"Do you agree to this, Madame Morien?" asked the crown princess; shall I open this letter and serve as umpire?"

But before the terrified young woman found time to reply, Madame Brandt approached the princess with smiling self-possession. She had arrived at a despairing decision. The crown prince had told her that the paper contained a poem. Why might not the poem be meant for the princess as well as for Madame Morien? It doubtless contained a declaration of love, and declarations of love are fitted for every woman and are always welcome.

"If your Royal Highness permits, I can clear up this riddle," said Madame Brandt, perfectly quiet and confident.

The crown princess nodded assent.

"This letter belongs neither to Madame Morien nor Fräulein Schwerin," Madame Brandt continued.

"But you promised explanation, and it seems to me that you do but make the riddle more impenetrable. The letter belongs neither to Madame Morien nor to the little Louise. To whom does it belong, then?"

"It belongs to your Royal Highness!"

"What?" said the princess, astonished, while Madame Morien stared at her friend in speechless horror, and Louise Schwerin laughed outright.

"Yes, this letter belongs to your Royal Highness. The crown prince gave it to me with the command to lay it upon your Royal Highness' dressing-case before the toilet hour. But I came too late and learned that your Royal Highness was already engaged with her toilet. I, therefore, did not venture to disturb, and kept the letter to be delivered now. As I held it in my hand and jested with Madame Morien at the prince's having neglected to address it, Fräulein Schwerin snatched it from me, in a most unseemly manner, asserting that it was hers. Madame Morien hastened after her to get it back. That is the whole story."

"And you say the letter is to me?"

"To you, and contains a poem from his Royal Highness."

"Then I may break the seal," said the princess, opening the letter and unfolding the paper it contained. Then, with a happy smile she exclaimed, "It is indeed a letter from my husband."

"And here comes his Royal Highness to confirm the truth of my statement," said Madame Brandt.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BANQUET.

MADAME BRANDT was right. It was the crown prince, who, surrounded by his courtiers, entered the room just as the crown princess began to read the poem. A murmur of applause arose at his appearance, and the crown princess' face glowed with joy and pleasure at sight of the young prince, whom she could call her husband with confidence, at the moment in which she held in her hand the first love poem from him. The crown prince was not clad to-day as usual, in the uniform of his regiment, but wore a French costume of the latest cut.

But the most beautiful feature of the company was the glowing face of the crown princess. Never had the prince seen her so brilliant. She had never seen him in this exaltation of happiness and love. And all this was for her. She had read only the beginning of the poem he had written her, but this beginning contained words of tenderness, of glowing love. While the crown princess was gazing silently at the prince, Madame Brandt approached him, and lightly describing the scene that had transpired, begged him to confirm her statement.

The crown prince's glance had strayed a moment from Madame Morien, trembling with confusion and fear, to his wife, from whose glowing face he concluded that she really believed the poem had been addressed to herself. She had not read as far as the line in which a direct appeal to Le Tourbillon, the bewitching Leontine, betrayed all. She must be prevented from reaching that line. That was all.

The crown prince approached his wife with a smile which she had never seen, and which made her tremble with joy.

"I beg pardon," he said, "for my poor little poem, which has been handed to you so stormily and ill-deserves so much attention. Read it in some lonely hour when you are *ennuyée*, and may it serve as a diversion for an idle moment, but not now. To-day we will vex ourselves no more with verses and poems, to-day we will laugh and be merry—that is, if it so please you, madame."

The crown princess murmured a few slight words of assent, and while her heart was full of love and pleasure she found, as usual, no words in which to express herself. This shy

ness, this poverty of words in the midst of the richest wealth of feeling was the misfortuue of the poor crown princess.

If she had possessed, at that moment, courage for a piquant, spirited answer, it would have greatly pleased her husband. But her silence angered him. Silent as herself, he offered her his arm, and greeting Madame Morien with a stolen glance, led his wife through the banquet hall to the table, perfumed with flowers and fruits, and gleaming with silver.

"The gardener of Rheinsberg, by name Frederick of Hohenzollern, invites his friends to partake of what he has produced," said the crown prince, pointing to the great, fragrant melon before his plate; "so let us be seated for, the crown prince being luckily absent, we may be as much at our ease as the mouse when the cat's away."

He seated himself beside his wife and beckoned Madame Morien to the place at his left, whispering to her with an enchanting half smile, "You must be my savior this day. My heart is in flames and needs cooling off. So have a care that I do not burn up in my own fire!"

"Ah! this heart is a phœnix that arises out of the ashes rejuvenated," replied Madame Morien.

"But only to burn again in its own glow!" was the prince's rejoinder. Then, taking up a glass, "The first toast to youth, to that sweet folly which the aged envy us, and of which, alas! every day helps to cure us; to youth and beauty, which this day are so brilliantly represented that one must half believe Madame Venus has sent us all her daughters and their playmates and all their lovers, the rejected and deserted, as well as those whom she is only proposing to reject and desert, and therefore still favors."

The health was drank amidst laughter, and conversation soon ran riot. The fat Knobelsdorf related, in his resonant voice, fragments of the *chronique scandaleuse* of his life of travel; little Jordan, with flashing eye and laughing lips, bandied across at the crown prince one of those series of badinage which the wit of both and their long friendship rescued alike from heaviness and malice; Chazot recited extracts from Voltaire's newly published "Pucelle;" the vain Kaiserling set off every minute some new sky-rocket of his wit or learning, now reciting verses of the "Henriade" to the ladies at his side, now declaiming Gellert's last new fable, then descanting upon painting with the artist Pesne, or drawing a fascinating picture of the future for Fräulein von Schwerin at his side, of that future which should see in Berlin a French theatre and an Itali[illegible] and crowning all, a French-Italian ballet,

with dancers exceeding all the glory known to the German Empire.

But farther along the table sat the Bendas, both Grauns and Quantz, the able and much-dreaded violin virtuoso, teacher of the crown prince, and dreaded by everyone for his rudeness. Before this man even the crown prince felt a sort of timidity, for even he was not secure from brusque repellant answers.

To-day, however, even Quantz was friendly and his face wore the half good-humored, half angry expression of a bull-dog stroked by a friendly hand, and longing to growl, but unable to begin for sheer content.

Louder and stormier grew the merriment, the ladies' cheeks glowed, the courtiers' words became more tender and daring. The crown princess alone sat silent and gloomy beside her husband, and her heart was careworn and sad. She had reflected further upon the scene that had passed, and was now convinced that the poem was not meant for her, but for someone else, so that she felt mortified at her own credulity, and blushed over her own vanity; for how was it possible that he, this brilliant man at her side, should love her, who had naught but her youth and beauty, and had, besides, the misfortune to be not only his wife, but a wife forced upon him against his will? No, the poem was not meant for her; but for whom, then? Who was so happy as to possess the heart of the crown prince? Her heart ached as she recognized that it was another, and not herself, who called this happiness her own, and yet, in her gentleness, there was no anger against that other. But she longed to know her name, not to be revenged upon her, but to pray for her, for her whom the crown prince loved, whom he had to thank, perhaps, for a few poor days of happiness.

But who was it? With a scrutinizing gaze the princess passed in review the faces of all the ladies at the table. There were beautiful, attractive faces among them. Many of them revealed spirit, animation, wit, but none was worthy to be loved by the crown prince. At that moment the prince bent with a charming smile to his neighbor, whispering a word or two. Madame Morien blushed, dropped her eyelids, glanced up again to gaze at him with an ardent look, whispering a word or two with trembling lips, so softly that the prince could scarcely hear. Could this be she? Impossible! This frivolous, coquettish, superficial woman could not possibly have captivated the high-minded prince—could not be Elizabeth's rival.

But who was it, then? If only this everlasting meal would come to an end. If she could only be alone in her apartments to read the poem, which must, without a doubt, contain the solution of the riddle, the name of the loved one.

But the prince seemed to have divined this wish of his wife, and to have determined to thwart it. The dinner had not begun to-day until six, and now it was dark, and the candelabra, with wax candles, were being brought to light the table.

"The candles are burning," cried the crown prince; "let us not leave the table until the candles are burnt out and a champagne illumination in our heads takes their place."

So they talked and laughed, whispered and declaimed, drank and made merry, and the heart of the crown princess grew heavier and more sorrowful.

Suddenly her husband turned to her. "The vanity of an author is stirring within me," he said, laughing, "and I venture the question whether you are not curious to know the poem I had the honor to send you by Madame Brandt?"

"Indeed, I have," she answered, eagerly; "I am burning with curiosity to know it."

"Then permit me to satisfy your wish at once," said the crown prince, reaching his hand to take the poem.

The princess hesitated, but meeting her husband's eye, it rested upon her with such coldly commanding gaze that she shuddered.

She drew the poem from her pocket and silently handed it to him.

"Now, little Fräulein von Schwerin," said the crown prince, laughing and raising his voice, "this whole wise, honorable company shall judge whether this paper is, as that tender child declares, a letter from her dear mother, or, as I assert, a poem which a certain prince has written who sometimes suffers from the versifying fever. Listen, therefore, ladies and gentlemen, but lest anyone imagine that I read anything else than what stands written here, and translate the tender expressions of a mother's love into still more tender feelings of the lover, Madame Morien shall scan the paper with me and testify to the truth of what I read."

He handed the paper to Madame Morien, and slightly bending his head, began to read—the first verses as they stood, then beginning a free improvisation, he recited a poem sparkling with spirit, grace, wit, humor, singing the praise of his wife and studded with jest and *double entendre*. It was received with a burst of applause. While he read what was written, Madame Morien read what was, and her boson heaved as she met his ardent declaration of love and half humble, half imperious invitation to a rendezvous.

The reading ended, loud approval resounded from all sides. The crown prince folded the paper together, turned to his wife and asked her, smiling, whether she was content with the poem.

"So much so," answered she, "that I wish to beg for it again. I should like to treasure it in memory of this hour."

"Treasure it? not at all. A poem, like a flower, is a thing of the moment. A flower in a herbarium has lost life and fragrance; the moment gave it, the moment shall take it away; and we'll sacrifice to the gods what the gods have given."

So speaking, the crown prince tore the paper to shreds and laid them upon his outstretched palm in a little heap.

"Go ye to all the winds and teach all the peoples that nothing is imperishable, not even the poem of a prince," he said, lightly blowing the shreds that fluttered upward like snowflakes. Then began a merry chase after the shreds, each blowing farther, each trying to give to the strip that floated to him some new, definite direction. Only the crown princess sat sorrowful and still. Now and then a scrap of paper settled down before her. She gathered them together mechanically, not blowing them farther, but looking at them with a listless, pained expression. Suddenly she started and blushed violently. She had read two words upon one of the shreds which made her heart beat high with pain and anger. These two words were: "Bewitching Leontine."

The secret was divulged! The poem was written to Leontine—the bewitching Leontine—and not to Elizabeth! But who was she? who of these ladies was called Leontine? This she must know. She summoned all her courage, joined in the general merriment, laughed, jested, chatted with the crown prince and Madame Morien, as well as with the youthful Baron Bielfeld, her *vis-à-vis*.

Never had the crown princess been so witty, and no one dreamed that all these jests were but the masks that hid the wounds in her soul.

The candles were half burnt out, and the champagne illumination was beginning in the heads of some of the members of this round table. Chazot ceased to declaim, and began to sing some of those delightful *chansons* which he had learned from the peasant maids of his fatherland, Normandy; Jordan improvised a sermon in the fanatical, hypocritical manner prevalent for some time past in Berlin; Kaiserling

had risen from his seat and struck an attitude which he had seen Lagière assume in Paris in the Syrène ; Knobelsdorf related his most entertaining Italian adventures, and Quantz took courage to administer a vigorous kick to Biche, the crown prince's favorite hound, whom he hated as a rival and who was snuffing at his feet.

"Bielfeld must have his share of the universal illumination, too," said the crown prince, smiling to his wife, as he signalled him to a health to Bielfeld's betrothed in Hamburg.

While Bielfeld arose to join the crown prince, the princess rapidly communicated her orders to one of the servants.

She had seen that Bielfeld, to cool his hot blood, had been drinking whole glasses of water from the *carafe* in front of him. She quickly had the *carafe* emptied and filled with sillery as colorless and clear as the water from a mountain spring. Poor Bielfeld, returning to his place still more heated at thought of his betrothed, filled his glass to the brim and without noticing what he did, emptied the draught of heating sillery.

The crown princess, pursuing the same end, and striving to discover which of the ladies was the bewitching Leontine, now ventured the decisive blow. With an attractive smile, she said to Bielfeld:

"The crown prince spoke of your betrothed ; may I congratulate you?"

Bielfeld, who dared not confess that he was about to faithlessly desert her, bowed in silence.

"May I know the name of your betrothed?"

"Fräulein von Randau," murmured Bielfeld, and drank, to hide his embarrassment, a second glass of sillery.

"Fräulein von Randau!" repeated the princess, smiling. "How cold, how ceremonious, that sounds! how impersonal! To be able to imagine a lady one must know her name, for one's name is, after all, in some measure, a part of one's character. What is your *fiancée's* proper name?"

"Regina, your Royal Highness."

"Regina! That is beautiful—a whole prophecy of happiness, for she will ever be queen of your heart. I understand the meaning of a name, and at home, in my father's house, they called me Sybil, for my predictions were always verified. I will tell the fortunes of the company out of their names. Ladies! let us begin. What is your name, dear Madame Katsch?"

And as the princess spoke in all apparent innocence, she smiled and played carelessly with the Venetian glass in front

of her. The crown prince alone saw that the hand that held the glass trembled violently.

He saw the meaning of the prophecy—saw that the crown princess knew the contents of the poem.

"Conceal your name," he whispered rapidly to Madame Morien. Then he turned to his wife, who had just prophesied a long life to Madame Katch, and a happy one.

"What is your name, Fräulein von Schwerin?" asked the crown princess.

"Louise."

"Ah! Louise! Well, I prophesy that you will be happier than your namesake, the beautiful LaVallière. You will never suffer remorse, and never go into a cloister!"

"But, then, I shall probably never have the happiness to be loved by a king," said the little maid-of-honor, with a deep sigh.

A merry laugh from the company greeted this sigh.

The crown princess continued. She had a quaint sally, a bright jest, for each, a piece of delicate flattery.

Now she turned to Madame Morien, still smiling, still playing with the glass.

"Now, your name, dear Madame Morien?" she asked, grasping the glass in her slender fingers and looking intently into it.

"Le Tourbillon is her name," cried the crown prince, laughing.

"Antoinette Louise Albertine are my names," said Madame Morien, hesitatingly.

The crown princess drew a long breath of relief, and darted a beaming glance from the glass to Madame Morien. "Those are too many for me to prophesy from," she said. "Which of them are you called by?"

Madame Morien hesitated. The other ladies, better initiated than the crown princess in Le Tourbillon's small secrets, guessed that something unusual lurked behind the princess' question and Madame Morien's embarrassment, and listened intently for the beauty's answer.

A moment's pause followed. Suddenly Fräulein von Schwerin broke into a laugh. "Well!" she said, "have you quite forgotten that you are called Leontine?"

"Leontine!" exclaimed the crown princess passionately, and her fingers closed over the glass so convulsively that it crushed with a sharp click in her hand.

The crown prince saw the inquiring, surprised gaze of the company fasten upon his wife, and felt called upon to give

the general attention another direction, turning the princess' action into a jest.

"You are right, Elizabeth!" he exclaimed. "The candles have burned down, the illumination has begun, the feast is at an end, and as we sacrificed the poem to the gods we must now yield up the glasses from which he have quaffed a few hours of pleasure and blessed forgetfulness. I therefore sacrifice this glass to the gods! Follow, ye all, my example!"

He raised his glass and threw it over his shoulder to the ground, where it broke with a crash.

All followed the crown prince's example. Each raised a glass with a shout and dashed it to the ground. There was an endless crashing and shouting. In a few moments nothing remained of the gleaming crystal but scattered fragments covering the floor.

But the excited company was not appeased with the first sacrifice; it thirsted for more. The work of destruction had become a mad desire. Having begun with the glasses, they seized upon vases and crystal and porcelain bowls and dishes in the same wild fever of annihilation.

In the midst of the general confusion the door opened and Fredersdorf appeared upon the sill, a letter in his hand.

His unexpected appearance was something so unheard of that it could be explained only by a most unusual occasion. This they all felt despite the mad excitement of their merriment. Instant silence fell upon the company. All looked expectantly at the crown prince, who had received and opened Fredersdorf's letter.

The prince turned pale, the paper trembled in his hand, and he arose hastily.

"My friends," he said, solemnly, "the feast is at an end. I must leave for Potsdam at once. The king is dangerously ill. Farewell!" And offering his wife his arm, he left the room with her.

Silently the guests arose, silently each sought his own apartment, and only here and there was heard a whisper, was seen a questioning, significant look.

CHAPTER XIV.

LE ROI EST MORT, VIVE LE ROI.

King Frederick William's life was coming to an end. The spirit that had long wrestled with the body had now, after long torturing months of secret pain, to confess itself vanquished. The stiff uniform no longer fitted the fallen figure; etiquette and ceremony were supplanted by the all-conquering ruler, Death. Here is no king, but a dying man—nothing more; a father taking leave of his children, a husband embracing his wife for the last time, pressing the last kiss upon her tear-stained cheek, whispering in her ear his prayer for pardon for many a harshness, many a cruel act.

Frederick William had made his peace with God and the world. His pride was broken. He had struggled long enough in his haughtiness against the admission of his sins; but a brave-hearted priest, Roloff, had approached his couch and awakened the slumbering conscience of the monarch.

In vain had the king tried, at first, to meet the accusations with proud self-consciousness. "I have never broken the sixth commandment; I have never been unfaithful to my wife."

Roloff recurred undaunted to the king's sins and offences, his extortions and oppressions, the trade in human beings carried on for his beloved guard; and finally Frederick William was compelled to confess himself vanquished; finally he had the crown taken from his head, and as an humble and penitent sinner, prayed to God for mercy and forgiveness.

Having made his peace with God there remained nothing but to put his last affairs in order, make his peace with the world, taking leave of his wife, his children, his servants.

They were all assembled in his room to say farewell to him. Near the roller-chair in which he sat, wrapped in a silk mantle, stood the queen and the crown prince. His hands rested in theirs, and when he raised his heavy, weary eyes to theirs he met eyes filled with tears, beaming upon him with boundless love and sympathy. Death, which was about to separate them forever, had united father and son. Frederick William had clasped his son in a warm embrace, exclaiming in a voice choked with tears, "Hath not God shown me great mercy in bestowing upon me so noble a son?"

And the son pressed his tear-stained face to the dying

father's breast, and sent up a heart-felt prayer for the king's recovery.

But the end was coming. The king knew that. He had had the oaken coffin in which some months before he had laid himself down brought into his room, and looking upon this sorrowful couch said, with a contented smile: "In that bed I shall sleep well!" Then he beckoned to his private secretary and commanded him to read aloud the order for the funeral ceremonies which he himself had dictated.

After arranging for the care of his corpse, Frederick William desired to assign a memento to each of his favorites, the Prince of Dessau and Count Hake. And the most desirable relic he could think of was a horse. He therefore commanded that his horses be led into the court and begged the gentlemen to go down and each select one. He then had the windows opened into the court. From thence he could command the view of the whole, and bestow a last look upon each of the animals that had so often borne him in festivities and parades. Never again would his foot enter the stirrup, never again would he traverse the streets of Berlin, rejoicing in the stately buildings that his will had called into being; never again would he receive the humble greetings of his subjects, and when next the trumpets blew and cannons thundered, it would be to greet not himself, the king, but the royal corpse.

The king brushed a stolen tear from his eye and forced himself to watch the horses that the grooms were leading up and down. As he did so, he forgot for the moment that death stood at his heels; and he looked with tense attention into the court to see which horses the gentlemen would choose. When he saw which one the Prince of Anhalt-Dessau had selected, he smiled the pitying, superior smile of the connoisseur.

"That is a very bad horse, my dear Prince," he called down into the court, and the indignation of the horse-lover gave his voice its wonted strength and energy. "Take that one there; I guarantee that that is a good animal."

When the prince had taken the one prescribed and Count Hake had selected another, the king commanded that the two animals be caparisoned with the utmost splendor, and gazed into the court with sympathy and interest while this was being done. At his back stood Minister von Podewils and the privy councillors, whom the king had had summoned to prepare the royal writ of abdication by which he proposed to convey the royal power to the crown prince at once. He was surrounded by the queen, the prince, generals, adjutants,

and priests. But he paid no heed to them; he had quite forgotten that he was dying, thought only of his horses, and a wrathful frown wrinkled his brow when he saw a groom putting a blue plush saddle on the yellow silk saddle-cloth of the Prince of Anhalt's horse.

"Oh! If I were but well!" he shouted, threateningly, "how I should thrash that stupid groom! Hake, do me one last favor and beat the rascal for me!"

The horses pricked up their ears and whinnied, and the grooms trembled at the voice of their master, as threatening as ever, and still so hoarse and death-like!

But now the excitement had passed and the king sank back in his chair panting and broken. He had no strength for signing the writ of abdication and could only silently beckon for them to carry him to bed.

There he lay stiff and motionless, with half-open eyes and blue lips, moaning and groaning. A fearful stillness reigned in this chamber of death. Everyone held his breath and listened, everyone expected the mortal sigh of the dying man. Everyone wished to witness the solemn, mysterious moment.

Pale and trembling the crown prince bent over the face of his father. The queen knelt at the other side of the couch, and with grave faces generals, courtiers, physicians, and priests watched the ghostly being who but a moment ago was a king and now is—nothing!

But no! Frederick William was not dead; the breath which had stopped returned to his breast once more. Once more he opened his eyes, still large, full of mind and commanding.

"I do not look so ruinous as I supposed," he said, with the last flickering of human vanity. "Feel my pulse, doctor, and tell me how long I still have to live."

"Your Majesty desires to know?"

"I command it!"

"Then, your Majesty, you are about to die!"

No feature of the king's face changed.

"How can you tell that?"

"By your pulse, sire, which has begun to slacken."

The king raised his arm and moved his hand. "No," he answered, "if the pulse had stopped I could not move my hand."

Suddenly the words ceased, and a hoarse cry issued from his breast. The raised arm sank heavily and noisily down.

"Jesus! Jesus!" moaned the king, "I live and die in thee! Thou art my refuge!"

The last anxious prayer had died on his lips, his spirit had flown.

The crown prince led the weeping queen away; the swarm of courtiers waited, but their faces were no longer sad and anxious—they were expectant. The tragedy had been played to its end. All the world was eager for the drama, the curtain of which was about to rise there in the apartments of the crown prince, now king.

In haste they flocked from the room of death to the doors of the anteroom leading to the apartments of the young king.

Whom will he call first? The king is so young, so full of life, fond of show and state and gay festivities. This is no soldier king; no man of the rod—a cavalier, a poet, a scholar. Science and art will flourish; the corporal's stick is broken; the flute begins its melodious rule.

So they thought, these breathless courtiers waiting there in the young king's anteroom. So thought Pöllnitz, master of ceremonies, standing at the door that led to the young king's rooms.

The crown prince had always treated him graciously, kindly, and now the young king must certainly remember that Pöllnitz alone had, now and then, succeeded in getting Frederick William to pay the prince's debts.

He must remember this now, and Pollnitz's former services must bear Pöllnitz to honors and dignities. He must be favorite—the envied, dreaded, mighty *protégé*—before whom all bow, who is mighty as the king himself; for the king was young, inexperienced, lightly deceived, warm of heart, and rich of fancy, with a strong tendency to pleasure, pomp, and show. These qualities must be fostered; this shall be the leading string with which the king shall be guided. He must be intoxicated with gorgeous feasts, sated with piquant enjoyment, a very Sardanapalus, for whom all life is a flower-strewn feast—nothing more. And then, while the young Frederick is recovering, gathering his forces for new enjoyments, Pöllnitz will rule! This is surely no chimera, no mere dream, but a well-matured plan, for which he had won a mighty ally in Fredersdorf, the young king's body-servant. Fredersdorf had promised that Pöllnitz should be the first whom the young king would summon.

Hence it was that the master of ceremonies stood so near the door which led to the king's inner rooms; hence it was that he looked down with proud disdain upon all these courtiers who were waiting with such expectation for the opening of the doors.

Now, at last, the door opened, and Fredersdorf's face was seen.

"Baron von Pöllnitz!"

"Here I am," said Pöllnitz, casting a triumphant glance at the courtiers, and following Fredersdorf into the royal apartments.

"Have I kept my word?" whispered Fredersdorf, as they crossed the first rooms.

"You have kept your word, and I will keep mine. We will rule together."

"Enter; there is the king," said Fredersdorf, leaving Pöllnitz.

The young king stood at the window, leaning his hot brow upon the pane, drawing a long breath from time to time, and sighing as if deeply troubled. As he turned to Pöllnitz, the master of ceremonies saw that his eyes were red from weeping, and a shudder swept through the frame of the courtier.

A young king just attaining regal power, who was weeping for the death of his father, instead of being intoxicated by his brilliant fortune! How little did this correspond with the wishes of the master of ceremonies!

"Blessings upon your Majesty!" cried Pöllnitz, with apparent enthusiam, bowing to kiss the king's robe.

But the king stepped backward and motioned him to stop.

"Let us leave these ceremonies for coronation-day," he said, with a weary smile. "I need you now for very different things. You are a master and a sage in matters of etiquette and ceremony; you shall, therefore, continue the conduct of affairs at my court, and begin by arranging for the funeral of the king."

"According to the simple standard specified by the late king?" asked Pöllnitz.

"No. I must, unfortunately, begin my rule by an act of disobedience to the last wishes of my father. I cannot let the simple funeral take place which he commanded. The world would misunderstand it and blame me for want of reverence to the royal corpse. It must be buried with all the honor due a king. This is my will. Act accordingly. The details I leave to you. Go to work at once. Buy all that is necessary in the way of mourning and send me the bills. I will have them paid."

The master of ceremonies was dismissed and crossed the royal chambers meditating and revelling in anticipations of future splendor and power.

"One thing more, Pöllnitz," called the king after him from