner in the officers' mess. It was very simple and friendly! Stayed talking until 11.30. On returning home went to dear Alix, with whom I spent a peaceful heavenly hour!

3 July After breakfast we went to church. The Bishop of Ripon gave an excellent sermon. Dinner was at 9.15 with only the court officials. The little Lord in Waiting, Lord Playfair mistook me for the Windsor priest and summoned me to the Queen, which made all those present laugh loud and long. Sat with dear Alix.

4 July At 5 o'clock the infant son of Georgie and May was christened at White Lodge in the presence of the whole family. Granny gave him seven names.¹⁴ I was among the godfathers. Instead of immersing him, the Archbishop wet his fingers and touched the baby's head.¹⁵ Then we had tea in a marquee in the garden. Four generations had their photograph taken together. There was no rain on the way back. An officer was almost killed because his horse stumbled. Arrived in Windsor at 7.45. Lausbub!¹⁶ [rascal] Dined later. Sat for a long time with! Shpitsbub* [scamp]

5 July After having coffee with dear Alix, went to the station to go to London. Visited Sam and his wife. Went into an antique furniture shop, where I bought a

¹⁴ He was named Edward Albert Christian George Andrew Patrick David, and was known in his family as David. He succeeded his father as King Edward VIII in 1936.

¹⁵ In an Orthodox Church the baby is immersed in water.

¹⁶ In Alix's hand.

He is interesting
being in the
presence
of her
Shpitsbub,
who is not
napping on a
table
actually
sitting
on his
hand
up his
shirts,
but
dramatic.
The
introduction
of being
in the
arm
during
a war
campaign
to cheer
the troops

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beautiful Empire bed, wash stand, table and mirror, which I was very pleased with! Spent an hour and a half at Marlborough House; said goodbye to Uncle Bertie, Aunt Alix, Victoria and Maud. Unfortunately they will not be coming to us in Petersburg for Sandro and Xenia's wedding! Returned to Windsor for Luncheon.

Two jewellers had laid out their wares in my room and I took a trinket from each. We had tea at Frogmore and then went for a long drive, we were even cold. On the way back we stopped at the chapel where Eddy is buried, and on whose tomb Granny told Alix to lay a wreath. Spent a wonderful evening with my darling bride. I am dying of love for her!

8 July - Osborne, Isle of Wight Granny's life here is the same, transposed from Windsor - but not for us, as the sea is near. [in Alix's hand] My own Boysy Boysy dear, never changing, always true. Have confidence and faith in your girly dear who loves more deeply and devotedly than she can ever say. Words are too poor to express my love and admiration and respect - what is past, is past, and will never return and we can look back on it with calm - we are all tempted in this world and when we are young we cannot always fight and hold our own against the temptation, but as long as we repent and come back to the good and on to the straight path, God forgives us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin. God pardons those who confess their faults. Forgive my writing so much but I want you to be quite sure of my love for you and that I love you even more since you told me that little story.³⁶ your confidence in me touched me, oh, so deeply, and I pray to God that I may always show myself worthy of it. God bless you beloved Nicky!

10 July Alix and I went by char-a-banc to the shore, and sat on the sand looking at the waves. Our officers came to dinner, I presented them to Granny. Spent a last evening with my bride. [in Alix's hand] Ever true and ever loving, faithful, pure and strong as death.

11 July - Polar Star A sad day - parting - after more than a month of blissful existence! There was rain in the morning, which then turned into mist. I became sadder and sadder as the hour of our separation approached! I did not leave my sweet dear bride for a single moment. Sweet Nicky love.* After tea I drove with her and Granny for a last time in the direction of the town of Ryde. We had dinner a little before 9 o'clock; the Portsmouth marines were playing. I said goodbye to the ladies and gentlemen and to Munshi; I changed into the uniform of the Guard Corps and after saying goodbye to dear Granny, I went to the landing stage with Alix. After parting from my darling bride, I boarded the cutter. Once on the Polar Star I received a long letter from Alix. Was exhausted from sadness and longing.

KR, Diary - 10 July - Krasnoe Selo

Nicky is painting a fan for Xenia for her wedding. He is doing it from a French book with pictures. The picture shows a frightened hen which has laid several eggs out of which are hatching a whole army of paper cockerels. Nicky draws very well and has a lot of taste.

Nicky had this day confessed to her his affair with M. Kshessinskaya.

* in Alix's hand.

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Alix to Nicky - 10-11 July - Osborne, Isle of Wight

My own precious darling Nicky dear,

As I left you, a few lines in your room at Coburg, so that you should find them when I was gone, so I am going to write again and give this to your servant to give you when you have parted. It makes me too miserable to think about it tomorrow morning, goodbye! Oh, sweet love, what shall I do without you, I am so accustomed now to have you always near me, that I shall feel quite lost.

Sundays, Granny is punctual and I am not washed or anything. Only this still. I love you, many more than words can express, and daily my affection grows stronger and deeper - sweetly, what will be the end!

Oh sweetie, how could you go and give me that lovely ring today, really, too bad of you - I shall doubly value and love it, having received from you in your own little cabin on board. To think that my darling will be soon there, sailing far away from his little girl. Could I but slip into your pocket instead of the thermometer, what unspeakable joy, to be ever near you, and watch for every little wish to try and fulfil it - but someday I may do it - and then no more parting - always with you.

How lovely the sea looked this evening when we sat out on the beach, all so peaceful and quiet, a real Sunday evening. It is a comfort possessing so many sweet photos of you - they surround me and look so sweet, even that naughty artillery officer!

Oh, bad Boysy, how you do spoil me - there you have gone and given me that glorious brooch with pearl drops, a thing I have always longed for, but still much too good for me. I felt quite shy wearing it tonight.

July 11th. I don't know how to keep up and yet I must do so - it hurts, having to look unconcerned and smiling, when one's heart feels rent in twain. I think that tomorrow, at this time you will be far away from me! Out on the big sea, steaming forwards and your little bride left behind, yearning after you. With what passion I love you, like a fire burning, and consuming me, and to feel this love returned. What bliss could be greater?

When your man goes in to wake you tomorrow morning, I hope that he will bring you this so that at least a good morning kiss may reach you. I press it here.

Nicky to Alix - 11 July - Polar Star

My own beloved precious little darling,

This parting was too awful for words; if it went on more often I would not live long! My sweet one, I have just read your dearest long letter through, which the old man gave me on arriving on board! I followed you with my eyes as long as I could from the launch until such a lump came up my throat that I had to turn away and I sobbed in the boat like I did this afternoon. Luckily it was dark and the men were busy rowing. Thank, oh! thank you once more my own beloved Alixy-dear for all your kindness and love, you also don't know how I love and respect you, my sweet darling, my little *spitzbub*. I suffered so for you, poor sweetie, when you had those awful pains in the legs and still were so good and patient to let me remain with you. No! those delightful evenings with my girly dear, were too divine for words.

Darling, darling my one and all, believe me, your old boysy loves you deeper and stronger than you can think; he only cannot express himself!

Goodbye! my sweet angel, my beloved little Alix! God bless you for all your kind-

~~She says nothing. Her hand is on her head.~~

~~What a lovely letter!~~

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Nicky to Alix - 22 July - Peterhof

You have got me entirely and for ever, soul and spirit, body and heart, everything is *yours*, yours; I would like to scream it out loud for the world to hear it. It is me who am proud to belong to such a sweet angel as you are and to venture to claim for your love to be returned - is more than being greedy and selfish.

Ever your deeply loving and faithful Boysy, Pelly Nicky

Alix to Nicky - 23 July - Wolfsgarten

My sweet ovy dear

It is the third time today that I sit down to write to you. I never can forget [Aldershot] and what an angel you looked - I could have gazed for ever, you were too enjoyable and that dear expression and little movement of head and the deep big eyes, I so madly adore, oh! for the moment to press my lips on them and to whisper words of love and utter contentment into my Nicky's ears.

It must indeed have been a moving scene when Xenia and Sandro went to the Lord's Supper together. I think the idea a lovely one, their going together before their marriage. What a moment of emotions it always is! Sweetie dear, that day for me, it will be *quite* *private*, won't it, like it was for Ella, otherwise it would be fearful - a religious act like that must be quiet, otherwise one cannot think of what one is doing or saying.

Ernie played then lawn tennis and Ducky sat and read to me whilst I lay on the sofa and worked; but the reading did not progress much, as we began talking. She is such a dear thing; - in her open way she speaks about everything [which] touches me deeply.

I being so much older, she can speak to me about things I know and younger girls would not, I think that does her good. I cannot say how old I sometimes feel - as a child I knew things, others don't till they are grown up and married. I don't know how it came! Then being alone so much with dear Papa and going with them everywhere and to the Theatre always made me get old early - I have gone through much in different respects - and so I don't mind speaking about things to her. She too has married Ernie to whom I should not mind telling anything, and that helped her at first, when she was so shy with him. It does one good to see how they love each other, but it makes me greedily long for you.

Ever your own deeply loving, very devoted and ever true bridy, Alix

Alix to Xenia - 23 July - Wolfsgarten

My darling Xenia,

These lines are to bring you and Sandro my very fondest good wishes and blessings for the future.

My thoughts and prayers will be with you on your Wedding day. I fear this letter will seem cold and stiff, but I cannot put down on paper all I feel, and the wishes I would like to express.

You know nobody can rejoice more in the Chicken's happiness than the old Hen, who loves you dearly? Think of the second couple, who is praying for your happiness. I am sure, you will be glad to have dear Aunt Alix and the Cousins with you on the great day - I deeply envy them, as you can well imagine.

But I won't bother you with a long letter, as you will have other things to do than to read letters.

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the pain from the separation with Xenia. She felt it deeply the last days, though she tried to hide her sadness, so as not to make Xenia sorry!

The wedding went off very well, they both looked most happy. It was a pleasure for me seeing them standing together before the altar - so bright and clear was their expression. They were both deeply thankful for your table and tea set, that brought over with the yacht. The service for the marriage did not last long, but we remained at the palace for the rest of the day.

Alix to Nicky - 27 July - Worsley

Oh, lovy, had I but got you with me, I want you too badly - a mad longing takes hold of me, and I don't know how to keep quiet. I am burning for a kiss and to feel myself clasped tightly in your arms, safe and protected by the most loving of all beings.

You must come here; still life in the country is so different from the town life - we can be out all day in the woods without meeting anyone - can be quite to ourselves in God's beautiful nature. We two alone under the magnificent trees, loving each other with all our hearts and feeling so utterly content!

29 July

My own beloved darling

I am selfish and greedy and want the best things for myself - shocking, is it not? I don't think you can cure me of that. Me want you, and only for me.

You see how greedy I am. Poor little Xenia, what a heartache or worried life being pulled into a ditch - thank goodness they were not hurt - but the wretched coachman - I trust it is nothing serious.

She is a beautiful girl of Russian descent

Queen Victoria to Nicky - 1 August - Osborne, Isle of Wight

Dearest Nicky,

I send you a few lines for Xenia. I hope the poor coachman is recovering?

The final separation from her after her departure will, I fear, have been very painful for your Mama and I am glad Aunt Alix was able to be there. I suppose she won't stay much longer now.

Darling Alixey is, I am glad to hear, careful and doesn't ride or play at lawn tennis.

Will you kindly send me some photographs of Peterhof and of your sisters and brother Misha?

Aunt sends you many kisses

Ever, dearest Nicky, your devoted (future) Grandmama.

End to Queen Victoria - 2 August - Moscow

Alix I think makes such progress with her Russian she writes so nicely to Nicky making very few faults and the 'tournure des phrases' [turning of phrases] is quite correct he told me she was rather shy about speaking. *about the wedding nothing*

Nicky, Diary - 2 September - Bielovejje

It has been decided to go to the Crimea after a few days at Spala. Everything is already packed and the rooms are empty. Received a letter from my dear Alix!

Alix to Nicky - 2 September - Wolfsgarten

... Some things came from Mme Flotov for me to try on; I felt so funny putting on such smart undergarments and nightgowns, don't be shocked my mentioning them. - Seeing things which are being got for the trousseau is the only thing really to remind me of the Wedding, as everything else remains exactly the same as always. Gretchen would be shocked if she knew my mentioning such clothings to you. I suppose I ought to be shyer and primmer with you, like with others, but somenow I can't.

Nicky, Diary - 5 September - Spala

Received a letter from dear Alix - I'm burning now with impatience to see her again - It's only a few more days! I'm dying to embrace her!

6 September The letter from dear Alix arrived later than usual! The departure for the Crimea has been postponed for an indefinite time, and with it my reunion with my dear bride.

Alix to Nicky - 11 September

You old monkey, how dare you say you will kiss me without my permission as much as you like! I never heard of such impudence before! You better not try it, otherwise my revenge will be most terrible. Oh, dear one, I long for you more and more, especially now that you could not come as soon as intended. What joy when we then at last do meet and I can clasp you in my arms and gaze into your precious face and beautiful tender eyes, and kiss you gently, always more and more, till there is no escaping for you any more. When once I have got you, you will not be free again so soon. I shall smother you with kisses!

Nicky to Queen Victoria - 11 September - Spala

My dearest Grandmama,

Your dear kind letter, that Alicky sent me over from Darmstadt, gave me such great pleasure - I thank you heartily for it.

This instant I received your telegram, in which you ask me about a fall George and I had from a horse - but nothing of the sort has happened. I cannot make out, where the papers do pick up such extraordinary news from? Our stay at Bielovejje was a very good one, the weather unluckily was cold and rainy, but since we are here, we enjoy once more a real summer weather! We had most splendid sport there, shooting bisons, elks and wild boars in quantities. The woods are magnificent and the trees grow up to a huge height. Some places in that forest reminded me so much of the Indian jungles, except that we have no creeping plants! This place is very dry and tho' there are many woods about, still it is a more open country rather sandy. The shooting here is also glorious, but we have only stags and

Nicky to Alix - 9 October - Livadia - Telegram

TO PRINCESS ALICE OF HESSE

TOMORROW GOD GRANT IT WE SHALL MEET HALF-WAY FROM SIMFEROPOL TO YALTA WHERE WE SHALL HAVE LUNCHEON TOGETHER I AM COMING WITH SERGEI HOPE YOU ARE NOT TIRED FONDLE LOVE TENDEREST KISSES - NICKY

Nicky, Diary - 10 October - Livadia

At 9.30 I set out with Uncle Sergei for Alushta, where we arrived at one o'clock in the afternoon. Ten minutes later my beloved Alix arrived from Simferopol with Elia. After luncheon I got into the carriage with Alix and we drove together to Livadia.

My God! What a joy to meet her here at home and to have her near to me - half my cares and worries have been lifted from my shoulders. I was overcome with emotion when we went in to the dear Parents. Papa was weaker today, and Alix's arrival, together with his talk with Father Ioann, have worn him out!

15 October [in Alix's hand] Sweet Child, pray to God, he will comfort you don't feel too low, he will help you in your trouble, Your Sunny is praying for you and the beloved patient. Darling Boysy, me loves you, oh so very tenderly and deep. Be firm and make the Drs Leyden or the other Z[akharin] come alone to you every day and tell you how they find him, and exactly, what they wish him to do, so that you are always the first 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 left out. You are Father dear's son and must be told all and be asked about everything. Show your own mind and don't let others forget who you are. Forgive me love.

17 October In the morning Papa took communion with Father Ioann. He felt weak from the emotion, besides which he had hardly slept at night. The day was wonderful and warm. It was already dark when we returned home. Sergei went with Alexei [uncles] by train to Vienna; the poor thing has developed consumption! After dinner, spent the evening with Papa - he is being tormented by a throat cough, but as always with my sweet, dear, darling Alix! [in Alix's hand] Tell me everything, dushka, you can fully trust me, look upon me as a bit of yourself. Let your joys and sorrows be mine, so that we may be ever drawn nearer together. My sweet One, how I love you, darling treasure, my very own One.

Dushka, when you feel low and sad, come to Sunny and she will try to comfort you and like her namesake warm you with her rays, God helping.

Only yours, quite your very own little splzbbub. Pussy mine!

18 October A terrible, sad day! Dear Papa did not sleep at all, and felt so unwell in the morning that we were all woken up and called upstairs. What a trial! Then Papa became a little calmer and dozed fitfully throughout the day.

I did not dare absent myself from the house for any length of time. What a support to have dear Alix; she sat with me the whole day, while I read reports from various ministers. At about 11 o'clock there was a consultation with the doctors in Uncle Vladimir's room - it was awful! We lunched downstairs so as to make less noise. Walked a little with Alix around the house. In the evening Papa appeared a little better - but terribly weak! Our only reliance and hope is in the Mercy of the Lord: let His will be done!

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19 October In the morning dear Papa slept for four hours in a row and sat up in a chair during the afternoon. Our disquiet returned towards evening, when Papa returned to his room and lay down in bed: he again felt terribly weak! Everyone was wandering around in the garden - Alix and I had been down to the sea and I was afraid for her legs, lest she got tired climbing back up: there was no carriage. After tea and in the evening read reports. Sat with my beloved Alix!

Nicky, Diary - 20 October - Livadia

My God, my God, what a day! The Lord has called unto Him our adored, dearly beloved Papa.

My head is going round, I cannot believe it - it seems inconceivable, a terrible reality. We spent the whole morning upstairs with him! His breathing was laboured, he had to be given oxygen the whole time. At about 3.30 he took communion; then he started to have light convulsions - and the end came quickly! Father Ioann stood by him for over an hour, holding his head.

It was the death of a Saint! Lord, help us in these terrible days! Poor dear Mama! In the evening, at 9.30 we held Prayers for the Dead - in the same bedroom! I felt as if I were dead also. The pains in Alix's legs have returned! In the evening I went to confession.

Sandro, Memoirs 20 October

Nicky and I stood on the veranda of the beautiful palace in Livadia armed with bags of oxygen and watching the end of the Colossus. He died as he lived, a bitter enemy of resounding phrases, a confirmed hater of melodrama. Just muttered a short prayer and kissed his wife.

Everyone in the crowd of relatives, physicians, courtiers and servants gathered around his now lifeless body realized that our country had lost the only support which kept it from falling down a precipice. Nobody understood it clearer than Nicky. 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 room. We embraced and cried and cried together.

He could not conceal his thoughts, he knew he was the Emperor now, and the weight of this terrifying fact crushed him.

'Sandro, what am I going to do,' he exclaimed pathetically. 'What is going to happen to me, to you, to Xenia, to Alix, to mother, to all of Russia! I am not prepared to be a Tsar. I never wanted to become one. I know nothing of the business of ruling. I have no idea of even how to talk to the ministers.'

Nicky, Diary - 21 October - Livadia

In the midst of our deep sorrow, the Lord has sent us a quiet and radiant joy: at 10 o'clock in the presence of the family my dear darling Alix was anointed with the holy oils and after the service we took communion together, with dear Mama and Ella. Alix repeated her responses and prayers wonderfully well and distinctly!

After luncheon we held Prayers for the Dead and again at 9 o'clock in the

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evening. The expression on Papa's face was wonderful, smiling as if he were about to laugh! Spent the whole day answering telegrams with Alix, and attending to the papers brought by the last courier. Even the weather has changed: it was cold with a gale blowing at sea

22 October Last night we had to carry dear Papa's body downstairs, as unfortunately it has rapidly begun to decompose. For this reason morning and evening prayers were held in the little church. Thank God, dear Mama is completely calm and is bearing her sorrow in a truly heroic way. ~~and nothing but answer the calls~~

There was a good deal of mental ferment about the question of where to arrange my wedding; Mama, myself and a few others considered it would be best to hold it quietly here while dear Papa is still under the same roof; but all the uncles are against this, saying I should be married in Petersburg after the funeral. To me this seems quite unfitting! In the afternoon we went down to the sea - the swell was enormous

24 October The day was grey - as it was in our hearts! In the morning I walked a little with dear Alix, then did some reading and writing. I still cannot bring myself to go into the corner room where dear Papa's body is lying - he is so changed since being embalmed, I cannot bear to dispel the wonderful impression of the first day!

27 October Luckily the weather was good and the sea calm. At 8.30 we left our house, which stood sad and abandoned, and went to the church. The service was just ending. The coffin was carried out and entrusted to the cossacks, who took turns with the gunners and oarsmen from His Majesty's cutter to carry it to the pier at Yalta. Mama and all of us followed the coffin on foot. After the service we boarded the *Memory of Mercury* where the coffin was laid out on the quarter-deck under a canopy. A full guard stood around it. A wonderful, beautiful but tragic sight. As we approached Sebastopol it got rough.

Kaiser Wilhelm II to Nicky⁴⁰ - 27 October - Neues Palais, Potsdam

My dear Nicky

The heavy and responsible task for which Providence had destined you has come upon you with the suddenness of a surprise, through the so unexpected and untimely death of your dear lamented father. These lines are to express my fullest and warmest sympathy with you and your Alix and your poor distressed mother. I can well understand the feelings which must have agitated your heart in witnessing the ebbing away of the life of your father, as his illness and sudden passing away was so very like my own dear Papa's, with whose character and kind geniality the late Tsar had many likenesses. My prayers to God for you and your happiness are unceasing. May Heaven comfort you in your grief and give you strength for your heavy duties, and may a long and peaceful reign give you the opportunity of looking after the welfare of your subjects. The sympathy and real grief at the so untimely end of your lamented father in my country will have shown you how strong the monarchical instinct is and how Germany feels for you and your subjects. As for me you will always find me the same in undiminished friendship and love to you.

⁴⁰ They wrote to each other in English.

at 10 o'clock. A bitter reunion with the remaining relatives. The procession from the station to the fort took four hours. After a requiem service we arrived at the Anichkov. How empty it seems! This was the moment I feared most for dear Mama. Aunt Alix and Uncle Bertie are downstairs. My Alix is for the moment with Ella. Dear Alix spent part of the evening with me - how strange to see her here - it reminds me of 1889.

KR, Diary - 1 November - St Petersburg

Yesterday I saw Nicky for the first time since he ascended the throne. This was at Nikolaevsky station at 10 o'clock in the morning, where we met the funeral train bearing the coffin of the late Emperor. The Empress came by the same train with her children, as well as Alexei, Sandro, the Waleses and Olia. "Sergei arrived a short time before with Ella and Uncle Misha.

After greeting me, he [Nicky] gave me a deep expressive look with his lovely, thoughtful and now sad eyes, and kissed me. The funeral procession moved off. We walked behind the coffin along the Nevsky and Admiralty Prospects, past the Synod and the Senate, along the English embankment, over the Nikolaevsky Bridge, along the embankment of Vassilievsky Island over Mitninski Bridge and through Alexander Park. Prayers were said by the Metropolitan in front of Kazan Cathedral.

The Emperor went in to kiss the icon. The day was warm, sombre and cloudy. Inside the fortress, when they opened the coffin I saw the face of the late Emperor in death; the familiar features were little changed; they looked peaceful, as if he were asleep.

Nicky, Diary - 2 November - St Petersburg

Slept well: but the moment I came to myself the memory of what has happened and the terrible feeling of oppression invaded of my soul with renewed vigour! Poor Mama again felt unwell and during the afternoon she fainted.

At 12 o'clock I received the full Council of State - I again had to make a speech! My dear Alix came to luncheon - it's sad to see her only at intervals! Alix, Uncle Bertie, George [Duke of York] and I dined together at 9 o'clock. She sat with me in the evening.

KR, Diary - 2 November - St Petersburg

The young Tsar is the admiration of everyone, wherever His words are heard, either directly or in writing. I hear that the short speech He made in the Kremlin palace to the Moscow nobility was delivered in a loud, clear, assured voice. Yesterday, when receiving the Council of State, He addressed them most beautifully. I watched Him during the requiem service: the calm kind face, the thoughtful, deeply sad eyes, often half-closed. He is weighed down by his exalted rank. His modesty suffers from having to be everywhere and always the first.

The Empress was not at the requiem, she is not well, she has lumbago and fainted; this happens to her, her heart is not strong.

" KR's sister Olga, Queen of Greece

It's only we could get near. Discussion of objective reality as opposed to devil's works

D.T. accepts the coronation but I say he has more fear of his inability to rule + prevent disaster

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Nicky, Diary - 3 November - St Petersburg

It's a bore to see so little of Alix - I can't wait to be married - then there will be no more goodbyes!

KR, Diary - 3 November - St Petersburg

I have not yet talked to the Emperor's bride; but she smiles so sweetly whenever you greet her.

In the evening they covered the Emperor's body in the coffin with a pall up to his chest, in order to hide the hands which are beginning to turn black. The head is already looking quite black.

Nicky, Diary - 4 November - St Petersburg

My dear Alix came at four o'clock. It's the only time, before and after tea, that I can see her alone!

KR, Diary - 5 November - St Petersburg

At 11 o'clock the Danish king arrived with his son Valdemar and we were ordered to send a guard of honour to Warsaw Station. Before the train arrived the Emperor went out to greet the guard; he walked along the line of soldiers like a real Tsar. Olia told us that she asked the Emperor if he intended to retain the rank of colonel, bestowed on him by the late Emperor. The Emperor replied that was correct.⁴² Splendid. At His command, Vladimir went to the station to meet the French extraordinary mission.

Nicky, Diary - 6 November - St Petersburg

At 11 o'clock we went to a service at the fortress. The King of Serbia arrived straight from the station. We lunched at home at one. Then I had to receive a mass of deputations: four German ones, two Austrian, a Danish and a Belgian - I had to talk to all of them! Went for a short walk in the garden - my head was spinning. The King of Serbia paid me a visit, then Ferdinand of Romania - they deprived me of those few free moments in the day when I am able to see Alix.

She came to tea with Ernie. At 7.30 I went to the Winter Palace to fetch Xenia for a requiem service. My dear darling Alix sat with me.

7 November We again had to relive those hours of grief and woe which were our lot on October 20th. At 10.30 the episcopal service began, then the funeral service and burial of our dear unforgettable Papa! It is painful and sad to write these words - it still seems as if we are living in a dream and that suddenly he will appear among us again.

On returning to the Anichkov, I lunched upstairs with dear Mama, she has remarkable self-control, and keeps her spirits up. Sat with my Alix.

⁴² Nicky remained a colonel till the end.

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Lord Carrington to Queen Victoria 7 November - St Petersburg

The Lord Chamberlain presents his most humble duty to Your Majesty and he very much regrets that owing to the dislocation of the Post Office arrangements no letter can be sent off today. The funeral is just over, and it passed off well. The Lord Chamberlain at once sent off a telegram which he despatched himself and which he trusts has reached Your Majesty safely.

The service began at 10.40 a.m. when the Emperor and the Imperial and Royal Families entered; and it lasted till 1 p.m. The crush was tremendous, the corps diplomatique (Your Majesty's ambassador being conspicuous) stood on the right. The Emperor, Empress, and the Princess of Wales in the centre with the Kings of Greece and Denmark and the Prince of Wales: surrounded by the Archdukes and Duchesses, and other Royal Guests - the future Empress looking remarkably handsome. The Ladies of the Court stood behind with the suites of the Royal Visitors.

The crowd was so great that Prince Dolgoruki, master of the ceremonies, who carried a long staff draped with black could hardly get a passage for the Empress to enter - 3 ladies fainted, one of them being Mlle. Fabrice who was in attendance on Princess Alix at Windsor.

The service was choral without organ, the Empress and Princesses standing or kneeling the whole time. The mass continued for an hour and a half, plaintive and monotonous and then the usual daily funeral service was gone through. Tapers were lighted and handed round but in consequence of the crowd no ladies took any and so accident from fire was averted. At 12.30 the terrible ceremony of paying the last farewell took place. The Empress with heroic courage walked up steadily, knelt, and then took a last look at the late Emperor and kissed the sacred picture on His Majesty's breast, and then kissed his lips. The Emperor supported and took great care of Her Majesty and all the Royal Personages present kissed the sacred picture.

The crowd on the catafalque at this moment was very great. The gilt coffin lid was borne up the steps and placed on the bier and then the late Emperor was carried by the Emperor and his royal relatives to his last resting place - close to the altar - the vault being 10 ft. long 4 ft wide and 5 feet deep. The Emperor then retired.

The Lord Chamberlain went up with the general company, to the raised dais - the diamond Crown of the Empire with the sceptre, orb and sword all in diamonds, the buckler and the standard were on the right of where the Emperor's head lay. On the left were the 6 crowns of the Principalities and at his feet were Your Majesty's wreath and one of lilies of the valley from the Empress. These were the only wreaths on the raised dais, all the others several hundred in number were hung on the walls of the Church. The French wreath of silver (nailed on to an enormous board covered with black velvet which was placed on an easel) was on the floor of the Church and was given no special prominence.

As there is only one exit door the difficulty of getting out was tremendous and the Lord Chamberlain met M. de Staal whose arrival was delayed in consequence of a attack of numbago. Footmen pushing to give their masters greatcoats added to the confusion which must have been dreadful for Ladies.

A mounted Guard of Honour of the Gardes a Cheval though big men on large horses, did not strike the Lord Chamberlain as being as fine or as smart as Your Majesty's own Life Guards.

Carrington

papers but which may be of interest to Your Majesty. The morning was dull quite an English November morning and at 11. o'clock the Lord Chamberlain drove up to the Commandants Door of the Winter Palace. Mourning was discarded for the day and the carriage servants wore red cloaks, and laced cocked hats - the hat of the coachman being worn across the head and cocked on to the right ear. The palace was crowded already - most of the Saloons being so full that threading through them was not easy. All the Ladies in Russian Costume some with fine diamonds but hardly any pretty faces; indeed the absence of beauty as compared with that seen at one of Your Majesty's drawing rooms struck the Lord Chamberlain very much.

It was said that 8,000 and even 10,000 persons were present. That is possible as the Saloons are of immense size and apparently interminable. No chairs or seats of any kind were provided; the Ladies and Gentlemen were shewn into the different rooms, and here they stood till the ceremony was over. The path, or gangway, down which the Royal Procession was conducted was very narrow - and the 2 Chamberlains detailed to each room must have had great difficulty in preventing the company pushing forward: composed as it was of Generals, Admirals, officers in the Army, and Navy; all the Ladies who had been presented at Court; the Dignitaries of the first 4 classes; the Mayors of St Petersburg and other large towns; and a great many commercial notabilities. In the last room next to the Imperial apartments were the Senators; 60 or 70 maids of honour all dressed alike; (something like the costume worn by Mme de Staal at Your Majesty's Drawing rooms:) white fronts to the dresses, and scarlet sleeves, trains, and head circlets - this being the Empress' colour - the other Grand Duchesses have other colours - one is reported to be a particularly hideous shade of orange. One maid of honour was so old that she was propped up against the wall - and finally a chair was brought for her in which she was placed till required. Your Majesty's Lord Chamberlain was given a place just in front of the 'grands charges de la Cour' of whom there are 6 or 7 and who immediately precede the Emperor. This was intended as a special compliment to Your Majesty. The Marshal of the Court Prince Troubetskoi walked immediately before the Royal and Imperial families, carrying a gold staff 7 feet high, with a diamond crown at the top. It was not till 12.30 that the doors were opened and the King of Denmark led the Imperial procession with the Empress Marie - who was dressed in white, looking very pale and sad, but very calm and collected, and showing no signs of emotion - the Empress' courage has been wonderful all through this terrible time; and it is to be hoped that she still may be able to bear up, when things resume their ordinary way.

The Emperor in a very plain uniform walked with the Bride who looked simply magnificent - on her head she wore a circlet of diamonds, with a diamond top which made it into a crown - 2 long curls (like the Princess of Wales used to wear,) on her shoulders, a splendid necklace and ornaments - and an enormous mantle of cloth of gold, lined with ermine. She looked the perfection of what one would imagine an Empress of Russia on her way to the altar would be and moved along quite simply and with great dignity. She makes very marked bows with her head, when she greets anyone, and this is much noticed and appreciated. The Imperial and Royal families and guests followed in a very long procession - all together the trains being carried by pages - sons of good families dressed in red and gold with white breeches and long boots. Then the Grande Maitresse of whom the young ladies of the Court have great awe - the 'Dames de Portrait' who wear the Emperor's

description by Dr. T.
reenter walking by

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picture set in diamonds for long and faithful service - one maiden Lady Mlle Barteniev is 77 and was Maid of Honour to Emperor Nicholas I. She is wonderfully preserved and is proud of her complexion: she is a sort of Russian Maria Marchioness of Aylesbury; and the Lord Chamberlain thinks she is a character: talks a great deal and is made a good deal of.

The Procession got at last into the Church - which is not very large; and when the royal Party got inside the altar rails an enormous number of people including the 70 maids of honour crowded in, and the Ambassadors in consequence saw nothing and were not seen at all. The Ceremony was choral - no organ - and the voices superbly trained and wonderfully true, the Crowd getting denser every moment. The ring was placed on the Bride and Bridegrooms' fingers; and then they walked 3 times round the altar, and knelt in front of it - gold crowns being held over their heads: the whole time. The Bride was proclaimed Empress at five minutes past one.

Carrington

Nicky, Diary - 15 November - Tsarskoe Selo

And so, I'm a married man! Happily, no one came to disturb us this morning - we answered our telegrams in peace! After coffee Mama came to visit us - she liked the decoration of our new rooms! We both prefer to sit in the corner one. We lunched at one. Went with Alix to the fortress, where we prayed at the tomb of dear unforgettable Papa. There were crowds of people! Rode my bicycle in the garden. At 5 o'clock the family came to visit us bringing presents for my Alix, and stayed for tea. She and I dined alone with Ernie, after which we accompanied him, Irène and Henry to the station. They left at 8.45. In the evening we sat upstairs reading letters from abroad until 11.

George, Duke of York to Queen Victoria - 16 November - Anichkov Palace

My dearest Grandmama

As Lord Carrington starts tonight direct for England, I will take this opportunity of sending you a few lines. I know that both Papa and Lord Carrington have continually written to you and kept you informed of what has been going on here, and so I did not write to you. I have written to May each day and we have been so busy that there is not much time for writing and several days I had barely time to finish my one letter, so I hope you will forgive me for not having written before.

It has indeed been a terribly sad time here; but the Wedding came like a gleam of sunshine in the midst of the deep mourning. Poor Aunt Minnie has indeed been brave and has borne her terrible grief in a wonderful way, Mama has been of the greatest possible help and comfort to her, I don't know how she could have got on without her. Dear Alix looked quite lovely at the Wedding, the Service was very fine and impressive and the singing quite beautiful, she went through it all with so much modesty but was so graceful and dignified at the same time, she certainly made a most excellent impression. I do think Nicky is a very lucky man to have got such a lovely and charming wife; and I must say I never saw two people more in love with each other or happier than they are. When they drove from the Winter Palace after the Wedding they got a tremendous reception and ovation from the

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It was the first time that, at Nicky's request, she had joined the others in the dining room, for she had previously been taking her meals alone; she was in tears, and when I saw this, I almost started to cry myself. When everyone left, she called me to her. She said she did not want to go anywhere, as there was no escape from her grief. She bears it with such resignation.

Nicky, Diary - 16 November - St Petersburg

We got up late as there was a mix up and they only woke us at 9 o'clock instead of 8. The day was full of hustle: Mouraviev came with a report and then I received people - so that I only managed to see dear Alix for one hour during the whole morning. We lunched together in the dining room, Mama also for the first time. At 3 o'clock went for a drive with Alix - it's strange to sit next to her in a carriage in Petersburg. Walked in the garden with Mama and Apapa. Had tea alone together. Wrote telegrams until dinner. Everyone came upstairs to us in the evening - to look at my wife's wedding presents!

17 November I am unbelievably happy with Alix, it's only a pity that my work takes up so much of the time that I would like to spend exclusively with her!

KR, Diary - 18 November

I did not see the Emperor or his wife at tea with the Empress. They came to dinner. He is so quiet, thoughtful, thin and pale; they are overloading him, he hardly goes into the air, and to stay without moving is bad for him. In the evening everyone went downstairs, to see the sumptuous presents He has given to his young wife. His study remains the same, the only addition being the writing table of the young Empress.

Nicky, Diary - 19 November - St Petersburg

All the Danish relatives came to lunch, to celebrate Aunt Alix's birthday - she has turned 50! Had tea at home and read together. We simply don't have the strength to leave each other!

Nicky to Georgy [brother] - 19 November - Anichkov Palace

First of all, Alix and I would like to send you our sincerest congratulations for your name day [26 November], we constantly pray God to send you a full and speedy recovery, and to comfort you, because it is so much more difficult to be alone after such great sorrow than it is for us who are at least together! I was heart-broken for poor Mama, especially during the first days of our arrival at the Anichkov and the burial of our unforgettable Papa. Thank God, she bore and withstood these last ordeals heroically - there is no other word.

The day of the wedding was also absolute torture both for her and for me.

Throughout the whole ceremony, I could not get rid of the thought that beloved, unforgettable Papa was not among us, and that you were far away from the family and all alone; I had to summon up all my strength not to break down there in church - in front of everyone.

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Nicky, Diary 19 Nov. St Petersburg

Now everything has calmed down a bit, and a completely new life has started for me. I cannot thank God enough for the treasure he has sent me in my wife. I am immeasurably happy with my darling Alix and feel that we will remain as happy together until the end of our lives. But the Lord has given me a heavy cross to bear; hope of His succour and the shining example of unforgettable Papa -- these will help me serve and work for the interest of our beloved homeland! There is very little free time, there are always reports to be read and endless people to receive but what can you do?

Nicky, Diary - 20 November - St Petersburg

At 11 o'clock we went to church. It was the first time Alix and I had been in our church since the wedding. At 4 o'clock we accompanied Uncle Willy, Aunt Olga and Georgie [of Greece] to the station. Dined with Alix at home and then at 8.30 went again to the station to see off Apapa, Uncle Bertie, Valdemar and Georgie [Duke of York]. I felt sorry for poor Mama with so many of her relatives leaving in one go. Only Aunt Alix remains - I hope for long!

22 November At 3 o'clock Alix and I left for Tsarskoe. It had started to freeze when we arrived at the Alexander Palace. I am staying in my old rooms. It's inexpressibly wonderful to live here quietly, without seeing anyone - all day and night together!

24 November Each day that passes I bless the Lord and thank Him from the depths of my heart for the happiness with which He has rewarded me! No man could wish for a greater or more complete fulfilment on this earth. My love and respect for dear Alix grow constantly!

Alix to Queen Victoria - 24 November - Tsarskoe Selo

My darling Grandmama,

I am resting on the sofa [sic] after having been for a delightful walk with Nicky in the park. He is sitting near me and reading through his papers. We have come here for four days and enjoy the quiet and beautiful air - poor Nicky has so much to do, that this rest here is very good for him and having him all to myself is such utter happiness. I never can thank God enough for having given me such a husband - and his love to You touches me also so deeply, for have You not been as a Mother to me, since beloved Mama died.

It is so nice here and my room is full of plants and delicious smelling flowers, quite like at home. In the next room my sweet Nicky was born and Georgie and the little Brother who died.*

I send You my most loving thanks for Your last dear letter, so full of love and kindness. Uncle Bertie will have told You all about the Wedding I hope. It was such a pity he and Georgie had to leave so soon.

How nice for dear Tonia and Maud that they stayed with You at Windsor, as they so seldom really see You.

Yesterday the weather was very cold, but today it is again warmer and it tried to snow a little in the morning; it is real country here, which is so pleasant after

* Alexander, the infant son of Alexander III, who died aged eleven months.

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having been in town, where we can only walk in the garden.

I always wear Your pretty ring.

But now I must say goodbye, beloved Grandmama.

Kissing Your dear hand most tenderly,

I remain,

Your very loving devoted Child, Alix

Nicky sends You his very best love.

Nicky, Diary - 25 November - Tsarskoe Selo

I was free, as practically nothing arrived for me to read. We lunched and dined alone. Words cannot express the bliss of living together in such a wonderful place as Tsarskoe!

next day

11 (10)

26 November Yesterday received a telegram from dear Mama saying that we can stay here one more day. My bliss is without bounds - it will be so sad to leave Tsarskoe, which has become such a dear place for us both; for the first time since our wedding we have been able to be alone and live truly soul-to-soul [in Alix's hand] Never did I believe there could be such utter happiness in this world, such a feeling of unity between two mortal beings. I love you - those three words have my life in them.

12 days later

(10)

27 November - St Petersburg For the last time I strolled in the park with my darling wife. After taking tea, we left the Alexander Palace and set out for Petersburg, we arrived at the Anichkov about 6 o'clock. Mama and Aunt Alix were just finishing tea. [in Alix's hand] No more separations. At last united, bound for life, and when this life is ended, we meet again in the other world to remain together for all eternity. Yours,

(10)

Yours. To the comment. The assurance! The ignorance! On the material level (passive) SPASS PART

3 December Ella and Uncle Sergei came to luncheon, as well as Aunt Alix (as usual). At 3 o'clock went for a walk. A lot of snow has fallen, making a pathway for the sleigh. Skating has already been set up in the garden. Went with Alix to see Ella we looked at several details of decoration for our rooms.

reincarnation

KR, Diary - 4 December - St Petersburg

After dinner Minnie invited me to have tea with her upstairs at 10.45. Here I heard from her something of the utmost significance: while Henry of Prussia was here, he told Nicky that his brother, the Emperor Wilhelm, was counting on Nicky visiting him in the summer for the opening of the new canal.

Nicky replied that he was not minded to make any visits while in deep mourning. Henry replied that his brother had come on a visit even though he had been in mourning for his father. Nicky then replied very firmly: 'Your brother is certainly not an example for me in this,' saying that his first trip abroad would be to Denmark to his grandfather. Minnie was highly pleased with this reply, and I was so delighted by her tale that I kissed her hand several times.

7 December On returning from a reception in the formal rooms, the Emperor saw me by the doors to His study downstairs. He said how difficult His position was. I reminded Him of Tikhomirov's article, which talks of the difficult and important role

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KR Diary, 4 Dec '94

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~~of the Emperor's interest, adding that if God chooses a Tsar, He gives him strength.~~

I asked whether He had received any advice from his Father before the latter's death. Nicky replied that his Father had never once mentioned the responsibilities that awaited Him. During confession Father Yanyshv had asked the dying Emperor whether he had talked to his Heir. The Emperor had replied: No, he himself knows everything. Nicky added that even before, when sending Him abroad to foreign courts, his Father had never given Him any instructions and had left Him to act as He thought best. For this reason it was now both easier and more difficult for Him.

11 December The young Empress again fell faint in church. If this is for the reason the whole of Russia longs for, then praise be to God!

type box

George, Duke of York to Nicky - 13 December - Sandringham

My dear Nicky

I can't tell you, my dear Nicky, how pleased I was to see you these few days in Petersburg, although it was all so terribly sad: but you have always been so kind and dear to me, ever since we have known each other. I look upon you if I may do so, as one of my oldest and best friends. It was also nice the Club meeting once again. I wonder when we four will be altogether again, I hope soon.

Ever your very devoted Cousin and friend George

Nicky, Diary - 14 December - Tsarskoe Selo

Today it is one month since we married - strange to say I am only just beginning to get used to the idea. My love for Alix keeps growing!

was there then some exaggeration in the letters?

Nicky to Georgy [brother] - 18 December - St Petersburg

It still seems to me that everything that has happened is a terrible, revolting dream, and that our unforgettable Papa is somewhere on a long absence and that he is bound to return to us! I somehow have the impression that I am only carrying out his duties temporarily this winter, just as I might if Papa and Mama had gone to stay in Corfu at the moment! But you can't bring back the past!

We live very quietly at Tsarskoe, at least we are less disturbed by every scoundrel and ugly mug, so that it is possible to take a break from everything and go out in the air twice a day. Luckily my dearest Alix is made of stern stuff and does not mind either the cold or the damp.

I have had my hunting sleigh sent from Gatchina, the one I had copied from Papa's just last year. We use it to drive through all the parks and in Pavlovsk, and of course we drive ourselves - for the moment quite successfully, although three days ago on a bend the sleigh tilted over so much that we almost fell out and the dim-wit Voron [dog] immediately jumped in and squashed Alix in the most impudent manner!

I am in our old rooms, she in Mama's - we sleep in their bedroom!

Such
my perfect
liked
me!

Nicky, Diary - 24 December - Tsarskoe Selo

We had tea upstairs and at 6 o'clock went to church. Afterwards there was the Christmas tree in the blue drawing room, according to age-old custom! It was both

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joyful and sad - what a change from last year: dear Papa is no more, Xenia is married and so am I! Dear Mama showered us all with gifts as always! We dined at 8 o'clock. When we returned downstairs, Alix and I decorated our own Christmas tree!

31 December [In Alix's hand] The last day of the old year - what happiness to spend it together. Sweetest Angel, if little wifey ever did anything that displeased you or unwillingly grieved and hurt you in the past year - forgive her dusk! So deep and pure and strong my love has grown - it knows no bounds. God bless and keep you.

Walked in the garden with Mama and Aunt Alix. The two of us had tea alone. Read until 7.30 and then went upstairs for the service. It was painful to stand in church and think of the terrible changes, which have happened this year. But putting faith in God I look forward to the next year without fear - because for me the worst has already happened, that which I feared all my life! But together with this irrevocable grief the Lord has rewarded me also with a happiness which I could never have imagined. He has given me Alix.

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Nicky, Dasy - 1 January - St Petersburg

Today everything had a terribly different feel from other years! At 11 o'clock were present in church: Uncles Misha, Vladimir, Alexei and Aunt Michen. Lunched with them and Aunt Alix. At 2 o'clock the reception for the diplomatic corps began in the ball-room. It reminded me so much of the reception there 10½ years ago - on the day I took my oath of allegiance! On the other hand it is easier now, because I am not alone - my dear Alix worked the ladies, while I took care of the men. After receiving the son of the Emir of Bokhara, we returned home at 3.30 - exhausted. Those wretched telegrams again took up all day! Finished writing and did some reading. Boris and Andrei¹ came for dinner. Went to bed early.

3 January From the morning my Alix did not feel at all well, and at about 11 o'clock she went back to bed. I felt so sorry for my poor little wife, all alone downstairs!

4 January We sat down to dinner at 7.30 as Aunt Alix [Princess of Wales] had to leave by 9 o'clock. We all accompanied her to the station. My heart aches at the thought that dear Mama will now be all alone upstairs! Help her, merciful God!

17 January An exhausting day. Went with Alix to the Winter Palace. Lunched with Xenia and Sandro. I was in a terrible state about having to go into the Nikolayevsky Hall and deliver a speech to representatives of the nobility, the zemstvos [local councils] and the town committees. Then there was a reception in each of the delegations in turn in the Concert Hall. Returned home at 4 o'clock. Strolled in the garden with Uncle Sergei.

separate pages

From Nicky's speech to the representatives of all estates

I am aware that recently in some zemstvos there have arisen the voices of people carried away by senseless dreams of taking part in the business of government.

Let everyone know that I will retain the principles of autocracy as firmly and unbendingly as my unforgettable late father.

¹ Sons of Grand Duke Vladimir.

1895

Nicky, Diary - 20 January

It is already three months that dear Papa is no longer with us, I still cannot believe that we will never see him again on this earth! It's too painful, too sad!

The whole family gathered in the fortress for a requiem service. On returning home I received Witte² and many others. We went skating, and then for a walk with Mama. After tea we said goodbye to Uncle Sergel. I finished reading *Le Journal de la Duchesse D'Angoulême* aloud to Mama.

22 January At 2 o'clock in the Winter Palace the ladies' baise-main [kissing of the hand] took place - 550 ladies! My dear Alix looked remarkably beautiful in Russian costume. The whole ceremony lasted ¾ of an hour. On returning home we went skating. After tea I read aloud from a new book about Napoleon's life on the island of St Helena. Went for a drive with Alix after dinner. It was very windy.

Nicky to Georgy [brother] - 23 January - St Petersburg

I am up to my neck in work, but thank God I am able to deal with it fairly easily. There are receptions on Wednesdays and Fridays only - I am fed up with them! I remember how dear Papa could not bear them - how I understand him now!

Yes, it's hard to change yourself, when before all my thoughts were focused on military service, never mind the type of weapon, it was the one thing I adored and to it alone I was totally dedicated!

Apart from anything else, the knowledge that I am forever cut off from a life close to the armed forces - adds no little sorrow to my burden, but enough about this. I have no right to complain, rather I should thank God for the happiness which he has bestowed on the second half of my life, and for the treasure which I call my wife. She and Mama are my comfort, my hope, my peace. What would I do without Alix - It's too awful to contemplate!

Our future apartments are being prepared in the Winter Palace, Alix and I are taking an active part and are involved in every detail!

Nicky, Diary - 27 January - St Petersburg

My love for my darling wife grows ever deeper, ever more tender.

29 January Dear Alix woke up with a headache, and therefore stayed in bed until 2 o'clock.

1 February Poor Alix got a bad headache at tea time - she went to bed until dinner. In the evening she felt a little better. Had tea with Mama.

Nicky to Queen Victoria - 1 February - St Petersburg

My darling Grandmama,

I feel ashamed that I have not written to you for such a long time, to thank you for your two dear letters, which made me so happy. I cannot tell you what a pleasure the arrival of the 'Scots Greys' deputation gave me and also how proud and pleased

² Count Sergei Witte, Finance Minister; later Prime Minister.

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We went out together for a walk - the weather was like yesterday. Poor Alix developed a headache and was forced to go and lie down. Worked in the garden and rode my bicycle.

9 April Unfortunately dear Alix's headache continued all day. She did not go upstairs at all - neither to church, nor to luncheon. I managed to read a lot of the papers that had accumulated. Walked in the garden with Mama, Xenia and Sandro. Had tea with my darling. Dined at 8 o'clock with Mama, Misha and Andrei. Alix went to bed early.

10 April Dear Alix still has an unbearable pain in the temples, and she was forced to remain in bed, on my advice. Had tea with Alix. Dined with Mama. Together we looked through some old papers of Papa's, that had remained in his writing desk.

Nicky to Sergei - 10 April - St Petersburg

Dear Uncle Sergei

First of all I must thank you with all my heart for your kind letter, but as you know how busy I am most of the time, you will hopefully forgive my impoliteness. I know that unforgettable Papa, for all his labours, always answered the letters he received, so the same quantity of work is no excuse. But I am so recently married, and have only just begun to enjoy bliss on earth - living together with one's ardently beloved - so is it surprising I should devote the two or three hours left free to me during the day wholly to my darling wife?

Sometimes, I confess, tears well up in my eyes at the thought of how calm and lovely life could have been for me for many years to come, had it not been for October 20.⁵ But these tears reveal human weakness, these are tears of self-pity and I try to dry them as soon as possible and humbly fulfill my heavy and responsible duty to Russia.

It is much easier in Tsarskoe, we stay there mostly alone, and it is better to work there. I hope that in three days I will be able to move in there for the whole spring. These past days we have lived on our reminiscences of last year in dear Coburg. Alix and I embrace you and Ella fondly.

Nicky

Nicky to Queen Victoria - 10 May - Tsarskoe Selo
Dearest Grandmama,

I send you my fondest thanks for the two letters you were so kind to write to me. I am too sorry that these lines will reach you after your dear birthday: though late, my wishes for that day, come from the depth of my heart! This year especially, as I recollect with such pleasure all the goodness and kindness you showed me during that never to be forgotten time I spent last summer in England. Alix and I we so often talk about those charming days at Windsor and at Osborne, where it was so gay and all so quiet. Alas! how things have changed since then. I thought so much of you, dearest Grandmama, when you sent us the sad news of the death of the poor Duchess of Roxburghe! It must be too hard for words, to lose one's best

⁵ The day of his father's death.

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Letter to Queen-Victoria 1891*Mary to
Tsarskoe
Selo*

friends, like that, one after another - Sir H. Ponsonby, Sir J. Cowell and poor little Lord Drumlanrig. I know well what your feelings must be, having recently gone through one of the most fearful trials in this life - the loss of my dearly beloved Father! But I try not to despair and not to lose courage, but to thank God for the good and happiness He has given me on the other side. I really could not be happier than I am, with such an angel for my wife, as darling Alix is - a treasure here to be found more.

In answer to your second letter mentioning the articles about England in the Russian papers, I must say that I cannot prevent people from putting their opinions openly in the newspapers. How often have I not been worried to read in English gazettes rather unjust statements in connexion with my country! Even books are being constantly sent to me from London, misinterpreting our actions in Asia, our interior politics, etc. I am sure there is as little hostility intended in these writings as there is in the above mentioned ones. Nicky

Nicky, Diary - 14 May - St Petersburg

It poured with rain all night, and became noticeably cooler. Because of the damage, we did not go out for a walk. At 11 o'clock went to church.

[in Alix's hand] A half a year now that we are married, how intensely happy you have made your Wife, you cannot think. God bless you, my own true, beloved husband - daily purer, stronger, deeper.

→ D.T. Alix is pregnant

Nicky to Georgy [brother] - 14 May - Tsarskoe Selo

Since Mama's departure we have already been once to Gatchina with Xenia and Sandro. We stayed in Apapa and Amama's rooms, which overlook the main courtyard. I'm glad we are not using your former rooms, because every time I enter our little flat, my soul is flooded with the bliss of happy, wonderful, recent memories - and I would not want to embarrass my dear Alix with a grief I am unable to conceal! I have only twice been in dear Papa's rooms; everything - down to the last object - has remained exactly in its place!

Nicky, Diary - 19 May - Tsarskoe Selo

The weather was unsettled. In the morning we went for a walk. After the reports I received visitors. We lunched alone. We looked over the upstairs rooms, over Alix's, which we are planning to arrange for a certain purpose!

25 May Dear Alix is 23 years old! The first birthday that we are spending together, may God grant that we live many other such days together, in quiet joy and happiness!

10 June - Peterhof At 7.30 there was a dinner at the Oldenburgs, afterwards we sat in the pavilion by the sea. The evening was heavenly, we went for a drive and returned home at 11 o'clock.

[in Alix's hand] My sweet old darling manykins, Wife loves you so deeply and strongly.

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tie it to p 126 M. greiner

you are my one and all. A few months still and then ... oh, my angel, what intense happiness ... ours ... our very own ... what happiness could be greater; only Wify must try and be as good and kind as possible, else another little person might suffer from it. A big kiss

This is June. The baby is born a girl almost 5 weeks ago.

Kaiser Wilhelm II to Nicky - 28 June - Sweden

Dearest Nicky

Let me once more thank you with all my heart for the sending of those splendid ships of yours, which so ably and powerfully represented the Russian navy at Kiel. Alexei was kindness and joviality itself and did everything in his power to make intercourse with our Russian comrades, everything that could be wished for.

Goodbye, dearest Nicky, my best love to Alix and to you, with wishes for a quiet summer and a nice little boy to come. Believe me, dear Nicky, ever your most affectionate friend and cousin

Willy

Nicky, Diary - 3 July - St Petersburg

I was working after tea when I was suddenly told that dear Xenia has had a daughter, Irina! Alix and I flew to the Farm. Thank God everything went all right. We saw Xenia and our little niece. Dined with Misha. We went to say goodnight to Mama, who has calmed down after her agitation!

Xenia to Nicky - 23 August - Bernsdorf

My dear darling Nicky

Here we are again in Denmark! But what a difference with our previous visits how many changes since then! You cannot imagine how difficult it is to be here without dear Papa, and how much we miss him! In general it's not much fun here which is understandable!

First we found poor Georgy in bed! Two days before our arrival he started to cough up blood (and just when he was beginning to feel better), and it happened again last night, but not as badly as the first time. Of course this affects his nerves terribly and makes him very upset!

Here all the girl cousins are learning to ride bicycles with great enthusiasm. I shall also have to put myself to it, although it seems to me I will never master how to do it.

I hope that dear Alix is in good health and feels quite well, and that the children are not wearing her out too much with their endless hopping! You have no idea how much I miss our delightful little daughter! Of course she will be absolutely fine with you, but I feel terribly sad without her!

Alix telegraphed me today to say that she [Irina] is quite well and is growing every day. Everybody here is very interested in her, and keeps asking me whom she looks like.

Sandro to Nicky - 6 September - steamship Petersburg

I had rather a boring time in Bernsdorf, and went to town in all three times. Georgy spent most of the time lying down, and was ill at the beginning ... our fears have been realized - Georgy's stay in Denmark unfortunately did him harm. In my opinion there is absolutely no need for Leyden. Chigayev is a wonderful doctor and

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should be given complete charge of Georgy's treatment. We should not forget that Leyden is a German, and on top of that a Jew, and that he does not care at all what happens to Georgy. Besides which, Georgy needs to be left in peace, so let him and the doctor decide what to do together, without any outside pressure.

Xenia to Nicky - 11 September - Abas Tuman

Thank God that our little one is well, and thank you both for looking after her and showing so much interest, Alix was even there for her bath! In a few days you should be moving to Tsarskoe, there she will be nearer and it will be more convenient.

Georgy [brother] to Nicky - 11 September - Abas Tuman

The *Polar Star* was delayed, and at that moment I started this wretched spitting up of blood again and I had to take to bed; as it occurred several times I had to stay there for a full eight days. It was no fun at all, and to make matters worse I was forbidden to smoke. It was awful, but I managed for the whole eight days, after which I gradually began to smoke again. I felt fine as long as I was in bed, but for the first weeks of my stay there I had an almost constant fever, and I cannot say that I felt particularly well. Of course I was delighted to see the family after 4 years, but it did not really do me any good, as I lost even more than the 5 pounds which I had put on with such difficulty in May and June; I also get out of breath more easily. So these are the results of my trip. Very annoying.

Kaiser Wilhelm II to Nicky - 14 September - Jagdhaus Romingen

Dearest Nicky

God knows that I have done all in my power to preserve the European Peace, but if France goes on openly or secretly encouraged like this to violate all rules of international courtesy and Peace in peacetime, one fine day, my dearest Nicky, you will find yourself *volens-volens* suddenly embroiled in the most horrible of wars Europe ever saw! Which will by the masses and by history perhaps be fixed on you as the cause of it. Pray don't be angry, if I perhaps hurt you quite unintentionally, but I think it my duty to our two countries and to you as my friend to write openly. As the seclusion and retirement the deep mourning has imposed upon you, debars you from seeing people and following in detail what is happening - behind the scenes. Think of the awful responsibility for the shaking bloodshed!

Now goodbye, dearest Nicky, best love to dear Alix and believe me ever your most devoted and faithful friend and cousin,

Willy

Nicky, Diary - 28 September - Tsarskoe Selo

Happily Alix felt well and spent the whole day lying on the sofa in the mauve room.

6 October From the evening Alix again started getting pains, which she felt at night whenever she woke up. As they continued in the morning, I decided not to go hunting and stayed at home. At about 10 o'clock Alix got up and spent the

whole day on her feet as if nothing was the matter; and there was I thinking that these pains meant the beginning of the end.

7 October My darling wife felt wonderful all day - things seem to have come to a halt, and we were so hoping that by Sunday the great event would have taken place!

with one week later
Kaiser Wilhelm II to Nicky - 13 October - Neues Palais, Potsdam
Dearest Nicky

That it is not the fact of a 'Rapport' or friendship between Russia and France that make me uneasy - every sovereign is sole master of his country's interests and he shapes his policy accordingly - but the danger which is brought to our Principle of Monarchism through the lifting up of the Republic on a pedestal by the form under which the friendship is shown. The constant appearance of Princes, Granddukes, statesmen, generals in 'full fig' at reviews, burlals, dinners, races - with the head of the Republic or in his entourage makes Republicans - as such - believe that they are quite honest excellent people, with whom Princes can concoct and feel at home! Now what is the consequence at home in our different countries? The Republicans are Revolutionists de nature and treated - rightly too - as people who must be shot or hung, they tell to our other loyal subjects: 'Oh, we are no dangered bad men, look at France! There you see the Royalties hobnobbing with the Revolutionnaires! Why should not it be the same with us?' The R[epublic] F[ranchise] is from the source of the Great Evolution and propagate and is bound to do so, the ideas of it. Don't forget, that Faïré - not his personal fault - sits on the throne of the King and Queen of France 'by the grace of God' whose heads Frenchmen Republicans cut off! The Blood of their Majesties is still on that country!

Look at it, has it since then ever been happy or quiet again? Has it not staggered from bloodshed to bloodshed? And in its great moments did it not go from war to war? Till it saused all Europe and Russia in streams of blood? Till at last it had the Commune over again? Nicky, take my word on it: the Curse of God has stricken that People for ever! We, Christian Kings and Emperors have one holy duty imposed on us by Heaven, that is to uphold the Principle 'von Gottes Gnaden' [by the grace of God].

Your most devoted and affectionate friend and cousin,

Willy

Nicky, Diary - 21 October - Tsarskoe Selo

Again not a joyful day. It seems a pity and somehow shameful to take off our mourning; it served as a visible link with a treasured past! The only reason for the minister of war. The rest of the time I answered telegrams. Lunchd with Alix and Ella. The day was clear. I met up with my little wife, as arranged, in the park. It was almost dark when I returned home. Did some reading. The five of us dined together again.

28 October The day was warm and quiet. The 29th wedding anniversary of dear Mama and Papa! My heart aches at the thought of how painful it must be for her. Help her, God!

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It is these women with myriads of nurses, who have trouble feeding their infants

3 November A day I will remember for ever, during which I suffered a very very great deal. At about 2 o'clock dear Mama arrived from Gatchina, she, Alix and I were with Alix the whole time. At exactly 9 o'clock a baby's cry was heard and we all breathed a sigh of relief! With a prayer we named the daughter sent to us by God 'Olga'! When all the anxiety was over, and the terrors had ceased, there was simply a blessed feeling at what had come to pass! Thank God, Alix came through the birth well, and felt quite alert in the evening. I ate late at night with Mama, and when I went to bed, I fell asleep at once!

Xenia, Diary - 3 November - Tsarskoe Selo

The birth of a daughter (Olga) to Nicky and Alix! A great joy, although it's a pity it's not a son! The birth pains began already last night.

At 10 o'clock we went to Tsarskoe. Poor Nicky and Mama were quite weak with exhaustion. The baby is huge - weighing ten pounds - and had to be pulled out with forceps! A terrible thing to witness. But thank God everything ended well. I saw dear Alix, she looks well; little Olga lay next to her on the bed!

Nicky, Diary - 4 November - Tsarskoe Selo

Although Alix slept very little at night, she felt well. Of course I was present for our daughter's birth! She is a big baby weighing 10 pounds and measuring 55 centimetres. I can hardly believe it's really our child! God what happiness!!! At 12 o'clock the whole family arrived for a service of thanksgiving. Lunched alone with Mama. Alix spent the whole day lying in the mauve room, for a change of air. She felt well, so did the little darling. There was a mountain of telegrams.

Xenia, Diary - 5 November - Tsarskoe Selo

Alix started feeding herself. During dinner, the wet-nurse's son started to take her breast, and we all took turns to go in and watch the spectacle! The wet-nurse stood next to her, looking very satisfied!

Alix looks wonderful and is once more in good spirits. I saw Ott (doctor) - he is delighted that everything has turned out well. The little one has the longest black hair!

Nicky, Diary - 5 November - Tsarskoe Selo

A splendid night - no fever. After our daughter's birth, the temperature was remarkably warm: 102. Went to church with Mama. Alix again spent the day in the selamlik with our little daughter by her side.

The first attempt at breast-feeding took place, and ended up with Alix successfully feeding the son of the wet nurse, while the latter gave milk to Olga! very funny! Did some reading and writing. Mama came in, and I finished reading to her. Spent a wonderful day!

P.T. It could have been Klara! But is, the girl who is DE Alix.

6 November In the morning I admired our delightful little daughter, she does not look at all newborn, because she is such a big baby with a full head of hair. Went for a short walk alone. Returned to my darling wife at 2 o'clock. Thank God all is well; but the baby does not want to take her breast, so we had to call the wet-nurse again.

It is these women with myriads of nurses, who have trouble feeding their infants

The little granddaughter of the two women

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Walter Dean Transloc 504 1195

3 November A day I will remember for ever, during which I suffered a very very great deal. At about 2 o'clock dear Mama arrived from Gatchina, and Lila and I were with Alix the whole time. At exactly 9 o'clock a baby's cry was heard and we all breathed a sigh of relief! With a prayer we named the daughter: first and only by God 'Olga!' When all the anxiety was over, and the terrors had ceased there was simply a blessed feeling at what had come to pass! Thank God. Alix came through the birth well, and felt quite alert in the evening. I ate late at night with Mama, and when I went to bed, I fell asleep at once!

Xenia, Diary – 3 November – Tsarskoe Selo

The birth of daughter (Olga) to Nikolay and Alina. A great joy, although it's a pity it's not a son! The birth pains began already last night."

At 10 o'clock we went to Tsarskoe. Poor Nicky and Mama were quite weak with exhaustion. The baby is huge - weighing ten pounds - and had to be pulled out with forceps! A terrible thing to witness. But thank God everything ended well. I saw dear Alix, she looks well; little Olga lay next to her on the bed.

Nicky, Diary - 4 November - Tsarskoe Selo

Although Alix slept very little at night, she felt well. Of course I was present for our daughter's birth. She is a big baby weighing 10 pounds and measuring 53 centimetres. I can hardly believe it's really our child! God what happiness!! At 2 o'clock the whole family arrived for a service of thanksgiving. Lunched alone with Ma na Alix spent the whole day living in the mauve room, for a change of air. She felt well so did the little darling. There was a mountain of telegrams.

Xenia, Diary - 5 November - Tsarskoe Selo

Alix started feeding herself. During dinner, the wet-nurse's son started to take her breast, and we all took turns to go in and watch the spectacle! The wet-nurse stood next to her, looking very satisfied!

Allx looks wonderful and is once more in good spirits. I saw Ott [doctor] - he is delighted that everything has turned out well. The little one has the longest black hair!

Nicky, Diary – 5 November, Tsarskoe Selo

~~A beautiful night - no bugs. After our daughter, both James and I took a walk. It was remarkably warm: 10°. Went to church with Mama. Alix again spent the day in the sewing room with our little daughter but now and~~

The first attempt at breast-feeding took place, and ended up with Alix successfully feeding the son of the wet nurse, while the latter gave milk to Olga! Very funny! Did some reading and writing. ~~Mama, Yanka, Anna, Daria, Pasha, and Sashka came for dinner. Spent a wonderful day!~~

[illegible]

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Nicky, Diary - 1 January - Pet

Slept well and woke up early. Enjoyed splashing in my bath, and after coffee sat down to the unbearable telegrams. *Happy New Year etc. - X*

At 11 o'clock the ceremonial began. It was the first time we took part in the new year celebration together. Thank God, Alix coped marvellously not only with the church service and the ambassadors' reception, but also with receiving homage from the ladies, the Council of State, the Senate, the court and the suites! We inaugurated our dining room with a family luncheon. At 3 o'clock we went to pay a few visits to the family. We sat with dear Mama and had tea with her. On returning home I sat down to work. We dined alone and spent the evening hanging icons in the bedroom.

Happy New Year
3 January After tea with Mama we returned for our little daughter's bath. We dined alone and spent the whole evening hanging photographs in the little lobby and along the staircase. *X*

ball
11 January At 9.30 we entered the Nikolayevsky Hall and our first big ball began. I suffered for dear Alix, who had to receive a mass of ladies. I went round all the tables and then had supper myself. At 1.30 it was all over! *X*

2 February Alix started to get ready for Uncle Vladimir and Aunt Michen's ball; she wore a beautiful crimson bere, like Tatiana in *Onegin*. The ball began with a mazurka performed by eight couples. It was a very lively ball. The ladies had their heads dressed in various ways.

We had supper with Aunt Michen. The dancing went on until 3.15. It was a joy to return home to our little bed.

21 February At breakfast our little darling is brought to Alix, after she has been fed, she is placed on the sofa, and here she starts to exhibit a desire to speak, and makes all sorts of prolonged noises through her lips.

10 March From today our daughter is being dressed in little short dresses!

Nicky to Empress Marie - 28 March, Easter - St Petersburg

Alix stood up wonderfully to the whole of the midnight service and liturgy; she rested only while I washed my face after the greeting ceremony.

This time, for the first three days, I had to kiss far more people than usual, as the Winter Palace was added to the rest. In all, judging by the number of eggs given away, it seems I have embraced 1600 people - a whole regiment! My cheeks are terribly sore after all this. I am longing to go to Tsarskoe, but at the same time I want to show Alix the breaking of the ice on the Neva, and indeed to see it myself, it should happen within the next few days.

life box

Nicky, Diary - 29 March - St Petersburg

In the morning I did a lot of reading and received visitors after the reports. S. Donsoruky and Mendorf came to luncheon. The new English ambassador O'Connor came to present his credentials. At 3 o'clock we went to the islands and went for a walk on Blagin. After dinner we went to the theatre. There was an excellent play called *Friends* (in Alix's hand) *sweet precious Nicky mine, no words can express how deeply I love you - more and more, day by day, deeper - truer. Love sweet do you believe it, do you feel hearty throb so quickly, and only for you, my husband.*

1 April The weather was good but overcast. Xenia brought Irina to our little one's bath. She also weighs 20½ pounds, but our daughter is fatter!

Kaiser Wilhelm II to Nicky - 7 April - Coburg

Dearest Nicky,

The merry wedding which is taking place here and the faces of many of the guests remind me of two years ago when it was my good fortune to be able to help you to secure that charming and accomplished angel who is now your wife. The reminiscences of April 1897 were also felt by others and from that time they agreed that we should send you the telegram you will have just received. I venture to trust that it will say as promises that you will not afterwards find in your matrimonial life. May God's blessing be on you both especially in the next month when you are going to be crowned under admiring assistance of the world.

Your affectionate cousin and friend,

Willy

People U.
↓
Sleep 129
letter
13 Oct.
1895
(16 mo.)

KR, Diary - 10 April - St Petersburg

How sweet and friendly she is; it's only a pity that she finds it so difficult to overcome her shyness. Learned from her that she will have to stop feeding the baby before her departure for Moscow. At the moment she is feeding once a day, in the morning while she has coffee with the Emperor; I asked when exactly, before or after the coffee? She replied that the infant feeds while she is drinking her coffee. How delightfull

5/4/04

The coronation of Nicholas as Tsar of all the Russias had been fixed for 14 May.

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Nicky to Empress Marie - 16 April - Tsarskoe Selo

Uncle Arthur's words about your letter did and I heard from him in detail about the anxiety and worry you went through when Georgy started coughing blood again. 'Ask God in faith, and ye shall receive.' These words are particularly dear to me, because for five whole years I repeated them every night, as I prayed to God to smooth Alix's path to Orthodoxy and to give her to me as my wife. Forgive me, dear Mama, for writing to you in this way, but I do not know whether I told you of this before?

Dr. writes
on his
variation
of that
there
around
only faith
was not
precise enough.
Our
safety valve

George, Duke of York to Nicky - 17 April - Copenhagen

My dear old Nicky

I want to tell you how disappointed both May and I are that we are not coming to the Coronation, I regret it most deeply. Of course it was impossible for you to do anything after Grandmama had told you she was going to send Uncle Arthur. I was so certain that she would send us that I did not bother anyone about it, else I should certainly have written to you a long time ago and asked you to write to her to say that you would like us to come. And everybody in England expected that we were going, and when at last it was settled that the Connaughts were going I must say I was furious, but there was nothing to be done.

But we are both such old friends and we understand each other so well and both you and Alix are my first cousins, and you don't know Uncle Arthur very well and she not at all.

Ever, dear Nicky, your very devoted cousin and friend.

Georgie

Alix to Empress Marie - 17 April - Tsarskoe Selo

Darling sweet Mother dear,

I cannot tell you how delighted I was when the Feldjäger brought me your dear letter; I never thought you would find time to answer it. So poor dear Georgy has again not been so well, but I am sure it must be a comfort to you to be near him at least. What a misfortune it is, and when he was just feeling better again. God grant he may soon be quite strong and well again, so that you can quietly enjoy your stay at Turbie, and are not constantly worried on his account.

Baby is flourishing and kisses her beloved Grandmama. I hope she can go out as soon as it gets a little warmer. Everything reminds me here so much of when she was born, and it is so strange to see her such a big, fat little creature, laughing and cooing away. Whilst we have our breakfast I give her hers. She weighs now a little more than Irina, but is of course not as long. Xenia and Sandro are coming for two nights as he is 'du jour' on Sunday; that day there will be a dinner for Ferdinand.

Grandmama wrote to me how delighted she has been to see you after so many years.

The goodies you sent are excellent and I thank you for them ever so much!

Kissing you very tenderly, I remain, Darling Mother dear, your deeply devoted child.

Alix

God bless you!

This play
works so
well for
that I feel
wonderful
not to
have concurred
it myself.
The piece
whether
long or
short, is
to the P.K.
or, unbrokenly,
to be, as
always
the matter
that then
faith was
aching.

Ella to Nicky - 20 April - Moscow

Dearest Nicky,

At last the weather has changed and we have heat like in summer, so that I hope it will be green for the coronation. Please tell Alix: the furs I send tonight and have telegraphed to Ducky saying a Feldjäger will take it to Darmstadt.

I had a letter today from my old lady the Princess Golitsyn, in which she says that 'on avait sondé le terrain si le Prince serait à Moscou' [one had sounded out whether the Prince would be in Moscow] and that they said no, now somebody mentioned that the intention had been he should be attached to the Hessian court, of course such an honour would be an immense joy, so that I now ask you: did you have an idea of his coming for that reason? Was it for Ducky, if so, could you kindly telegraph you wish him to come or that all have already been chosen as I will let her know them directly. You see he would have to get his uniform in order as they always live in the country. What was so kind of you was placing Olsoufieff for Ernie. His father was with the late Empress and he has a veneration for all the Hessian family.

I fear you must be overlaid with work. Here the town is topsy-turvy with the preparations - dust, noise and Sergei² works hard daily with all the affairs.

I do hope you have quite good news about Georgy, now the winds, which come in spring, are so fearfully trying for those, whose lungs are delicate.

Tender kisses from Sergei to you three - from your loving Sister,

Ella

Nicky to Empress Marie - 27 April - Tsarskoe Selo

It seems to me that we should look upon all the difficult ceremonies in Moscow [the coronation] as a great trial sent to us by God, as at every step we will have to repeat what we did during those wonderful happy days thirteen years ago. The only thought that consoles me is that we will never have to perform the same life again in our lives, and henceforth our existence will be smooth and even, I truly believe this, God will help us!

In general I am terribly fatigued, there are so many petty meaningless affairs before Moscow, it is as if my gentlemen ministers have decided to wear me out, they are so persistent and tiresome. I'm amazed my head hasn't burst with all the rubbish being pushed into it. Alix and the baby are doing extremely well, thank God, and look wonderful: our little daughter gets rounder and chubbier.

Note - the underlining is there only to show what to type.

Nicky, Diary - 29 April - Tsarskoe Selo

Today the unbearable English nanny left; what a relief to be rid of her at last!

7 May - Moscow Woke up to the same depressing weather as yesterday. In the morning walked for a few minutes in the garden. Received the Emir of Bokhara and the Khan of Khiva and their suites. Ernie, Ducky, Victoria, Ludwig, Ella and Uncle Sergei lunched with us. We showed them our little daughter. Received Henry's huge suite; and the princes of Baden, Württemberg and Japan. In between all this I read

Learned of the death of Arch-duke Karl Ludwig, who should have come here

² Grand Duke Sergei was Governor-General of Moscow.

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1866

expression of piety and supplication, his whole countenance emanated majesty. The young Tsarina is the embodiment of kindness and goodness. The Dowager Empress looked as young as she did 13 years ago, on the day of her own Coronation.

When the Emperor and his consort mounted their thrones, the dignitaries carrying their regalia and their assistants blocked my view, so that I could hardly see anything; I could only glimpse the Emperor with difficulty, but I could hear perfectly as he recited the Credo. His assistants were Vladimir and Misha. Then he put him up on the purple mantle; at this point his large Andreevsky chain with the diamonds broke.

I could just see as he raised the crown onto his own head, and took the orb and sceptre; but I could not see anything of the Empress kneeling before him; I was only able to catch sight of him raising her to her feet and kissing her. I could hardly hear the speech of the Metropolitan Palady. In the same way I hardly heard the prayer read by the Emperor as he kneeled. It was only when everybody else fell to their knees and the Emperor alone remained standing, that I was able to gaze on him.

The Emperor embraced me; I nearly burst into tears and said: 'Christ be with you.'

Nicky, Diary - 14 May - Moscow

A great, solemn day for Alix, Mama and myself, but one full of moral gravity. We were on our feet from 8 o'clock in the morning, though our procession did not move off until 9.30. Luckily the weather was heavenly.

The Grand Staircase presented a glittering sight. Everything took place in the Uspensky cathedral, and although it seems like a dream, I will remember it all my life. At 9 o'clock we went up onto the top balcony, where Alex switched on the electric illuminations on the Ivan the Great bell tower, after which all the tower and walls of the Kremlin were lit up successively.

We went to bed early.

KR, Diary - 15 May - Moscow

~~The illuminations were magical – a sea of fire. We went to the palace: the Emperor was receiving congratulations from senior dignitaries and the nobility. A constant stream of costly dishes were offered along with the bread and salt; they arranged several big tables in the Andreievsky hall, what a useless expense! How much good could that amount of money have been put to!~~

17 May Yesterday there was a gala performance at the Bolshoi theatre. The Empress was in a silver brocade dress.

Nicky, Diary - 17 May - Moscow

The weather was wonderful all day. For the first time the morning was free. We went to visit Xenia and Sandro and then Ernie and Ducky. We had lunch with Mama and then at 2 o'clock gathered upstairs for the ladies' congratulations. This was with the Grand Duchesses, then the ladies-in-waiting and after the ladies of

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1896

Nicky, Diary - 27 May - Ilinskoe

Awoke with the wonderful realization that everything is over and that it is now possible to live for oneself, quietly and peacefully! It was sultry all day. After coffee I went for a walk and inspected all the surroundings of the house.

type

28 May We all had luncheon together, there were almost 30 people. Lay down and fell asleep for an hour and a half. At 5 o'clock the whole family drove in three carriages. We picked lilac and lily-of-the-valley.

KK, Diary - 29 May - St Petersburg

I have been tormented by doubts: should I tell Sergei about what I consider to have been his mistakes? I certainly don't want to talk to him. Sergei does not like anyone to disagree with him, he gets annoyed and loses his capacity to think coolly and logically. And there would be no use in writing to him. A quarrel could arise as a result of a letter.

Type

Oh, if only the Emperor was more decisive! But he is surrounded by advisors. Vladimir is constantly giving him advice and even prompts him to revoke existing decisions, as for instance in the matter of Pahlen's appointment. The mandate was already prepared. Sergei, supported by Vladimir and Pavel - although none of them had read the script of the mandate - decided to ask to be relieved of his post - and so the Emperor never signed the mandate.

Type

Nicky to Empress Marie - 31 May - Ilinskoe

For me, of course, the greatest joy is freedom, the absence of work (for the first time since our wedding). While out walking, I keep being surprised that I don't have to rush back for a reception or a report! I am delighted that Alix has taken up riding again, for the moment we go out alone together. I find it more pleasant than a whole cavalcade.

D.T. leaves on train note

Nicky, Diary - 1 June - Ilinskoe

We dined at 7.30 and then went to the (Russian?) theatre at Archangel'skoe for 9 o'clock. The singers were Italian - they performed the opera *Il Ruy Blas*. Arnoldson. After the performance we walked back to their house and watched a very fine fireworks display from the main terrace. Everything was remarkably beautiful and well organized; the evening reminded me of previous occasions, when the owners held feasts and festivities!

type

Maria Pavlovna [the younger]. Memoirs

The coronation guests departed. We settled again at Ilinskoe into the routine of country life. Dmitri and I always spent our summers there with Uncle Sergei and Aunt Alla.

Type

KK, Diary - 8 June - St Petersburg

In three days the Emperor has changed his mind as many times. At first he agreed to the formation of a commission in such

a way as to exonerate both the Moscow governor general and the Court ministry. Then Vorontsov suggested the appointment of Pahlen. The Emperor readily agreed.

In the end, He went back on his decision, when Vladimir and his brothers declared that, if Count Pahlen was appointed, they would all resign from their posts. How outrageous can you get: to permit yourself, in an autocratic state, to give an ultimatum to the Emperor, to threaten and frighten!! Oh! If only the Emperor was sterner and stronger!

2 July It was painful for me to note that muted antagonism has broken out between Empress Marie and her daughter-in-law. I am even more convinced that ever that the Emperor lacks resolve; he is too easily swayed in his opinion by whoever talked to him last. The Empress is deeply perturbed, as are we all, that he signed Pahlen's mandate, and then revoked it. It is all so unfortunate and embarrassing!

12 July Sergei Mikhailovich and I talked about the Emperor. Sergei said that he had got to know him very well, while he was still heir, and that he loved him very much. Sergei puts down his lack of resolve and firmness to his upbringing; he also confirmed my opinion: that no one, if you like, can have a constant influence on the Emperor; unfortunately he is likely to be influenced by the last view expressed.

This tendency, to agree with the last opinion voiced, will probably get worse over the years. How painful, how sad, and how dangerous!

Xenia, Diary - 29 July - Mikhailovskoe

We had tea with Nicky and Alix. They only returned at about 6 o'clock. Nicky went duck shooting and killed 72 birds! We chatted a lot. Nicky clearly understands now about the uncles, and says that he won't try to keep them on, if they take it into their heads to resign!

Nicky to Georgy [brother] - 29 July - Peterhof

I don't want to talk about Moscow - it makes me sick to remember. It's not particularly comforting to think about the sad side of the coronation. This year seems to be a year of hard labour, with Alix and me as the martyrs: Moscow in the spring, and now soon all these intolerable foreign visits. First of all we are going to Austria, then Kiev, Germany, Denmark, England, France and finally Darmstadt; there at least we can hope for a complete rest. An attractive prospect, don't you think?

On top of it, we shall have to drag our poor little daughter with us, as all the relatives want to see her. I can imagine what the French will get up to in Paris - maybe they really will rename it Napoleonconda, or something like it!

Georgy to Nicky - 6 August - Abas Tuman

I was very sad to hear about Sandro leaving the fleet. It is disgusting behaviour on the part of Uncle Alexei, as he put you in an unbearable position with his stupid conditions.

D.T.
Crest
on
ground
from
down.

? P.T.?

D.T.
final
beach
almost
there
on the beach

Small
or
Jelly
have
hurry?

Alexander's promise

Sandro's quarrel with Grand Duke Alexander, who was the head of the Russian Navy.

Xenon in sequence

Typical box

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In general our dear uncles have behaved in a thoroughly improper manner recently. I am amazed at their effrontery, and even more by your patience.

Sandro Memoirs

Nicky spent the first ten years of his reign sitting behind a massive desk in the palace and listening with near awe to the well-rehearsed bellowing of his towering uncles. He dreaded to be left alone with them.

Nicky to Empress Marie - 13 September - Balmoral Castle

I cannot tell you how touched I was by your unexpected visit to the yacht, before the arrival of the family, as well as by the kind words you found time to write in my album! Alix and I watched a long time as you were carried away by the cutter *Tsarevna*, but as you were sitting among the crew, we could not see for the crowd. We stood together on the bridge, so as to see the familiar shore for the last time as we sailed by. I am so happy that Alix enjoyed Denmark so much. She was quite sad to leave!

Xenia to Nicky - 22 September - Ai-Todor

I can imagine what awaits you in Paris! In general this trip won't be gay, and I don't envy you - on the contrary I pity you with all my heart. At least in Denmark, even though you weren't there for long, you were able to be quiet and rest a little. The whole family were delighted to see you and Alix, who made a wonderful impression on everyone.

It's such a pity that you are not able to come here! But maybe it might be possible next year - in the spring or autumn. Evenings and nights are so warm that we dined on the balcony. Baby is growing up wonderfully. Now, if you stand her on her feet, she can remain there for a few seconds without any help; she is a really trying to take a few steps, which amuses her greatly, and is constantly asking to be put on the floor!!

1 October Your visit to Paris was quite a grandiose affair! Thank God. It all went off so brilliantly and without a hitch. I am sure that all the things you saw will never be erased from your memory. But now I think you must be glad of a rest at last, and to have some time for yourselves.

Nicky to Queen Victoria - 10 October - Neues Palais, Darmstadt

Dearest Grandmama,

I am so sorry to have kept you waiting so long for my answer and not to have thanked you at once, for your two letters. Of course by this time you will have read all the details of our wonderful stay in France. The three days at Paris were very interesting but rather trying and I had hardly time enough to occupy myself with serious matters and even no real conversations with the principal men.

When I arrived here, there were four messengers waiting for me and it took me over a week to finish all that business. I am sorry not to be able to give you my

Nicky to Queen Victoria 16 Oct.

...the question which Lord Salisbury and I had spoken about but the thing is that I never had the occasion in Paris of discussing it

Dear my
Stamh.

As to Egypt, I must own, dearest Grandmama, the question is of a very serious character, as it does not only concern France alone, but the whole of Europe. It is of the highest interest for Russia to have her shortest communication sea route with East Siberia free and open. The British occupation of Egypt is a constant threat to our maritime route to the Far East, because it is clear that who so ever is the master of the valley of the Nile, the same holds possession of the Suez canal. This is the reason why Russia and France do not approve of England remaining in that part of the world and why the two countries want the real integrity of the Canal. Politics alas! are not the same as private or domestic affairs and they are not guided by personal or relationship feelings. History is one's real positive teacher in these matters and for me personally, except that, I have always got the sacred example of my beloved Father and also the result and proof of all His deeds!

Tsk
boy

Mr de Staal would explain you all these difficulties about Egypt very clearly if you once gave him the opportunity of speaking to you openly. But now enough of politics!

You may well imagine Alix's joy of being once more quietly at home. I am happy too to be here and rest for a short while, after having travelled for nearly six weeks without stopping. In the beginning the weather was lovely and we took long drives to the different pretty places about Darmstadt-Jugenheim, Wolfsgarten, etc. all so new to me. We go very often to the theatre, which is, I think, excellent and such a good way of occupying one's evenings. But unfortunately our stay here comes to an end in a week; I shall be just as sorry as Alix to leave this peaceful place.

Now goodbye, dearest Grandmama, with my best love to all, believe me your most loving and devoted grandson

Nicky

Ella to Queen Victoria - 3 November - Moscow

Dearest Grandmama,

Such loving thanks for your dear letter and charming presents. It was such a joy having news about you through Alix and Nicky. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves together at Darmstadt and travelled most pleasantly together home. It must have been a great astonishment as people were saying we did not like each other etc. Well the abominable lies told about us to them are not edifying, the intrigues were simply disgusting but one day I trust all the truth will come out and the great thing is to have a clear conscience before God as who can change the unkindness of the world, in this case a set of jealous intriguers.

Our delightful journey freshened us both up, although poor Sergei looks very thin. People I suppose could not believe that we were harmless and happy, so began to prove the contrary.

Really we want nothing, we are very happy, we try to do our duty and I must say it sounds vain people here like us and again proved their affection by receiving us most warmly when we arrived the other day here. Well in everything bad there is good and we have now our eyes open and some really true friends and after all few enemies.

* British Prime Minister.