

**THE STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD,
ANNA MONICA PIA, DUCHESS OF
SAXONY: MY
EXPERIENCES AS GOVERNESS IN THE
HOUSE OF THE COUNTESS
MONTIGNOSO DURING 1906, PP. 10-278**

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Governess in the House of the Countess Montignoso during 1906, pp. 10-278 by Ida Kremer

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*The Countess Montignoso
and her daughter,
Princess Monica of Saxeony*

The Struggle for a Royal Child

Anna Monica Pia, Duchess of Saxony

My Experiences as Governess in the House of
the COUNTESS MONTIGNOSO during 1906

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to be made within the time of probation. If I succeed within those thirty days in proving myself worth my salt by my achievements in Florence—in other words, by bringing the little Princess to the Court in Dresden—who is to say that the head-governess there will rate my further services at the same high figure as the Chamberlain's Office does, *for the special job*? And if I don't succeed, will Othello's occupation be gone or not? Anyhow, it's an experiment.

Two years have gone by since the notorious Muth-affair, out of which the comic papers made such endless copy. The result of Fräulein Muth's inefficiency was, as all the world knows, that Anna Monica Pia, Duchess of Saxony, was left with her mother. The Countess Louise of Montignoso, Princess of Tuscany (and as such, Her Imperial Highness), actually succeeded in being allowed to keep her "Monili" two years longer than had been arranged.

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But now a fresh crisis is approaching—one of the conditions on which the Countess was to be allowed to see her two elder sons in Munich being, that on December 1, 1906, the Princess Pia Monica should be finally handed over to the Royal Court in Dresden for her future education.

But the Countess Montignoso knew how to make *her* conditions, too, and so she demanded that the future governess (who was to be selected by the King) should, immediately before the handing over of the Princess, undertake her education in Florence for one month in order that the Countess might have some personal knowledge of her child's teacher; and also in order that the Princess might grow accustomed to this new instructress, so that the transfer from the mother's hands to strange ones (for, after all, the Royal father is a total stranger to the poor little Princess) might not be quite so distressing to her. The demand seems perfectly reasonable,

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perfectly sensible, yet maternal cunning has a great deal to say in it! At any rate, the Court agreed, and thereby put into the Countess's hands a fresh weapon wherewith to lengthen out the struggle for the Royal child. And now Destiny has summoned me to assist in this new phase of the conflict. In the circumstances, it would be somewhat questionably to my advantage that it should be the last! I shall have, indeed, to fight through this phase almost as a duellist. However, one resolution I shall make, if I decide to go: my weapons shall be love, my shield the conscientious fulfilment of my duty; and those are the best arms against malice, cunning, and intrigue, for all of which I must be prepared.

Despite these fine resolutions, the task—regarded from a purely "human" point of view—appears to me a desperately difficult one. I am a woman, too, and a mother into the bargain, and I feel and think like

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a woman and a mother. I can understand how terribly grievous it must be to a mother, not only to endure the separation from all her children, but now to have to let her nestling go. The worst of sinners remains no less the mother of her children. That is why I shall need some such firm moral support as a deep sense of duty, if I am to prevail against the mere human temptations which assuredly await me. It's not a pretty task—to go forth to take a mother's baby from her! But I must school myself to realize that *so it must be*—must be, perchance, for the child's own sake—and that I shall be nothing more than the tool of that necessity. If it were not I, it would be someone else—possibly a second Muth woman, who knows not forbearance. . . . Better it should be I than another like that. Perhaps I shall succeed—if I do succeed in the business—in persuading the mother herself that it is best for her dear little one to enter the sphere to which she is born

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before she grows any older; perhaps I shall succeed in consoling that mother for her loss by teaching her the joy of abnegation for her daughter's good. When it is not necessary to wound or to hurt, it should never be done. But my best asset is to be my love for the child, whom from henceforth I think I have a right to shelter with all the sympathy I feel. The child is the treasure for whom all I do shall be done.

Most assuredly it is not the fifty marks a month which attracts me, nor the hope of a position at Court—much coveted, despite its many drawbacks. Rather it is the hope of being able to accomplish a labour of love, to rescue a little, tender soul from a set of conditions which will but become more intolerable with time, and to surround it then with all the innocent joys of a happy childhood. But I mustn't make myself out better than I am. My sentiments are all right, but they don't overflow; some-