the threshold of the royal apartment; "one thing more, Pöllnitz: no trickeries, no cheating, no double bills! I shall never pardon anything of that sort. Mark that, sir Baron!" and without awaiting an answer, the king turned back into his rooms.

But Pöllnitz stood staring after him with open-mouthed, horrified aspect.

It seemed to him as though he had seen a ghost.

This was not the young, extravagant, luxurious, confiding ruler whom Pöllnitz expected: this was a collected, serious, saving king, who saw through him, the tried old courtier, and distrusted him.

CHAPTER XV.

WE THE KING.

Two days, two nights, had passed, and still no word from the king. The court of Frederick William First lived on, and the little court in Rheinsberg was consumed with impatience. The means of diversion were exhausted—sailing-parties and promenades, music, reading aloud, all proved vain. Time had shed his wings and put on leaden shoes. Kaiserling's wit and Chazot's humor, where were they? All are silent, awaiting the days of power and splendor sure to dawn for all his favorites when the crown prince becomes king. Hitherto they had all been the friends of the crown prince—tolerated, anxious, secretly summoned, trembling before the wrath of the king, in daily danger of banishment from that idyll at his behest. But when the crown prince is king they are mighty *protégés*, and all the world vies with itself for their favor.

The crown princess alone seemed quiet in the midst of the universal excitement, the torturing expectation. She seemed quiet, and yet she knew that the next days would decide her whole life, that with the thread of life of the dying king her fortune too might snap, and her heart be entombed.

But Elizabeth Christine had a strong heart and a noble soul. She had spent one whole night upon her knees praying and weeping, and her heart had bled in grief and measureless pain. Now she was quiet, prepared for anything, even for separation from him. Should Frederick utter the slightest wish, she would go. Whither? That was unimportant—abroad, away. Whichever road she might journey, one goal she was sure to reach, and that goal was the grave.

If she might not live with him she would die. Knowing this she was quiet, succeeded in being cheerful.

"I invite all the ladies and gentlemen into my rooms today," she said on the afternoon of the second day of this painful waiting. "We will imagine that we have the pleasure of having the crown prince in our midst, and will spend the hours after his fashion. First a sail, then tea in my apartment, by which opportunity Herr Bielfeld will read aloud some chapters of the 'Henriade.' Then come cards, and, late in the evening, music. Do you agree to this, ladies and gentlemen? They murmured a few words of thanks and pleasure, but they looked grave and their brows were clouded. The crown princess noticed it. "It seems I have not met your wishes," she said, "and you are not content with my propositions. Even little Fräulein von Schwerin makes a wry face and my good mistress of ceremonies has lost her friendly smile. What is it; I wish to know? Baron Bielfeld I appoint spokesman for this rebellious assembly—speak!"

Baron Bielfeld sighed. "Your Royal Highness was perfectly right to speak a few days since of your gift of divination. It is certainly an extraordinary happiness, a flattering honor, when we enjoy the privilege of spending the evening in the apartments of the princess in her high presence. Yet if your Royal Highness really deign to permit us to beg a favor, it would be this—to receive us in the garden-salon, or the music-room, and not in her Highness' private apartment, for the private rooms, beautiful as they are, have one great, dreadful fault."

"Well?" asked the crown princess, as Bielfeld was silent once more. "You do, indeed, make me curious. I thought hitherto that my rooms were very beautiful and attractive. The crown prince himself arranged them, and Pesne and Buisson beautified them with charming decorations. Tell me quickly, what fault have my rooms?"

"This, your Royal Highness—that they lie on the right side of the castle."

The crown princess looked at him in astonishment. Then a smile flitted over her face. "Ah!" she said, "now I comprehend. They do not command the great bridge that all must pass who come from Berlin and Potsdam. You are right. That is a great defect in my rooms. But the music-hall lies on the left side and from thence the whole way may be seen. Let us, therefore, read aloud in the music-room and adjourn to our cards in my room only when it has grown so dark that you can no longer see the bridge and the road."

They followed the princess to the music-room, along whose walls small pale-red sofas stood. Whether by accident or out of mischief, the crown princess selected the divans farthest from the windows, so obliging the company to assemble there. But while they followed her each cast a longing glance at the window and the bridge over which the messenger of better fortunes might at any moment make his appearance.

Meanwhile Baron Bielfeld took up his book and began the reading required by the crown princess. But what a torture it was to read and listen to the regular Alexandrines of the "Henriade," while in Potsdam a new Alexander was perhaps placing the crown upon his beautiful young head!

Suddenly Bielfeld paused in his reading and stared at the window.

"Well, why no more?" asked the princess.

"Pardon, but it seemed to me that I saw a horse's head over there on the bridge."

Instantly, as if at a preconcerted signal, all flew to the windows, even the crown princess letting herself be carried with the stream. A general laugh followed. "An ox! Bielfeld's courier is an ox!"

The mortified company slunk back to its seats, and the reading began again. But it did not last long. Bielfeld soon let his book fall again. "Pardon, your Royal Highness," said he, "but this time it is certainly a horse trotting across the bridge."

And again the company rushed to the windows.

True enough, it was a horse! The rider, however, was no royal messenger, but a simple peasant.

"I see," said the crown princess, with a smile, "we must give up the reading. Let us walk in the garden—naturally on the left side of the garden, and as near the fence as possible."

At last the sun set, and the company reluctantly accepted the princess' invitation to cards in her rooms. And this play held to-day, as always, a magic power for the inhabitants of Rheinsberg, for it meant winning something that not the crown prince alone, but all the courtiers, always needed—it meant winning money. Count Wartensleben had been there for several days with a well-filled purse, which Bielfeld, Kaiserling, and Chazot longed to lighten.

The crown princess played a game of trisset in her room with her ladies-in-waiting, while the rest of the company amused themselves with quadrille at different tables in the anteroom.

Suddenly the door opened and the princess' chamberlain entered. As he passed the table where Count Wartensleben and Baron Bielfeld were playing with some ladies he showed them a mourning envelope which he was about to hand to the princess. "The king is dead," was murmured and whispered about, and Wartensleben, Bielfeld, and the ladies dropped their cards. What were a few groschen now, when the crown prince was king?

Wartensleben arose, took his hat, and said, solemnly: "I will be the first to salute the crown princess as queen!"

"I follow you," whispered Bielfeld, gravely, and both approached the open door, through which they could see the crown princess engaged in reading her letter.

She looked unusually contented, and a happy smile played upon her lips. As she looked up she met the two courtiers solemnly approaching her.

"Ah! you know, then, that a courier has really passed the fateful bridge! And you would like to know how the crown prince is coming on?"

"The crown prince!" repeated Wartensleben in astonishment. "Still crown prince?"

"You thought he was already king, and came to salute me as the queen?"

"Yes, your Royal Highness, the words 'your Majesty' were already upon our lips, like an arrow about to speed from the bow."

The whole company broke into a merry laugh, in which the crown princess joined, and conversation continued in a jesting strain until bed-time came, and they all thanked heaven that they could retire to their rooms.

When the crown princess finally found herself alone in her room she drew the letter from her bosom to read it once more.

"Frederick!" she whispered—"my Frederick!" pressing the letter to her lips. Then she read it again and a happy smile settled upon her face.

"No, he will not repudiate me; there it stands in writing. He will not be so cruel as to set the crown upon my head only to strew that head with ashes afterward! If he recognizes me as his spouse before his people, before all Germany, he has reached the determination never to repudiate me. Oh! he knows how I love him, though I never summoned courage to tell him so. My eyes, my sighs have told him, and he has taken pity upon the poor woman who asks nothing save that she may gaze upon him and love him. And who knows but

that some day this great, unexacting love may touch his heart? Grant that, grant that, my God, and then let me die!"

She sank upon her couch, pressed the letter to her lips, and whispered softly: "Good-night, Frederick—my Frederick!"

Soon deep stillness brooded over the castle. The lights were out, the windows dark. Sleep spread his wings upon all those impatiently and expectantly beating hearts and lulled them to slumber.

And *then* came the long-awaited courier dashing along the road. He passes the bridge and its wooden floor resounds under the horse's feet, and still no one hears him. They all sleep so soundly. He pounds at the gate, halloos, this messenger of the new times. There comes a stir of life in the castle, lights appear in the windows, the halls and stairs are full of flitting figures.

A knock at his door aroused Bielfeld. "Up, up! my friend," said fat Knobelsdorf, panting in. "Dress yourself as fast as you can! We must all go down to the queen to congratulate her, must prepare at once to accompany her to Berlin! Frederick William the First is dead, and we are King of Prussia!"

"Ah! that is another fairy tale," said Bielfeld, hastily dressing; "a fairy tale with which we poor discouraged children have been lulled to sleep too often to believe it true."

"Not at all. This time it is true. The king is dead, wholly dead. Jordan has the command to open and embalm the body; and you will understand that when *he* has it under his claws the king will not revive."

And Knobelsdorf laughed at his joke so heartily, and fell so exhausted into a chair, that he did not notice the small table standing beside it, which he knocked over with a loud crash to the floor.

"What are you doing!" exclaimed Bielfeld, anxiously. "You've scattered on the floor all the money I won yesterday. But that's too precious seed to be sown about in that way."

And he knelt and crept about the floor gathering up his winnings. Knobelsdorf pulled him up. "Is it permissible," he asked, indignantly, "to think of such miserable trifles at so glorious a moment—to be scratching about the floor for two-groschen pieces when it will be raining golden ducats upon us presently?"

The two hurried down to the anteroom that led to the princess' apartments. The whole court was there assembled

and each was doing his best to look grave and hide his satisfaction in honor of the importance of the occasion. All were speaking in undertones, for the princess' sleeping-room adjoined the anteroom, and she was still asleep, she who would awaken as queen.

"She must be awakened to receive the communication of her consort."

The first lady in waiting, Madame Katsch, accompanied by Elizabeth's two maids of honor, solemnly entered the room, well armed with salts and stimulants. Elizabeth Christine still lay smiling in her sleep. But at so weighty a moment not even the sleep of a princess can be kept holy.

Madame Katsch drew back the curtains and the sudden light awoke the princess. She looked wonderingly at the lady in waiting, who, bowing low, approached the bed.

"Pardon me that I venture to awaken your Majesty."

"Why do you call me 'your Majesty?' Has another ox crossed the bridge?"

"This time, your Majesty, it was the horse of Baron von Willichs bringing the news that King Frederick William died yesterday in Potsdam. Here, your Majesty, is a smelling-bottle."

The young queen waved it away, feeling not the slightest inclination to faint.

"And has Baron von Willich no letter for me?"

"Yes, indeed, your Majesty. It is here."

The young queen uttered a cry of joy and broke the seal with trembling, hasty fingers.

The letter contained a few lines only, but they had been written by her husband and were of great importance. The king called her to his side to receive the congratulations and homage of their subjects. True, the letter held no single tender, loving word, but the king summoned her to himself and called her "My spouse." He did not think of divorcing, repudiating her, and that was the all-important point.

Up and away, then, to Berlin! Equipages fill the court-yard, servants run hither and thither, the once quiet halls resound with voices, all is movement, noise, haste. In the music-hall the queen received the enthusiastic congratulations of the court. Everyone sees a brilliant future approaching, every heart beats with hope and expectation.

Away, away to Berlin, where a new sun has arisen—to the new king, Frederick the Second.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT AND MERCY.

Cannons were thundering, bells were ringing, the garrison of Berlin took the oath of loyalty, as the garrison of Potsdam had done on the preceding day.

The king was receiving the first great royal company in the White Hall. From all the provinces and every city, from all the corporations, deputations had hastened hither to see the king, the long-wished-for, the long-hoped-for, him who was to deliver them from oppression, servitude, and famine.

Honest rejoicing was universal, and he who saw the face of the young king glowing with enthusiasm felt that for Prussia a new time had indeed come. But who was elected to help put in motion the wheel of the new time? Whom will the new king choose for his friends and servants, whom will he reject, whom punish? For in the White Hall there were present many who, under command of the king, had done the crown prince bitter harm, many who had humiliated him, misused his confidence, slandered him, and aroused the wrath of his father against him. Will the king remember that now, when he has power to punish and take revenge?

Many persons had entered the White Hall trembling with fear, and stood silent, glad if the king's eye did not rest upon them, and they could withdraw unobserved into a window-niche.

Who had offended Frederick so often as Colonel Derschau? Who had ridiculed him, persecuted him so bitterly, executed the commands of the king against him so relentlessly? It was Derschau who had entered the crown prince's prison in the evening and, extinguishing the light by which the crown prince was reading, had said, with a cold smile, with no word of excuse: "The king wills it. Such is the king's command."

In those days "Captain Fritz" had wept with rage and pain, and had sworn to have his revenge upon the cruel officer. Will the king remember now what "Captain Fritz" swore then?

The king stood directly before the captain. His clear eyes were resting with a strange, sad, affectionate expression upon

the man who had caused him so much pain and was now bowed before him with downcast eye and beating heart.

With a sudden movement Frederick offered his hand, saying: "Good day, Derschau!"

It was the first time that Frederick had spoken to him in seven years, and the friendly word touched the colonel to the heart. He bowed low over the proffered hand, and as he kissed it a hot tear fell upon it.

"Colonel Derschau, you were to my father a true and faithful servant; you followed his commands with exactness in every point, yielding him self-effacing obedience. It is fitting that the son reward faithfulness to the father. From this day you are a major-general."

Then the king turned to Privy Councillor Eckert, and his expression grew hard and stern.

"Is the escutcheon built into the house in the Jaeger Street?" he asked. And as Eckert answered in the negative, the king continued: "Then let it not be mounted. The house is royal property, and I will not have it disfigured with such nonsense. Go home. I shall communicate my commands to you."

Pale and broken-hearted, Privy Councillor Eckert stole away. Laughter and half-audible comment accompanied him through the royal halls, and no one had a word of pity or regret for him. None remembered the oft-plighted friendship now, or the urgent assurances of thankfulness and devotion. As he approached the door Baron Pöllnitz stepped up to him, a wild, scornful smile playing about his lips, his expression betraying all the hatred he had been so often forced to suppress and conceal.

"Now," he said, slowly, "will you send me the promised wine from your cellar? You remember, from your house in the Jaeger Street, for which I designed your escutcheon. Ah, those were beautiful days, dear sir. You have often slandered me and won me words of censure from the king. But I have reason to be thankful to you, for the house in the Jaeger Street is stately and fine, and you have fitted it out with such princely magnificence at the king's expense that it is suitable even for a cavalier. Do you remember my description of the house of a courtier? The king called it a castle in Spain at the time, but you, dear, generous man, have made of my air-castle a reality, and now, when it is finished and in order, you give it up for me; for you know, Eckert, that Privy Councillor Eckert is dead, and only Chimney-Builder Eckert has survived him! But even so skilful a chimney-

builder may not remain within twenty miles of Berlin. Still, if my chimney smokes, I may send a messenger, may I not, and you will come and make the damage good again? You promise me this?"

Eckert murmured some unintelligible words and tried to push Pöllnitz from the door before which the relentless courtier had placed himself, like the angel with the flaming sword.

"You wish to go?" he asked, in a friendly tone. "You are doubtless curious as to the royal communication that awaits you at home. I can tell you its contents exactly. You are deprived of your offices and dignities and banished from Berlin—that is all. The king has pardoned you, you see. He might have executed you, or banished you for life to Spandau; but he did not wish to sully his ascent of the throne with your blood, and so he has pardoned you."

"Let me go, or I shall suffocate," coughed Eckert, ghastly pale.

But Pöllnitz still held him fast. "But do you not know, good man, that down in the castle garden there are thousands of human beings? Cannot you hear their rejoicing even here? These hurrahs and cheers would change to a fierce yell of rage if the people should see you, dear Eckert; for you know that the people are starving—you who filled the royal granaries and then closed them with such bolts that they, in the despair of famine, could not open them; you who swore to the king that his people had enough to live upon and did not need his grain and his help. Listen, they are hurrahing again. I will not detain you longer. Go and see how happy they are, for the young king has commanded that the granaries be opened. The king has had bread distributed among the soldiers, who had had none for three days, and has abolished for some months the revenue upon flour. Go, Eckert, see how happy the people are."

With a wild oath, Eckert broke away. Pöllnitz hastened into the adjoining room. There stood the king in the midst of the ministers, surrounded by a deputation from Berlin about to take its leave.

"I command you"—the king was closing his address to his ministers—"I command you, as often as you may hold it needful, to make suggestions contrary to my commands and decrees, and not to weary of repeating them if I should ever, unfortunately, lose sight of the welfare of my subjects; for it is my will that in future, so far as my personal interest may conflict with the general good, the prosperity of my country shall take precedence of my own good."

Thereupon the king left the great hall and withdrew into his private apartments, where his friends and confidants awaited his coming with beating hearts. They were all prepared to catch in their laps the shower of gold now, doubtless, about to descend. They were all convinced that the young king would transfer to their shoulders at least a corner of the purple that had descended upon himself; each one of them dreamed of a minister's portfolio, an embassy, or a general's epaulettes.

As the king entered their midst they welcomed him with loud hurrahs, and Margrave Heinrich, the comrade of many a feast in Rheinsberg, hastened up to him, reaching out both hands to greet him with merry, witty words, as the gardener of Rheinsberg. But Frederick withheld his hand, and no smile illumined his features. Gazing sternly at the margrave and retreating one step, he said, gravely, "Monsieur, I am now the king."

Then, reading astonishment in the faces of all these friends, but a moment before so confidently smiling, he continued more mildly: "We are no longer in Rheinsberg. There the word of Horace is fitting, 'Sweet is folly in its own time.' There I am gardener and friend. But here I am king, and here we must all work, each using his own powers, bearing witness in the service he renders the State to his fitness for being the king's friend."

"Shall I have the honor of counting myself among the king's friends?" asked the old Prince of Anhalt Dessau, who had just entered the hall with his two sons, and had heard the last words of the king. "Will your Majesty hold me and my sons in the favor which his blessed majesty bestowed upon us through so many happy years? O, your Majesty, I beseech you, be merciful to me and to my sons, and leave us the favor, distinction, and influence which we have enjoyed so long."

So speaking, the old prince bent the knee, weeping loudly, before the young monarch. The king nodded reflectively, and a smile played about his lips. He gave the prince his hand and bade him rise. "I shall gladly leave you your offices," said the king, "for I am certain that you will serve me as faithfully and zealously as my father. But as to distinction and influence under *my* reign, no one shall enjoy distinction and no one will influence me—not even my dearest friend."

The friends from Rheinsberg turned pale and stole furtive glances at one another. The king approached his friend Jor-

dan, and taking his arm, withdrew with him into a window-niche, where he had a long and earnest conversation with him. The courtiers and favorites looked with envious glances at the favored one, watching every gesture and expression of the king. Jordan's face was not radiant. On the contrary, a slightly pained expression of wonder passed like a cloud across it.

Then the king left the window-niche and beckoned Bielfeld. With him, too, he spoke long and earnestly, only to dismiss him and call Chazot. Finally he took Von Wartensleben's arm, pacing up and down with him. The faces of the other courtiers darkened. With none of them had he spoken so long, none had he held by the arm, none had he distinguished with such tokens of love and friendship. It was clear that from this day on Wartensleben was the king's favorite.

The young king had read the symptoms of all this envy, malice, grief, and anger in the gestures of his friends. He knew them all too well, had observed them all too exactly. It had amused him to play with souls bound in the toils of such petty selfishness and hatred. But now that the count had served his purpose he, too, must have his wings clipped a trifle.

"Yes, I am ruler over a kingdom," said Frederick. "I have a fine army and well-filled treasury. You will not doubt that my highest endeavor will be to bring my country to the utmost height of prosperity, maintain the reputation of my army, and make good use of my wealth. The money is there to circulate and be used, to reward those who serve their country well, but, primarily, it is there for those who are truly my friends."

The young count's face beamed, and a scornful smile played over the king's face.

"But I shall naturally know how to distinguish," he continued, "and he who needs no money will receive none. You, for instance, my dear count, who are so unusually rich and so remarkably economical, will have to be satisfied with my love, for you will never receive from me one single thaler."

So speaking, he nodded to the count, went into the next room, and shut the door behind him. Dumb with astonishment, the courtiers stood staring at one another when the king had left them. Jordan was the first to break the silence. With a sorrowful smile he offered Bielfeld his hand.

"It shall not be said that disappointed hopes brought envy

with them, and made us blind to the good qualities of our friends. Accept my congratulations and be sure that I rejoice from my heart at your good fortune."

Bielfeld looked at him in surprise. "My good fortune? Dear friend, in this fortune there is nothing to envy, and as to my elevation, it is so trivial that one can scarcely see it. The king told me that he destines me for a diplomatic career, but that I need several years of apprenticeship. For this purpose he has selected me to accompany his ambassador, Count Truchess, to Hanover. When I come back from there I am to be promoted. That is but a small beginning. But you, dear Jordan, what important post have you?"

"What am I?" exclaimed Jordan, smiling. "I am not minister nor councillor of state. I am—you will never guess! —I am director of the poor! I am to see that the streets of Berlin are freed from those annoying beggars, who are to be brought into an almshouse which I am to build. Do you envy me, my friends?"

All were silent. All eyes turned now to Wartensleben.

"And you, dear count, are you the happy man?"

"I!" exclaimed the count, half angry, half amused. "I have nothing and shall never have anything. Do you wish to know what the king said to me? He assured me solemnly that I am rich enough, and shall never have a thaler from him."

They all laughed. "Let us confess," said Bielfeld, "that we have been playing a comedy which Molière might have written under the title, 'The Day of the Dupes.' But listen, the king is playing the flute."

Yes, the king was playing the flute. But soon he laid it aside, for his eye rested upon a table covered with letters and papers. He must read and answer them all himself, for no one should work for him. Everything should go out from himself. He would himself be heart and soul of his State. So he had no more time for playing the flute; he must work, for he was king, *i.e.*, first servant and administrator of his people and his land.

He opened the letters, read them, and noted the answer to each on the margin for the secretary to fill out. The work was near its end. The paper with the large seal, which he now opened, should be the last for to-day. It was a letter from the ecclesiastical department, reporting that, by means of the Roman Catholic schools tolerated in Berlin, many inhabitants were being led away from Protestantism. The department, therefore, inquired whether it would not be better to close and abolish the Catholic schools.

A pitying smile played over the king's features as he read this. "And they assert that they all believe in one God!" he said, "and their pastors preach Christian tolerance and Christian love, and know nothing about it. They all have, not God, but the Church before their eyes. Intolerant are they in their hearts. My whole life shall be a struggle with the preachers. They will despise me and call me a heretic; but the Church may be against me forever if only my conscience exonerates me! Now, to begin the war; and what I write now will be a battle-cry sounded in the midst of the pious camp!"

He took his pen and wrote, as an answer to the ecclesiastical department, on the margin of the paper: "All religions must be tolerated, and the secretary of the treasury has but the one point to care for, that none injure another, for in my country each one must be free to be blessed after his own fashion."

CHAPTER XVII.

IN THE GARDEN AT MONTBIJOU.

The first days of excitement were over. The young king had retired for a time to the solitude and quiet of Montbijou, while his spouse, still staying in the crown prince's palace in Berlin, awaited with great trepidation her husband's summons to follow him to Charlottenburg. But the young king seemed to have mind and attention for nothing outside his royal duties. He worked and studied uninterruptedly, and even the flute was silent to make way for decrees and rescripts. Berlin had submitted a few days to the requirements of etiquette and worn mourning, hiding its laughing face until the coronation day of the new king. Even the queen dowager dreamed of coming splendors and glories. Sophia Dorothea had too long been an oppressed and trembling wife; she longed to be a queen! Her son would doubtless give her all the power and influence which her husband had refused her. Her son would remember the days of tears, pain, and humiliation which she had endured for his sake, and now, when it was in his power, he must reward them brilliantly. Frederick was not born to rule; he was a poet, a philosopher, an enthusiast, who dreamed Utopian dreams. For him to reign would be burdensome, and the trumpet-blast of his soldiers an inharmonious interruption of his fantasies. But happily his mother was there ready to reign for him, to take upon herself the heavy burden of the kingdom, and work with his ministers while he was perhaps writing poetical epistles to Voltaire. And why should she not be able to rule and make laws? Had there not been women in all countries who had ruled their peoples with honor and glory? Was not England proud of its Elizabeth, Sweden of its Christine, Spain of its Isabella, Russia of its Catharine? had not Prussia Sophia Charlotte, who had held a most important position? Why shoud not Sophia Dorothea achieve the same glory?

So thought the queen as she paced up and down the shady paths of the garden of Montbijou, listening with a proud smile to the flatteries of Manteuffel, who had just brought her the letter of condolence of the Empress of Austria.

"Her majesty, the empress, writes unusually tenderly and lovingly to-day," said the queen, with a smile.

"She has but expressed to-day those feelings which dwell in her heart at all times," said Manteuffel, reverentially.

The queen nodded with a smile and plucked one of the roses, before a group of which they stood. "The houses of Hohenzollern and Hapsburg have never been friends," she said, reflectively. "It seems to be in their natures not to love one another."

"Could not the hatred of the parents be reconciled in the children?" asked Count Manteuffel.

"But we are not the children; we are of the generation of the fathers!" exclaimed the queen, proudly, remembering how her husband had been thwarted and deceived by the House of Austria, and how, upon his death-bed, that husband had enjoined upon his son Frederick the duty of revenging himself upon the House of Austria.

"Pardon, your Majesty, if I venture to contradict you," said Manteuffel, smiling. "If really between the fathers there exists a regrettable feud, the love of the children has reconciled it; for the young king's wife is the niece, and a warmly loved niece, of the Austrian Imperial House."

"She was so when my husband visited the emperor in Bohemia, and it was not found according to etiquette for the emperor to give the King of Prussia his hand. She was so when the court at Vienna scorned all its promises and all our just claims, and refused to give to Prussia that to which Prussia had undeniable hereditary claims."

"But she was not yet so when Austria, by her energetic interference, saved the then crown prince's life; for your