

And Lord Grenville passed the count with a stiff bow, and disappeared in the door of the anteroom.

Count Haugwitz heaved a profound sigh, and wiped off the perspiration pearly in large drops on his brow. He then took the king's letter from his side-pocket and perused it once more.

"It is the king's handwriting," he said, shaking his head, "and it is also his peculiar laconic style." And, as if to satisfy himself by hearing the contents of the letter, he read aloud:

"Do not enter into any negotiations with the ambassadors of Russia and Great Britain. We will hold another council of war. I am on my way to Berlin. Within an hour after receipt of these lines, I shall expect to see you in my cabinet. Yours, affectionately,

"FREDERICK WILLIAM."

"Yes, yes, the king has written that," said Haugwitz, folding the letter; "I must hastily dress, therefore, and repair to the palace. I am anxious to know whence this new wind is blowing, and who has succeeded in persuading the king to change his mind. Should my old friend, Köckeritz, after all, be favorable to France? It would have been better for him to inform me confidentially, and we might have easily agreed; for I am by no means hostile to France, and I am quite ready to vote for peace, if there be a chance to maintain it. Or should the young king really have come to this conclusion without being influenced by anybody? Why, that would be a dangerous innovation! We should take quick and decisive steps against it. Well, we will see! I will go and dress."

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE FRIEND OF PEACE.

THE king, with his wonted punctuality, had reached Berlin precisely at the specified time, and when Count Haugwitz arrived at the palace he was immediately conducted to the king, who was waiting for him in his cabinet.

Count Haugwitz exchanged a rapid glance with Baron Köckeritz, who was standing in a bay window, and then approached the king, who was pacing the room with slow steps and a gloomy air.

He nodded to the minister, and silently continued his promenade across the room for some time after his arrival. He then stepped to his desk, which was covered with papers and documents, and sitting down on a plain cane chair in front of it, he invited the gentlemen to take seats by his side.

"The courier reached you in time, I suppose?" he said, turning to Count Haugwitz.

"Your majesty, your royal letter reached me while holding a conference with the ambassadors of Russia and Great Britain, and just when I was about to inform them of your majesty's resolution to join the coalition."

"You had not done so, then?" asked the king, hastily. "It was your first conference, then?"

"Yes, your majesty, it was our first conference. I invited the ambassadors immediately after my return to call on me."

"It took you, then, two weeks to travel from Minden to Berlin!"

"Yes, your majesty, two weeks."

"And yet these gentlemen are in favor of an advance of the army!" exclaimed the king, vehemently. "Yes, if all of my soldiers were encamped directly on the frontier of Holland and had their base of supplies there! But in order to send a sufficient army to Holland, I should have to withdraw a portion of my soldiers from the provinces of Silesia and Prussia. They would have to march across Westphalia, across the same Westphalia where it took you with your carriage two weeks to travel from Minden to Berlin. And my soldiers have no other carriages but their feet. They would stick in that dreadful mire by hundreds and thousands; they would perish there of hunger, and that march would cost me more men than a great, decisive battle. I had given you my word that I would join the coalition, Count Haugwitz; I had even authorized you to negotiate with the ambassadors of Russia and Great Britain, but on the road to Wesel I was obliged to change my mind. Ask Baron Köckeritz what we had to suffer on the first day of our journey, and how far we had got after twelve hours' travelling."

"Yes, indeed, it was a terrible trip," said General von Köckeritz, heaving a sigh. "In spite of the precautions of the coachman, his majesty's carriage was upset five times in a single day, and finally it stuck so firmly in the mud that we had to send for assistance to the neighboring villages in order to set it going once more. We were twelve hours on the road, and made only three German miles during that time."

"And we had to stop over night in a miserable village, where we scarcely found a bed to rest our bruised and worn-out limbs," said the king, indignantly. "And I should expose my army to such fatigues and sufferings! I should, heedless of all consideration of humanity, and solely in obedience to political expediency, suffer them to perish in those endless marshes, that would destroy the artillery and the horses of the cavalry. And all that for what purpose? In order to drag Prussia violently into a war which might

be avoided by prudence and by a sagacious reserve; in order to hasten to the assistance of other powers not even threatened by France, and only in return to draw upon ourselves her wrath and enmity!"

"But at the same time the sympathies of all Europe," said General von Köckeritz, eagerly. "Your majesty has permitted me to speak my mind at all times openly and honestly, and I must therefore persist in what I previously said to you. Now or never is the time for Prussia to give up her neutrality, and to assume a decided attitude. France has placed herself in antagonism with all law and order, and with all treaties consecrated by centuries of faithful observance; she is threatening all monarchies and dynasties, and is trying to win over the nations to her republican ideas. And at the head of this French Republic there is a young general, whose glory is filling the whole world, who has attached victory to his colors, and who intoxicates the nations by his republican phrases of liberty and fraternity, so that, in their mad joy, they overturn thrones, expel their sovereigns, and awake them from their ecstasy under the republican yoke of France. Your majesty, I believe it to be the duty of every prince to preserve his people from such errors, and, jointly with his people, to raise a bulwark against the evil designs of France. Austria and Russia have already begun this holy task; their heroic armies have driven back on all sides the hosts of the overbearing French, who have been compelled to abandon their conquests in Italy and Switzerland. If your majesty should join England, occupy Holland, restore that country to its legitimate sovereign, and menace the northern frontier of France, while Austria is menacing her southern frontier, the arrogance of the republic would be tamed, the overflowing torrent would be forced back into its natural bed, and Europe would have at last peace and tranquillity."

"First of all, every one ought to think of himself," said the king, sharply. "Prussia has hitherto enjoyed peace and tranquillity, and I believe it to be my principal task to preserve these blessings to my country. I am no ruler hankering after glory and honors; I do not want to make any conquests, nor to acquire any new territory, but I will content myself with the humble renown of having fulfilled my duties as a ruler to the best of my ability, and according to the dictates of my conviction, as the father and friend of my people. Hence I have not dared to identify my name with that of my great ancestor, Frederick the Second, and call myself Frederick the Third, for a name imposes obligations, and I know very well that I am no hero and genius, like Frederick the Great. I assumed, therefore, the name of Frederick William, as

the successor of my peaceable father, Frederick William the Second. It is true, Frederick William the Second has waged a war against France, but precisely that war has satisfied me that a war with France may involve Prussia in the greatest dangers and calamities. I participated in the campaign of 1792, gentlemen, and I must honestly confess that I feel little inclination to resume a war which, at best, will only produce sacrifices for us, and no reward whatever."

"There is a reward, however, your majesty," said Count Haugwitz, solemnly. "It is the preservation of the thrones, and of monarchical principles. We cannot fail to perceive that the thrones are being menaced, and those republics of America, France, and Italy are teaching the nations very dangerous lessons—the lessons of self-government and popular sovereignty. That insatiable General Bonaparte has attached these two words to his colors, and if the princes do not combat him with united strength, and try to take those colors from him, he will soon carry them into the midst of all nations, who will rapturously hail him, and desire to follow the example of France."

"I have no fears for myself," said the king, calmly; "but even if I should be so unfortunate as to be obliged to doubt the love and fidelity of my people, the thought of my personal safety and of the fate of my dynasty ought not to exert a decisive influence upon my resolutions concerning the welfare of my country. I told you before, I want to be the father of my country; a good father always thinks first of the welfare of his children, and tries to promote it; only when he has succeeded in doing so he thinks of himself."

"A good father ought to strive, first of all, to preserve himself to his children," exclaimed Count Haugwitz. "An orphan people is as unfortunate as are orphan children. Your people need you, sire; they need a wise and gentle hand to direct them."

"And yet you want to put the sword in my hand, and that I should lead my people to war and carnage," said the king.

"In order to make peace bloom forth from war and carnage," said Count Haugwitz, gravely. "The bloody monster of war is stalking now through the whole world, and, as it cannot be avoided, it is better to attack it, and to confront it in a bold manner. Russia, Austria, and England are ready to do so, and they stretch out their hands toward you. Refuse to grasp them, and, for the doubtful and dangerous friendship of France, you will have gained three powerful enemies."

"And if I grasp their hands I shall not advance the interests of Prussia by shedding the blood of my people, but only those of Austria and Russia," replied the king. "If France should be greatly

weakened, or even entirely annihilated, serious dangers would arise for Prussia, for Austria and Russia would unite in that case, for the purpose of menacing our own security. They would easily and quickly find compensations for themselves, and Austria especially would profit by the losses of France; for she would recover the Netherlands, which Prussia is to conquer now by the blood of her soldiers, and acquire, perhaps, even Bavaria. But what compensation would fall to the share of Prussia? Or do you believe, perhaps, Austria, from a feeling of gratitude toward us, would cede to Prussia a portion of her former hereditary possessions in the Netherlands? No, no—no war with France! Let Russia and Austria fight alone; they are strong enough for it. I say all this after mature deliberation, and this is not only my opinion, but also that of distinguished and experienced generals. General von Tempelhof, too, is of my opinion, and confirmed it in a memorial which I asked him to draw up for me.”

“Your majesty requested the Duke of Brunswick, also, to write a memorial on the intended coalition against France,” said General von Kockeritz, hastily. “On our arrival I received this memorial and read it, according to your majesty’s orders. The duke persists in the opinion that it is necessary for the honor, glory, and safety of Prussia to join the coalition, and to oppose France in a determined manner. Your majesty, I must confess that I share the view maintained by the duke.”

“So do I!” exclaimed Count Haugwitz, “and so do all your subjects. Sire, your whole people ardently desire to chastise this arrogant France, and to sweep these hosts of Jacobins from the soil of Germany. Oh, my king and lord, only make a trial, only raise your voice and call upon the people to rally around your standards, and to wage war against France! You will see them rally enthusiastically around the Prussian eagles and fervently bless their courageous king. And when you begin this struggle, sire, you and your army will have a formidable, an invincible ally. That ally is *public opinion*, sire! Public opinion requires this war, and public opinion is no longer something dumb and creeping in the dark, but something that has a voice, and that raises it in ringing, thundering notes in the newspaper and magazine. One of these voices spoke a few weeks ago in the *Political Journal*, as follows: ‘Can our monarch abandon the German empire? Can he look on quietly while France is making preparations for attacking Prussia as soon as her turn shall come? It is only necessary for us to think of Italy, Switzerland, and Holland in order to appreciate the friendship of France.’ \* This voice has reëchoed throughout Prussia, and

\* “Political Journal.” Berlin, 1798.

every one is looking up to the throne of your majesty anxiously and hopefully; every one is satisfied that you will draw the sword for the honor and rights of Germany. Sire, at this moment I am nothing but the voice of your people, and therefore I implore your majesty to take a bold and manful resolution. Draw the sword for Prussia’s honor and Germany’s safety.”

“I implore your majesty likewise to do so,” exclaimed General von Kockeritz. “I dare to implore your majesty, in the name of your people. Oh, sire, take a bold and manly resolution! Draw the sword for Prussia’s honor and Germany’s safety.”

The king had risen and paced the room with violent steps. His features, usually so quiet and gentle, were not uneasy and agitated; a gloomy cloud covered his brow, and a painful expression trembled on his lips. He seemed to carry on a violent and desperate inward struggle, and his breath issued painfully and gaspingly from his breast. Finally, after a long pause, he approached the two gentlemen who had risen and were looking at him with evident anxiety.

“I am unable to refute all these reasons,” said the king, sighing, “but an inward voice tells me that I ought not to break my word, and commence hostilities. If the welfare of the state requires it, however, I shall join the coalition, but only on condition that the Austrians attack Mentz in force, take the fortress by assault, and thereby cover the left flank of my base of operations.\* And now we will close our consultation for to-day. Go, Count Haugwitz, and resume your negotiations with the ambassadors of Russia and Great Britain. As for you, General von Kockeritz, I beg you to bring me the memorial of the Duke of Brunswick, and then you may return to your house and take some rest, of which you doubtless stand greatly in need after the fatigues you have undergone.”

He greeted the gentlemen with a hasty nod and turned his back to them, without paying any attention to the deep and reverential bows with which the minister and the general withdrew toward the door.

When the two gentlemen had reached the anteroom, they satisfied themselves by a rapid glance that they were alone, and that nobody was able to hear them.

“He was quite angry,” whispered General von Kockeritz; “he only yielded with the utmost reluctance; and, believe me, my friend, the king will never forgive us this victory we have obtained over him; it may produce the worst results and endanger our whole position.”

“It is true,” said Count Haugwitz, sighing, “the king dismissed

\* The king’s own words.—Vide “Memoiren zur Geschichte des Preuss. Staats.” By Col. Massenbach. Vol. iii., p. 88.

us in a more abrupt and harsh manner than ever before. It would have been better for us to yield, and let the king have his own way. Who knows but he is right, and an alliance with France, perhaps, would be more advantageous than this coalition with Austria and Russia? It startles me somewhat that Austria should be so anxious to obtain the accession of Prussia to the coalition, for Austria certainly would feel no inclination to propose any alliance that might prove profitable to Prussia. It may be best for Prussia, after all, to side with France."

"But public opinion would execrate such an alliance," said General von Köckeritz, sighing. "Public opinion—"

"My dear friend," interrupted Count Haugwitz, angrily, "public opinion is like the wind, changing its direction every day. Success alone influences and decides public opinion, and if France should vanquish the three powers, the same public opinion which now urges us to join the coalition would condemn us. Public opinion should not induce us to endanger our position and our power over the king for its sake. And I tell you, I am uneasy about this matter. The king was greatly irritated; he seemed angry with us, because he felt that he is not entirely free and independent, and that he has granted us some power over his decisions."

"We should yield even now," said General von Köckeritz, anxiously. "We should confess to the king that his reasons have convinced us, that we have been mistaken—"

"So that he would feel with twofold force that not his own free will, but our altered opinion, decided his action?" asked the minister. "No, we must give the king a chance to decide the whole question by his own untrammelled authority, and to prove that he alone is the ruler of Prussia's destinies. You can give him the best opportunity for so doing, for you have a pretext to return to him at once. Did not the king order you to bring him the memorial of the Duke of Brunswick?"

"Good Heaven! that is true; the king is waiting for the memorial!" exclaimed the general, in terror. "In my anxiety, I even forgot his orders."

"Hasten, my friend, to bring it at once to him," said Count Haugwitz, "and with your leave I shall take a little rest in the room which the king has been kind enough to assign to you here in the palace. He will perhaps countermand the instructions he has just given me."

A few minutes afterward General von Köckeritz, with the memorial in his hands, reëntered the cabinet of the king, who was still slowly pacing the room, without noticing the arrival of his adviser.

"Your majesty," said the general, timidly, "here is the memorial of Ferdinand, duke of Brunswick."

"Just lay it on my desk there," said the king, continuing his promenade.

General von Köckeritz stepped to the desk and placed the memorial on it. Just at that moment the king had arrived at the desk too, and paused in front of the general. He fixed a long and mournful glance upon him and slowly shook his head.

"You have deserted me also," said the king, sighing. "You may be right, gentlemen. I have yielded to your more profound sagacity for the time being, but an inward voice tells me that it is wrong to break the peace because France at the present time is being threatened on all sides, and because her armies have been defeated."

"Your majesty alone has to decide the whole question," said Köckeritz, solemnly. "Your conviction is our law, and we submit in dutiful obedience to your majesty's more profound sagacity. It is for you to command, and for us to obey."

A sudden gleam beamed in the eyes of the king, and a deeper blush mantled his cheeks. The general saw it, and comprehended it very well.

"Moreover," he added, with downcast eyes and with an air of confusion, "moreover, I have to make a confession to your majesty in my own name and in that of Count Haugwitz. While trying to win your majesty by our arguments for the war and for the coalition, it has happened to us that we were converted by the arguments your majesty adduced *against* the war and *against* the coalition, and that your majesty convinced us of the fallacy of our opinion. It is, perhaps, very humiliating to admit that our conviction has veered around so suddenly, but your majesty's convincing eloquence—"

"No, not my poor eloquence, but the truth has convinced you," exclaimed the king, joyfully, "and I thank you for having the truly manly and noble courage to admit that you were mistaken and have changed your mind. I am grateful to Count Haugwitz, too, and I shall never forget this generous and highly honorable confession of yours. It is a new proof for me that you are faithful and reliable friends and servants of mine, men who are not ashamed of acknowledging an error, and who care more for the welfare of the state than for carrying their own point. I therefore withdraw my previous instructions. I shall not join the coalition. Hasten to Haugwitz, my friend. Tell him to go forthwith to the Russian ambassador and inform him that my army will not assist the forces of the coalition, and that I shall take no part whatever in the war against France. Haugwitz is to say the same to the English ambassador,

and to inform him that I shall not claim the subsidy of six million dollars, which England offered to pay me for my auxiliary army. Six million dollars! I believe General Tempelhof was right when he said the siege of a second-rate fortress would cost a million dollars, and in Holland we should have to take more than ten fortresses from the stubborn and intrepid French. This would cost us more than ten million dollars, and, moreover, we should have to use up the powder and ammunition destined for our own defence. Those six million dollars that England would pay me would not cover our outlay; I should be obliged to add four million dollars more, and to shed the blood of my brave and excellent soldiers without obtaining, perhaps, even the slightest advantage for Prussia. Hasten, general, to communicate my fixed and irrevocable resolution to Count Haugwitz. Prussia remains neutral, and takes no part whatever in the war against France!"

"I hasten to carry out your majesty's orders," exclaimed General von Köckeritz, walking toward the door, "and I know that Count Haugwitz will submit to the royal decision with the same joyful humility and obedience as myself."

The king's eyes followed him with an expression of genuine emotion.

"He is a faithful and honest friend," he said, "and that is, indeed, a rare boon for a king. Ah, I have succeeded, then, in averting this bloody thunder-cloud, once more from Prussia, and I shall preserve the blessings of peace to my people. And now, I believe, I may claim some credit for the manner in which I have managed this delicate affair, and repose a little from the cares of government. I will go to Louisa—her sly and the smiles of my children will reward me for having done my duty as a king."

#### CHAPTER XXXIII.

##### THE LEGITIMATE WIFE.

THE Prince von Reuss, Henry XIV., Austrian ambassador at Berlin, had died an hour ago. A painful disease had confined him to his bed for weeks, and Marianne Meier had nursed him during this time with the greatest love and devotion. She had never left his bedside, and no one except herself, the physicians, and a few servants had been permitted to enter the sick-room. The brothers and nephews of the prince, who had come to Berlin in order to see their dying relative once more, had vainly solicited this favor. The physicians had told them that the suffering prince was un-

able to bear any excitement, there being great danger that immediate death would be the consequence of a scene between them. The prince, moreover, had sent his trusted *valet de chambre* to his brother, and informed him, even if he were entirely well, he would not accept the visits of a brother who had shown him so little fraternal love, and caused him so much grief by opposing his faithful and beloved friend Marianne Meier in the most offensive and insulting manner.

The distinguished relatives of the prince, therefore, had to content themselves with watching his palace from afar, and with bribing a few of his servants to transmit to them hourly reports about the condition of the patient.

And now Prince Henry XIV. was dead, and his brother was his successor and heir, the prince having left no legitimate offspring. It was universally believed that he had never been married, and that his immense fortune, his estates and titles, would devolve on his brother. It is true there was still that mistress of his, fair Marianne Meier, to whom the prince, in his sentimental infatuation, had paid the honors of a legitimate wife. But, of course, she had no claims whatever to the inheritance; it would be an act of generosity to leave her in possession of the costly presents the prince had made to her, and to pay her a small pension.

The prince had hardly closed his eyes, therefore, and the doctors had just pronounced him dead, when his brother, now Prince Henry XV., accompanied by a few lawyers, entered the palace of the deceased in order to take possession of his property, and to have the necessary seals applied to the doors. However, to give himself at least a semblance of brotherly love, the prince desired first to repair to the death-room, and to take a last leave of the deceased. But in the anteroom he met the two footmen of his brother, who dared to stop his passage, telling him that no one was allowed to enter.

"And who dares to issue such orders?" asked the prince, without stopping a moment.

"Madame has done so," said the first *valet de chambre*. "Madame wants to be alone with the remains of her husband."

The prince shrugged his shoulders, and, followed by the legal gentlemen, he walked to the door, which he vainly tried to open.

"I believe that woman has locked the door," said the prince, angrily.

"Yes, sir, madame has locked the door," said the *valet de chambre*; "she does not want to be disturbed in her grief by mere visits of condolence."

"Well, let us leave her, then, to her grief," exclaimed the prince, with a sarcastic smile. "Come, gentlemen, let us attend to our

business. Let us take an inventory of the furniture in the several rooms and then seal them. You may be our guide, valet."

But the *valet de chambre* shrugged his shoulders and shook his head. "Pardon me, sir, that is impossible. His highness, our late prince and master, several days ago, when he felt that his end was drawing near, caused every room to be locked and sealed by the first *attaché* of the legation in the presence of all the members of the embassy. The keys to all the rooms, however, were handed by order of the prince to madame, his wife."

The new prince, Henry XV., turned somewhat uneasily to the legal gentlemen.

"Have we a right to open the doors forcibly?"

"No, that would be contrary to law," said one of the lawyers, in a low voice. "The late prince has doubtless left some directions in relation to this matter and intrusted them to the officers of the legation. Your highness ought to apply to those gentlemen."

"Is the first *attaché* of the legation, Baron Werdern, in the palace?" said the prince to the *valet de chambre*.

"No, your highness, he has just gone out with a few other gentlemen of the legation to request the attendance of two officers of the law, that the will may be opened and read in their presence."

"My brother has made a will, then?" asked the prince, in a somewhat frightened tone.

"Yes, your highness, and he laid it, in the presence of every member of the legation, of two officers of the law, and of every servant, three days ago, in a strong box, the key of which he handed to the officers of the law, when the box was deposited in the archives of the legation."

"And why did Baron Werdern go now for the officers of the law?"

"In order to request their attendance in the palace, the late prince having left the verbal order that his will should be opened two hours after his death. The baron was going to invite your highness likewise to be present."

"Well, let us wait here for the arrival of the gentlemen," said Prince Henry XV., shrugging his shoulders. "It seems a little strange to me, however, that I must wait here in the anteroom like a supplicant. Go and announce my visit to madame!"

The *valet de chambre* bowed and left the room. The prince called the two lawyers to his side. "What do you think of this whole matter?" he asked, in a low voice.

The two representatives of the law shrugged their shoulders. "Your highness, every thing seems to have been done here legally. We must wait for the return of the gentlemen and for the opening of the will."

The *valet de chambre* now reëntered the room, and approached the prince. "Madame sends her respects to the prince, and begs him to excuse her inability to admit her brother-in-law just now, as she is dressing at the present moment. She will have the honor to salute her gracious brother-in-law at the ceremony."

"Does that woman call myself her gracious brother-in-law?" asked the prince, with an air of the most profound contempt, turning his back to the *valet de chambre*. "We will wait here, then, gentlemen," he added, turning to the lawyers. "It seems that woman intends to take a petty revenge at this moment for the contempt with which I have always treated her. I shall know, however, how to chastise her for it, and—"

"Hush, your highness," whispered one of the lawyers, "they are coming!"

In fact, the large folding-doors were opened at that moment, and on a catafalque, hung with black cloth, the remains of the prince were lying in state; on both sides of the catafalque large tapers were burning in heavy silver chandeliers.

Prince Henry, awed by this solemn scene, walked forward, and the grave countenance of his brother, with whom he had lived so long in discord, and whom he had not seen for many years, filled his heart with uneasiness and dismay.

He approached the room, followed by the legal gentlemen, with hesitating, noiseless steps. On the threshold of the door there now appeared the first *attaché* of the legation, Baron Werdern, who, bowing deeply, invited the prince whisperingly to come in.

The prince walked in, and on crossing the threshold, it seemed to him as if his brother's corpse had moved, and as if his half-opened eyes were fixed upon him with a threatening expression.

The prince averted his eyes from the corpse in dismay and saluted the gentlemen standing around a table covered with black cloth. Two large chandeliers, with burning tapers, a strong box, and writing-materials, had been placed upon this table; on one side, two arm-chairs, likewise covered with black cloth, were to be seen.

The baron conducted the prince to one of these arm-chairs, and invited him to sit down. Prince Henry did so, and then looked anxiously at the officers of the law, who were standing at the table in their black robes, and behind whom were assembled all the members of the legation, the physicians, and the servants of the late prince.

A long pause ensued. Then, all at once, the folding doors opened, and the prince's steward appeared on the threshold.

"Her highness the Princess Dowager von Reuss," he said, in a loud, solemn voice, and Marianne's tall, imposing form entered the

room. She was clad in a black dress with a long train; a black veil, fastened above her head on a diadem, surrounded her noble figure like a dark cloud, and in this cloud beamed her expansive, thoughtful forehead, and her large flaming eyes sparkled. Her features were breathing the most profound and majestic tranquillity; and when she now saluted the gentlemen with a condescending nod, her whole bearing was so impressive and distinguished that even Prince Henry was unable to remain indifferent, and he rose respectfully from his arm-chair.

Marianne, however, paid no attention to him, but approached the remains of her husband. With inimitable grace she knelt down on one side of the catafalque. The priest who had entered with her knelt down on the other.

Both of them muttered fervent prayers for the deceased. Marianne then arose, and, bending over the corpse, imprinted a long kiss upon the forehead of her departed husband.

"Farewell, my husband!" she said, in her full, melodious voice, and then turned around and stepped toward the table. Without deigning to glance at the prince, she sat down in the arm-chair.

"I request the officers of the law now to open the strong box," she said, in an almost imperious voice.

One of the officers handed the key to Baron Werdern; the latter opened the strong box, and took from it a sealed paper, which he gave to the officer.

"Do you recognize the paper as the same yourself locked in this strong box?" she asked. "Is it the same which his highness the late Prince von Reuss, Henry XIV., handed to you?"

"Yes, it is the same," said the two officers; "it is the will of the late prince."

"And you know that his highness ordered us to open it immediately after his death, and to promulgate its contents. Proceed, therefore, according to the instructions of the deceased."

One of the officers broke the seal, and now that he unfolded the paper, Marianne turned her head toward the prince, and fixed her burning eyes piercingly upon his countenance.

The officer commenced reading the will. First came the preamble, to be found in every will, and then the officer read in a louder voice, as follows:

"In preparing to appear before the throne of the Lord, I feel especially called upon to return my most heart-felt thanks, in this public manner, to my wife, Princess Marianne, *née* Meier, for the constancy, love, and devotion which she has shown to me during our whole married life, and for the surpassing patience and self-abnegation with which she nursed me during my last sickness. I

deem myself especially obliged to make this acknowledgment, inasmuch as my wife, in her true love for me, has suffered many undeserved aspersions and insults, because, in accordance with my wishes, she kept our marriage secret, and in consequence had to bear the sneers of evil-disposed persons, and the insults of malicious enemies. But she is my lawful wife before God and man, and she is fully entitled to assume the name of a Princess Dowager von Reuss. I hereby expressly authorize her to do so, and, by removing the secret that has been observed during my life in relation to our marriage, I authorize my wife to assume the title and rank due to her, and hereby command my brother, as well as his sons and the other members of my family, to pay to the Princess Dowager von Reuss, *née* Meier, the respect and deference due to her as the widow of the late head of the family, and to which she is justly entitled by her virtue, her blameless conduct, her respectability, beauty, and amiability. The Princess Dowager von Reuss is further authorized to let her servants wear the livery and color of my house, to display the coat-of-arms of the princes von Reuss on her carriages, and to enjoy the full privileges of her rank. If my brother Henry, the heir of my titles, should have any doubts as to her rights in this regard, the officer reading my will is requested to ask him whether or not he desires to obtain further evidence in relation to the legitimacy of my marriage."

"Does your highness require any further evidence?" asked the officer, interrupting the reading of the will.

"I do," said the prince, who had listened to the reading of the will with a pale and gloomy mien.

"Here is that evidence," said the priest, beckoning the sexton, who stood on the threshold of the door. The latter approached the priest, and handed him a large volume bound in black morocco.

"It is the church register, in which I have entered all the marriages, christenings, and funeral masses performed in the chapel of the Austrian embassy," said the priest. "On this page you find the minutes of the marriage of the Prince von Reuss, Henry XIV., and Miss Marianne Meier. The ceremony took place two years ago. I have baptized the princess myself, and thereby received her into the pale of the holy Catholic Church, and I have likewise performed the rite of marriage on the occasion referred to. I hereby certify that the princess is the lawful wife of the late prince, as is testified by the minutes entered on the church register. The marriage was performed in the chapel, and in the presence of witnesses, who have signed the minutes, like myself."

"I witnessed the marriage," said Baron Werdern, "and so did

the military counsellor Gentz, who, if your highness should desire further testimony, will be ready to corroborate our statements."

"No," said the prince, gloomily, "I require no further testimony. I am fully satisfied of the truth of your statements, and will now pay my respects to my sister-in-law, the Princess Dowager von Reuss, *née* Meier."

He bowed, with a sarcastic smile, which, for a moment, caused the blood to rush to Marianne's pale cheeks, and then carelessly leaned back into his arm-chair.

"Be kind enough to proceed," he said, turning to the officer.

The latter took up the will again and read its several sections and clauses. The prince bequeathed his palace, with every thing in it, to his wife Marianne, and likewise his carriages, his horses, and the family diamonds he had inherited from his mother. The remainder of his considerable property he left to his brother, asking him to agree with the Princess Marianne on a pension corresponding with her rank and position in society. Then followed some legacies and pensions for the old servants of his household, a few gifts to the poor, and last the appropriation of a sum for which a mass was to be read on every anniversary of his death, for the peace of his soul.

The ceremony was over. The officers of the law and the members of the embassy had left the death-room, and on a sign from Marianne the servants had also withdrawn.

The prince had exchanged a few words in a low voice with his two lawyers, whereupon they likewise had left the room. No one except the brother and the wife of the deceased remained now in this gloomy room, illuminated by the flickering tapers. Marianne, however, seemed to take no notice of the presence of her brother-in-law; she had approached the corpse again, and gazed at it with the most profound emotion.

"I thank you, Henry," she said, loudly and solemnly. "I thank you from the bottom of my heart; you have given back to me my honor; you have revenged me upon your haughty relatives, and upon the sneering world!"

"Do not thank him, respected sister-in-law, for he has left you poor," said the prince, approaching her, and contemplating her with a freezing smile. "My brother has made you a princess, it is true, but he has not given you the means to live as a princess. He has bequeathed to you this palace, with its costly furniture; he has bequeathed to you his carriages and diamonds; but a palace and furniture are no estates, and in order to keep carriages one has to feed men and horses. It is true, you can sell the palace and the diamonds, and obtain for them several hundred thousand florins. That sum would be amply sufficient for a person leading a retired

life, but it is very little for one who desires to keep up a princely household, and to live in the style becoming a lady of your beauty and social position. My brother has foreseen all this, and he indirectly gave us a chance to come to an understanding, by asking me to agree with you on a pension to be paid you. Hence I ask you, how much do you demand? How high will be the sum for which you will sell me your mourning veil, your name, and your title of princess dowager? For you doubtless anticipate, madame, that I do not propose to acknowledge you publicly as my sister-in-law, and to receive a—Marianne Meier among the members of my family. Tell me your price, therefore, madame."

Marianne looked at him with flaming eyes, a deep blush of anger mantling her cheeks. "Prince von Reuss," she said, proudly, "you will have to permit the world to call me your sister-in-law. I am your sister-in-law, and I shall prove to the world and to you that it is unnecessary to have been born under a princely canopy in order to live, think, and act like a princess. My husband has rewarded me in this hour for years of suffering and humiliation. Do you believe that my reward is for sale for vile money? And if you should offer me millions, I should reject them if, in return, I were to lead a nameless, disreputable, and obscure existence. I will sooner die of starvation as a Princess Dowager von Reuss than live in opulence as Marianne Meier. This is my last word; and now, sir, begone! Do not desecrate this room by your cold and egotistic thoughts, and by your heartless calculations! Honor the repose of the dead and the grief of the living. Begone!"

She proudly turned away from him, and bent once more over the corpse. While she was doing so her black veil, with a gentle rustle, fell down over her face and wrapped her, as well as the corpse, as in a dark mist, so that the two forms seemed to melt into one.

The prince felt a shudder pervading his frame, and the presence of the corpse embarrassed him.

"I will not disturb you now in your grief, madame," he said; "I hope your tears will flow less copiously as soon as the funeral is over, and I shall then send my lawyer, for the purpose of treating further with you."

He bowed, and hastened to the door. She seemed neither to have heard his words, nor to have noticed that he was withdrawing. She was still bending over the remains of her husband, the black cloud surrounding her and the corpse.