

"But would not a royal crown crush my state which is too small for it?" asked the elector.

"Well, we shall enlarge it so as to render it able and worthy to support a royal crown," exclaimed Napoleon, hastily. "I believe I shall have the power and opportunity to bestow on my ally, the elector of Wurtemberg, some aggrandizements in Germany to compensate and reward him for the auxiliaries which he is to furnish to me. Besides, your task is a truly grand one. You shall assist me in subduing Austria, that arrogant Austria which would like to treat all Germany as her property, and who considers all German princes as her servants and vassals."

"You are right," said the elector, vehemently; "Austria constantly endeavors to meddle with my prerogatives in an unbecoming and arrogant manner. She would like to degrade us to the position of vassals who must always be ready to obey their emperor, but who, when they are themselves in danger, never can count on the assistance and support of their emperor."

"Let us, then, dispel Austria's illusion as though she were your master," said Napoleon, smiling. "Become my ally, and believe me, we shall have the power to teach the Emperor of Austria to respect the *King* of Wurtemberg, my ally. Will you be my ally for that purpose? Will you assist me, as a German prince, in delivering Germany from the yoke Austria has laid around her neck?"

"Sire, I am ready to save Germany with my life-blood!" exclaimed the elector, "and as your majesty has come to deliver Germany from Austria, it would be a crime for any German prince to withhold his assistance from you. Hence, I accept your alliance. Here is my hand! I shall stand by you with my troops and with my honor!"\*

#### CHAPTER XLIV.

##### QUEEN LOUISA'S PIANO LESSON.

THE queen sat at the piano, practising one of Reichardt's new songs which her singing-teacher, the royal concert-master and composer, Himmel, had just brought to her. The queen wore a most brilliant costume, which, however, seemed calculated less for her silent cabinet and for the music-teacher than for a great gala-day

\* The whole account of this interview is strictly historical. Vide "Memoirs of General de Wolzogen," and Häusser's "History of Germany," vol. ii., p. 613. The Elector of Wurtemberg became the *third* German ally of the French emperor, the Electors of Bavaria and Baden having preceded him. He furnished ten thousand German troops to Napoleon.

and an aristocratic assembly at court. A white satin dress, interwoven with golden flowers, and closely fitting, according to the fashion of that period, surrounded her noble figure. Her splendid white arms were bare, and her wrists were adorned with two bracelets of gold and precious stones. Her neck and shoulders, showing the noble lines and forms of a Venus of Melos, were uncovered like her arms, and adorned only with jewelry. Her hair, surrounding a forehead of classical beauty in waving masses, was fastened behind in a Grecian knot holding the golden diadem, set with diamonds, which arose on the queen's head.\* A gentle blush mantled her cheeks, and a smile of melancholy and tenderness trembled on her purple lips. She had her hands on the keys, and her eyes were fixed on the music-book before her; but she had suddenly ceased singing in the middle of the piece, and her voice had died away in a long sigh.

Mr. Himmel, the concert-master, stood behind her; he was a man more than forty years of age, with a broad, full face, beaming with health, and a tall and slender form which would have been more fitting for the head of an Apollo than for this head, which reminded the beholder of a buffalo rather than of a god.

When the queen paused, a joyful smile overspread his features, which had hitherto been gloomy and ill at ease. "Your majesty pauses?" he asked, hastily. "Well, I wish your majesty joy of it. That Mr. Reichardt, of Halle, is too sentimental and arrogant a composer, and never should I have dared to lay these new pieces of his before your majesty if you had not asked me to bring you every thing written by Reichardt. Well, you have seen it now; it displeases your majesty, and I am glad of it, for—"

"For," said the queen, gently interrupting him, "for the great composer Himmel is again jealous of the great composer Reichardt. Is it not so?"

She raised her dark-blue eyes at this question to Himmel's face, and he saw to his dismay that there were tears in those eyes.

"What!" he asked in terror, "your majesty has wept?"

She nodded in the affirmative, smiling gently. "Yes," she said, after a pause, "I have wept, and hence I could not continue singing. Do not scold me, do not be angry with me, my dear and stern teacher. This song has moved me profoundly; it is so simple and yet so touching, that it must have come out of the depths of a truly noble heart."

Mr. Himmel replied only with a low sigh and an almost inaudible murmur, which the queen, however, understood very well.

\* A portrait, representing the queen precisely in this costume, may be seen at the royal palace in Berlin.



"Perhaps," she said, trying gently to heal the jealous pangs of the composer, "perhaps I was so deeply moved by the words rather than by the music; these words are so beautiful that it seems to me Goethe never wrote any thing more beautiful."

And bending over the music-book, she read in an undertone:

"Wer nie sein Brod mit Thränen ass,  
Wer nie die kummervollen Nächte  
Auf seinem Bette einsam sass,  
Der kennt euch nicht, Ihr himmlischen Mächte!"\*

"Say yourself, Mr. Himmel, is not that beautiful and touching?" she asked, looking up again to her teacher.

"Beautiful and touching for those who have wept much and suffered much," said Himmel, harshly; "but I cannot conceive why these words should touch your majesty, whose whole life has hitherto illuminated the world like an uninterrupted sunny spring morning."

"Hitherto," repeated the queen, musingly, "yes, hitherto, indeed, my life was a sunny spring morning, but who is able to fathom what clouds may soon appear on the horizon, and how cloudy and gloomy the evening may be? This song reëchoes in my soul like a melancholy foreboding, and clings to its wings as if it wanted to paralyze their flight. 'He who never ate his bread with tears,' ah, how mournful it sounds, and what a long story of suffering is contained in these few words!"

The queen paused, and two tears, glistening more beautifully than the diamonds of her golden diadem, slowly ran down her cheeks.

Concert-master Himmel was not courageous enough to interrupt the silence of the queen, or, may be, he had not listened very attentively to her words, and his thoughts perhaps were fixed on matters of an entirely different character, for his air was absent and gloomy; his eyes glanced around the room, but returned continually to the lovely form of the queen.

Suddenly Louisa seemed to arouse herself violently from her gloomy meditation, and after hastily wiping the tears from her eyes she forced herself to smile.

"It is not good to give way to melancholy forebodings," she said, "particularly in the presence of a stern teacher. We must improve our time in a more useful manner, for time is a very precious thing; and if I had not judiciously profited by my short leisure to-day, I should not have had a single hour to spare for my teacher, for there

\* "He who never ate his bread with tears,  
He who never, through nights of affliction,  
Sat on his lonely bed,  
He does not know you, powers of heaven!"

will be a reception in the palace to-night, and I must previously give audience to several visitors. I have, therefore, made my evening toilet in the afternoon, and thereby gained time to take my dear singing-lesson. But now let us study, so that your pupil may redound to your honor."

"Oh, your majesty," ejaculated Himmel, "my honor and my happiness!"

"Hush, hush," said Louisa, interrupting him, with an enchanting smile, "no flattery! no court-phrases! Here I am not the queen, nor are you my devoted subject; I am nothing but an obedient pupil, and you are my rigorous master, who has a right to scold and grumble whenever I sing incorrectly, and who very frequently avails himself of this privilege. Do not apologize for it, but go on in the same manner, for I will then only learn the more."

"Your majesty sings like an angel," murmured Himmel, whose eyes were fixed steadfastly on the queen.

"Well, as far as that is concerned, you are a competent judge," exclaimed Louisa, laughing, "for being *Himmel* (heaven), you must know how the angels sing, and your opinion cannot be disputed. The angels, then, sing incorrectly, like your obedient pupil? Let the angels do so, but not your pupil. Come, Mr. Himmel, sit down. It does not behoove the *maestro* to stand at the side of his pupil. Sit down."

She pointed with a graceful wave of her hand at the chair standing at her side, and Mr. Himmel, complying with her order, sat down. His glances returned involuntarily to the queen, whose beauty only now burst on his short-sighted eyes, and whom he believed he had never seen so lovely, so fascinating and graceful. Her beautiful face seemed to him like that of a fairy queen, and her wonderful shoulders, her superb, dazzling neck, which he had never seen unveiled and so very near, appeared to him like the bust of a goddess, moulded by Phidias from living marble.

"Well, let us commence," said the queen, calmly. "Pray play the melody in the treble and let me play the accompaniment a few times; I shall then be better able to sing the song."

She commenced eagerly playing the prelude, while a deeper blush mantled her cheeks. It was Himmel's turn now to begin with the melody; his eyes, however, were not fixed on the music, but on the queen, and hence he blundered sadly.

"Well?" asked the queen, looking at him in charming confusion. "You do not play correctly."

"Yes, I have blundered, your majesty," said Himmel, gloomily; "I have blundered, for I am only a man after all, and cannot look into the sun without having a *coup de soleil*. Your majesty, I have



had such a *coup de soleil*, and you see I have lost my reason in consequence."

With these words he bent over the queen and imprinted a glowing kiss on her shoulders; then he hastily rose, took his hat, and rushed out of the room.\*

The queen's eyes followed him with an air of surprise and embarrassment; then she burst into ringing, charming laughter.

"Ah," she said, "if that austere 'Madame Etiquette,' the mistress of ceremonies, should have seen that, she would have either died with horror, or her wrath would have crushed the criminal. I believe I will confess the terrible crime to her. Oh, my dear mistress of ceremonies! my dear mistress of ceremonies!" she cried.

The door of the adjoining room opened immediately, and the Countess von Voss made her appearance.

"Your majesty has called me," she said, and, after looking around the room, she cast a glance of surprise on the clock.

"Ah, my dear countess, you are surprised that Mr. Himmel, my singing-master, has already left, although the hour has only half expired?" asked the queen, merrily.

"Your majesty," said the countess, sighing, "I really ought no longer to be surprised at any thing, nor wonder at any violation of etiquette, for such things, unfortunately, occur every day and every hour. Your majesty knows, moreover, that this Mr. Himmel is altogether distasteful to me."

"And why?" asked the queen, gayly.

"Your majesty, because it is contrary to etiquette for a queen to take lessons, and to have a teacher."

"What!" exclaimed Louisa. "According to etiquette, then, a queen is not permitted to learn any thing after ascending the throne?"

"No, your majesty, for it is entirely unbecoming that one of your subjects should become the teacher of his queen, and that anybody should be permitted and dare to censure her."

"Well, do not you do so very often, my dear countess?" asked the queen, good-naturedly.

"I dare not censure the queen, but merely to defend and maintain etiquette, as my duty and official position require me to do. But a queen who takes lessons must descend from her throne so long as her teacher is with her; must renounce her exalted position, and obey instead of commanding. In such a case, therefore, etiquette is altogether out of the question."

"You are right," said Louisa, merrily. "Mr. Himmel, the concert-master, at least, entirely coincides with you, and he takes

\*Historical.

no notice whatever of etiquette. Shall I confess to you, my dear countess, why Mr. Himmel has run away to-day half an hour before the regular time?"

"Run away?" asked the mistress of ceremonies, in dismay. "He has dared to run away in the presence of your majesty?"

"Yes, he has dared to do so, but previously he has dared to do something a great deal worse. He has—but, dear countess, sit down; you might turn giddy."

"Oh no, your majesty, permit me to stand. Your majesty was going to communicate graciously to me what Mr. Himmel—this teacher of a queen is not even a nobleman—has dared to do in the presence of your majesty."

"Well, listen to me," said the queen, smiling; and bending down closely to the ear of the countess, she whispered: "He has kissed my shoulder!"

The mistress of ceremonies uttered a piercing cry and tottered back in dismay.

"Kissed!" she faltered.

"Yes, kissed," sighed the queen; "I really believe it is still to be seen."

She walked with light, swinging steps to the large looking-glass, and looked at her shoulder with a charming, child-like smile.

"Yes, that small red spot there is Mr. Himmel's crime!" she said. "Tell me what punishment he has deserved, countess."

"That is a question for the courts alone to decide," said the mistress of ceremonies, solemnly; "for we shall bring the occurrence, of course, at once to their notice. Orders should be issued immediately to arrest him, and his punishment should be as unparalleled as was his offence. Your majesty will permit me to repair at once to the king in order—"

"No, my dear mistress of ceremonies," said the queen, who was still standing in front of the looking-glass and contemplating her own form, not with the contented looks of a conceited woman, but with the calm, stern eyes of a critic examining a work of art—"no, my dear mistress of ceremonies, we shall take good care not to raise a hue and cry about it. And Mr. Himmel is not so culpable, after all, as he seems to be."

"What! Your majesty intends to defend him?"

"Not to defend, but to excuse him, my dear countess. He was at my side as my dear old teacher, and I was to him not a queen, but a pupil; and, moreover, a pupil with very beautiful shoulders. My dear countess, I am really more culpable than poor Himmel, for, if the queen becomes a pupil, she must remember that her teacher is a man, and she must not treat him merely as an automaton instruct-



ing her. The only judge who is able to decide this matter is my husband, the king. He shall pronounce judgment on it, and if he permits Mr. Himmel to come back, I shall go on with my singing-lessons. However," added the queen, smiling, and blushing delicately, "in future I shall wrap a shawl around my shoulders. And now, my dear countess, pray let us not mention this little affair to anybody. I shall submit it to the king and ask him to decide it."

"I shall be silent because your majesty orders me to keep the occurrence secret," sighed the countess. "But it is unheard-of, it is dreadful. It is rank treason, and the offended royal majesty will forgive without punishing."

"Oh, yes, I will!" exclaimed the queen, joyfully. "Forgiving without punishing, is not that the most sacred and sublime power of a queen; is it not the most brilliant gem in our crown? How miserable and deplorable would monarchs be if God had not conferred the right of mercy upon them! We stand ourselves so much in need of mercy and forbearance, for we commit errors and faults like other mortals, and yet we judge and punish like gods. Let us be merciful, therefore, that we may be judged mercifully."

The door of the anteroom opened at this moment, and the chamberlain-in-waiting entered.

"Your majesty," he said, "Prince Louis Ferdinand and Minister von Hardenberg beg leave to wait on your majesty."

"I expected these gentlemen at this hour," said the queen, glancing at the clock; "let them come in, therefore. And you, my dear countess, farewell."

"Your majesty orders me to withdraw?" asked the mistress of ceremonies, hesitatingly. "Etiquette requires that the queen should give her audiences only in the presence of her mistress of ceremonies, or of one of her ladies of honor."

"My dear countess," said the queen, with a slight tinge of impatience, "I am not going to give any audience, but merely to receive a friendly visit from my royal cousin and his friend; as I know it is their intention to communicate to me matters which no one except myself can hear, I shall receive them alone. Hence be so kind as to withdraw."

"His royal highness Prince Louis Ferdinand and his excellency Minister von Hardenberg!" shouted the footman, opening the folding-doors.

The queen nodded a parting greeting to the mistress of ceremonies, and advanced a few steps to meet the visitors, while the countess, heaving mournful sighs, disappeared through the side-door.

## CHAPTER XLV.

## THE CONFERENCE.

PRINCE LOUIS FERDINAND, a nephew of Frederick the Great, and Minister von Hardenberg, were at that time the most popular men in Prussia, because they were known to be the leaders of the party which at the court of Berlin considered the accession of Prussia to the coalition of Russia, England, and Austria, as the only means to save the country, while Minister von Haugwitz, Lombard, the first secretary of foreign affairs, and General Köckeritz, constantly renewed their efforts to win the king to an alliance with France.

Prince Ferdinand, a fine-looking young man, scarcely thirty years of age, in his brilliant uniform, in which his tall and noble form presented a very imposing appearance, and in which he looked like the incarnation of an heroic warrior, was consequently the special favorite of the soldiers, who told the most astonishing and incredible stories about his intrepidity and hardihood. He was, besides, the favorite of the ladies, who called him the best-looking and most amiable man in the whole monarchy; and, with amiable indulgence, attributed his many adventures and acts of inconstancy, his wild and dissipated life, his extravagance and numerous debts, to the genius of the prince. He was, indeed, an extraordinary man, one of those on whose brow Providence has imprinted the stamp of genius,—not to their own good, but to their misfortune, and who either miserably perish by their genius, or constantly inflict with it the most painful wounds upon others.

Minister von Hardenberg, who now, after a long struggle, had succeeded in overcoming the influence of Minister von Haugwitz, and, with him, that of the French party, was one of those rare and extraordinary statesmen who have made diplomacy not a business, but the task of their whole life, and who have devoted to it all the strength, all the thoughts and feelings of their soul. A native of Hanover, and receiving rapid promotion at the hands of the government of that country, he had, nevertheless, soon entered the service of the Duke of Brunswick, who had charged him, after the death of Frederick the Great, to take the king's will, which had been deposited in the ducal archives at Brunswick, to Berlin.\* King Frederick William the Second, who was so sagacious as to perceive and appreciate the diplomatic talents of the young ambassador, had induced him to enter his service, and intrusted to him the difficult mission of negotiating the annexation of Baireuth to Prussia, of

\* "Mémoires d'un Homme d'État," vol. I., p. 302.



settling the claims of the margrave, of paying the crushing burden of the debts of Baireuth as speedily as possible, and of restoring the country, which had suffered so much, to its former prosperity and content. Afterward he had been appointed minister of state and war in Prussia, and since that time he had always displayed the greatest activity and zeal in serving Prussia according to the dictates of his honest conviction, but at the same time also to guard the interests of the great fatherland, the interests of Germany. The influence of France, above all, seemed to him to endanger these interests; hence he believed it to be specially incumbent upon him to preserve at least Prussia from this noxious influence and to push her over to the other side, to the side of the coalition, than to allow her to be devoured, like a poor little bird, by the French basilisk. These endeavors, which kept up a continual conflict between him and the special favorites and confidants of the king, Haugwitz and Köckeritz, had gained him the love and esteem of all Prussian patriots, and secured him an extraordinary popularity. These two favorites of the Prussian people now entered the queen's cabinet.

Louisa replied to the familiar and friendly—rather than respectful—greeting of the prince with a smile and a nod, and received the respectful bow of the minister with the calm and proud dignity of a queen.

"Well, my merry and reckless cousin," she said, turning to the prince, "are there again some sins to be confessed, some neglects of discipline to be hushed up, some tears to be dried, and the mercy of the king to be implored for the extravagant freaks of our genius? And is it for that reason that you have brought along so *eloquent* an advocate and attorney?"

"No, your majesty," said the prince, heaving a sigh, "this time, unfortunately, I have to confess to you no merry freaks and agreeable sins, and I am afraid I am about to become a steady man, and to turn my back on all extravagant pranks. Hence, the minister has not accompanied me this time in order to defend me and to implore the gracious intercession of my royal cousin, but we have come for the purpose of repeating to your majesty Prussia's cry of anguish and distress, and of beseeching you to assist us in saving her from the ruin on the verge of which she is tottering at the present time!"

The queen looked alternately at the prince and at the minister with grave, wondering eyes. "It is a political conference, then, you wish to hold with me?" she asked; and when the two gentlemen made no reply, she continued more rapidly and in a slightly agitated voice—"in that case, gentlemen, I must request you to leave me, for

I am no politician, and I do not aspire to the *rôle* of a political intriguer. I am the wife of the reigning king, but not a reigning queen; my sole endeavor is to render the king a happy husband at home, and to cause him to forget at my side politics and the vexations of his official position."

"I am afraid, your majesty," said Minister von Hardenberg, solemnly—"I am afraid the time for such an idol on the throne is past; and instead of causing the king to forget the vexations of his position, it will now be the great task of your majesty to bear them with him."

"And we have come to beg my noble and magnanimous cousin to do so," exclaimed the prince, enthusiastically. "We have come to implore your assistance and coöperation in the name of Prussia, in the name of all German patriots, and in the name of your children!"

"In the name of my children?" ejaculated the queen, turning pale. "Speak! speak! what has happened? what calamity threatens my children? I decline listening to you as a queen, but I will do so as a mother, who anxiously desires to secure the happiness of her children. What evils, what calamities do you refer to?"

"The independence, nay, perhaps the whole existence of Prussia, is menaced," said Minister von Hardenberg, solemnly. "We have to choose whether Prussia is to be an isolated state, shunned by everybody, and despised by everybody—a state which France will be able to devour with impunity and amid the jeers of the whole world, as she has devoured Italy, Holland, and the left bank of the Rhine—or whether Prussia will preserve her power, her independence, and her honor, by not staving off a division any longer, but meeting her friends as well as her enemies with open visor, and by assuming at length an active and resolute attitude instead of the vacillating and hesitating course she has so long pursued!"

"We ought to oppose the Emperor of France in a manly manner," exclaimed the prince, energetically. "If we do not interfere with his proceedings, he will soon be our master as he is of all those who call themselves his allies, and who are really nothing but his slaves. My heart kindles with rage when I now see all Germany trembling with fear before this son of a Corsican lawyer, this tyrant who assassinated the noble and innocent Duke d'Enghien, and who, not contenting himself with chaining France, would like to catch the whole world in his imperial mantle so as to fatten its golden bees on it. And he will succeed in doing so, unless we resist him, for his word is now already the law of half the world, and this emperor carries out whatever he wants to do. Truly, if he should feel some



day a hankering for a dish of princes' ears, I should no longer deem my own ears safe, nor those of your young princes either!"\*

The queen did not smile at this jest which the prince had uttered in an angry voice, but she turned once more with a grave and anxious air to the minister.

"Tell me, has any thing occurred?" she asked. "Has there been a change in the political situation?"

"Yes, your majesty," replied the minister, "there has been a change in the political situation; the Emperor Napoleon has dared to violate our neutrality, and if Prussia should not now demand satisfaction she either loses her honor, or she places herself before the whole world as the ally of France, and defies thereby the open hostility of Austria, Russia, and England."

"You dare to say that Prussia's honor has been attacked, and to doubt that the king will hold the offender responsible for such an outrage?" exclaimed the queen, with flashing eyes. "The king, who is the incarnation of honor, will not permit even the shadow of a stain to fall on Prussia's honor; in generous anger he will hurl back the insolent hand that will dare to shake the palladium of our honor."

"Oh, if you think and speak thus," said the prince, enthusiastically, "I have no longer any fears, but consider Prussia as saved already from the dangers now menacing her. As I see your majesty now, in your wondrous beauty, with those eyes reflecting your inward heaven, with this face so radiant with enthusiasm, you seem to be the genius whom Providence has sent to Prussia to guard and protect her, and to guide her on the right path and to the right goal. O, queen! fulfil the mission which Providence has intrusted to you; follow your noble and sacred vocation; be the genius of Prussia; and impart to the vacillating and timid, firm, manly courage and energetic resolution! Queen, I implore you, on my knees, have pity on Prussia, have pity on your children: be the genius of Prussia!"

And quite beside himself, his eyes filled with tears, his lips quivering with emotion, the prince knelt down before the queen and raised his folded hands imploringly to her.

"Your majesty, permit me also to bend my knees before you," said Minister von Hardenberg, solemnly, "to adore and worship you as the genius of Prussia, from whom we expect our salvation, our peace, and our honor! Oh, queen, you alone have the power to touch the heart of the king and to remove the doubts of his noble and honorable mind: you alone will be able to accomplish what

\*Prince Louis Ferdinand said this to the queen.—Vide "Rahel and her Friends," vol. i.

neither our arguments nor our supplications could bring about; you alone will be able to elevate the vacillation of your husband to the strength of high-spirited and courageous resolution!"

"No, not a word against the king!" exclaimed the queen, almost sternly. "Let no one dare to assert that the king lacks manly determination and vigorous courage. If he is hesitating when you would wish to act, it is because he looks into the future more prudently and sagaciously than you, while you only think of the present time; it is because he weighs and calculates the consequences, while you only care for the action of the moment. But arise, gentlemen: let us not perform a sentimental scene at a time when it is of the highest importance to be prudent and to reflect. Let us converse, therefore, gravely and soberly; explain to me what has happened, and what danger is menacing Prussia and my children. I comply now with your wish; let us hold a political conference. Let us sit down, then, and commence."

She took a seat on the sofa, and invited the gentlemen to sit down on the two chairs opposite her.

"Now tell me what has occurred, and what has changed the political situation. Minister von Hardenberg, pray give me a full and plain account of the state of our political affairs, for I have already told you that I never meddle with politics, and do not know much about them; indeed I have been too happy, and my life too much absorbed by my happiness, to have made it necessary for me to think of politics. But I see very well that the time of quiet happiness is over now! Let us, then, speak of politics. You said, a few minutes ago, Prussia had been insulted by France?"

"Yes, your majesty, Prussia has been insulted. Her most sacred right, her neutrality, has been violated," replied Hardenberg. "The king, in his generous endeavor to preserve the blessings of peace to his people, intended to maintain a strict neutrality amid all these wars and storms agitating the world, and, the friend and ally of no party and no power, to rely exclusively on his own strength. He wanted to wait, to mediate, and conciliate, but not to attack, act, and decide. There may be times when such a rôle is a weighty and dignified one—may secure the peace of the world; but it always depends on those between whom one wishes to act as a neutral mediator. One may remain neutral between men of honor, between princes, to whom their word is sacred, and who do not dare to violate treaties, but not between those to whom their word is sacred only so long as their own advantage requires it, and who do not violate treaties only so long as they do not interfere with their selfish plans. It is a principle of neutrality not to open one's territory to either of the contending powers, and this principle has



always been strictly observed. When Russia, now that she is going to send her troops for the second time to Germany for the purpose of assisting the Austrians, informed the king that she would march these troops through Southern Prussia and Silesia, the king deemed this information equivalent to a declaration of war, and his majesty immediately ordered the whole army to be placed on the war footing. We should now be at war with Russia, if the Emperor Alexander had not sent on the day after the first dispatch had arrived here, another dispatch to the king, in which he apologized, and declared that he had been too rash in making the above-named demand.\* But this step of Russia, this mere threat of violation of our neutrality, had sufficed to induce Prussia to place her army on the war footing, and to do so *against* the coalition of Austria, Russia, and England. A cry of horror resounded throughout Germany when the people heard of this first step by which Prussia seemed to declare publicly for France and *against* the coalition, and this cry was reëchoed abroad, of which the conduct of the King of Sweden gave us a striking proof. Your majesty is aware that this king, through his ambassador, M. de Bernstorff, returned to his majesty the King of Prussia the order of the Black Eagle which he had received from the late lamented king, accompanying it by an insulting letter in which he stated, that 'he could not wear an order which the king had recently also sent to Monsieur Bonaparte.'

"And on the same day that this offensive return of the highest Prussian order took place," exclaimed Prince Louis Ferdinand, with a harsh, angry laugh, "on the same day the King of Prussia received from the Emperor of France the *grand cordon* and seven other grand crosses of the Legion of Honor to be distributed among the princes and ministers. And not only did we receive these seven orders, but in return for them we sent seven orders of the Black Eagle to Paris." †

"But you forget to add that the king returned on the same day the Seraphine order to the King of Sweden, and recalled his ambassador, so that we are now in a state of war with Sweden," said the queen, eagerly.

"Oh, my royal cousin, you betray your secrets," exclaimed the prince, joyfully, "you wanted us to believe that your majesty did not care at all for politics, and now you know the most minute details so accurately."

"I take a lively interest in every occurrence which grieves the heart of my husband," said the queen; "and that event made a very painful impression upon him."

\* Vide Häusser's "History of Germany," vol. ii., p. 635. "Mémoires d'un Homme d'État," vol. viii., p. 474.

† Häusser's "History of Germany," vol. ii., p. 576.

"Oh, your majesty, it was only a prelude to other mortifications and insults which we shall have to suffer if the king will not avenge them," said Hardenberg, energetically. "It has been said that Prussia was siding with France merely because she would not grant Russia a passage through her neutral territory, and because she placed her army in a menacing position against Russia. But what would the world say if it should learn what has now occurred?"

"Well, what has occurred?" asked the queen, breathlessly.

"The Emperor of France has carried out what Russia only threatened to do. The Emperor of France, without applying for permission, has marched a portion of his army, commanded by Bernadotte, through Prussian territory. He has marched his troops, contrary to treaties and to international law, through Prussian Franconia, Anspach, and Baireuth."

The queen uttered a cry of surprise, and her cheeks turned pale.

"Does the king already know it?" she asked.

"He has known it since yesterday," said Hardenberg, gravely.

"We kept the matter secret, because we would only lay it before the public together with the decision of his majesty."

"And has the king come already to a decision?" asked the queen.

"He has, your majesty," said Hardenberg, solemnly. "When Russia threatened to violate our territory, we placed our army on the war footing, and it is still in arms. Now that France dares to do what Russia only threatened to do, we do not turn our arms against her in order to avenge the insult, but we take our pen and write and ask France to explain her startling proceedings. It is true we threaten, but do not strike!"

"No, we do not strike!" exclaimed the prince, laughing scornfully; "we mobilize our army against our natural friends and allies, but we do not draw the sword against our natural enemies and adversaries. The army of Frederick the Great is ready for war, and yet it remains idle and looks on quietly while the insatiable conqueror is penetrating farther and farther into the heart of Germany; while he is scattering broadcast the seeds of treachery, discord, and mischief; while he is persuading the German princes to turn traitors to Germany; while he is poisoning and corrupting the hearts of the people and degrading their characters to such an extent, that the sense of fidelity, honesty, and constancy will soon become extinct in Germany, and all the Germans will be nothing but a horde of slaves, who will be happy if this tyrant does not apply the lash too often to their backs, and who will kiss his feet, so that he may step at least mildly and gently on their necks! If the tyrant should succeed now in humiliating Austria, who alone has been courageous enough to oppose him; if Napoleon should defeat the



Austrian army, Germany would be lost and become nothing but a French province like Italy and Holland: all the German princes would lay their crowns at the feet of Napoleon, and be glad if he should suffer them only as governors in their former states, or leave them at least their empty titles after depriving them of their possessions!"

"No, no," exclaimed the queen, "we must not, we shall not permit that! Prussia is ready to maintain the honor of Germany; Prussia will rise like a hero accustomed to victory; she will drive the invader from her territory, and compel him, with arms in her hands, to keep the peace, if she is unable to obtain it with her pen. You are right, the time of neutrality and hesitation is past, and henceforth we must act. I shall no longer remain neutral, I shall act too. You have appealed to the mother and wife and shown her the danger threatening her children and her husband; you have reminded the daughter of Germany of the horrors menacing her fatherland; you have pointed out to the Queen of Prussia the evils impending over her people; the mother, the wife, and the queen has heard and understood you. The time of neutrality is past; we must move the heart of the best and most magnanimous king by our prayers and remonstrances, in order that he may listen to us, and no longer to the insinuations and flatteries of his enemies, so that he may discern his friends as well as his enemies. The king is hesitating only because, in generous self-abnegation, he prefers the happiness of his people to his own wishes and to the gratification of his own desires. A soldier by nature and predilection, he compels himself to be a peaceable ruler, because he believes it is necessary for the happiness of his people. Let us prove to him that his subjects refuse to accept this generous sacrifice, and that they are joyfully ready to remove the stains from their honor with their heart's blood. Let public opinion speak out and come to our assistance. I say, 'to our assistance,' for henceforth I shall side with you, I shall be a member of your party, and a determined and out-spoken enemy of France!"

"May God bless your majesty for these words!" said Hardenberg, deeply moved; "I am once again in hopes that Prussia will be saved, for she has now won an ally who brings more to her than armies and arms, and who places the enthusiasm and indomitable determination of a great chieftain at the head of our people."

"And with this chieftain at our head we shall vanquish every French army," exclaimed Prince Louis, enthusiastically; "with this chieftain at our head we shall triumphantly march against the enemy, and one idea, one sentiment will animate all of us: Queen Louisa is watching and praying for us! Oh, my queen, would that

that blessed day of battle could dawn for us! Command the sun of that day to rise and to shine into all Prussian hearts, and to fire them with patriotism so as to shrink back no longer from death and wounds, but only from dishonor and degradation! Oh, my blood burns like fire in my veins; it would like to burst forth in a fiery torrent and drown and burn every Frenchman. Queen, have mercy on me—let the solemn day when I may shed my blood for the fatherland dawn without delay!"

"Live and labor for the fatherland!" said the queen, with flaming eyes, and her face radiant with enthusiasm. "It is not the most exalted and difficult task to die an heroic death for a great idea, but it is even more noble and difficult to nourish and preserve this idea in the gloomy days of adversity, and not to abandon it and give it up in a period of affliction, but to remain its guardian and priest, even though fate may seem to reject it and to humiliate us with it. Now that I am entering a new life-path, I say to you, from the bottom of my heart, we will struggle for the honor, liberty, and independence of Prussia and Germany, but we will be determined, too, not only to die for these ideas, but also to suffer and bear affliction for them. Oh, it seems to me as though I were looking at this moment into the future, and as though I did see there much misery and distress in store for us, many storms and thunder-clouds!"

"But the sun is hidden behind the thunder-clouds, and when the thunder has died away it will shine again," said Hardenberg.

"And it will then shine on the heads of my husband and of my children!" exclaimed the queen, raising her radiant eyes to heaven.

"Above all, it will shine on the Prussian people from the face of their adored Queen Louisa," said the prince.

The queen smiled sadly. "Let us not speak of the sun, but of the thunder-clouds preceding it. They are gathering around us; let us see how we can break through them. You may count on my earnest assistance. My husband and my children are in danger, I feel and see it. France is the enemy menacing them. Henceforward we will oppose this enemy with open visor. I promise it to you in the name of Prussia, in the name of my husband, and of my children. Here, take my hand; we will stand by each other, and struggle together against France for the honor and glory of Prussia. You will fight with your sword and with your pen, and I shall do so with my word and my love. May the people support us, may God bless us!"

"May God bless us!" repeated the prince and the minister, reverentially kissing the queen's hands.

"And now, gentlemen, go," said the queen, after a short pause



"Let us not desecrate this solemn moment by any additional words. Every thing for Prussia! Let that be our watchword! and so I bid you farewell for to-day. Every thing for Prussia!"

"Every thing for Prussia!" repeated the two gentlemen, taking leave of the queen.

Louisa sent a long, melancholy look after them; then she turned hastily around and crossed the room with rapid steps; the sudden draught produced by her quick passage blew the music-paper from the piano to the floor; it fell exactly at the queen's feet.

She picked it up; it was the song she had sung an hour ago. A painful smile played on the lips of the queen, and raising her eyes sadly to heaven, she whispered, in a low voice:

"Oh, my God, grant that this may not be an omen, and that I may not be compelled to eat my bread with tears, and to weep through nights of affliction! But if it must be, O God, give me strength to bear my misfortunes uncomplainingly, and to be a comfort to my husband, a mother to my children!"

## CHAPTER XLVI.

### THE OATH AT THE GRAVE OF FREDERICK THE GREAT.

THE wishes of the queen had rapidly been fulfilled; public opinion had declared in Berlin with rare energy and emphasis against France, and the people had received the news of the violation of Prussia's neutrality with a unanimous cry of rage and horror. The inhabitants of Berlin, usually so peaceable and addicted to pleasure, seemed all at once transformed into heroes grave and eager for war, who no longer knew any other aim than to avenge as speedily as possible the insult offered to them, and to call France to account for the outrage she had committed against Prussia.

"War! war!" That was the word of jubilee and supplication now resounding on every street, and in every house; like one exulting prayer of the whole nation, it rose to the windows of the royal palace, and seemed to rap gently at them, so that the king might open them and let it penetrate into his heart.

The people spoke everywhere of this one great affair; they asked each other, in conversation: "Shall we take up arms? Shall we declare war against France?"

Those who answered these questions in the negative were treated in the most contemptuous manner; the people turned their backs on them with angry glances and threatening murmurs; to those, how-

ever, who replied in the affirmative, they offered their hands joyfully and greeted them as friends and allies.

Minister von Haugwitz was known to be an adherent of the French and an opponent of the war; the people rushed to his house and broke his windows, shouting loudly and angrily, "We do not want peace! Let all the French and friends of the French perish!"

Minister von Hardenberg, on the other hand, was hailed by the people with the most enthusiastic applause wherever he made his appearance; and on their return from the house of Minister von Haugwitz, they hurried to Hardenberg's humble residence in order to cheer him and to shout, "War! war! We want war with France!"

Not only the people in the streets, however, but also the best classes of the public participated in this general enthusiasm, and did not hesitate to give vent to it in public. Even the royal functionaries found suddenly sufficient energy to show themselves as German patriots, and it was certainly not unintentional that "Wallenstein's Camp," by Schiller, was to be performed at the Royal Theatre during those days of general excitement.

Everybody wished to attend this performance; all Berlin rushed to the Royal Theatre, and the fortunate persons who had succeeded in obtaining tickets were envied by the thousands unable to gain admission. The theatre was crowded; the pit was a surging sea, the gallery was filled to suffocation, and in the boxes of the first and second tiers the aristocratic, elegant, educated, and learned world of all Berlin seemed to have met. All faces were glowing, all lips were smiling, all eyes were sparkling; every one was aware that this was to be a political demonstration, and every one was happy and proud to participate in it.

When Prince Louis Ferdinand made his appearance in the small royal proscenium-box, all eyes turned immediately toward him, and when he bent forward from his box, and seemed to greet the audience with his merry eyes and winning smile, there arose a storm of applause as though a favorite singer had just concluded an *aria di bravura* and received the thanks of the enraptured listeners. Suddenly, however, the loud applause died away, perhaps because the prince had waved his hands as if he wished to calm this roaring sea—perhaps because the attention of the audience was attracted by somebody else. The eyes of the crowd turned from the prince toward an adjoining box. Four gentlemen, in brilliant uniforms, had just entered it; but these uniforms were not those of the Prussian army, and the broad ribbons which these gentlemen wore across their breasts, were not the ribbons of Prussian orders. The newcomers, who had entered the box, were the members of the French