

'KENTUCKY PRINCESS' HERE AS STOWAWAY TO PROVE AMERICAN BIRTH AND REGAIN SON AND FORTUNE

Wife of Prince Tchernitchew Says He Was Crucified by Bolsheviki, and She Tramped Over Europe With Diplomatic Secrets to Ask Protection of Uncle Sam

STIRS FEDERAL OFFICIALS BY TALE OF ROMANTIC LIFE FILLED BY ROYAL INTRIGUES

Asks Repatriation in Order to Have Backing of Old Glory in Battle With Soviets to Restore Her Estates and Child Not Seen in Four Years

IT IS given to some persons to lead lives of tranquillity. An unseen destiny directs their paths beside still waters. Serenity and calm are theirs. Turmoil and strife are alien terms. Theirs a life of repose—of quiet content.

But life has many phases. As the mountain torrent roars and foams on its plunge to the sea, broken and buffeted on the rocks, but not for a moment halted, so other lives are lived. They are lived in a world of action. Romance, great joys, great sorrows, plottings, intrigue, murder, shipwreck, revolutions, prisons! Of such stuff is life also made.

Which life, think you, would a Princess be likely to lead? As a child—if you were a normal child—you read of the golden-haired Princess who had but to wave her fairy wand to have her slightest wish gratified. Her curls were long, her eyes were blue, and her lips forever smiled. And finally came the Prince—tall, straight, handsome. And they were married and lived happily ever after! Who can't recall their fate! Such was the story book Princess, and such her joy of life.

Read here a different story. It is the life narrative of a real Princess; one who exists in the flesh. Her name is Elizabeth Tchernitchew. Her husband was Prince Ivan Tchernitchew. Both were related by blood to the Romanoffs, the ruling family of the Czarist regime.

Seated on a divan in one of the world's famous hotel lobbies—in Washington—she laughed as she sketched her life. Stained-glass windows cast a soft glow on the scene. Luxury was all about. And remember—the Princess laughed—laughed as she told this tale:

Says She Is American, But Cannot Prove It

"Of course I am an American. But I can't prove it. That is why I am here. Everybody is awfully kind. It is most amazing how kind people are. Secretary of Labor Davis—I saw him yesterday—is helping me all he can. I hope to see Secretary Hoover. I'm told he knows all about Russia. And I want to get some advice. Some day I shall want to go back. But first I must prove I'm American! I could never go back as a Russian."

"You see, my father, Frederick Schlich, was a naturalized American—a German by birth. My mother was a Russian, of high Russian nobility. Before I can return to Russia—before I can do anything—I must acquire my American citizenship, to which I am entitled, now that my husband is dead, because I was born here. I must establish it so I can fight for my rights. And that I will do. I have been fighting all my life. It would seem I had been equipped by life training and experience for this fight I am making now—and for others to come. Fighting is my forte!"

And this slender—almost slight—woman, with blond hair, snapping blue eyes, Teutonic accent and square chin and jaw, laughed. She interposed: "It is unlike a Russian to fight. It is contrary to Russian nature. The Russian says with a shrug when misfortune overtakes him: 'It is fate. It is Kismet. So must it be.' But not I. I am an American. I fight for my rights."

Kentucky Birth Record Is Crux of Her Fight

"I was born in Louisville. But we were only there a few days. My parents were on a trip. They did not expect me so soon. They were returning to New York, their home, when I was born. As soon as they could they went on. That was forty years ago. I doubt if there is a record anywhere of my birth. It is only through relatives and friends I can hope to establish the facts. That is what I am trying to do."

She again took up her story: "When I was two years old my father went west to buy an estate, taking a large amount of money with him. We never heard of him again. What happened? We never knew. He never came back. Not a word did we ever receive. From that time on my mother looked on her grief and sense of loss in my father's disappearance in hatred of the United States—and on me."

"I never had any playmates. I have never known what it is to be a child, or to have other children to play with me. My only contacts in my childhood were with my mother and with my governess. I am really having my youth now—and I'm almost an old woman."

And she laughed a little at that. "I fought for my rights with my mother. I never asked what I wanted to do; what my choice was in any matter. What she wanted she commanded me to do. There was no appeal. That was all there was to it. She was a woman. I was nothing."

"I was fifteen years old before I was permitted to eat a meal with her or her presence. And that—she insisted—was in Belgium. King Leopold insisted on my presence at that meal. I should not have been asked to be so entertained. So I sat

Kentucky Princess Loves Diplomacy and Intrigue

"DIPLOMACY—intrigue—they are wonderful," says Princess Tchernitchew.

"I want my son to be—a business man!—a professional man!—No! A diplomat! It's dangerous, but it's wonderful."

And this from an American-born girl who sat at table with her mother for the first time at the age of fifteen, and then only by command of the King of Belgium.

A woman who trudged across Europe with secret Russian papers to avoid Bolshevik spies. A wife whose husband was crucified and shot by the same Bolsheviks who now hold her estates and possibly her son.

at the royal table, the first time in my mother's presence.

"And from that time on I fought for my personal rights—with my mother, later with my husband. Now I must fight for my son, for my estates. And to get those I must fight for my citizenship."

Too Frail to Fight? Not This Princess

Here the narrative halted. A chapter from later life was lifted from its chronological order and set down as an interlude.

"I've been called a 'frail little woman.' Frail! I'm more tough than any man living!"

This called for an explanation. It came promptly with a laugh: "I came as a stowaway from Antwerp. I had to be tough to stand it! I had to leave. Bolshevik agents were watching me. They had orders to prevent me from reaching the United States at all hazards. My husband, before he died, had entrusted certain diplomatic papers to me. I did not have them with me. I never carried them except when I took them—well to a certain part of Russia. But they sought me to get the papers and to prevent me from coming to this country. They knew of my American birth. So I had to leave as a stowaway."

"Five days and five nights without food or water. In the bunkers. I had to be tough," she laughed.

"Five days out I crawled out of hiding. And they sent me back to Europe. I had stowed away on the Gasconia. In mid-ocean, in the midst of a raging storm, they transferred me to the Texarkana, supposed to be bound for Antwerp. But instead it put in at Bremen. I refused to go ashore."

"I can't put me ashore in an enemy country. I told them, 'You can put me ashore in Antwerp, but not in Bremen.' And I stuck to it and refused to leave the ship."

Then the superintendent of the company came aboard. I told him who I really was. He did not tell the others. And he authorized the captain to take me along to the United States, and to give me anything I wanted. The purser was ordered to buy me clothes, and to supply me with any special food I might desire. I had stowed away in men's attire, and when they found me I was sick. But after the superintendent came aboard at Bremen things were different. And that is how I came over."

"Don't you know"—and she smiled—"The Lord always looks after you. Always when you're in a tight place. It may look very dark, but always there is a little light. And soon there's more light!"

Stowed Away on Ship Dressed as a Sailor

"But how did you get aboard as a stowaway?"

"It's easy! Any one can do it. I dressed in sailor's clothes. One day I walked down to the docks. The watchman was there, of course. I put my pipe—oh, yes, I have a pipe! It comes in very handy—I put my pipe in my mouth. When the watchman came near me I staggered a little and purposely stumbled against him. 'Go to hell!' I told him, in German. One has to do it sometimes! There are tricks in every trade. He thought I was a drunken sailor."

"After that it was easier still. I simply walked on board ship. There



Writing her appeal to Department of Labor

wasn't a soul around. I walked around the whole ship—through the officers' quarters, the cabin, the saloon—over the whole thing. And I never saw a soul. It's easy to be a stowaway!"

She smiled and went back to her story. "I was twenty when I met my future husband. We were married in the Russian Embassy and the Russian Church in Berlin on May 3, 1902. The Russian law requires the two ceremonies to make it legal. It was a very strange marriage. I never was asked or consulted about it until two weeks before-hand. Then I was merely told I was to marry him. He was a Russian Prince. I offered no objection. If I had they would have married me any way."

I learned on my wedding night that my husband had intended to marry my mother. She had refused him several times. He was twenty years older than I was. I was his second choice. I was a substitute. I left him the next day, refusing to live with him. "That really frightened my mother. All her life she had been living under a curse. The Russians are a superstitious people. She was a Russian. Before she was born her parents had mistreated a peasant. The peasant had cursed her mother. She died when my mother was born, and four years afterward her father died—killed, probably by the peasants. Then my mother married, and her husband disappeared. Then I refused to live with my husband. That was the climax. She said it was the curse. She was scared out of her wits. After that she let me have anything I wanted."

Says Her Violent Temper Came From Her Mother

"Do I believe in curses? No, sir! I don't believe I have a bit of Russian blood in me! My only inheritance from my mother was a fierce temper, and that I have learned to curb. Russians generally cannot curb it."

In this description of the effect of Russian superstition and discipline on the Princess did not smile. Her face was almost stern. Then she went back to her story.

"When I left my husband we came back to New York, and did not return to Europe for seven years. In 1909 my mother decided to go back to Russia, believing she was going to die. She wanted to die at home. She and I met my husband in London in that year, and we were reunited. Mother wanted me to live with him. I think that was really why she wanted to go abroad. So we all went to Russia to live."

"Our home was in Grasseo Castle, near the Nijni-Novgorod. That was our estate. There my mother died in 1910. And there my husband was killed—crucified by the Bolsheviki—in 1918, after the revolution. Yes, he was crucified. And then they shot him."

There was a moment's silence. Then the narrative resumed: "It was treachery that did it. It could not have been anything else."

"When the revolution occurred, we stayed on at our place. We knew none of our own peasants would attack us. It is not in the Russian nature to fight, and the peasants felt friendly toward us. Then we were so out of the way that it wasn't worth while for the Red soldiers to come and attack us. So we stayed on there two years."

"Then one night they came. One night about 10 o'clock. We hadn't the slightest idea they were in the vicinity. They came in and took possession. It must have been some one of our own people who told them we were there. My husband and I were together. They killed him that very night. Crucified him—crucified him against his own front door. And then they shot him and killed him."

Beating by Husband Saved Life of Wife

"They didn't know I was the Princess. When the soldiers came, my husband began pulling my hair and beating me, so they would think I was



On her way to see Secretary Davis



Gruff "go to hell" and pipe rooted suspicious sailor



Princess Tchernitchew in usual garb and as a stowaway, pipe and all



Husband beat her to make Bolsheviki think she was a servant and her life was spared

a servant being punished by my master. They saw him doing this, and did not molest me. Then, while they were crucifying my husband, as my maid and my husband's manservant watched, I slipped out to a waiting ledge. The maid and manservant joined me, and in that way we made our escape.

"It was bitterly cold and we were poorly dressed. They took me all the way across Russia, to the castle of Count and Countess Dusterlohe, who were distant relatives to my mother. Their castle was in Riga. Most of the aristocracy had fled to Siberia, but we took our chances there. We were all taken for servants as we made our way along. We left our own castle the 15th of November, and it was the 20th of February before we reached Riga. The Count and Countess gave us sanctuary until January, 1921, when again we were forced to flee."

"On that flight to Riga we traveled by day and night, whenever we thought we could. We ate what we could. Once in a while we got a chance, you know. The Russian peasant isn't so bad as he's painted. And you know you can live on very little when you're out. A piece of bread sometimes helps you to go two or three days. Raw potatoes taste sometimes mighty good! Meat was a delicacy—my gracious! Meat we had hardly any. Milk not any at all."

And again the Princess smiled. "And what about your son?"

"When the revolution broke out we sent him to the estate of Prince Deldoruki near Petrograd for safe keeping. I am confident that they have protected him. But now I must find him. He was twelve years old last month. Not for four years have I seen or heard of him. Never a word have I had. I do not know where he is."

Is the Carina Dead? Who Can Answer Mystery?

There was another momentary halt in the narrative. Then: "They say the Carina is dead," the Princess observed.

"Isn't she?—who the natural question."

"I do not know—who does?" was the enigmatic reply.

She resumed the thread of her tale: "I left Russia—Riga—in January, 1921. The most interesting fact is that I did not know I was leaving. I had typhoid fever and was unconscious when they carted me out. When I woke up

we were in Germany—the Countess Dusterlohe and her boy, and manservant and myself. Her husband and two children had been killed.

"I left them there in Germany. Before sailing as a stowaway from Antwerp I walked almost all the way across Europe."

"Why could you not take passage—ride—travel by train?" she was asked. Her reply, with a ready laugh: "In that lay my only safety. I had to walk. They were watching for me everywhere. I dared not ride."

"Are you happy now you are here? Are your troubles temporarily over?"

The Princess smiled as she said: "Over? To a certain extent, surely."

"Life is better here than anywhere in the world," came the quick answer. "It always has been, and I have always found it so, even though my mother tried to teach me to hate the United States. I think I have a greater love for it because of that. It is the law of action and reaction. She tried to force me to hate it. I learned to love it the more."

And the Princess' blue eyes blazed. Stowaway, farm hand—while walking across Europe—seamstress, servant, princess of royal line.

"Tragedy, mystery, murder, storms, hunger, vast wealth, revolution separation from family her lot."

For two months she was held at New Orleans, where the ship that brought her docked. She claimed American citizenship. There is another dark chapter in those two months, of which she prefers not to talk. But finally she was released unconditionally and permitted to enter her native land, and there is a certain immigration official who paled and trembled at some things she told him before she left his custody.

Finds Alabama Cousin to Help Her in Fight

Since arrival in the United States the Princess has discovered a first cousin, Carl Schlich, of Foley, Ala., who will assist her in establishing proof of her American birth. Mr. and Mrs. T. H. Shepard, of New Orleans, whose guest she was in the South, also will aid her. Mr. Shepard and Mr. Schlich are related by marriage.

American women who marry aliens

lose the American citizenship and assume the citizenship of their husbands. Upon the death or divorce from their husbands they are automatically restored to their status as Americans. This is the Princess' case. But first she must prove she was born in the United States, of a father who was a naturalized American.

Eventually she hopes to re-establish her home in New York. But that will be long hence, perhaps, after she has found her son, and, as an American citizen, made a fight for her property in Russia.

"What will you make of your son?" the Princess was asked.

She smiled as she replied: "A fine American citizen!"

"Another smile—but no immediate answer."

"A business man—professional man."

"No."

"Then after a breath of a pause—"

"I want him to be a diplomat!"

"The Princess' blue eyes sparkled."

"Diplomacy—intrigue—they are wonderful!" she exclaimed. "How I love them. If I were a man I should want to be a diplomat. Dangerous, sometimes—but interesting!"

Intrigue of Diplomacy Has Fascination for Her

"My husband always told me I was a born diplomat. He never made an important move or took an important step that he did not consult me. And he generally took my advice. He was in close touch with the government, of course, though not in any official capacity. He knew what was going on."

"What do you think of Russia now? I would rather not say. The Russian people are a strange people. They are mystic, superstitious, fatalistic, unenlightened. They are always slow to act. But once let them get an idea in their heads and it is there to stay. You never get it out."

"There has been much that is not true told of the Czarist regime and of Russian rule then. The peasants were one—and breakfast the next morning. Russian hospitality was a byword. Any one—peasant or otherwise—could travel across Russia on the hospitality of her people. Travelers always were sure of a meal in the evening, a bed to sleep in if there was one—and if there were not, they made one—and breakfast the next morning. Then he could travel until nightfall and find another place to stop. No one was turned away."

"I remember once a flock of more than one hundred peasants stopped at our estate. My husband housed and fed them."

"They stayed with us three weeks instead of a single night. When I told my husband I thought they should be put to move on, he said: 'That! You told to move on, he said: 'That! You would violate the law of Russian hospitality. Let them stay as long as they wish!'"

Princess Tchernitchew arrived in the United States penniless, almost friendless, with but a single Russian passport to establish her American citizenship and obtain a passport permitting her to go back to Europe and press her case and her claims in Russia as an American.

"Did you not notice," she asks, "a dispatch saying between twenty and thirty Russian princes and princesses had committed suicide in Paris during the last few months? They're starving to death. They're starving throughout Europe. How many were there, all told? One—two or three hundred, perhaps. And many of those were killed."

"The aristocracy," she adds, "represented the best intellect of Russia. Why do you not feed them when you have so much food for the peasants?"