

you saw my wife more recently than I did myself. Josephine is beautiful, is she not? No young girl can boast of more freshness, more grace, innocence, and loveliness. Whenever I am with her, I feel as contented, as happy and tranquil as a man who, on a very warm day, is reposing in the shade of a splendid myrtle-tree, and whenever I am far from her—"

Bonaparte paused, and a slight blush stole over his face. The young lover of twenty-eight had triumphed for a moment over the stern, calculating general, and the general was ashamed of it.

"This is no time to think of such things," he said, almost indignantly. "Seal the letters now, and dispatch a messenger to Paris. Ah, Paris! Would to God I were again there in my little house in the *Rue Chantereine*, alone and happy with Josephine! But in order to get there, I must first make peace here—peace with Austria, with the Emperor of Germany. Ah, I am afraid Germany will not be much elated by this treaty of peace which her emperor is going to conclude, and by which she may lose some of her most splendid fortresses on the Rhine."

"And the Republic of Venice, general?"

"The Republic of Venice is about to disappear," exclaimed Bonaparte, frowning. "Venice has rendered herself unworthy of the name of a republic—she is about to disappear."

"General, the delegates of the republic were all day yesterday in your anteroom, vainly waiting for an audience."

"They will have to wait to-day likewise until I return from the conference which is to decide about war or peace. In either case, woe unto the Venetians! Tell them, Bourrienne, to wait until I return. And now, my carriage. I cannot let the Austrian plenipotentiaries wait any longer for my ultimatum."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE TREATY OF CAMPO FORMIO.

THE Austrian plenipotentiaries were at the large Alberga of Udine, waiting for General Bonaparte. Every thing was prepared for his reception; the table was set, and the cooks were only looking for the arrival of the French chieftain in order to serve up the magnificent *déjeuner* with which to-day's conference was to begin.

Count Louis Cobenzl and the Marquis de Gallo were in the dining-room, standing at the window and looking at the scenery.

"It is cold to-day," said Count Cobenzl, after a pause in the conversation. "For my part, I like cold weather, for it reminds me of

the most memorable years of my life—of my sojourn at the court of the Russian Semiramis. But you, marquis, are probably reminded by this frosty weather even more sensibly of your beautiful Naples and the glowing sun of the south. The chilly air must make you homesick."

"That disease is unknown to me, count," said the marquis. "I am at home wherever I can serve my king and my country."

"But to-day, my dear marquis, you have to serve a foreign prince."

"Austria is the native country of my noble Queen Caroline," said the marquis, gravely, "and the empress is my king's daughter. The Austrian court, therefore, may command my whole power and ability."

"I am afraid that we are going to have hard work to-day, marquis," remarked Count Cobenzl, gloomily. "This French general is really a *sans-culotte* of the worst kind. He is entirely devoid of noblesse, *bon ton*, and refinement."

"My dear count, for my part I take this Bonaparte to be a very long-headed man, and I am sure we must be greatly on our guard to be able to wrest a few concessions from him."

"Do you really believe that, marquis?" asked the count, with an incredulous smile. "You did not see, then, how his marble face lighted up when I handed him the other day that autograph letter from his majesty the emperor? You did not see how he blushed with pleasure while reading it? Oh, I noticed it, and, at that moment, I said to myself: 'This republican bear is not insensible to the favors and affability of the great.' Flattery is a dish which he likes to eat; we will, therefore, feed him with it, and he will be ours, and do whatever we may want without even noticing it. The great Empress Catharine used to say: 'Bears are best tamed by sweetmeats, and republicans by titles and decorations.' Just see, marquis, how I am going to honor him! I let him drink his chocolate to-day from my most precious relic—from this cup here, which the great empress gave to me, and which you see contains the czarina's portrait. Ah, it was at the last festival at the *Ermitage* that she handed me the cup with chocolate, and, in order to give it its real value, she touched the rim of the cup with her own sublime lips, sipped of the chocolate, and then permitted me to drink where she had drunk. This cup, therefore, is one of my most cherished reminiscences of St. Petersburg, and little General Bonaparte may be very proud to be permitted to drink from Catharine's cup. Yes, yes, we will give sweetmeats to the bear, but afterward he must dance just as we please. *We* will not yield, but *he* must yield to *us*. Our demands ought to be as exorbitant as possible!"



"By straining a cord too much, you generally break it," said the Italian, thoughtfully. "General Bonaparte, I am afraid, will not consent to any thing derogatory to the honor and dignity of France. Besides, there is another bad feature about him—he is incorruptible, and even the titles and decorations of the Empress Catharine would not have tamed this republican. Let us proceed cautiously and prudently, count. Let us demand much, but yield in time, and be content with something less in order not to lose every thing."

"Austria can only consent to a peace which extends her boundaries, and enlarges her territory," exclaimed Cobenzl, hastily.

"You are right, certainly," replied the Marquis de Gallo, slowly; "but Austria cannot intend to aggrandize herself at the expense of France. What is that so-called Germany good for? Let Austria take from her whatever she wants—a piece of Bavaria, a piece of Prussia—I would not care if she even gave to France a piece of Germany, for instance the frontier of the Rhine. In the name of Heaven, I should think that the so-called German empire is decayed enough to permit us to break off a few of its pieces."

"You are very unmerciful toward the poor German empire," said Count Cobenzl, with a smile, "for you are no German, and owing to that, it seems you are much better qualified to act as Austrian plenipotentiary in this matter. Nevertheless it is odd and funny enough that in these negotiations in which the welfare of Germany is principally at stake, the Emperor of Germany should be represented by an Italian, and the French Republic by a Corsican!"

"You omit yourself, my dear count," said the marquis, politely. "You are the real representative of the German emperor, and I perceive that the emperor could not have intrusted the interests of Germany to better hands. But as you have permitted me to act as your adviser, I would beg you to remember that the welfare of Austria should precede the welfare of Germany. And—but listen! a carriage is approaching."

"It is General Bonaparte," said Count Cobenzl, hastening to the window. "Just see the splendid carriage in which he is coming. Six horses—four footmen on the box, and a whole squadron of lancers escorting him! And you believe this republican to be insensible to flattery? Ah, ha! we will give sweetmeats to the bear! Let us go and receive him."

He took the arm of the marquis, and both hastened to receive the general, whose carriage had just stopped at the door.

The Austrian plenipotentiaries met Bonaparte in the middle of the staircase and escorted him to the dining-room, where the *déjeuner* was waiting for him.

But Bonaparte declined the *déjeuner*, in spite of the repeated and most pressing requests of Count Cobenzl.

"At least take a cup of chocolate to warm yourself," urged the count. "Drink it out of this cup, general, and if it were only in order to increase its value in my eyes. The Empress Catharine gave it to me, and drank from it; and if you now use this cup likewise, I might boast of possessing a cup from which the greatest man and the greatest woman of this century have drunk!"

"I shall not drink, count!" replied Bonaparte, bluntly. "I will have nothing in common with this imperial Messalina, who, by her dissolute life, equally disgraced the dignity of the crown and of womanhood. You see I am a strong-headed republican, who only understands to talk of business. Let us, therefore, attend to that at once."

Without waiting for an invitation, he sat down on the divan close to the breakfast-table, and, with a rapid gesture, motioned the two gentlemen to take seats at his side.

"I informed you of my ultimatum the day before yesterday," said Bonaparte, coldly; "have you taken it into consideration, and are you going to accept it?"

This blunt and hasty question, so directly at the point, disconnected the two diplomatists.

"We will weigh and consider with you what can be done," said Count Cobenzl, timidly. "France asks too much and offers too little. Austria is ready to cede Belgium to France, and give up Lombardy, but in return she demands the whole territory of Venice, Mantua included."

"Mantua must remain with the new Cisalpine Republic!" exclaimed Bonaparte, vehemently. "That is one of the stipulations of my ultimatum, and you seem to have forgotten it, count. And you say nothing about the frontier of the Rhine, and of the fortress of Mentz, both of which I have claimed for France."

"But, general, the Rhine does not belong to Austria, and Mentz is garrisoned by German troops. We cannot give away what does not belong to us."

"Do not I give Venice to you?" exclaimed Bonaparte—"Venice, which, even at the present hour, is a sovereign state, and whose delegates are at my headquarters, waiting for my reply! The Emperor of Germany has certainly the right to give away a German fortress if he choose."

"Well, Austria is not indisposed to cede the frontier of the Rhine to France," remarked the Marquis de Gallo. "Austria is quite willing and ready to form a close alliance with France, in order to resist the ambitious schemes of Prussia."



"If Austria should acquire new territory in consequence of an understanding with France, she must be sure that no such right of aggrandizement should be granted to Prussia," said Count Cobenzl, hastily.

"France and Austria might pledge themselves in a secret treaty not to permit any further aggrandizement of Prussia, but to give back to her simply her former possessions on the Rhine," said De Gallo.

"No digressions, if you please!" exclaimed Bonaparte, impatiently. "Let us speak of my ultimatum. In the name of France, I have offered you peace, provided the territories on the left bank of the Rhine with their stipulated boundaries, including Mentz, be ceded to France, and provided, further, that the Adige form the boundary-line between Austria and the Cisalpine Republic, Mantua to belong to the latter. You cede Belgium to France, but, in return, we give you the continental possessions of Venice; only Corfu and the Ionian Islands are to fall to the share of France, and the Adige is to form the frontier of Venetian Austria."

"I told you already, general," said Count Cobenzl, with his most winning smile, "we cannot accept the last condition. We must have Mantua, likewise; in return, we give you Mentz; and not the Adige, but the Adda, must be our frontier."

"Ah! I see—new difficulties, new subterfuges!" exclaimed Bonaparte, and his eyes darted a flash of anger at the diplomatist.

This angry glance, however, was parried by the polite smile of the count. "I took the liberty of informing you likewise of *our* ultimatum, general," he said, gently, "and I am sorry to be compelled to declare that I shall have to leave this place unless our terms be acceded to. But in that case, I shall hold *you* responsible for the blood of the thousands which may be shed in consequence."

Bonaparte jumped up, with flaming eyes, and lips quivering with rage.

"You dare to threaten me!" he shouted, angrily. "You resort to subterfuge after subterfuge. Then you are determined to have war? Very well, you shall have it."

He extended his arm hastily and seized the precious cup which the Empress Catharine had given to Count Cobenzl, and, with an impetuous motion, hurled it to the ground, where it broke to pieces with a loud crash.

"See there!" he shouted in a thundering voice. "Your Austrian monarchy shall be shattered like this cup within less than three months. I promise you that."

Without deigning to cast another glance upon the two gentlemen, he hurried with rapid steps to the door, and left the room.



NAPOLEON AND COUNT COBENZL.



Pale with anger and dismay, Count Cobenzl stared at the *débris* of the precious cup, which so long had been the pride and joy of his heart.

"He is leaving," muttered the Marquis de Gallo. "Shall we let him go, count?"

"How is that bear to be kept here?" asked the count, sighing, and shrugging his shoulders.

At this moment Bonaparte's powerful voice was heard in the anteroom, calling out:

"An orderly—quick!"

"He calls out of the window," whispered the marquis. "Let us hear what he has got to say."

The two plenipotentiaries slipped on tiptoe to the window, cautiously peeping from behind the curtains. They saw a French lancer galloping up below, and stopping and saluting under the window of the adjoining room.

Again they heard Bonaparte's thundering voice. "Ride over to the headquarters of Archduke Charles," shouted Bonaparte. "Tell him on my behalf that the armistice is at an end, and that hostilities will recommence from the present hour. That is all. Depart!"

Then they heard him close the window with a crash, and walk with loud steps through the anteroom.

The two plenipotentiaries looked at each other in dismay. "Count," whispered the marquis, "listen! he leaves and has threatened to shatter Austria. He is the man to fulfil his threat. My God, must we suffer him to depart in anger? Have you been authorized to do that?"

"Will you try to command the storm to stand still?" asked Count Cobenzl.

"Yes, I will try, for we must not break off the negotiations in this way and recommence hostilities. We must conciliate this terrible warrior!"

He rushed out of the room, and hastened through the anteroom and down-stairs to the front door.

Bonaparte had already entered his carriage; his escort had formed in line, the driver had seized the reins and whip in order to give the impatient horses the signal to start.

At this moment, the pale and humble face of the Marquis de Gallo appeared at the carriage door. Bonaparte did not seem to see him. Leaning back into the cushions, he gloomily looked up to heaven.

"General," said the marquis, imploringly, "I beseech you not to depart!"

"Marquis," replied Bonaparte, shrugging his shoulders, "it does



not become me to remain peaceably among my enemies. War has been declared, for you have not accepted my ultimatum."

"But, general, I take the liberty to inform you that the Austrian plenipotentiaries have resolved to accept your ultimatum."

Bonaparte's marble countenance did not betray the slightest emotion of surprise and joy; his large eyes only cast a piercing glance upon the marquis.

"You accept it without subterfuge or reserve?" he asked, slowly.

"Yes, general, precisely as you have stated it. We are ready to sign the treaty of peace, and accept the ultimatum. Just be kind enough to alight once more, and continue the conference with us."

"No, sir," said Bonaparte, "*nulla vestigia retrorsam!* Being already in my carriage, I shall not return to you. Besides, the delegates of the Venetian Republic are waiting for me at Passeriano, and I believe it is time for me to inform them too of my ultimatum. At the end of three hours, I ask you, marquis, and Count Cobenzl to proceed to my headquarters at Passeriano. There we will take the various stipulations of the treaty into consideration, and agree upon the public and secret articles."

"But you forget, general, that your orderly is already on the way to the Austrian headquarters in order to announce the reopening of hostilities."

"That is true," said Napoleon, quietly. "Here, two orderlies. Follow the first orderly, and command him to return. You see, marquis, I believe in the sincerity of your assurances. In three hours, then, I shall expect you at Passeriano for the purpose of settling the details of the treaty. We shall sign it, however, on neutral ground. Do you see that tall building on the horizon?"

"Yes, general, it is the decayed old castle of Campo Formio."

"Well, in that castle, the treaty shall be signed. In three hours, then. Until then, farewell."

He nodded carelessly to the marquis, who, as humble as a vassal, at the feet of the throne, stood at the carriage door, constantly bowing deeply, and waving his plumed hat.

"Forward!" shouted Bonaparte, and the carriage, followed by a brilliant suite, rolled away. Bonaparte, carelessly leaning into the corner, muttered, with a stealthy smile: "It was a *coup de théâtre*, and it had evidently great success. They had to accept peace at my hands as a favor. Ah, if they had guessed how much I needed it myself! But these men are obtuse; they cannot see any thing. They have no aim; they only live from minute to minute, and whenever they find a precipice on their route, they stumble over it, and are lost beyond redemption. My God, how scarce real men are! There are eighteen millions in Italy, and I have scarcely found two

men among them. I want to save these two men, but the rest may fulfil their destiny. The Republic of Venice shall disappear from the earth—this cruel and bloodthirsty government shall be annihilated. We shall throw it as a prey to hungry Austria; but when the latter has devoured her, and stretched herself in the lazy languor of digestion, then it will be time for us to stir up Austria. Until then, peace with Austria—peace!"

Three hours later the treaty between Austria and France was signed at the old castle of Campo Formio. France, by this treaty, acquired Belgium, the left bank of the Rhine, and the fortress of Mentz. Austria acquired the Venetian territory. But to these acquisitions, which were published, secret articles were added. In these secret articles, France promised, in case Prussia should demand an enlargement of her dominions, like Austria, not to consent to it.

The Emperor of Austria, on his part, pledged himself to withdraw his troops, even before the conclusion of the treaty with the German empire, to be agreed upon at Rastadt, from all the fortresses on the Rhine—in other words, to surrender the German empire entirely to its French neighbors.

Austria had enlarged her territory, but, for this aggrandizement, Germany was to pay with her blood, and finally with her life. Austria had made peace with France at Campo Formio, and it was stipulated in the treaty that the German empire likewise should conclude peace with France. For this purpose, a congress was to meet at Rastadt; all German princes were to send their ambassadors to that fortress, in order to settle, jointly, with three representatives of the French Republic, the fate of the empire.



## THE YOUNG QUEEN OF PRUSSIA.

### CHAPTER IX.

#### QUEEN LOUISA.

THE most noble Countess von Voss, mistress of ceremonies at the court of Prussia, was pacing the anteroom of Queen Louisa in the most excited manner. She wore the regular court dress—a long black robe and a large cap of black crape. In her white hands, half covered with black silk gloves, she held a gorgeous fan, which she now impatiently opened and closed, and then again slowly moved up and down like a musical leader's *bâton*.

If anybody had been present to observe her, the noble mistress of ceremonies would not have permitted herself such open manifestations of her impatience. Fortunately, however, she was quite alone, and under these circumstances even a mistress of ceremonies at the royal court might feel at liberty to violate the rules of that etiquette which on all other occasions was the noble lady's most sacred gospel.

Etiquette, however, was just now the motive of her intense excitement, and in its interest she was going to fight a battle on that very spot in Queen Louisa's anteroom.

"Now or never!" she murmured. "What I was at liberty to overlook as long as Frederick William and Louisa were merely 'their royal highnesses, the crown prince and crown princess,' I cannot permit any longer now that they have ascended the royal throne. Hence I am determined to speak to the young king on this first day of his reign\* in as emphatic and sincere a manner as is required by a faithful discharge of my responsible duties."

Just at that moment the large folding doors were opened, and a tall and slender young man in a dashing uniform entered the room. It was young King Frederick William III., on his return from the interior palace-yard where he had received the oath of allegiance at the hands of the generals of the monarchy.

The noble and youthful countenance of this king of twenty-seven years was grave and stern, but from his large blue eyes the kindness and gentleness of his excellent heart was beaming, and his

\* November 17, 1797.

handsome and good-natured features breathed a wonderful spirit of serenity and sympathy.

He crossed the room with rapid and noiseless steps, and, politely bowing to the mistress of ceremonies, approached the opposite door.

But the mistress of ceremonies, evidently anxious to prevent him from opening that door, placed herself in front of it and gravely said to him:

"Your majesty, it is impossible. I cannot permit etiquette to be violated in this manner, and I must beg your majesty to inform me most graciously of what you are going to do in these rooms?"

"Well," said the king, with a pleasant smile, "I am going to do to-day what I am in the habit of doing every day at this hour—I am going to pay a visit to my wife."

"To your *wife!*" exclaimed the mistress of ceremonies, in dismay. "But, your majesty, a king has no *wife!*"

"Ah! in that case a king would be a very wretched being," said the king, smiling, "and, for my part, I would sooner give up my crown than my beloved wife."

"Good Heaven, your majesty, you may certainly have a wife, but let me implore you not to apply that vulgar name to her majesty in the presence of other people. It is contrary to etiquette and injurious to the respect due to royalty."

"My dear countess," said the young king, gravely, "I believe, on the contrary, that it will only increase the respect which people will feel for us, if her majesty remains a woman in the noblest and truest meaning of the word, and my wife—I beg your pardon, I was going to say the queen—is such a woman. And now, my dear countess, permit me to go to her."

"No," exclaimed the mistress of ceremonies, resolutely. "Your majesty must first condescend to listen to me. For an hour already I have been waiting here for your majesty's arrival, and you must now graciously permit me to speak to you as frankly and sincerely as is required by my duty and official position."

"Well, I will listen to you, my dear countess," said the king, with an inaudible sigh.

"Your majesty," said the mistress of ceremonies, "I consider it my duty to beseech your majesty on this memorable day to confer upon me the power of enforcing the privileges of my office with more severity and firmness."

"And to submit myself to your sceptre. That is what you want me to do, I suppose, dear countess?" asked the king, smiling.

"Sire, at all events it is impossible to keep up the dignity and majesty of royalty if the king and queen themselves openly defy the laws of etiquette."



"Ah!" exclaimed the king, sharply, "not a word against the queen, if you please, my dear mistress of ceremonies! You may accuse me just as much as you please, but pray let me hear no more complaints about my Louisa! Well, then, tell me now what new derelictions I have been guilty of."

"Sire," said the countess, who did not fail to notice the almost imperceptible smile playing on the king's lips—"sire, I perceive that your majesty is laughing at me; nevertheless, I deem it incumbent on me to raise my warning voice. Etiquette is something sublime and holy—it is the sacred wall separating the sovereign from his people. If that ill-starred queen, Marie Antoinette, had not torn down this wall, she would probably have met with a less lamentable end."

"Ah! countess, you really go too far; you even threaten me with the guillotine," exclaimed the king, good-naturedly. "Indeed, I am afraid I must have committed a great crime against etiquette. Tell me, therefore, where you wish to see a change, and I pledge you my word I shall grant your request if it be in my power to do so."

"Sire," begged the mistress of ceremonies, in a low and impressive voice, "let me implore you to be in your palace less of a father and husband, and more of a king, at least in the presence of others. It frequently occurs that your majesty, before other people, addresses the queen quite unceremoniously with 'thou,' nay, your majesty even in speaking of her majesty to strangers or servants, often briefly calls the queen 'my wife.' Sire, all that might be overlooked in the modest family circle and house of a crown prince, but it cannot be excused in the palace of a king."

"Then," asked the king, smiling, "this house of mine has been transformed into a palace since yesterday?"

"Assuredly, sire, you do not mean to say that you will remain in this humble house after your accession to the throne?" exclaimed the mistress of ceremonies, in dismay.

"Now tell me sincerely, my dear countess, cannot we remain in this house?"

"I assure your majesty it is altogether out of the question. How would it be possible to keep up the court of a king and queen in so small a house with becoming dignity? The queen's household has to be largely increased; hereafter we must have four ladies of honor, four ladies of the bedchamber, and other servants in the same proportion. According to the rules of etiquette, Sire, you must likewise enlarge your own household. A king must have two adjutant-generals, four chamberlains, four gentlemen of the bedchamber, and—"

"Hold on," exclaimed the king, smiling, "my household fortu-

nately does not belong to the department of the mistress of ceremonies, and therefore we need not allude to it. As to your other propositions and wishes, I shall take them into consideration, for I hope you are through now."

"No, your majesty, I am not. I have to mention a good many other things, and I must do so to-day—my duty requires it," said the mistress of ceremonies, in a dignified manner.

The king cast a wistful glance toward the door.

"Well, if your duty requires it, you may proceed," he said, with a loud sigh.

"I must beseech your majesty to assist me in the discharge of my onerous duties. If the king and queen themselves will submit to the rigorous and just requirements of etiquette, I shall be able to compel the whole court likewise strictly to adhere to those salutary rules. Nowadays, however, a spirit of innovation and disinclination to observe the old-established ceremonies and customs, which deeply afflicts me, and which I cannot but deem highly pernicious, is gaining ground everywhere. It has even now infected the ladies and gentlemen of the court. And having often heard your majesty, in conversation with her majesty the queen, contrary to etiquette, use the vulgar German language instead of the French tongue, which is the language of the courts throughout Germany, they believe they have a perfect right to speak German whenever they please. Yes, it has become a regular custom among them to salute each other at breakfast with a German '*Guten morgen!*'\* That is an innovation which should not be permitted to anybody, without first obtaining the consent of her majesty's mistress of ceremonies and your majesty's master of ceremonies."

"I beg your pardon," said the king, gravely, "as to this point, I altogether differ from you. No etiquette should forbid German gentlemen or German ladies to converse in their mother tongue, and it is unnatural and mere affectation to issue such orders. In order to become fully conscious of their national dignity, they should especially value and love their own language, and no longer deign to use in its place the tongue of a people who have shed the blood of their king and queen, and whose deplorable example now causes all thrones to tremble. Would to God that the custom of using the German language would become more and more prevalent at my court, for it behooves Germans to feel and think and speak like Germans; and that will also be the most reliable bulwark against the bloody waves of the French Republic, in case it should desire to invade Germany. Now you know my views, my dear mistress of ceremonies, and if your book of ceremonies prescribes that all court

\* Vide Ludwig Häusser's "History of Germany," vol. ii.



officers should converse in French, I request you to expunge that article and to insert in its place the following: 'Prussia, being a German state, of course everybody is at liberty to speak German.' This will also be the rule at court, except in the presence of persons not familiar with the German language. Pray don't forget that, my dear countess, and now, being so implacable a guardian of that door, and of the laws of etiquette, I request you to go to her majesty the queen, and ask her if I may have the honor of waiting upon her majesty. I should like to present my respects to her majesty; and I trust she will graciously grant my request."\*

The mistress of ceremonies bowed deeply, her face radiant with joy, and then rapidly entered the adjoining room.

The king looked after her for a moment, with a peculiar smile.

"She has to pass through six large rooms before reaching Louisa's boudoir," he murmured: "this door, however, directly leads to her through the small hall and the other anteroom. That is the shortest road to her, and I shall take it."

Without hesitating any longer, the king hastily opened the small side door, slipped through the silent hall and across the small anteroom, and knocked at the large and heavily-curtained door.

A sweet female voice exclaimed, "Come in!" and the king immediately opened the door. A lady in deep mourning came to meet him, extending her hands toward him.

"Oh, my heart told me that it was you, my dearest!" she exclaimed, and her glorious blue eyes gazed upon him with an indescribable expression of impassioned tenderness.

The king looked at her with a dreamy smile, quite absorbed in her aspect. And indeed it was a charming and beautiful sight presented by this young queen of twenty years.

Her blue eyes were beaming in the full fire of youth, enthusiasm, and happiness; a sweet smile was always playing on her finely-formed mouth, with the ripe cherry lips. On both sides of her slightly-blushing cheeks her splendid auburn hair was flowing down in waving ringlets; her noble and pure forehead arose above a nose of classical regularity, and her figure, so proud and yet so charming, so luxuriant and yet so chaste, full of true royal dignity and winning womanly grace, was in complete harmony with her lovely and youthful features.

"Well?" asked the queen, smiling. "Not a word of welcome from you, my beloved husband?"

"I only say to you, God bless you on your new path, and may

\* The king's own words.—Vide "Characterzüge und Historische Fragmente aus dem Leben des Königs von Preussen, Friedrich Wilhelm III. Gesammelt und herausgegeben von R. Fr. Eylert, Bishop, u. s. w. Th. ii., p. 21.

He preserve you to me as long as I live!" replied the king, deeply moved, and embracing his queen with gushing tenderness.

She encircled his neck with her soft, white arms, and leaned her head with a happy smile upon his shoulder. Thus they reposed in each other's arms, silent in their unutterable delight, solemnly moved in the profound consciousness of their eternal and imperishable love.

Suddenly they were interrupted in their blissful dream by a low cry, and when they quickly turned around in a somewhat startled manner, they beheld the Countess von Voss, mistress of ceremonies, standing in the open door, and gloomily gazing upon them.

The king could not help laughing.

"Do you see now, my dear countess?" he said. "My wife and I see each other without any previous interruption as often as we want to do so, and that is precisely as it ought to be in a Christian family. But you are a charming mistress of ceremonies, and hereafter we will call you *Dame d'Etiquette*.\* Moreover, I will comply with your wishes as much as I can."

He kindly nodded to her, and the mistress of ceremonies, well aware of the meaning of this nod, withdrew with a sigh, closing the door as she went out.

The queen looked up to her husband with a smile.

"Was it again some quarrel about etiquette?" she asked.

"Yes, and a quarrel of the worst kind," replied the king, quickly. "The mistress of ceremonies demands that I should always be announced to you before entering your room, Louisa."

"Oh, you are always announced here," she exclaimed, tenderly; "my heart always indicates your approach—and that herald is altogether sufficient, and it pleases me much better than the stern countenance of our worthy mistress of ceremonies."

"It is the herald of my happiness," said the king, fervently, laying his arm upon his wife's shoulder, and gently drawing her to his heart.

"Do you know what I am thinking of just now?" asked the queen, after a short pause. "I believe the mistress of ceremonies will get up a large number of new rules, and lecture me considerably about the duties of a queen in regard to the laws of etiquette."

"I believe you are right," said the king, smiling.

"But I don't believe *she* is right!" exclaimed the queen, and, closely nestling in her husband's arms, she added: "Tell me, my lord and king, inasmuch as this is the first time that you come to me as a king, have I not the right to ask a few favors of you, and to pray you to grant my requests?"

\* The king's own words.—Vide Eylert, part ii., p. 93.



"Yes, you have that right, my charming queen," said the king, merrily; "and I pledge you my word that your wishes shall be fulfilled, whatever they may be."

"Well, then," said the queen, joyfully, "there are four wishes that I should like you to grant. Come, sit down here by my side, on this small sofa, put your arm around my waist, and, that I may feel that I am resting under your protection, let me lean my head upon your shoulder, like the ivy supporting itself on the trunk of the strong oak. And now listen to my wishes. In the first place, I want you to allow me to be a wife and mother in my own house, without any restraint whatever, and to fulfil my sacred duties as such without fear and without regard to etiquette. Do you grant this wish?"

"Most cordially and joyfully, in spite of all mistresses of ceremonies!" replied the king.

The queen nodded gently and smiled. "Secondly," she continued, "I beg you, my beloved husband, on your own part, not to permit etiquette to do violence to your feelings toward me, and always to call me, even in the presence of others, your 'wife,' and not 'her majesty the queen.' Will you grant that, too, my dearest friend?"

The king bent over her and kissed her beautiful hair.

"Louisa," he whispered, "you know how to read my heart, and, generous as you always are, you pray me to grant what is only my own dearest wish. Yes, Louisa, we will always call each other by those most honorable of our titles, 'husband and wife.' And now, your third wish, my dear wife?"

"Ah, I have some fears about this third wish of mine," sighed the queen, looking up to her husband with a sweet smile. "I am afraid you cannot grant it, and the mistress of ceremonies, perhaps, was right when she told me etiquette would prevent you from complying with it."

"Ah, the worthy mistress of ceremonies has lectured you also today already?" asked the king, laughing.

The queen nodded. "She has communicated to me several important sections from the 'book of ceremonies,'" she sighed. "But all that shall not deter me from mentioning my third wish to you. I ask you, my Frederick, to request the king to permit my husband to live as plainly and modestly as heretofore. Let the king give his state festivals in the large royal palace of his ancestors—let him receive in those vast and gorgeous halls the homage of his subjects, and the visits of foreign princes, and let the queen assist him on such occasions. But these duties of royalty once attended to, may we not be permitted, like all others, to go home, and in the midst of our dear little family circle repose after the fatiguing pomp and

splendor of the festivities? Let us not give up our beloved home for the large royal palace! Do not ask me to leave a house in which I have passed the happiest and finest days of my life. See, here in these dear old rooms of mine, every thing reminds me of you, and whenever I am walking through them, the whole secret history of our love and happiness stands again before my eyes. Here, in this room, we saw each other for the first time after my arrival in Berlin, alone and without witnesses. Here you imprinted the first kiss upon your wife's lips, and, like a heavenly smile, it penetrated deep into my soul, and it has remained in my heart like a little guardian angel of our love. Since that day, even in the fullest tide of happiness, I always feel so devout and grateful to God; and whenever you kiss me, the little angel in my heart is praying for you, and whenever I am praying, he kisses you."

"Oh, Louisa, you are my angel—my guardian angel!" exclaimed the king, enthusiastically.

The queen apparently did not notice this interruption—she was entirely absorbed in her recollections. "On this sofa here," she said, "we were often seated in fervent embrace like to-day and when every thing around us was silent, our hearts spoke only the louder to each other, and often have I heard here from your lips the most sublime and sacred revelations of your noble, pure, and manly soul. In my adjoining cabinet, you were once standing at the window, gloomy and downcast; a cloud was covering your brow, and I knew you had heard again sorrowful tidings in your father's palace. But no complaint ever dropped from your lips, for you always were a good and dutiful son, and even to me you never alluded to your father's failings. I knew what you were suffering, but I knew also that at that hour I had the power to dispel all the clouds from your brow, and to make your eyes radiant with joy and happiness. Softly approaching you, I laid my arm around your neck, and my head on your breast, and thereupon I whispered three words which only God and my husband's ears were to hear. And you heard them, and you uttered a loud cry of joy, and before I knew how it happened, I saw you on your knees before me, kissing my feet and the hem of my garment, and applying a name to me that sounded like heavenly music, and made my heart overflow with ecstasy and suffused my cheeks with a deep blush. And I don't know again how it happened, but I felt that I was kneeling by your side, and we were lifting up our folded hands to heaven, thanking God for the great bliss He had vouchsafed to us, and praying Him to bless our child, unknown to us as yet, but already so dearly beloved. Oh, and last, my own Frederick, do you remember that other hour in my bedroom? You were sitting at my bedside, with folded hands,



praying, and yet, during your prayer, gazing upon me, while I was writhing with pain, and yet so supremely happy in my agony, for I knew that Nature at that hour was about to consecrate me for my most exalted and sacred vocation, and that God would bless our love with a visible pledge of our happiness. The momentous hour was at hand—a film covered my eyes, and I could only see the Holy Virgin surrounded by angels, on Guido Reni's splendid painting, opposite my bed. Suddenly a dazzling flash seemed to penetrate the darkness surrounding me, and through the silence of the room there resounded a voice that I had never heard before—the voice of my child. And at the sound of that voice I saw the angels descending from the painting and approaching my bedside in order to kiss me, and the Mother of God bent over me with a heavenly smile, exclaiming: 'Blessed is the wife who is a mother!' My consciousness left me—I believe my ineffable happiness made me faint."

"Yes, you fainted, beloved wife," said the king, gently nodding to her; "but the swoon had not dispelled the smile from your lips, nor the expression of rapturous joy from your features. You lay there as if overwhelmed with joy and fascinated by your ecstatic bliss. Knowing that you were inexpressibly happy, I felt no fear whatever—"

"Well, I awoke soon again," added the queen, joyfully. "I had no time to spare for a long swoon, for a question was burning in my heart. I turned my eyes toward you—you were standing in the middle of the room, holding the babe that, in its new little lace dress, had just been laid into your arms. My heart now commenced beating in my breast like a hammer. I looked at you, but my lips were not strong enough to utter the question. However, you understood me well enough, and drawing close to my bedside, and kneeling down and laying the babe into my arms, you said, in a voice which I shall never forget, 'Louisa, give your blessing to your son!' Ah, at that moment it seemed as if my ecstasy would rend my breast. I had to utter a loud scream, or I should have died from joy. 'A son!' I cried, 'I have given birth to a son!' And I drew my arms around you and the babe, and we wept tears—oh, such tears—"

She paused, overwhelmed with emotion, and burst into tears.

"Ah!" she whispered, deprecatingly, "I am very foolish—you will laugh at me."

But the king did not laugh, for his eyes also were moist; only he was ashamed of his tears and kept them back in his eyes. A pause ensued, and the queen laid her head upon the shoulder of her husband, who had drawn his arm around her waist. All at once she raised her head, and fixing her large and radiant eyes upon the deeply-moved face of the king, she asked:

"My Frederick, can we leave a house in which I bore you a son and crown prince? Will we give up our most sacred recollections for the sake of a large and gorgeous royal palace?"

"No, we will not," said the king, pressing his wife closer to his heart. "No, we will remain in this house of ours—we will not leave it. Our happiness has grown and prospered here, and here it shall bloom and bear fruit. Your wish shall be fulfilled; we will continue living here as man and wife, and if the king and queen have to give festivals and to receive numerous guests, then they will go over to the palace to comply with their royal duties, but in the evening they will return to their happy home."

"Oh, my friend, my beloved friend, how shall I thank you?" exclaimed the queen, encircling his neck with her arms, and imprinting a glowing kiss upon his lips.

"But now, dear wife, let me know your fourth wish," said the king, holding her in his arms. "I hope your last wish is a real one, and not merely calculated to render *me* happy, but one that also concerns yourself?"

"Oh, my fourth wish only concerns myself," said the queen, with an arch smile. "I can confide it to you, to you alone, and you must promise to keep it secret, and not to say a word about it to the mistress of ceremonies."

"I promise it most readily, dear Louisa."

"Well," said the queen, placing her husband's hand upon her heart, and gently stroking it with her fingers. "I believe during the coming winter we shall often have to be king and queen. Festivals will be given to us, and we shall have to give others in return; the country will do homage to the new sovereign, and the nobility will solemnly take the oath of allegiance to him. Hence there will be a great deal of royal pomp, but very little enjoyment for us during the winter. Well, I will not complain, but endeavor, to the best of my ability, to do honor to my exalted position by your side. In return, however, my beloved lord and friend—in return, next summer, when the roses are blooming, you must give me a day—a day that is to belong exclusively to myself; and on that day we will forget the cares of royalty, and only remember that we are a pair of happy young lovers. Of course, we shall not spend that day in Berlin, nor in Parez either; but like two merry birds, we will fly far, far away to my home in Mecklenburg, to the paradise of my early years—to the castle of Hohenzieritz; and no one shall know any thing about it. Without being previously announced, we will arrive there, and in the solitude of the old house and garden we will perform a charming little idyl. On that day you only belong to me, and to nobody else. On that day I am your wife and sweetheart and