

**GÉLTA: OR, THE CZAR
AND THE SONGSTRESS.
A NOVEL**

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Gélta: Or, the Czar and the Songstress. A Novel by Nadage Dorée

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NADAGE DORÉE

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NADAGE DOREE

(Born in New Orleans, U. S. A.)

GÈLTA;

OR.

THE CZAR AND THE SONGSTRESS.

A NOVEL.

BY

NADAGE DORÉE.

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JOY W 33
CLUB
WEAVER

to

MY DARLING MOTHER (Selig):

whose unselfish, pure and high ideal of life, has
been the beacon light which has safely guided me
past the innumerable temptations, which beset a
young girl in her lonely battle with the world.

In reverent memory, this humble effort

Is Dedicated,

by the Author.

GELTA,

OR,

The Czar and the Cantatrice.

CHAPTER I.

It was a cold, rainy day towards the end of January, and Gelta Dechon was loitering through the spacious rooms of the British Museum with that listlessness, with which one is apt to saunter about a museum on a dull, rainy day. She sometimes lolled over the glass cases of coins, sometimes admiring an Etruscan vase, sometimes studying the sarcophagus of an Egyptian mummy, and sometimes trying to comprehend the allegorical paintings on the lofty ceilings.

Whilst she was gazing about in this idle way her attention was attracted to a distant door at the end of the room, which, though she had many times visited the room before, she had never observed. The door was closed, but every now and then would open and some solitary being would steal forth, when instantly it would close again. There was an air of mystery about this that piqued her languid curiosity, and she determined to attempt

the passage of that strait, and to explore the unknown regions beyond. She tried to open the door but found it locked; she knocked, but no response. Then a monotonous voice reached her, saying, "The bell to the right, Madam!"

She turned towards the Egyptian mummies, whence the sound seemed to come, thinking, "Can this be a remnant of Cleopatra's voice?" Then for the first time that afternoon she perceived the attendant who was drowsily sitting between two confined mummies; and who was now with half-awakened gestures trying to indicate the bell to the right.

Gelta saw it and thanked him. Upon pulling the bell the door yielded to her hand with that facility with which the portals of enchanted castles yield to the adventurous knight errant.

She found herself in a narrow, short passage, and was confronted by an attendant who, indicating a register to the left which was on a high desk, said, "Please sign your full name and address."

After conforming with the rule, she entered the only apartment leading from the passage. She found herself in a small, square room whose walls were surrounded with glass cases. About the room were placed long stands, which also upheld glass cases containing precious gems and some of the finest cut cameos. A hushed stillness reigned through this apartment, excepting, as the guard at the entrance, after having thoroughly