

nothing else, and I shall provide amusement and food for you. Yes, dearest Frederick, I shall prepare your meals all alone, and set the table and carve for you. Oh, dear, dear friend; give me such a day, such an idyl of happiness!"

"I give it to you and to myself, most joyfully; and let me confess, Louisa, I wish the winter were over already, and the morning of that beautiful day were dawning."

"Thanks—thousand thanks!" exclaimed the queen, enthusiastically. "Let the stiff and ceremonious days come now, and the sneaking, fawning courtiers and the incense of flattery. Through all the mist I shall constantly inhale the sweet fragrance of the roses of the future, and on the stiff gala-days I shall think of the idyl of that day that will dawn next summer and compensate me for all the annoyances and fatigues of court life."

The king placed his right hand on her head, as if to bless her, and with his left lifted up her face that was reposing on his breast. "And you really think, you charming, happy angel, that I do not understand you?" he asked, in a low voice. "Do you think I do not feel and know that you want to offer me this consolation and to comfort me by the hope of such a blissful day for the intervening time of care, fatigue, and restlessness? Oh, my dear Louisa, you need no such consolation, for God has intended you for a queen, and even the burdens and cares of your position will only surround you like enchanting geni. You know at all times how to find the right word and the right deed, and the Graces have showered upon you the most winning charms to fascinate all hearts, in whatever you may be doing. On the other hand, I am awkward and ill at ease. I know it only too well; my unhappy childhood, grief and cares of all kinds, have rendered my heart reserved and bashful. Perhaps I am not always lacking right ideas, but I fail only too often to find the right word for what I think and feel. Hereafter, my dear Louisa, frequent occasions will arise when you will have to speak for both of us. By means of your irresistible smile and genial conversation you will have to win the hearts of people, while I shall be content if I can only win their heads."

"Shall I be able to win their hearts?" asked the queen, musingly. "Oh, assist me, my dearest friend. Tell me what I have to do in order to be beloved by my people."

"Remain what you are, Louisa," said the king, gravely—"always remain as charming, graceful, and pure as I beheld you on the most glorious two days of my life, and as my inward eye always will behold you. Oh, I also have some charming recollections, and although I cannot narrate them in words as fascinating and glowing as yours, yet they are engraved no less vividly on my mind, and,

like beautiful geni, accompany me everywhere. Only before others they are bashful and reticent like myself."

"Let me hear them, Frederick," begged the queen, tenderly leaning her beautiful head on her husband's shoulder. "Let us devote another hour to the recollections of the past."

"Yes, let another hour be devoted to the memories of past times," exclaimed the king, "for can there be any thing more attractive for me than to think of you and of that glorious hour when I saw you first? Shall I tell you all about it, Louisa?"

"Oh, do so, my beloved friend. Your words will sound to me like some beautiful piece of music that one likes better and understands better the more it is heard. Speak, then, Frederick, speak."

## CHAPTER X.

### THE KING'S RECOLLECTIONS.

"WELL," said the king, "whenever I look back into the past, every thing seems to me covered with a gray mist, through which only two stars and two lights are twinkling. The stars are your eyes, and the lights are the two days I alluded to before—the day on which I saw you for the first time, and the day on which you arrived in Berlin. Oh, Louisa, never shall I forget that first day! I call it the first day, because it was the first day of my real life. It was at Frankfort-on-the-Main, during the campaign on the Rhine. My father, the king, accompanied by myself, returned the visit that the Duke of Mecklenburg, your excellent father, had paid on the previous day. We met in a small and unpretending villa, situated in the midst of a large garden. The two sovereigns conversed long and seriously, and I was listening to them in silence. This silence was, perhaps, disagreeable to my father the king.

"What do you think, your highness?" he suddenly asked your father. "While we are talking about the military operations, will we not permit the young gentleman there to wait upon the ladies? As soon as we are through, I shall ask you to grant me the same privilege."

"The duke readily assented, and calling the footman waiting in the anteroom, he ordered him to go with me to the ladies and to announce my visit to them. Being in the neighborhood of the seat of war, you know, little attention was paid to ceremonies. I followed the footman, who told me the ladies were in the garden, whither he conducted me. We walked through a long avenue and a number of side-paths. The footman, going before me, looked around in every

direction without being able to discover the whereabouts of the ladies. Finally, at a bend in the avenue, we beheld a bower in the distance, and something white fluttering in it.

"Ah, there is Princess Louisa," said the footman, turning to me, and he then rapidly walked toward her. I followed him slowly and listlessly, and when he came back and told me Princess Louisa was ready to receive me, I was perhaps yet twenty yards from the rose-bower. I saw there a young lady rising from her seat, and accelerated my steps. Suddenly my heart commenced pulsating as it never had done before, and it seemed to me as if a door were bursting open in my heart and making it free, and as if a thousand voices in my soul were singing and shouting, 'There she is! There is the lady of your heart!' The closer I approached, the slower grew my steps, and I saw you standing in the entrance of the bower in a white dress, loosely covering your noble and charming figure, a gentle smile playing on your pure, sweet face, golden ringlets flowing down both sides of your rosy cheeks, and your head wreathed with the full and fragrant roses which seemed to bend down upon you from the bower in order to kiss and adorn you, your round white arms only half covered with clear lace sleeves, and a full-blown rose in your right hand which you had raised to your waist. And seeing you thus before me, I believed I had been removed from earth, and it seemed to me I beheld an angel of innocence and beauty, through whose voice Heaven wished to greet me.\* At last I stood close before you, and in my fascination I entirely forgot to salute you. I only looked at you. I only heard those jubilant voices in my heart, singing, 'There is your wife—the wife you will love now and forever!' It was no maudling sentimentality, but a clear and well-defined consciousness which, like an inspiration, suddenly moistened my eyes with tears of joy.† Oh, Louisa, why am I no painter to perpetuate that sublime moment in a beautiful and glorious picture? But what I cannot do, shall be tried by others. A true artist shall render and eternize that moment for me, ‡ so that one day when we are gone, our son may look up to the painting and say: 'Such was my mother when my father first saw her. He believed he beheld an angel, and he was not mistaken, for she was the guardian angel of his whole life.'

"Oh! you make me blush—you make me too happy, too happy!" exclaimed the queen, closing her husband's lips with a burning kiss.

\* Goethe saw the young princess at the same time, and speaks of her "divine beauty."

† The king's own words, vide Bishop Eylert's work, vol. ii., p. 22.

‡ This painting was afterward executed, and may now be seen at the royal palace of Berlin. The whole account of the first meeting of the two lovers is based upon the communication the king made himself to Bishop Eylert

"Don't praise me too much, lest I should become proud and overbearing."

The king gently shook his head. "Only the stupid, the guilty, and the base are proud and overbearing," he said. "But, whoever has seen you, Louisa, on the day of your first arrival in Berlin, will never forget your sweet image in its radiance of grace, modesty, and loveliness. It was on a Sunday, a splendid clear day in winter, the day before Christmas, which was to become the greatest holiday of my life. A vast crowd had gathered in front of the Arsenal *Unter den Linden*. Every one was anxious to see you. At the entrance of the *Linden*, not far from the Opera-Place, a splendid triumphal arch had been erected, and here a committee of the citizens and a number of little girls were to welcome you to Berlin. In accordance with the rules of court etiquette, I was to await your arrival at the palace. But my eagerness to see you would not suffer me to remain there. Closely muffled in my military cloak, my cap drawn down over my face, in order not to be recognized by anybody, I had gone out among the crowd and, assisted by a trusty servant, obtained a place behind one of the pillars of the triumphal arch. Suddenly tremendous cheers burst forth from a hundred thousand throats, thousands of arms were waving white handkerchiefs from the windows and roofs of the houses, the bells were rung, the cannon commenced thundering, for you had just crossed the Brandenburger Gate. Alighting from your carriage, you walked up the *Linden* with your suite, the wildest enthusiasm greeting every step you made, and finally you entered the triumphal arch, not suspecting how near I was to you, and how fervently my heart was yearning for you. A number of little girls in white, with myrtle-branches in their hands, met you there; and one of them, bearing a myrtle-wreath on an embroidered cushion, presented it to you and recited a simple and touching poem. Oh, I see even now, how your eyes were glowing, how a profound emotion lighted up your features, and how, overpowered by your feelings, you bent down to the little girl, clasped her in your arms and kissed her eyes and lips. But behind you there stood the mistress of ceremonies, Countess von Voss, pale with indignation, and trembling with horror at this unparalleled occurrence. She hastily tried to draw you back, and in her amazement she cried almost aloud, 'Good Heaven! how could your royal highness do that just now? It was contrary to good-breeding and etiquette!' Those were harsh and inconsiderate words, but in your happy mood you did not feel hurt, but quietly and cheerfully turned around to her and asked innocently and honestly: 'What! cannot I do so any more?\*' Oh, Louisa, at that

\* Eylert, vol. ii., p. 79.

moment, and in consequence of your charming question, my eyes grew moist, and I could hardly refrain from rushing out of the crowd and pressing you to my heart, and kissing your eyes and lips as innocently and chastely as you had kissed those of the little girl.

"See," said the king, drawing a deep breath, and pausing for a minute, "those are the two great days of my life, and as you ask me now, what you ought to do in order to win the love of your people, I reply to you once more: Remain what you are, so that these beautiful pictures of you, which are engraved upon my heart, may always resemble you, and you will be sure to win all hearts. Oh, my Louisa, your task is an easy one, you only have to be true to yourself, you only have to follow your faithful companions the Graces, and success will never fail you. My task, however, is difficult, and I shall have to struggle not only with the evil designs, the malice, and stupidity of others, but with my own inexperience, my want of knowledge, and a certain irresolution, resulting, however, merely from a correct appreciation of what I am lacking."

The queen with a rapid gesture placed her hand upon the king's shoulder.

"You must be more self-reliant, for you may safely trust yourself," she said, gravely. "Who could be satisfied with himself, if you were to despair? What sovereign could have the courage to grasp the sceptre, if your hands should shrink back from it?—your hands, as free from guilt and firm and strong as those of a true man should be! I know nothing about politics, and shall never dare to meddle with public affairs and to advise you in regard to them; but I know and feel that you will always be guided by what you believe to be the best interests of your people, and that you never will deviate from that course. The spirit of the Great Frederick is looking upon you; he will guide and bless you!"

The king seemed greatly surprised by these words.

"Do you divine my thoughts, Louisa?" he asked. "Do you know my soul has been with him all the morning—that I thus conversed with him and repeated to myself every thing he said to me one day in a great and solemn hour. Oh, it was indeed a sacred hour, and never have I spoken of it to anybody, for every word would have looked to me like a desecration. But you, my noble wife, you can only consecrate and sanctify the advice I received in that momentous hour; and as I am telling you to-day about my most glorious reminiscences, you shall hear also what Frederick the Great once said to me."

The queen nodded approvingly, raising her head from his shoulder and folding her hands on her lap as if she were going to pray.

The king paused for a moment, and seemed to reflect.

"In 1785," he then said, "on a fine, warm summer day, I met the king in the garden at Sans-Souci. I was a youth of fifteen years at that time, strolling carelessly through the shrubbery and humming a song, when I suddenly beheld the king, who was seated on the bench under the large beech-tree, at no great distance from the Japanese palace. He was alone; two greyhounds were lying at his feet, in his hands he held his old cane, and his head reposed gently on the trunk of the beech-tree. A last beam of the setting sun was playing on his face, and rendered his glorious eyes even more radiant. I stood before him in reverential awe, and he gazed upon me with a kindly smile. Then he commenced examining me about my studies, and finally he drew a volume of La Fontaine's 'Fables' from his pocket, opened the book and asked me to translate the fable on the page he showed me. I did so—but when he afterward was going to praise me for the skill with which I had rendered it, I told him it was but yesterday that I had translated the same fable under the supervision of my teacher. A gentle smile immediately lighted up his face, and tenderly patting my cheeks, he said to me, in his sonorous, soft voice: 'That is right, my dear Fritz, always be honest and upright. Never try to seem what you are not—always be more than what you seem!' I never forgot that exhortation, and I have always abhorred falsehood and hypocrisy."

The queen gently laid her hand upon his heart. "Your eye is honest," she said, "and so is your heart. My Frederick is too proud and brave to utter a lie. And what did you say to your great ancestor?"

"I? He spoke to me—I stood before him and listened. He admonished me to be industrious, never to believe that I had learned enough; never to stand still, but always to struggle on. After that he arose and, conversing with me all the time, slowly walked down the avenue leading to the garden gate. All at once he paused, and leaning upon his cane, his piercing eyes looked at me so long and searchingly, that his glance deeply entered into my heart. 'Well, Fritz,' he said, 'try to become a good man, a good man *par excellence*. Great things are in store for you. I am at the end of my career, and my task is about accomplished. I am afraid that things will go pell-mell when I am dead. A portentous fermentation is going on everywhere, and the sovereigns, especially the King of France, instead of calming it and extirpating the causes that have produced it, unfortunately are deluded enough to fan the flame. The masses below commence moving already, and when the explosion finally takes place, the devil will be to pay. I am afraid your own position one day will be a most difficult one. Arm yourself, therefore, for the strife!—be firm!—think of me! Watch over our

honor and our glory! Beware of injustice, but do not permit any one to treat you unjustly! He paused again, and slowly walked on. While deeply moved and conscious of the importance of the interview, I inwardly repeated every word he had said, in order to remember them as long as I lived. We had now reached the obelisk, near the gate of Sans-Souci. The king here gave me his left hand, and with his uplifted right hand he pointed at the obelisk. 'Look at it,' he said, loudly and solemnly; 'the obelisk is tall and slender, and yet it stands firm amid the most furious storms. It says to you: *Ma force est ma droiture*. The culmination, the highest point overlooks and crowns the whole; it does not support it, however, but is supported by the whole mass underlying it, especially by the invisible foundation, deeply imbedded in the earth. This supporting foundation is the people in its unity. Always be on the side of the people, so that they will love and trust you, as they alone can render you strong and happy.' He cast another searching glance upon me, and gave me his hand. When I bent over it in order to kiss it, he imprinted a kiss on my forehead. 'Don't forget this hour,' he said kindly, nodding to me. He turned around, and accompanied by his greyhounds, slowly walked up the avenue again.\* I never forgot that hour, and shall remember it as long as I live."

"And the spirit of the great Frederick will be with you and remain with you," said the queen, deeply moved.

"Would to God it were so!" sighed the king. "I know that I am weak and inexperienced; I stand in need of wise and experienced advisers; I—"

A rap at the door interrupted the king, and on his exclaiming, "Come in!" the door was opened and the court marshal appeared on the threshold.

"I humbly beg your majesty's pardon for venturing to disturb you," he said, bowing reverentially; "but I must request your majesty to decide a most important domestic matter—a matter that brooks no delay."

"Well, what is it?" said the king, rising and walking over to the marshal.

"Your majesty, it is about the bill of fare for the royal table, and I beseech your majesty to read and approve the following paper I have drawn up in regard to it."

With an obsequious bow, he presented a paper to the king, who read it slowly and attentively.

"What!" he suddenly asked, sharply, "two courses more than formerly?"

\* The king's own account to Bishop Eylert, in the latter's work, vol. i., p. 455.

"Your majesty," replied the marshal, humbly, "it is for the table of a king!"

"And you believe that my stomach has grown larger since I am a king?" asked Frederick William. "No, sir, the meals shall remain the same as heretofore,\* unless," he said, politely turning to the queen, "unless you desire a change, my dear?"

The queen archly shook her head. "No," she said, with a charming smile; "neither has my stomach grown larger since yesterday."

"There will be no change, then," said the king, dismissing the marshal.

"Just see," he said to the queen, when the courtier had disappeared, "what efforts they make in order to bring about a change in our simple and unassuming ways of living; they flatter us wherever they can, and even try to do so by means of our meals."

"As for ourselves, however, dearest, we will remember the words of your great uncle," said the queen, "and when they overwhelm us on all sides with their vain and ridiculous demands, we will remain firm and true to ourselves."

"Yes, Louisa," said the king, gravely, "and whatever our new life may have in store for us, we will remain the same as before."

Another rap at the door was heard, and a royal footman entered.

"Lieutenant-Colonel von Köckeritz, your majesty, requests an audience."

"Ah, yes, it is time," said the king, looking at the clock on the mantel-piece. "I sent him word to call on me at this hour. Farewell, Louisa, I must not let him wait."

He bowed to his wife, whose hand he tenderly pressed to his lips, and turned to the door.

The footman who had meantime stood at the door as straight as an arrow, waiting for the king's reply, now hastened to open both folding-doors.

"What!" asked the king, with a deprecating smile, "have I suddenly grown so much stouter that I can no longer pass out through one door?" †

The queen's eyes followed her husband's tall and commanding figure with a proud smile, and then raising her beautiful, radiant eyes with an indescribable expression to heaven, she whispered: "Oh, what a man! my husband!" ‡

\* Vide Eylert, vol. i., p. 18.

† Ibid., p. 19.

‡ "O, welch ein Mann! mein Mann!"—Eylert, vol. ii., p. 157.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE YOUNG KING.

THE king rapidly walked through the rooms and across the hall, separating his own apartments from those of the queen. He had scarcely entered his cabinet, when he opened the door of the ante-room, and exclaimed:

"Pray, come in, my dear Köckeritz."

A corpulent little gentleman, about fifty years of age, with a kind, good-natured face, small, vivacious eyes, denoting an excellent heart, but little ability, and large, broad lips, which never perhaps had uttered profound truths, but assuredly many pleasant jests, immediately appeared on the threshold.

While he was bowing respectfully, the king extended his hand to him.

"You have received my letter, my friend?" he asked.

"Yes, your majesty. I received it yesterday, and I have been studying it all night."

"And what are you going to reply to me?" asked the king, quickly. "Are you ready to accept the position I have tendered to you? Will you become my conscientious and impartial adviser—my true and devoted friend?"

"Your majesty," said the lieutenant-colonel, sighing, "I am afraid your majesty has too good an opinion of my abilities. When I read your truly sublime letter, my heart shuddered, and I said to myself, 'The king is mistaken about you. To fill the position he is offering to you, he needs a man of the highest ability and wisdom. The king has confounded your heart with your head.' Yes, your majesty, my heart is in the right place; it is brave, bold, and faithful, but my head lacks wisdom and knowledge. I am not a learned man, your majesty."

"But you are a man of good common-sense and excellent judgment, and that is worth more to me than profound learning," exclaimed the king. "I have observed you for years, and these extended observations have confirmed my conviction more and more that I was possessing in you a man who would be able one day to render me the most important services by his straightforwardness, his unerring judgment, his firm character, and well-tryed honesty. I have a perfect right to trust you implicitly. I am a young man, as yet too ignorant of the world to rely exclusively upon myself, and not to fear lest dishonest men, in spite of the most earnest precautions, should deceive me. Hence every well-meant advice must be exceedingly welcome to me, and such advice I can expect at your

hands. I pray you, sir, remain my friend, do not change your bearing toward me, become my adviser.\* Köckeritz, will you reject my request?"

"No," exclaimed Herr von Köckeritz; "if that is all your majesty asks of me, I can promise it and fulfil my promise. Your majesty shall always find me to be a faithful, devoted, and honest servant."

"I ask more than that," said the king, gently. "Not only a faithful servant, but a devoted *friend*—a friend who will call my attention to my short-comings and errors. Assist me with your knowledge of men and human nature. For nobody is more liable to make mistakes in judging of men than a prince, and it cannot be otherwise. To a prince no one shows himself in his true character. Every one tries to fathom the weaknesses and inclinations of rulers—and then assumes such a mask as seems best calculated to accomplish his purposes. Hence, I expect you to look around quietly, without betraying your intentions, for honest and sagacious men, and to find out what positions they are able to fill in the most creditable manner." †

"I shall take pains, your majesty, to discover such men," said Herr von Köckeritz, gravely. "It seems to me, however, sire, that fortunately you have got many able and excellent men close at hand, and for that reason need not look very far for other assistants."

"To whom do you allude?" exclaimed the king, sharply, and with a slight frown.

Herr von Köckeritz cast a rapid glance upon the king's countenance and seemed to have read his thoughts upon his clouded brow.

"Your majesty," he said, gravely and slowly, "I do not mean to say any thing against Wöllner, the minister, and his two counselors, Hermes and Hiller, nor against Lieutenant-General von Bischofswerder."

The frown had already disappeared from the king's brow. Stepping up to his desk, he seized a piece of paper there, which he handed to his friend.

"Just read that paper, and tell me what to do about it."

"Ah, Lieutenant-General von Bischofswerder has sent in his resignation!" exclaimed Herr von Köckeritz, when he had read the paper. "Well, I must confess that the general has a very fine nose, and that he acted most prudently."

"You believe, then, I would have dismissed him anyhow?"

"Yes, I believe so, your majesty."

\* Vide "A letter to Lieutenant-Colonel von Köckeritz, by Frederick William III."

† Ibid.

"And you are right, Köckeritz. This gloomy and bigoted man has done a great deal of mischief in Prussia, and the genius of our country had veiled his head and fled before the spirits which Bischofswerder had called up. Oh, my friend, we have passed through a gloomy, disastrous period, and seen many evil spirits here, and been tormented by them. But not another word about it! It does not behoove me to judge the past, for it does not belong to me. Only the future is mine; and God grant when it has, in turn, become the past, that it may not judge *me*! Lieutenant-General von Bischofswerder was the friend and confidant of my lamented father, the king, and in that capacity I must and will honor him. I shall accept his resignation, but grant him an ample pension."

"That resolution is highly honorable to your majesty's heart," exclaimed Herr von Köckeritz, feelingly.

"As to Minister Wöllner," said the king, frowning, "in respectful remembrance of my lamented father's partiality for him, I shall not at once dismiss him, but leave it to himself to send in his resignation. Let him see if he will be able to reconcile himself to the new era, for a new era, I hope, is to dawn for Prussia—an era of toleration, enlightenment and true piety, that does not seek satisfaction in mere lip-service and church-going, but in good and pious deeds. Religion is not an offspring of the church, but the reverse is true; the church is an offspring of religion, and the church therefore, ought to be subordinate to religion, and never try to place itself above it. Henceforth there shall be no more compulsion in matters of faith, and all fanatical persecutions shall cease. I honor religion myself; I devoutly follow its blessed precepts, and under no circumstances would I be the ruler of a people devoid of religion. But I know that religion always must remain a matter of the heart and of personal conviction, and if it is to promote virtue and righteousness, it must not, by a mere methodical constraint, be degraded to an empty and thoughtless ritualism. Hereafter Lutheran principles shall be strictly adhered to in religious affairs, for they are entirely in harmony with the spirit and Founder of our religion. No compulsory laws are necessary to maintain true religion in the country and to increase its salutary influence upon the happiness and morality of all classes of the people.\* These, I am afraid, are principles which Minister Wöllner cannot adopt; and if he is an honest man, he will consequently send in his resignation. If he should not do so in the course of a few weeks, of course I shall dismiss him. You see, Köckeritz, I am speaking to you frankly and unreservedly, as if you were a true friend of mine, and I am treating you already as my adviser. Now tell me who are the men of

\* Vide "Menzel's Twenty Years of Prussian History," p. 534.

whom you wished to speak, and whom you believe to be able and reliable."

The face of Herr von Köckeritz assumed an embarrassed and anxious air, but the king was waiting for an answer, and therefore he could not withhold it any longer.

"Well, your majesty," he said, somewhat hesitatingly, "I alluded to the minister of foreign affairs, Herr von Haugwitz, whom I believe to be an honest man, while I am equally satisfied that his first assistant, Lombard, is a man of excellent business qualifications and great ability."

The king nodded his assent. "I am entirely of your opinion," he said; "Minister von Haugwitz is not only an honest man, but an able-minded and skilful diplomatist, and an experienced statesman. I stand in need of his experience and knowledge, and as I moreover believe him to be a good patriot, he may remain at the head of his department."

A gleam of joy burst from the eyes of Herr von Köckeritz, but he quickly lowered them, in order not to betray his feelings.

"As to Lombard," said the king, "you are likewise right; he is an excellent and most able man, though a little tinctured with Jacobinism. His French blood infects him with all sorts of democratic notions. I wish he would get rid of them, and I shall assist him in doing so, in case he should prove to be the man I take him for. His position is too exalted and important that I should not deem it desirable to see him occupy a place in society in accordance with the old established rules. I want him to apply for letters of nobility. I shall grant the application at once. Please, tell him so."

Herr von Köckeritz bowed silently.

"Is there anybody else whom you wish to recommend to me?" asked the king with an inquiring glance.

"Your majesty," said Köckeritz, "I do not know of anybody else. But I am sure your majesty will always find the right man for the right place. Even in my case, I trust, your majesty has done so, for if it is of importance for you to have a faithful and devoted servant close to your person, who values nothing in the world so greatly, who loves nothing so fervently, and adores nothing so much as his young king, then I am the right man, and in this regard I do not acknowledge any superior. And further, if it be of importance that your majesty should at all times hear the truth, then I am the right man again, for I hate falsehood, and how should I, therefore, ever be false toward your majesty, inasmuch as I love your majesty?"

"I believe you, I believe you," exclaimed the king, taking the lieutenant-colonel by the hand. "You love me and are an honest man; I shall, therefore, always hear the truth from you. But you

shall inform yourself also of the state of public opinion concerning myself and my government, weigh the judgment passed on me and my counsellors, and if you believe it to be correct, then discuss it with men whom you know to be impartial and able to speak understandingly of the matter. Having thus ascertained public opinion and familiarized yourself with every thing, I expect you to lay the matter before me and tell me your opinion firmly and unreservedly. I shall never question your good intentions, but always endeavor to profit by your advice. And I shall now directly give you a trial. What do you think of the congress which met a few weeks ago at Rastadt, and at which the German empire is to negotiate a treaty of peace with France?"

"Your majesty, I believe it will be good for all of us to live at peace with France," exclaimed Herr von Köckeritz, earnestly. "If Prussia should quarrel with France, it would only afford Austria an opportunity to carry out its long-standing designs upon Bavaria, while Prussia would be occupied elsewhere; and in order not to be hindered by Prussia in doing so, Austria, who now has just concluded so favorable a treaty of peace with France at Campo Formio, would become the ally of France and thus strengthen her old hostility toward Prussia. A war between Austria and Prussia would be the unavoidable consequence; the whole of Germany would dissolve itself into parties favorable or hostile to us, and this state of affairs would give France an opportunity and a pretext to carry out her own predatory designs against Germany; and, while we would be fighting battles perhaps in Silesia and Bavaria, to seize the left bank of the Rhine."

"I am entirely of your opinion," exclaimed the king. "I am very glad to find my views in complete harmony with yours."

It is true Lieutenant-Colonel von Köckeritz was well aware of this, for all he had said just now was nothing but a repetition of what the king, while yet a crown prince, had often told him in their confidential conversations. But of this he took good care not to remind the king, and merely bowed with a grateful smile.

"Yes," added the king, "like you, I believe prudence and sound policy command us to remain at peace with France, and to form a closer alliance with this power. That is the only way for us to prevent Austria from realizing her schemes of aggrandizement. Austria, not France, is dangerous to us; the latter is our natural ally, and the former our natural adversary. Every step forward made by Austria in Germany, forces Prussia a step backward. Let Austria enlarge her territory in the south, toward Italy, but never shall I permit her to extend her northern and western frontiers farther into Germany. The peace of Campo Formio has given Venice to

the Austrians but they never shall acquire Bavaria. It is Prussia's special task to induce France not to permit it, and, precisely for that reason, we must force a closer alliance with France. That, my dear Köckeritz, is *my* view of the political course that we should pursue in future. Peace abroad and peace at home! No violent commotions and convulsions, no rash innovations and changes. New institutions should gradually and by their own inherent force grow from the existing ones, for only in that case we may be sure that they really have taken root. I shall not head the world in the capacity of a creative and original reformer, but I shall always take pains to adopt such reforms as have proven valuable, and gradually to transform and improve such institutions as at present may be defective and objectionable. And in all these endeavors, my dear Köckeritz, you shall be my adviser and assistant. Will you promise me your aid?"

He looked earnestly and anxiously at the lieutenant-colonel and gave him his hand.

"I promise it to your majesty," exclaimed Herr von Köckeritz, gravely, and grasping the king's hand.

"Well," said the king, "with this solemn pledge you may enter upon your official position, and I am satisfied that my choice has been a judicious one. Remain what you are, sir, an upright, honest man! As far as I am concerned, you may always be sure of my heart-felt gratitude; on the other hand, however, you should remember that you not only oblige me personally, but that I request you, as it were, in the name of the state, to labor for the latter. At some future time you will gain the sweet conviction and satisfaction that you have done not a little for the welfare of the commonwealth and thereby earned the thankfulness of every well-meaning patriot. I am sure there cannot be a sweeter reward for a man of true honor and ambition like yourself."\*

## CHAPTER XII.

FREDERICK GENTZ.

It was yet early in the morning; the blinds of all the windows in the *Taubenstrasse* were as yet firmly closed, and only in a single house an active, bustling life prevailed. At its door there stood a heavy travelling-coach which a footman was busily engaged in loading with a large number of trunks, boxes, and packages. In the rooms of the first story people were very active; industrious hands were assiduously occupied with packing up things generally;

\* Vide the king's letter to Lieutenant-Colonel von Köckeritz.

straw was wrapped around the furniture, and then covered with linen bags. The looking-glasses and paintings were taken from the walls and laid into wooden boxes, the curtains were removed from the windows, and every thing indicated that the inmates of the house were not only about to set out on a journey, but entirely to give up their former mode of living.

Such was really the case, and while the servants filled the ante-rooms and the halls with the noise of their preparations, those for whom all this bustle and activity took place were in their parlor, in a grave and gloomy mood.

There were two of them—a lady, scarcely twenty-four years of age, and a gentleman, about twelve years older. She was a delicate and lovely woman, with a pale, sad face, while he was a vigorous, stout man with full, round features, and large vivacious eyes which at present tried to look grave and afflicted without being able to do so; she wore a travelling-dress, while his was an elegant morning costume.

Both of them had been silent for awhile, standing at the window, or rather at different windows, and witnessing the removal of the trunks and packages to the travelling-coach. Finally, the lady, with a deep sigh, turned from the window and approached the gentleman who had likewise stepped back into the room.

"I believe the trunks are all in the carriage, and I can set out now, Frederick," she said, in a low and tremulous voice.

He nodded, and extended his hand toward her. "And you are not angry with me, Julia?" he asked.

She did not take his hand, but only looked up to him with eyes full of eloquent grief. "I am not angry," she said. "I pray to God that He may forgive you."

"And will *you* forgive me, too, Julia? For I know I have sinned grievously against you. I have made you shed many tears—I have rendered you wretched and miserable for two years, and these two years will cast a gray shadow over your whole future. When you first entered this room, you were an innocent young girl with rosy cheeks and radiant eyes, and now, as you leave it forever, you are a poor, pale woman with a broken heart and dimmed eyes."

"A *divorced* wife, that is all," she whispered, almost inaudibly. "I came here with a heart overflowing with happiness—I leave you now with a heart full of wretchedness. I came here with the joyous resolution and fixed purpose to render you a happy husband, and I leave you now with the painful consciousness that I have not bestowed upon you that happiness which I sought so earnestly to obtain for myself. Ah, it is very sad and bitter to be under the necessity of accepting this as the only result of two long years!"

"Yes, it is very sad," he said, sighing. "But after all, it is no fault of ours. There was a dissonance in our married life from the start, and for that reason there never could be any genuine harmony between us. This dissonance—well, at the present hour I may confess it to you, too—this dissonance simply was the fact that I *never* loved you!"

A convulsive twitching contracted the pale lips of the poor lady. "You were a great hypocrite, then," she whispered, "for your words, your solemn vows never made me suspect it."

"Yes, I was a hypocrite, a wretch, a coward!" he exclaimed, impetuously. "They overwhelmed me with exhortations, supplications, and representations. They knew so well to flatter me with the idea that the beautiful, wealthy, and much-courted heiress, Julia Gilly, had fallen in love with me, the poor, unknown Frederick Gentz, the humble military counsellor. They knew so well to depict to me the triumph I would obtain by marrying you, to the great chagrin of all your other suitors. Flattery intoxicates me, and a success, a triumph over others, fills me with the wildest delight. My father spoke of my debts, my creditors threatened me with suits and imprisonment—"

"And thus," she interrupted him—"thus you sacrificed me to your vanity and to your debts—you falsely vowed a love to me which you never felt, and accepted my hand. My father paid your debts, you solemnly promised to all of us not to incur any new ones, but you utterly broke your pledges. Instead of squandering hundreds as heretofore, you henceforth lavished thousands until my whole maternal property was gone—until my father, in a towering passion, turned his back upon us and swore never to see us again. The creditors, the debts, the embarrassments, reappeared, and as I had no money left with which to extricate you from your difficulties, you thought you owed me no further respect and were not under the necessity of remembering that I was your wife. You had a number of love-affairs, as I knew very well, but was silent. Love-letters arrived for you, not from one woman with whom you had fallen in love, but from God knows how many. I was aware of it and was silent. And when you were finally shameless enough to let the whole city witness your passion for an actress—when all Berlin spoke contemptuously of this flame of yours and of the follies you committed in consequence—then I could be silent no longer, and my honor and dignity commanded me to apply for a divorce."

"And every one must acknowledge that you were perfectly right. As a friend I could not have given you myself any other advice, for I shall not and cannot alter my nature. I am unable to accustom myself to a quiet and happy family life—domestic felicity is repul-



sive to me, and a feeling of restraint makes me rear and plunge like the noble charger feeling his bit and bridle for the first time. I can bear no chains, Julia, not even those of an excellent and affectionate wife such as you have been to me."

"You can bear no chains," she said, bitterly, "and yet you are always in chains—in the chains of your debts, your love-affairs, and your frivolity. Oh, listen to me—heed my words for once. They are as solemn as though they were uttered on a death-bed, for we shall never see each other again. Fancy a mother were speaking to you—a mother tenderly loving you. For I confess to you that I still love you, Gentz—my heart cannot yet break loose from you, and even now that I have to abandon you, I feel that I shall forever remain tenderly attached to you. Oh, true love is ever hopeful, and that was the reason why I remained in your house, although my father had applied for a divorce. I was always in hopes that your heart would return to me—oh, I did not suspect that you had never loved me!—and thus I hoped in vain, and must go now, for our divorce will be proclaimed to-day, and honor forbids me to remain here any longer. But now that I am going, listen once more to the warning voice of a friend. Frederick Gentz, turn back! Pursue no longer the slippery path of frivolity and voluptuousness. Break loose from the meshes of pleasures and sensuality. God has given you a noble mind, a powerful intellect—make good use of your surpassing abilities. Become as great and illustrious as Providence has intended you if you but be true to yourself. See, I believe in you, and although you only seem to live for pleasure and enjoyment, I know you are destined to accomplish great things, provided you strive to do so. Oh, let me beseech you to change your course, and to emerge from this whirlpool of dissipation and profligacy. Close your ears to the alluring songs of the sirens, and listen to the sublime voices resounding in your breast and calling you to the path of glory and honor. Follow them, Frederick Gentz—be a man, do not drift any longer aimlessly in an open boat, but step on a proud and glorious ship, grasp the helm and steer it out upon the ocean. You are the man to pilot the ship, and the ocean will obey you, and you will get into port loaded with riches, glory, and honor. Only make an effort. Remember my words, and now, Frederick Gentz, in order to live happily, never remember me!"

She turned round and hastily left the room. He stood immovable for several minutes, dreamily gazing after her, while her words were still resounding in his ears like an inspired prophecy. But when he heard the carriage roll away on the street, he started, passed his hand across his quivering face and whispered: "I have deeply wronged her; may God forgive me!"

Suddenly, however, he drew himself up to his full height, and a gleam of intense joy burst forth from his eyes. "I am free!" he exclaimed, loudly and in a tone of exultation. "Yes, I am free! My life and the world belong to me again. All women are mine again, Cupid and all the gods of love will boldly flit toward me, for they need not conceal themselves any longer from the face of a husband strolling on forbidden grounds, nor from the spying eyes of a jealous wife. Life is mine again, and I will enjoy it; yes I enjoy it. I will enjoy it like fragrant wine pressed to our lips in a golden goblet, sparkling with diamonds. Ah, how they are hammering and battering in the anteroom! Every stroke of theirs is a note of the glorious song of my liberty. The furniture of my household is gone; the pictures and looking-glasses are all gone—gone. The past and every thing reminding me thereof shall disappear from these rooms. I will have new furniture—furniture of gold and velvet, large Venetian mirrors, and splendid paintings. Oh, my rooms shall look as glorious and magnificent as those of a prince, and all Berlin shall speak of the splendor and luxury of Frederick Gentz. And to whom shall I be indebted for it? Not to my wife's dower, but to myself—to myself alone, to my talents, to my genius! Oh, in regard to this at least, poor Julia shall not have been mistaken. I shall gain fame, and glory, and honors; my name shall become a household word throughout all Europe; it shall reëcho in every cabinet; every minister shall have recourse to me, and—hark! What's that?" he suddenly interrupted himself. "I really believe they are quarrelling in the anteroom."

Indeed, a violent altercation was heard outside. Suddenly the door was pushed open, and a vigorous, broad-shouldered man, with a flushed and angry face, appeared on the threshold.

"Well," he exclaimed, with a bitter sneer, turning to the footman who stood behind him, "was I not right when I told you that Mr. Counsellor Gentz was at home? You would not announce me, because your master had ordered you not to admit any visitors of my class. But I want to be admitted. I will not permit myself to be shown out of the anteroom like a fool, while the counsellor here is snugly sitting on his sofa laughing at me."

"You see, my dear Mr. Werner, I am neither sitting on my sofa nor laughing at you," said Gentz, slowly approaching his angry visitor. "And now let me ask you what you want of me."

"What I want of you?" replied the stranger, with a sneer. "Sir, you know very well what I want of you. I want my money! I want the five hundred dollars you have been owing me for the last twelve months. I trusted your word and your name; I furnished you my best wines—my choicest champagne and the most exquisite

delicacies for your dinner parties. You have treated your friends; that was all right enough, but it should have been done at your expense, and not at mine. For that reason I am here, and you *must* pay me. For the hundredth and last time, I demand my money!"

"And if I now tell you for the hundredth, but not the last time, that I have not got any money?"

"Then I shall go to the war department and attach your salary."

"Ah, my dear friend, there you would be altogether too late," exclaimed Gentz, laughing. "My honorable landlord has outstripped you as far as that is concerned; he has attached my salary for a whole year, and I believe it is even insufficient to cover what I owe him."

"But in the d—l's name, sir, you must find some other means of satisfying my claim, for I tell you I shall not leave this room without getting my money."

"My dear Mr. Werner, pray do not shout so dreadfully," said Gentz, anxiously; "my ears are very sensitive, and such shouting terrifies me as much as a thunderstorm. I am quite willing to pay you, only point out to me a way to do it!"

"Borrow money of other people and then pay me!"

"My dear sir, that is a way I have exhausted long ago. There is no one willing to advance me money either on interest or on my word of honor."

"But how in the d—l's name are you going to pay me then, sir?"

"That is exactly what I don't know yet, but after a while I shall know, and that time will come very soon. For I tell you, sir, these days of humiliations and debts will soon cease for me. I shall occupy an exalted and brilliant position; the young king will give it to me, and—"

"Fiddlesticks!" exclaimed Werner, interrupting him; "do not feed me with such empty hopes after I have fed you with delicacies and quenched your thirst with my champagne."

"My dear sir, I have not partaken all alone of your good cheer; my friends have helped me, and now you ask me alone to pay the whole bill. That is contrary to natural law and to political economy."

"Mr. Counsellor, are you mocking me with your political economy? What do *you* know about economy?"

"Ah, I am quite familiar with it, and my book on English finances has brought me fame and honor."

"It would have been better for you, Mr. Counsellor, if you had attended to your own finances. All Berlin knows in what condition they are."

"Nevertheless, there were always excellent men putting a noble trust in me, and believing that I would repay the money I borrowed

of them. You are one of those excellent men, Mr. Werner, and I shall never forget it. Have a little patience, and I will pay you principal and interest."

"I cannot wait, Mr. Counsellor. I am in the greatest embarrassment myself; I have to redeem large notes in the course of a few days, and unless I can do so I am lost, my whole family is ruined, and my reputation gone; then I must declare myself insolvent, and suffer people to call me an impostor and villain, who incurs debts without knowing wherewith to pay them. Sir, I shall never suffer this, and therefore I must have my money, and I will not leave this room until you have paid my claim in full."

"In that case, my dear sir, I am afraid you will have to remain here and suffer the same distressing fate as Lot's unfortunate wife—"

"Sir, pray be serious, for my business here is of a very serious character. Five hundred dollars is no trifle; a man may squander them in a few days, but they may cause him also to commit suicide. Pay me, sir, pay me; I want my money!"

"For God's sake, do not shout in this manner. I told you once already that I cannot stand it. I know very well that five hundred dollars is a serious matter, and that you must have your money. I will make an effort, nay, I will do my utmost to get it for you; but you must be quiet. I pledge you my word that I will exert myself to the best of my power in order to obtain that amount for you, but in return you must promise me to go home quietly and peaceably, and to wait there until I bring you the money."

"What are you going to do? How are you going to get the money? You told me just now you were unable to borrow any thing."

"But somebody may give me those miserable five hundred dollars, and it seems to me that would do just as well."

"Oh, you are laughing at me."

"By no means, sir. Just be still and let me write a letter. I will afterward show you the address, and thereby let you know from whom I am expecting assistance."

He walked rapidly to his desk, penned a few lines, and placed the paper in a large envelope, which he sealed and directed.

"Read the address," he said, showing the letter to Mr. Werner.

"To his excellency the minister of the treasury, Count von Schulenburg-Kehnert, general of artillery," read Werner, with a hesitating tongue, and casting astonished and inquisitive glances upon Gentz. "And this is the distinguished gentleman to whom you apply for the money, Mr. Counsellor?"

"Yes, my friend; and you must confess that a minister of finance is the best man to apply to for money. I have written to his excellency that I stand in urgent need of five hundred dollars to-day, and