

CHAPTER II.

THE WINTER-QUARTERS IN LEIPSIC.

THE king of Prussia had left Meissen, and taken up his winter-quarters in Leipsic. The choice of this town arose from a particular need of the king. He wished to pass the winter in a university town, and, instead of the rough companions of war, to surround himself with learned men and artists, poets and musicians. He had his band brought from Berlin, and invited the professors of the Leipsic University to his table. Thus Leipsic, the rich and luxurious commercial town, found itself, for a few months, converted into a royal residence. But not willingly did she undergo this transformation; and it was against her wish that she received the Prussian king, in lieu of the troops of the allies, within her walls. Frederick knew this, and therefore exercised no mercy on this city, so rich in money and professions, whose unwelcome guest he was.

Had Leipsic welcomed the Prussian army in a ready and friendly manner, she would certainly have met with indulgence; but her defiant and sullen behavior, her warm partisanship of Austria, whose ally Saxony was, naturally only tended to increase the animosity of the king, and aggravate his ill-humor. If Leipsic insisted upon regarding the Prussians as enemies, his duty was to consider her as an enemy, and treat her as such.

Enormous contributions were laid upon the town, and in spite of the previous written promise of the king that her assessment should not, at the utmost, exceed five hundred thousand dollars, new demands were now constantly being made, and new contributions levied. In

vain did the Council beg and plead for mercy and justice; in vain did the merchants protest that their means were exhausted, and that they were not able to meet any further payments. The enormous demands determined on were firmly and with iron obstinacy insisted upon; and as the refractory town did not cease to oppose them, recourse was had to threats to intimidate her. Tarred rings were hung against the houses, and it was sworn to lay the town in ashes if Leipsic did not immediately pay the million of dollars demanded. But the unfortunate inhabitants had already reached that pitch of desperation at which people are prepared for any thing, and fear nothing further because there is nothing more to lose. They declared that they could pay no more, and offered to seal their word with their death.

The tarred rings were indeed taken down from the houses, but the richest and most respectable inhabitants were seized and incarcerated. Even the authorities were not spared, and the officers of the Council were thrown into the prisons of the towns. In the most degrading manner, like a flock of sheep, they were shut up in spaces hardly able to contain them; damp straw was their bed, bread and water their only nourishment, and this was brought to them with words of cruel insult by their Prussian jailers. But to these latter the burden soon became too heavy; they were weary of their cruel service, and sought to lighten it.

At first they had one hundred and twenty prisoners, but, after a fortnight of useless torment, the greater number had been set free, and only seventeen retained. To be sure, these consisted of the richest and most respectable citizens of Leipsic. And these unfortunate hostages, these spoilt sons of wealth and luxury, were now forced to bear the whole weight of misfortune, the

entire anger of the victorious enemy. They, whose whole life had been one of indulgence and effeminacy, had now to undergo the greatest privations, the hardest sufferings. The cold earth was their bed, a piece of bread thrown to them their nourishment; and it was a feast to them when one of the gentlewomen of Leipsic succeeded in obtaining permission to visit a brother or husband, and was able to smuggle in under her silk dress a piece of meat or a little bowl of soup for the martyrs. These cruelties would doubtless have been lessened or abolished if the king had had positive knowledge of them, or if he had believed that the city's inability to pay was real, and not a mere pretext. But the king, vexed by the continually repeated complaints, out of humor at the obstinate conduct of Leipsic, and mindful of the vandal conduct of the Saxons at Charlottenburg, had issued strict orders not to trouble him with this business, and not to report to him about them until they could at the same time show that the sum demanded had been paid. And therewith sentence had been passed upon the unfortunate citizens of Leipsic. No one dared to mention to the king the torments and tortures to which the hostages of the pitiable town were subjected. No one had the courage to beg for mercy for those whose only crime was, that their riches were exhausted, their coffers empty, and that they did not possess the means to pay the inordinate sums demanded of them.

But while the population of Leipsic was undergoing this grief, this hard time of trial, an uninterrupted quiet and precious peace prevailed in the house inhabited by the King of Prussia. Music was performed, readings were held, and in the midst of these gentle diversions and this pleasant rest Frederick drew up the plans of

fresh battles and new and great undertakings. Fasch and Quanz had been brought from Berlin to play music for him, the Marquis d'Argens to philosophize for him, his dogs to amuse him. The king, who knew enough of men to despise the wavering, erring, sinful creatures, was also a sufficient connoisseur of dogs to love the faithful, obedient, submissive animals with his whole heart, and devoted a great part of his time to them. He who was deaf to the wailing and lamentations of a whole city, had his ears open to the least whine of Biche, or his favorite Psyche, and never would have forgiven him who had dared to treat one of his dogs as so many of the noble and distinguished citizens of Leipsic were being treated in his name.

CHAPTER III.

THE FRIEND IN NEED.

No one would have dared to speak a word for the refractory citizens and authorities of Leipsic to the king, nor act in direct contravention to his express orders. Even the Marquis d'Argens, his intimate friend and confidant, had refused to be the advocate of the unfortunate town. It seemed to be lost, without hope of redemption, and already it had been threatened with the extreme of severity. It had been announced to the chief men, the fathers and heads of families who were pining in the prisons, that they would be transported on foot to Magdeburg as recruits, with knapsacks on their backs. But at this moment the rescuer in need, of the afflicted city, made his appearance.

A tall, proud, manly form crossed the antechamber

of the king. Power and energy were visible in his countenance, and his eyes sparkled with noble excitement. He was going to perform that duty from which courtiers and flatterers shrank with trembling; and what the bravest generals did not dare, he was going to undertake. John Gotzkowsky was going to tell the king the truth. John Gotzkowsky was not afraid to rouse the anger of a king, when it came to helping the unfortunate or protecting the oppressed. He had a more noble mission to perform than to sue for the smiles of a king, or the favor of the great. It was the higher mission of humanity which impelled him, and, as usual, his resolution was firm and unwavering. With bold decision he reached the door which led into the king's chamber. He had the privilege of entering unannounced, for the king expected him.

He had summoned Gotzkowsky from Berlin, to obtain information as to the progress of the Berlin industrial works, and the faithful patriot had, in obedience to the call of his king, come to Leipsic. He had seen the misery and suffering on this poor, down-trodden town, and, as he traversed the antechamber, he said to himself, with an imperceptible smile, "I brought the Russian general to clemency, and the king will not be harder than he was."

But before he threw off his cloak, he drew out of it a small package, which he examined carefully. Being satisfied with its appearance, he took it with him to the cabinet of the king. Frederick did not look at him at first. He was reclining on the floor, and around him, on silken cushions, lay his dogs, their bright eyes fixed on a dish which was placed in the midst of them. The king, with an ivory stick, was carefully dividing the portion for each dog, ordering the growling, discon-

tented ones to be quiet, and comforting the patiently waiting ones with a light jest concerning the next piece. Suddenly he raised his eyes, and his quick glance rested on Gotzkowsky's smiling, placid face. "Ah, you laugh," said he, "and in your human conceit you find it quite beneath one's dignity to occupy one's self with dogs, when there are so many human beings. Let me tell you, you don't understand any thing about it! You don't know dogs at all, and perhaps you don't know men.—Quiet, Biche! leave that piece for Apollo. I gave it to him, and therefore it belongs to him. One would suppose you had been learning from men, and in the true spirit of Christian and brotherly love, grudged each other a piece of bread. Quiet, Biche, and don't be vexed that I compared you to human beings. I did not mean you were quite as bad as that."

And gently stroking and caressing the offended Biche, he rose and seated himself in his velvet-covered *fauteuil*. His bright eye turned toward Gotzkowsky, and rested on the package the latter had in his hand. "What have you there?"

"A plate and a cup," said Gotzkowsky, seriously—"the first two pieces from my porcelain factory in Berlin."

The king now rose from his seat and strode hastily toward Gotzkowsky. "Give them here. I want to see what sort of potters'-ware you are going to impose upon me for porcelain." With impatient hands he tore off the paper coverings, and so eagerly was he engaged with them, that he did not perceive that Biche and Apollo were already fighting for a scrap of paper which he had thrown directly on Biche's nose, and which she consequently mistook for a delicate morsel, a prize worth a fight with Apollo. "Forsooth, it is porcelain!" cried

the king, as he drew out the gold-rimmed plate and the beautifully painted cup from their wrappings, and looked at them attentively; and as his eye rested on the painting of the cup, his features assumed a soft and sad expression. "My house in Rheinsberg," muttered he softly to himself—"a greeting from my happy days."

"In the castle Rheinsberg, I first enjoyed the favor of being presented to your majesty," said Gotzkowsky. "Castle Rheinsberg is, therefore, to me a happy recollection, and it was for that reason selected to adorn the proof pieces of my porcelain factory."

The king fastened a penetrating look upon him. "You are playing me a trick—I don't like tricks, you must know. Therefore tell me the truth. Where did you get this porcelain? It is not from Meissen. The mark is wanting, and it is whiter and stronger. Where did you get it?"

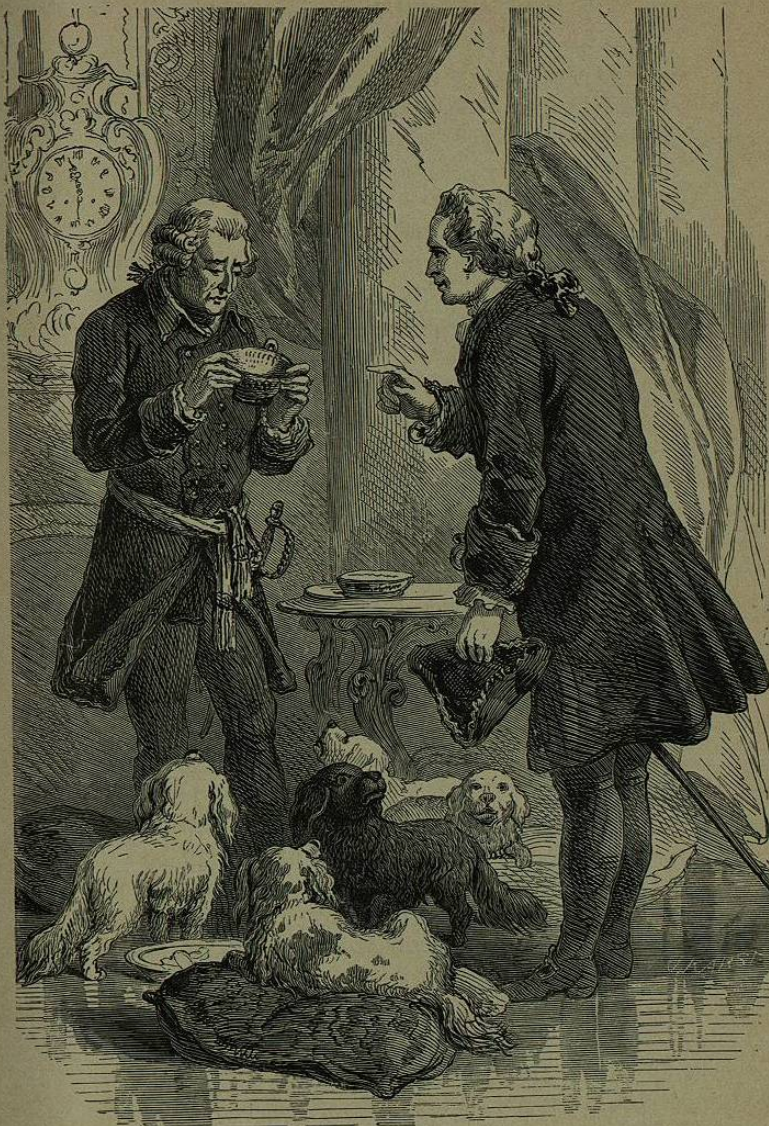
"From Berlin, sire. I promised you, when you were in Meissen, that in future you should procure your porcelain from your own dominions, and I dare not forfeit my word."

"And so you imitated the Almighty, and created a porcelain factory with the breath of your mouth?"

"Not with the breath of my mouth, but the breath of my money."

"Tell me about it, and all the particulars," said the king, still holding the cup in his hand, and looking at it attentively.

And Gotzkowsky related how, on his return from Meissen, he had accidentally made the acquaintance of a young man, who was passing through Berlin on his way to Gotha, the duke having offered to advance him the capital necessary to found a factory for the making of porcelain according to a process of his own invention.



THE GREAT FREDERICK EXAMINING THE PORCELAIN CUP.

The specimens exhibited convinced Gotzkowsky that this young man was fully acquainted with the secret of porcelain-making, and he had therefore immediately determined to forestall the Duke of Gotha.

Money had in this instance, as usual, exercised its charm, and nothing more was necessary than to outbid the terms agreed on with the duke. A few thousand dollars more offered, and double purchase-money, had secured the secret of porcelain-making to Gotzkowsky, and bound the inventor down in Berlin for life.*

The arrangements necessary for the first attempts were made in one of the out-buildings of his house, and the articles offered to the king were the first-fruits of his factory. The king listened to him with intense interest, and when Gotzkowsky had finished, he nodded to him with a smile.

"The Marquis d'Argens is right. I wish myself I had many such citizens as you are. It would be a fine thing to be a king if all one's subjects were true men, and made it worth one's while to be to them a kind father and lord. You have fulfilled a favorite wish of mine; and let me tell you, I do not think you will call the porcelain factory yours long. I think it will soon be a royal factory."

"I founded it for your majesty."

"Good, good! you have given me a pleasure, I will give you one in return. Ask some favor for yourself. You are silent. Do you know of nothing to ask for?"

"Oh, yes, indeed," said Gotzkowsky, ardently, "I

* Porcelain-making was then a great secret in Germany, only known in Meissen; the process being conducted with closed doors, and the foreman bound by oath. Gotzkowsky paid ten thousand dollars down, a life income of a thousand dollars, and house and firewood free.—"Life of a Patriotic Merchant," p. 87.

have a great favor to ask—have pity on the poor inhabitants of this town!”

The king frowned and pressed his lips angrily together. “Do you know that I have generally forbidden any one to trouble me with these Leipsic jeremiades?”

“I know it, sire.”

The king looked at him with astonishment. “And yet you do it?”

“Yes, sire, I do it because I relied on the kind, noble heart of my king, and because humanity bade me not to fear your majesty’s anger, when it became a question of mercy to the oppressed.”

“And for this reason you wanted to bribe me with your bits of porcelain. Oh, you are a reckoner, but this time you have reckoned without your host. No pity for these obstinate Leipsigers. They must pay the eleven hundred thousand dollars, or—”

“Or what?” asked Gotzkowsky, as he hesitated.

The king looked angrily at him. “You are very bold,” said he, “to interrupt me. The Leipsigers must pay, for I need the money for my soldiers, and they are rich; they are able to pay!”

“They are not able to pay, sire! They are as little able to pay as Berlin is if Russia insists upon her demands, and her magnanimous king does not come to her assistance. But your majesty certainly does not wish that the world and history shall say that Russia acted with more forbearance and clemency toward Berlin than Prussia did toward Leipsic? To be sure, the Russians carried off the Jewish elders into captivity because they could not pay, but then they treated these poor victims of their avarice like human beings. They did not make them sleep on rotten straw; they did not let them starve, and die of misery and filth; they did not have them

scourged and tortured until they wet with their tears the bit of bread thrown to them.”

“Who does that?” cried the king, with thundering voice and flashing eye.

Gotzkowsky bowed low. “Your majesty, the King of Prussia does that!”

Frederick uttered a cry of anger, and advanced with his arm raised on Gotzkowsky, who looked at him quietly and firmly. “You lie! retract!” thundered the king.

“I have, as long as I have lived, spoken the truth, sire—the truth, without fear or dread of man. Your majesty is the first man who has accused me of a lie. I have seen with my own eyes your majesty’s officials treating the poor captive Leipsic merchants like dogs. What do I say—like dogs? Oh, how would the poor down-trodden men envy those dogs the delicacies contained in that dish! It may be right to compel and humble the refractory, but it is not right to tread out the human soul, and even in the conquered you should honor God’s image.”

The king looked at him with ludicrous surprise. “Do you wish to give me a lesson? Well, I will forgive you this time, and, as you express it, honor God’s image in the owner of the Berlin porcelain factory. But hush about these hard-headed Leipsigers. They must pay. My soldiers cannot live on air, and my coffers are empty.”

“The Leipsigers are very willing to contribute, but the demand must not exceed their powers.”

“How do you know that?”

“The magistracy and merchant guild of Leipsic sent a deputation to me, and entreated my mediation.”

“You have then already the reputation of one who

knows how to use his tongue well, and goes about tattling with it."

"Sire," said Gotzkowsky, smiling, "we only follow the example of our hero-king. We all are anxious to fight, and those who have no swords must fight with the tongue. I have latterly been compelled to fight a great deal with it, and the Leipsic merchants may have heard something about that. They knew that I had some exercise with my tongue, and gained a little victory with it over the Russians in Berlin."

"How much do you think the city of Leipsic can pay?" asked the king after a pause.

"If your majesty will remit them a few hundred thousand dollars, and allow the merchants time, they are willing to bind themselves in joint bonds."

"*Parbleu!* are they willing to do that?" asked the king, derisively. "The bonds of the Leipsic merchants would be no security to me." And turning quickly on Gotzkowsky, he asked him, "Are you willing to guarantee the payment?"

"If your majesty orders it, the bonds shall be drawn out with my guaranty."

"I look to you, then, for their payment."

"At your orders, sire."

"Well, then, for your sake I will remit the Leipsigers three hundred thousand dollars; but for the rest of the million you are answerable."

"I will be answerable for it."

"I will let these gentlemen of Leipsic know that it is to your intercession and your guaranty that they are indebted for the mitigation of their contributions; and then you can, if it gives you pleasure, bargain with the rich town for some reward for your services rendered."

"That would give me no pleasure, sire!" cried Gotz-

kowsky, with noble indignation. "Your majesty must not think so meanly of me as to suppose that I would make a profit out of the misfortunes of others, and that I have interceded for the poor Leipsigers in order to make a trade out of them!"

"I think that you are a hard-headed, obstinate fellow, who must be allowed to have his own way," said the king, with an affable smile. "But I must bear you witness that, in your own way, you have rendered me many a good service. For that reason, you will always find me well affected toward you, and in the Sans-Souci gallery you have created a beautiful memorial to yourself."

"If your majesty would come there now, you would find the Correggio about which you wrote to the Marquis d'Argens."

The king's eyes sparkled. "The Correggio is mine!" said he, walking up and down slowly, with his hands behind his back. "Ah," added he, after a long pause, in a low tone, as if speaking to himself, "when will this nomadic life cease, and the world be at peace, to allow this poor, badgered king a few hours of leisure and recreation, to enjoy the contemplation of his house and his pictures? The wandering Jew, if he ever existed, did not lead such a rambling life as I do. We get at last to be like the roving play-actors, who have neither hearth nor home, and thus we pass through the world, playing our bloody tragedies, with the wailings of our subjects for chorus.* When will it end?"

"When your majesty has subdued all your enemies."

The king looked around with surprise—he had quite forgotten Gotzkowsky. "Ah! are you still there? and you prophesy me victory? Well, that will be as good

* "Correspondance de Frédéric II. avec le Comte Algarottis."

to me as the Leipsic money. Go back home, and tell the Leipsigers to hurry with the money. And hark ye! when you get to Potsdam, greet the Correggio, and tell him I yearn for him as a lover does for his mistress. Adieu!"

CHAPTER IV.

GRATITUDE AND RECOMPENSE.

THUS did Gotzkowsky save unfortunate Leipsic from the heavy burden which weighed her down. The prisoners were released, and the merchants gave a bond, for whose punctual and prompt payment Gotzkowsky guaranteed with his signature.

He did not do this from a selfish or vain ambition to have the praise of his name sounded, nor to increase the number of his addresses of gratitude, or written asseverations of affection. He did it from love of mankind; because he desired to fulfil the vow he had made to God and himself on the highway as a shivering, starving lad: that if he should ever become rich, he would be to every unfortunate and needy one the hand which had appeared out of the dust-cloud to his relief. He did it because, as he tells us naïvely and simply in his *Life*, "I knew from my own experience how difficult it was for a community to collect such a sum, and because the idea of profiting by such misfortune was abhorrent to me."

And now there was a brilliant banquet, and no end to the words of gratitude and tears of emotion. This banquet was given by the Leipsic merchants in honor of him who had so magnanimously taken their part, saved them three hundred thousand dollars, and guaranteed

their bonds. And they devoured the delicate viands and emptied the beakers to his honor, and praised him in high-sounding speeches.

When Gotzkowsky, wearied and bored by this festival, returned home, he found on his table three letters. The one which bore on its seal the arms of Prussia he opened first. It was a cabinet order from the king to his private secretary, Leinning, to pay to the merchant, John Gotzkowsky, one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. "Ah," said he, smiling, "payment on account; I bought a hundred thousand ducats' worth of paintings for the king, and he does not wish to remain always in my debt." With a slight shrug of the shoulders he opened the second letter. Suddenly he burst into a loud laugh, and his countenance assumed an expression of derisive mirth. "The Elector of Saxony, in consideration of services rendered to the town of Leipsic, appoints me his commercial privy councillor!" cried he, waving the paper in the air; "that is a good joke! The little elector, who has been my debtor for many long years, is gracious enough to throw me a bit of rank—a title! Much obliged! My name sounds well enough. It is not necessary to have a title to be a man of honor. Throw titles to numskulls, not to me—away with it!"

He then threw the paper aside with scorn, and took up the third letter. As he read it his noble countenance brightened up with proud pleasure, and his eyes sparkled. It was a document from the town of Leipsic, an address of thanks from the magistracy, the concluding words of which ran thus:

"In our extreme need we had recourse to Herr Gotzkowsky, the respected merchant and banker of Berlin, imploring the same to intercede for this town and its merchants with the king of Prussia; affording them his

credit and valuable assistance, to accord to said town some reasonable respite for payment, with security. To this earnest pleading Herr Gotzkowsky yielded, and, as a true philanthropist, without any ulterior views of profit to himself, did in the most praiseworthy manner assist us, and averted this misfortune from the town. These services we are compelled to acknowledge. We therefore offer our services in return on all possible occasions, not doubting that the mercantile community of this place entertain the same sentiments, and feel themselves equally bound to all imaginable reciprocity.

[SIGNED]

“THE COUNCIL OF LEIPSIC.

“LEIPSIC, *February 26, 1761.*”

“This paper I will carry to my daughter, as a souvenir,” said Gotzkowsky, folding it up carefully, and then added thoughtfully: “Who knows but what the time may come when it will be necessary to remind the merchants of Leipsic of this document? The opinions and destinies of men are very variable.”

But Gotzkowsky himself was to have occasion to remind unthankful Leipsic of her professions of gratitude—not to call on her to perform reciprocal favors, but to protect himself against calumny and unfriendly suspicions. For a day came, when Leipsic forgot the affliction and grief she had suffered, and only remembered that John Gotzkowsky was her creditor, and that she owed him large sums of money. So, when at last, weary of long waiting, he pressed for payment, they accused him of self-interest, and said that he had unnecessarily mixed himself up in their affairs, and that it would have been better if he had left them to their captivity; for although they might have had much to suffer, they would have had but little to pay.

Gotzkowsky answered these accusations in a manner characteristic of his noble, proud self—he was silent about them. But hard times and oppression came again upon the rich town of Leipsic.

The Prussian king exacted fresh contributions—and now they recalled to mind the services of Gotzkowsky; again they sent him humble letters, begging him to have pity on them; and now the cunning, calculating magistracy of Leipsic saw fit to take notice of these calumnies, which they had shortly before so industriously circulated through the public newspapers, and solemnly to declare in all the journals: “We hereby certify, in compliance with truth, through these writings, that the worshipful Herr Gotzkowsky, as well in past years, as at the late Leipsic fair, out of unchanged and innate love and friendly kindness to us, this town, and its inhabitants, has given just cause for gratitude.”

Gotzkowsky forgot the insults, and was again of assistance to them. A second time he persuaded the king to mitigate their contribution, and guaranteed the new bonds issued by them. A second time the magistrates and merchants thanked him in the most touching words for his noble and disinterested assistance, and a second time were they destined to forget their vows of gratitude.

CHAPTER V.

FOUR YEARS' LABOR.

FOUR years of work, of industry, of productive activity, had passed away since the stormy year of 1760. They had produced but little alteration in the life of Gotzkowsky and his daughter.