

for my services, instead of fine speeches, I would have been as rich as Croesus."

"And a beggar in virtue," said the king, smiling. "But go, I was wrong to reproach you. I shall now go to Berlin, and when my brother arrives he shall find me there. Go now, my grand chamberlain, and take the prince my permission for a three days' absence."

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE FIRST DISAPPOINTMENT.

A FEW hours later the equipage of Prince Henry arrived in the court-yard of Monbijou, and the prince demanded of his mother, the widowed queen, permission to pay her his respects.

Sophia Dorothea was suffering greatly. The gout, that slow but fatal disease, which does not kill at once, but limb by limb, had already paralyzed the feet of the poor queen, and confined her to her chair. To-day her sufferings were greater than usual, and she was not able to leave her bed. Therefore, she could not receive the prince as a queen, but only as a mother, without ceremony or etiquette. That the meeting might be entirely without constraint, the maids of honor left the queen's room, and as the prince entered, he saw the ladies disappearing by another door; the last one had just made her farewell bow, and was kissing respectfully the queen's hand.

This was Louise von Kleist, for whose sake the prince had come, and for whom his heart throbbed painfully. He could have cried aloud for joy as he saw her in her bewildering loveliness, her luxuriant beauty. He longed to seize her hands and cover them with kisses—to tell her how much he had suffered, how much he was still suffering for her sake.

But Louise appeared not to have seen him, not to have noticed his entrance. She had only eyes and ears for the queen, who was just dismissing her with winning words, telling her to remain in the castle and return when she desired to see her.

"I shall remain and await your majesty's commands," said Louise, withdrawing hastily.

The queen now greeted the prince as if she had just observed him, and invited him to be seated on the *fauteuil* near her couch.

The prince obeyed, but he was absent-minded and restless, and the more the queen endeavored to engage him in harmless and unconstrained conversation, the more monosyllabic and preoccupied

he became. The poor prince remembered only that his beloved was so near, that only a door separated them, and prevented him from gazing on her beauty.

Yes, Louise was really in the next room, in the cabinet of the queen, sorrowful and exhausted; she had fallen upon the little sofa near the door, the smile had left her lips, and her brilliant, bewitching eyes were filled with tears. Louise wept; she wept for her last youthful dream, her last hope of happiness and virtue, for her sad, shadowed future and wounded pride; for to-day she had to resign forever the proud hopes, the brilliant future for which she had striven with so much energy.

But it was vain to struggle against this hard necessity. The king had given her his orders and was there to see them carried out. He sat behind that *portière* that led into the grand saloon; he had just left Louise, and, before going, had said to her, in a stern, commanding tone:

"You will fulfil my commands accurately. You know that Fritz Wendel still lives, and that I shall be inexorable if you do not act as you have promised."

Louise submitted respectfully to the king's commands; she accepted her fate, but she wept bitterly, and when she felt that the king's eyes were no longer upon her, her tears flowed unceasingly.

Perhaps Frederick still saw her, or suspected her weakness, for the *portière* opened slightly, and his noble, but stern countenance appeared.

"Madame," he said, "if the prince sees you with tearful eyes, he will not believe in your happiness."

Louise smiled painfully. "Ah! sire, he will believe I am weeping for joy. I have often heard of joyful tears."

The king did not reply; he felt for her agony, and closed the *portière*.

"I will cry no more," she said; "I have accepted my destiny, and will fulfil it bravely for the sake of my daughter. It concerns Camilla's happiness more than my own. I will deserve the respect of my unfortunate child."

In saying this, a smile like a sunbeam illuminated her countenance. But now she started up, and laid her hand in terror upon her heart. She heard steps approaching. The door moved, and in a moment the king appeared and motioned to her.

"Courage, courage!" murmured Louise, and with instinctive fear she flew away from the door and placed herself in the niche of the last window.

To reach her, the prince must cross the saloon; that would give her a few moments to recover. The door opened and Prince Henry

entered; his glance flew quickly over the saloon, and found the one he sought.

Louise could have shrieked with agony when she saw the tender smile with which he greeted her. Never had he appeared so handsome, so noble as at this moment, when she must resign him forever.

But there was no time to think of this, no time for complaints or regrets. He was there, he stood before her, offered both his hands, and greeted her with the tenderest words of love.

Louise had a stern part to play, and she dared not listen to her heart's pleadings.

"Ah, my prince," she said, with a laugh that sounded to herself like the wail of a lost soul—"ah, my prince, take care! we women are very credulous, and I might take your jesting words for truth."

"I advise you to do so," said the prince, happy and unconcerned. "Yes, Louise, I advise you to do so, for you know well that my jesting words have an earnest meaning. And now that we are alone, we will dispense with ceremony. You must justify yourself before a lover—a lover who is unfortunately very jealous. Yes, yes, Louise, that is my weakness; I do not deny it, I am jealous—jealous of all those who keep you from me, who prevent my receiving your letters."

"My letters!" said Louise, astonished; "why should I have written letters to your highness? I do not believe it is the custom for ladies to write to gentlemen voluntarily. It has been two weeks since I received a letter from your highness."

"Because it was impossible for my messenger to deliver them, Louise; you were so unapproachable, at least for me. But you must have known that my thoughts were always with you, that my heart pined for news and comfort from you."

"*Non, vraiment*, I did not know it," said Louise, laughingly.

"You did not know it?" asked Henry, wonderingly. "Well, what did you suppose?"

"I thought," she said, carelessly—"I thought that Prince Henry had overcome or forgotten his little folly of the carnival."

"And then?"

"Then I determined to follow his example. Then I preached a long sermon to my foolish eyes—they were misty with tears. Listen, I said to them: 'You foolish things you have no reason to weep; you should always look bright and dazzling, even if you never see Prince Henry again. Really, the absence of the prince has been most fortunate for you. You might have whispered all kinds of foolish things to my weak heart. The prince is young, handsome, and amiable, and it amuses him to win the love of fair ladies. Had you seen him more frequently, it is possible he might have succeeded

with poor Louise, and the little flirtation we carried on together would have resulted in earnest love on my part. That would have been a great misfortune. Laugh and look joyous, beautiful eyes, you have saved me from an unrequited love. You should not weep, but rejoice. Look around and find another suitor, who would, perhaps, love me so fondly that he could not forget me in a few days; whose love I might return with ardor.' This, my prince, is the sermon I preached to my eyes when they grew dim with tears."

"And was your sermon effective?" said the prince, with pale, trembling lips. "Did your eyes, those obedient slaves, look around and find another lover?"

"Ah! your highness, how can you doubt it? My eyes are indeed my slaves, and must obey. Yes, they looked and found the happiness they sought."

"What happiness," asked Henry, apparently quite tranquil, but he pressed his hand nervously on the chair that stood by him—"what happiness did your eyes find?"

Louise looked at him and sighed deeply. "The happiness," she said, and against her will her voice trembled and faltered—"the happiness that a true, earnest love alone can give—which I have received joyously into my heart as a gift from God."

The prince laughed aloud, but his face had a wild, despairing expression, and his hands clasped the chair more firmly.

"I do not understand your holy, pious words. What do they mean? What do you wish to say?"

"They mean that I now love so truly and so earnestly that I have promised to become the wife of the man I love," said Louise, with forced gaiety.

The prince uttered a wild cry, and raised his hands as if to curse the one who had wounded him so painfully.

"If this is true," he said, in a deep, hollow voice—"if this is true, I despise, I hate you, and they are right who call you a heartless coquette."

"Ah, my prince, you insult me," cried Louise.

"I insult you!" he said, with a wild laugh; "verily, I believe this woman has the effrontery to reproach me—I who believed in and defended her against every accusation—I that had the courage to love and trust, when all others distrusted and despised her. Yes, madame, I loved you; I saw in you a goddess, where others saw only a coquette. I adored you as an innocent sacrifice to envy and malice; I saw a martyr's crown upon your brow, and wished to change it for the myrtle-crown of marriage. And my love and hopes are dust and ashes; it is enough to drive me mad—enough to stifle me with rage and shame."

Carried away by passion, the prince ran wildly through the saloon, gasping for air, struggling for composure, and now and then uttering words of imprecation and despair.

Louise waited, in silence and resignation, the end of this stormy crisis. She questioned her heart if this bitter hour was not sufficient atonement for all her faults and follies; if the agony she now suffered did not wipe out and extirpate the past.

The prince still paced the room violently. Suddenly, as if a new thought had seized him, he remained standing in the middle of the saloon, and looked at Louise with a strangely altered countenance. She had forgotten for a moment the part she was condemned to play, and leaned, pale and sad, against the window.

Perhaps he heard her sorrowful sighs—perhaps he saw her tears as they rolled one by one from her eyes, and fell like pearls upon her small white hands.

Anger disappeared from his face, his brow cleared, and as he approached Louise his eyes sparkled with another and milder fire.

"Louise," he said, softly, and his voice, which had before raged like a stormy wind, was now mild and tender—"Louise, I have divined your purpose—I know all now. At first, I did not understand your words; in my folly and jealousy I misconceived your meaning; you only wished to try me, to see if my love was armed and strong, if it was as bold and faithful as I have sworn it to be. Well, I stood the test badly, was weak and faint-hearted; but forgive me—forgive me, Louise, and strengthen my heart by confidence and faith in me."

He tried to take her hand, but she withdrew it.

"Must I repeat to your highness what I have said before? I do not understand you. What do you mean?"

"Ah," said the prince, "you are again my naughty, sportive Louise. Well, then, I will explain. Did you not say that you now love so truly, that you have promised to become the wife of the man you love?"

"Yes, I said that, your highness."

"And I," said the prince, seizing both her hands and gazing at her ardently—"I was so short-sighted, so ungrateful, as not to understand you. The many sorrows and vexations I suffer away from you have dimmed my eyes and prevented me from seeing what is written with golden letters upon your smiling lips and beaming eyes. Ah, Louise, I thank you for your precious words; at last you are captured, at last you have resolved to become the wife of him who adores you. I thank you, Louise, I thank you, and I swear that no earthly pomp or power could make me as proud and happy as this assurance of your love."

Louise gazed into his beautiful, smiling face with terror.

"Ah, my prince, my words have not the meaning you imagine. I spoke the simple truth. My heart has made its choice—since yesterday, I am the betrothed wife of Captain du Trouffle."

"That is not true," cried the prince, casting her hands violently from him. "You are very cruel to-day; you torture me with your fearful jests."

"No, your highness, I speak the truth. I am the betrothed of Captain du Trouffle."

"Since yesterday you are the betrothed of Captain du Trouffle!" repeated the prince, staring at her wildly. "And you say you love him, Louise?"

"Yes, your highness, I love him," said Louise, with a faint smile.

"It is impossible," cried the prince; "it is not true."

"And why should I deceive your highness?"

"Why?—ah, I understand all. Oh, Louise, my poor darling, how short-sighted I have been! Why did I not immediately suspect my brother?—he has spies to watch all my movements; they have at last discovered my love for you. Pöllnitz, who would do any thing for gold, has betrayed us to the king, who condemns me to marry according to my rank, and, to carry out his purpose surely, he now forces you to marry. Oh, Louise, say that this is so; acknowledge that the power of the king, and not your own heart, forced you to this engagement. It is impossible, it cannot be that you have forgotten the vows that we exchanged scarcely two weeks ago. It cannot be that you look upon the heart that loved you so deeply, so purely, as an idle plaything, to be thrown away so lightly! No, no, Louise, I have seen often in your beaming eyes, your eloquent smiles, I have felt in your soft and tender tones, that you loved me fondly; and now in your pale, sad face I see that you love me still, and that it is the king who wishes to separate us. My poor, lovely child, you have been intimidated; you think that my brother, who reigns supreme over millions, will yield to no obstacle, that it is vain to resist him. But you are mistaken, Louise; you have forgotten that I am Frederick's brother, that the proud, unconquerable blood of the Hohenzollerns flows also in my veins. Let my brother try to force me to his purpose; I shall be no weak tool in his hands. You had not firm confidence in your lover, Louise; you did not know that I would resign cheerfully rank and all family ties for your sake; you did not know that I had sworn to marry only the woman I love. This I must do to satisfy my heart and my honor, and also to show the king that Prince Henry is a free man. Now tell me, Louise, if I have not divined all. Is not this the

king's cruel work? Ah, you do not answer, you are silent. I understand—the king has made you swear not to betray him. Now look at me, Louise; make me a sign with your hand, tell me with your eyes, and I will comprehend you—I will take you in my arms and carry you to the altar. My God! Louise do you not see that I am waiting for this sign?—that you are torturing me?”

Louise raised her head, her heart was melting within her; she forgot her terror, and was ready to resist God, the king, and the whole world, to grasp the noble and unselfish love that the prince offered her. But her glance fell involuntarily upon the curtain, behind which the king stood, and it seemed to her as if she saw the angry, burning eyes of Frederick threatening to destroy her. She remembered her daughter, Fritz Wendel, and the world's mocking laughter, and was overcome.

“You are still silent,” said the prince; “you give me neither sign nor glance.”

Louise felt as if an iron hand was tearing her heart asunder.

“I really am at a loss what more to say or do,” she said, in a careless tone, that made her own heart shudder. “It pleases your highness to make a jest of what I say. I am innocent, my prince, of any double meaning. Five weeks have passed since I saw you—I believed you had forgotten me; I did not reproach you, neither was I in despair. I soon found that it was stupid and dreary to have my heart unoccupied, and I sought for and soon found a lover, to whom my heart became a willing captive. Therefore, when Captain Trouffle pleaded earnestly for my hand, I had not the courage to say no. This is my only crime, your highness. I was not cruel to myself; I received the happiness that was offered. I have been called a coquette, my prince; it is time to bind myself in marriage bonds, and show the world that love can make an honest woman of me. Can your highness blame me for this?”

The prince listened with breathless attention; gradually his countenance changed, the color faded from his cheeks, the light from his eyes; a smile was still on his lips, but it was cold and mocking; his eyes burned with anger and contempt.

“No, madame,” he said, with calm, proud indifference, “I do not blame you—I praise, I congratulate you. Captain du Trouffle is a most fortunate man—he will possess a most beautiful wife. When will this happy ceremony be performed?”

Madame von Kleist was unable to reply. She gazed with wild terror into his cold, iron face—she listened with horror to that voice, whose mild, soft tone had become suddenly so harsh, so stern.

The prince repeated his question, and his tone was harder and more imperious.

“The day is not fixed,” said Louise; “we must first obtain the king's consent to our marriage.”

“I shall take care it does not fail you,” said the prince, quietly. “I will strengthen your petition to the king. Now, madame, you must forgive me for leaving you. Many greetings to your betrothed—I shall be introduced to him to-morrow at the parade. Farewell, madame!”

The prince made a slight bow, and, without glancing at her again, left the room slowly and proudly.

Louise gazed after him with mournful eyes, but he did not see it; he did not see how she fell, as if broken, to the floor, as if struck by lightning; and when the door closed on him she held her hands to Heaven pleadingly for mercy and forgiveness.

The *portière* now opened, and the king entered; his countenance was pale, his eyes tearful, but they sparkled with anger when he saw Louise upon the floor. For him she was but a heartless coquette, and he was angry with her because of the suffering she had caused his brother, for whom he felt the deepest pity and compassion.

But that was now past; the brother could weep a tear of pity, the king must be firm and relentless.

As he approached her, she raised herself from the ground and made a profound and ceremonious bow.

“You have repaired much of the evil you have done, madame,” said the king, sternly. “You have played a dishonorable game with my brother. You enticed him to love you.”

“I think I have atoned, sire,” said Louise, faintly; “the prince no longer loves but despises me. Your commands are fulfilled to the letter, and I now beg your majesty's permission to withdraw.”

“Go, madame; you have done your duty to-day, and I will also do mine. I shall not forget what I promised you when you are Madame du Trouffle. We will forget all the faults of Madame von Kleist.”

He dismissed her with a slight bow, and gazed after her until she had disappeared.

At this moment, a heavy fall was heard in the antechamber. The door opened immediately, and the pale, disturbed face of Pöllnitz appeared.

“What is the matter, Pöllnitz?” asked the king, hastily.

“Oh, sire, poor Prince Henry has fainted.”

The king was startled, and stepped quickly to the door, but he remained standing there until his features resumed their calm expression.

“He will recover,” he said—“he will recover, for he is a man; in my youthful days I often fainted, but I recovered.”

## CHAPTER X.

## THE CONQUERED.

PAINFUL and bitter were the days for Henry that followed his first disappointment. He passed them in rigid seclusion, in his lonely chambers; he would see no one, no cheerful word or gay laughter was allowed in his presence. The servants looked at him sorrowfully; and when the prince appeared at the parade the day after his painful interview with Louise, even the king found him so pale and suffering, he begged him to take a week's leave and strengthen and improve his health.

The prince smiled painfully at the king's proposition, but he accepted his leave of absence, and withdrew to the solitude of his rooms. His heart was wounded unto death, his soul was agonized.

Youth soon laid its healing balm upon his wounds and closed them; anger and contempt dried his tears, and soothed the anguish of his heart.

The king was right when he said of his brother, "He is a man, and will recover." He did recover, and these days of suffering made a man of him; his brow, once so clear and youthful, had received its first mark of sorrow; the lines of his face were harsh and stern, his features sharper and more decided. He had experienced his first disappointment—it had nerved and strengthened him.

Before his eight days' leave of absence had expired, his door was again open to his circle of friends and confidants.

His first invited guest was the grand chamberlain, Baron Pöllnitz. The prince welcomed him with a bright and cheerful face.

"Do you know why I wished to see you?" he asked. "You must tell me the *chronique scandaleuse* of our most honorable and virtuous city. Commence immediately. What is the *on dit* of the day?"

"Ah," sighed Pöllnitz, "life is now stupid, dull, and monotonous. As you say, every one has become most honorable and virtuous. No scandals or piquant adventures occur; baptisms, marriages, and burials are the only events. This is really a miserable existence; for as I do not wish to be baptized or to marry, and as I am not yet ready for burial, I really do not know why I exist."

"But those that are married and baptized, doubtless know why they exist," said the prince, smiling. "Tell me something of this happy class. Whose, for example, is the latest marriage?"

"The latest marriage?" said Pöllnitz, hesitating—"before answering, I must allow myself to ask after the condition of your heart. Does it still suffer?"

"No," cried the prince, "it does not suffer; it received a heavy shower of cold water, and was cured instantly."

"I rejoice to hear it, your highness, and congratulate you on your recovery, for truly there is no more painful disease than a suffering heart."

"I told you that I had recovered fully; tell me, therefore, your news without hesitation. You spoke of a marriage. Who were the happy lovers?"

"Your highness, Madame von Kleist has married," murmured Pöllnitz.

The prince received this blow without betraying the slightest emotion.

"When did the marriage take place?" he asked, with perfect composure.

"Yesterday; and I assure your highness that I never saw a happier or more brilliant bride. Love has transformed her into a blushing, timid maiden."

Prince Henry pressed his hand upon his heart with a quick, unconscious movement.

"I can well imagine that she was beautiful," said he, controlling his voice with a great effort. "Madame von Kleist is happy, and happiness always beautifies. And the bridegroom, M. du Trouffle, was he also handsome and happy?"

"Your highness knows the name of the bride-groom," said Pöllnitz, appearing astonished.

"Yes, Madame von Kleist told me herself when she announced her approaching marriage. But I am not acquainted with Du Trouffle—is he handsome?"

"Handsome and amiable, your highness, and besides, a very good officer. The king gave him, as a wedding present, a major's commission."

"Then the beautiful Louise is now Mrs. Major du Trouffle," said the prince, with a troubled smile. "Were you present at the wedding?"

"Yes, in the name of the king."

"Did she speak the decisive Yes, the vow of faith and obedience, with earnestness and confidence? Did she not blush, or droop her eyelids in doing so?"

"Oh, no; she smiled as if entranced, and raised her eyes to heaven, as if praying for God's blessing upon her vows."

"One thing more," said the prince, fixing his large, grave eyes with a searching expression upon Pöllnitz—"what is said of me? Am I regarded as a rejected lover, or as a faithless one; for doubtless all Berlin knows of my love for this lady, you having been our confidant."

"Oh, my prince, that is a hard insinuation," said Pöllnitz, sadly. "Your highness cannot really believe that—"

"No protestations, I pray you," interrupted the prince, "I believe I know you thoroughly, but I am not angry with you nor do I reproach you: you are a courtier, and one of the best and rarest type; you have intellect and knowledge, much experience and *savoir vivre*; I could desire no better company than yourself; but for one moment cast aside your character as a courtier, and tell me the truth: what does the world say of this marriage in regard to me?"

"Your highness desires me to tell you the truth?"

"Yes, I do."

"Now the important moment has come," thought Pöllnitz. "Now, if I am adroit, I believe I can obtain the payment of my debts."

"Well, then, your highness," said Pöllnitz, in answer to the prince, "I will tell you the truth, even should I incur your displeasure. I fear, my prince, you are regarded as a rejected lover, and Madame du Trouffle has succeeded in throwing a holy lustre around her beautiful brow. It is said that she refused your dishonorable proposals, and preferred being the virtuous wife of a major, to becoming the mistress of a prince."

"Go on," said the prince, hastily, as Pöllnitz ceased, and looked searchingly at him. "What do they say of me?"

"That you are in despair, and that you have retired to your chambers to weep and mourn over your lost love."

"Ah, they say that, do they?" cried the prince, with flashing eyes and darkened brow; "well, I will show this credulous world that they are mistaken. Is the king in Sans-Souci?"

"Yes, your highness."

"Well, go to him, and announce my visit; I will follow you on foot."

"We have won the day," cried Pöllnitz, as he approached the king; "the prince desires to make you a visit. He will be here immediately."

"Do you know what my brother wishes of me?" asked the king.

"I do not know, but I suspect, sire. I think he wishes to marry, in order to pique his faithless sweetheart."

"Go and receive the prince, and conduct him to me; then remain in the antechamber, and await until I call."

When Pöllnitz left, the king seized his flute hastily and began to play a soft, melting adagio. He was still playing, when the door opened, and the prince was announced. Henry stood in the doorway, and made the king a ceremonious bow.

The king continued to play. The low, pleading notes of the flute floated softly through the room; they touched the heart of the prince, and quieted its wild, stormy beating.

Was that the king's intention, or did he intend to harmonize his own spirit before speaking to his brother? Perhaps both, for Frederick's glance softened, and his face assumed a kind and mild expression.

When the adagio was finished, the king laid his flute aside and approached the prince.

"Forgive me, brother," he said, offering his hand—"forgive me for keeping you waiting, I always like to conclude what I commence. Now, I am entirely at your service, and as I am unfortunately not accustomed to receive such friendly visits from you, I must ask you what brings you to me, and how I can serve you?"

The fierce, violent nature of the prince slumbered but lightly. The king's words aroused it, and made his pulse and heart beat stormily.

"How you can serve me, my brother?" he said, hastily. "I will tell you, and truthfully, sire."

The king raised his head, and glanced angrily at the burning face of the prince.

"I am not accustomed to have my words repeated, and all find that out here to their cost," he said, sternly.

"Have the goodness, then, to tell me why you have pursued me so long and unrelentingly? What have I done to deserve your displeasure and such bitter humiliations?"

"Rather ask me what you have done to deserve my love and confidence," said the king, sternly. "I refer you to your own heart for an answer."

"Ah, your majesty promised to answer my questions, and now you evade them; but I will reply frankly. I have done nothing to deserve your love, but also nothing to make me unworthy of it. Why are you, who are so good and kind to all others, so stern and harsh with me?"

"I will tell you the truth," said the king, earnestly. "You have deserved my displeasure; you have desired to be a free man, to cast aside the yoke that Providence placed upon you; you had the grand presumption to dare to be the master of your own actions."

"And does your majesty desire and expect me to resign this most natural of human rights?" said the prince, angrily.

"Yes, I desire and expect it. I can truthfully say that I have given my brothers a good example in this particular."

"But you did not do this willingly. You were cruelly forced to submission, and you now wish to drive us to an extremity you have,

doubtlessly, long since forgotten. Now, you suffered and struggled before declaring yourself conquered."

"No," said the king, softly, "I have not forgotten. I still feel the wound in my soul, and at times it burns."

"And yet, my brother?"

"And yet I will have no pity with you. I say to you, as my father said to me: 'You must submit; you are a prince, and I am your king!' I have long since acknowledged that my father was right in his conduct to me. I was not only a disobedient son, but a rebellious subject. I richly deserved to mount the scaffold with Katte."

"Ah, my brother, there was a time when you wept for this faithful and unfortunate friend," cried the prince, reproachfully.

"The sons of kings have not the right to choose their own path, destiny has marked it out for them; they must follow it without wavering. I neither placed the crown upon my head, nor the yoke upon your neck. We must bear them patiently, as God and Providence have ordained, and wear them with grace and dignity. You, my brother, have acted like a wild horse of the desert—I have drawn the reins tight, that is all!"

"You have caught, bound, and tamed me," said the prince, with a faint smile; "only I feel that the bit still pains, and that my limbs still tremble. But I am ready to submit, and I came to tell you so. You desire me to marry, I consent; but I hold you responsible for the happiness of this marriage. At God's throne, I will call you to justify yourself, and there we will speak as equals, as man to man. What right had you to rob me of my most holy and beautiful possession? What right have you to lay a heavy chain on heart and hand, that love will not help me to bear? I hold you responsible for my miserable life, my shattered hopes. Will you accept these conditions? Do you still wish me to marry?"

"I accept the conditions," said the king, solemnly. "I desire you to marry."

"I presume your majesty has chosen a bride for me?"

"You are right, *mon cher frère*. I have selected the Princess Wilhelmina, daughter of Prince Max, of Hesse-Cassel. She not only brings you a fortune, but youth, beauty, and amiability."

"I thank you, sire," said the prince, coldly and formally. "I would marry her if she were ugly, old, and unamiable. But is it allowed me to add one condition?"

"Speak, my brother, I am listening."

The prince did not answer immediately; he breathed quickly and heavily, and a glowing red suffused his pale, trembling face.

"Speak, my brother. Name your conditions," said the king.

"Well, then, so be it. My first condition is that I may be allowed to have a brilliant wedding. I wish to invite not only the entire court, but a goodly number of Berliners; I desire all Berlin to take part in my happiness, and to convince every one, by my gay demeanor and my entertainment, that I joyfully accept my bride, the princess."

The king's eyes rested sorrowfully upon his brother's countenance. He fully understood the emotions of his heart, and knew that his brother wished to wound and humiliate his faithless sweetheart by his marriage; that Henry only submitted to his wishes because his proud heart rebelled at the thought of being pitied as a rejected lover. But he was considerate, and would not let it appear that he understood him.

"I agree to this first proposition," said the king, after a pause, "and I hope you will allow me to be present at this beautiful *fête*, and convince Berlin that we are in hearty unison. Have you no other conditions?"

"Yes, one more."

"What is it?"

"That my marriage shall take place, at the latest, in a month."

"You will thus fulfil my particular and personal wish," said the king, smiling. "I am anxious to have this marriage over, for, after the gayeties, I wish to leave Berlin. All the arrangements and contracts are completed, and I think now there is no obstacle in the way of the marriage. Have you another wish, my brother?"

"No, sire."

"Then allow me to beg you to grant me a favor. I wish to leave a kind remembrance of this eventful hour in your heart, and I therefore give you a small memento of the same. Will you accept my castle of Rheinsberg, with all its surroundings, as a present from me? Will you grant me this pleasure, my brother?"

The king offered his hand, with a loving smile, to Henry, and received with apparent pleasure his ardent thanks.

"I chose Rheinsberg," he said, kindly, "not because it is my favorite palace, and I have passed many pleasant and happy days there, but because none of my other palaces are so appropriate for a prince who is discontented with his king. I have made that experience myself, and I give you Rheinsberg, as my father gave it to me. Go to Rheinsberg when you are angry with me and the world; there you can pass the first months of your marriage, and God grant it may be a happy one!"

The prince answered him with a cold smile, and begged leave to withdraw, that he might make the necessary preparations for his wedding.

"We will both make our preparations," said the king, as he bade the prince farewell—"you with your major-domo, and I with Baron Pöllnitz, whom I shall send as ambassador to Cassel."

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE TRAVELLING MUSICIANS.

THE feasts, illuminations, and balls given in honor of the newly-married couple, Henry and his wife, the Princess Wilhelmina, were at an end. The prince and his followers had withdrawn to Rheinsberg, and many were the rumors in Berlin of the brilliant feasts with which he welcomed his beautiful bride. She was truly lovely, and the good Berliners, who had received her with such hearty greetings when she appeared with the prince on the balcony, or showed herself to the people in an open carriage, declared there could be no happier couple than the prince and his wife; they declared that the large, dark eyes of the princess rested upon the prince with inexpressible tenderness, and that the prince always returned her glance with a joyous smile. It was therefore decided that the prince was a happy husband, and the blessings of the Berliners followed the charming princess to Rheinsberg, where the young couple were to pass their honeymoon.

While the prince was giving splendid *fêtes*, and seeking distraction, and hoping to forget his private griefs, or perhaps wishing to deceive the world as to his real feelings, the king left Sans-Souci, to commence one of his customary military inspection trips. But he did not go to Königsberg, as was supposed; and if Trenck really had the intention of murdering him during his sojourn there, it was rendered impossible by the change in the king's plans. Frederick made a tour in his Rhine provinces. At Cleves he dismissed his followers, and they returned to Berlin.

The king declared he needed rest, and wished to pass a few days in undisturbed quiet at the castle of Moyland.

No one accompanied him but Colonel Balby, his intimate friend, and his cabinet-hussar, Deesen. The king was in an uncommonly good humor, and his eyes sparkled with delight. After a short rest in his chamber, he desired to see Colonel Balby.

To his great astonishment, the colonel found him searching through a trunk, which contained a few articles of clothing little calculated to arrest the attention of a king.

"Balby," said the king, solemnly, but with a roguish sparkle of the eye, "I wish to present you this plain brown suit. I owe you a

reward for your hearty friendship and your faithful services. This is a princely gift. Take it as a mark of my grateful regard. That you may be convinced, Balby, that I have long been occupied in preparing this surprise for you, I inform you that these rich articles were made secretly for you in Berlin, by your tailor; I packed them myself, and brought them here for you. Accept them, then, my friend, and wear them in memory of Frederick."

With a solemn bow, the king offered Balby the clothes.

The colonel received this strange present with an astonished and somewhat confused countenance.

The king laughed merrily. "What," he said, pathetically, "are you not contented with the favor I have shown you?"

Balby knew by the comic manner of the king that the sombre suit hid a secret, and he thought it wise to allow the king to take his own time for explanation.

"Sire," he said, emphatically, "content is not the word to express my rapture. I am enthusiastic, speechless at this unheard-of favor. I am filled with profound gratitude to your majesty for having invented a new costume for me, whose lovely color will make me appear like a large coffee-bean, and make all the coffee sisters adore me."

The king was highly amused. "This dress certainly has the power of enchantment. When Colonel Balby puts on these clothes he will be invisible, but he shall not undergo this transformation alone. See, here is another suit, exactly like yours, and this is mine. When I array myself in it, I am no longer the king of Prussia, but a free, happy man."

"Ah, you are speaking of a disguise," cried the colonel.

"Yes, we will amuse ourselves by playing the *rôle* of common men for a while, and wander about unnoticed and undisturbed. Are you agreed, Balby, or do you love your colonel's uniform better than your freedom?"

"Am I agreed, sire?" cried the colonel; "I am delighted with this genial thought."

"Then take your dress, friend, and put it on. But stay. Did you bring your violin with you, as I told you?"

"Yes, sire."

"Well, then, when you are dressed, put your violin in a case, and with the case under your arm, and a little money in your pocket, go to the pavilion at the farthest end of the garden; there I will meet you. Now hasten, friend, we have no time to lose."

According to the king's orders, Colonel Balby dressed and went to the pavilion. He did not find the king, but two strange men there. One of them had on a brown coat, the color of his own,



ornamented with large buttons of mother-of-pearl; black pantaloons, and shoes with large buckles, set with dull white stones; the lace on his sleeves and vest was very coarse. He wore a three-cornered hat, without ornament; from under the hat fell long, brown, unpowdered hair.

Behind this stranger there stood another, in plain, simple clothes; under one arm he carried a small bag, and under the other a case that contained either a yard-stick or a flute. He returned the colonel's salutation with a grimace and a profound bow. A short pause ensued, then the supposed strangers laughed heartily and exclaimed:

"Do you not know us, Balby?"

Their voices started the colonel, and he stepped back.

"Sire, it is yourself."

"Yes, it is I, Frederick—not the king. Yes, I am Frederick, and this capital servant is my good Deesen, who has sworn solemnly not to betray our incognito, and to give no one reason to suspect his high dignity as royal cabinet-hussar. For love of us he will, for a few days, be the servant of two simple, untitled musicians, who are travelling around the world, seeking their fortunes, but who, unfortunately, have no letters of recommendation."

"But who will recommend themselves by their talents and accomplishments."

The king laughed aloud. "Balby, you forget that you are a poor musician, chatting with your comrade. Truly your courtly bow suits your dress as little as a lace veil would a beggar's attire; you must lay your fine manners aside for a short time, for, with them, you would appear to the village beauties we may meet like a monkey, and they would laugh at instead of kissing you."

"So we are to meet country beauties," said Colonel Balby, no longer able to suppress his curiosity. "Tell me, sire, where are we going, and what are we going to do? I shall die of curiosity."

"Make an effort to die," said the king, gayly; "you will find it is not so easy to do as you imagine. But I will torture you no longer. You ask what we are going to do. Well, we are going to amuse ourselves and seek adventures. You ask where we are going. Ask that question of the sparrow that sits on the house-top—ask where it is going, and what is the aim of its journey. It will reply, the next bush, the nearest tree, the topmost bough of a weeping willow, which stands on a lonely grave; the mast of a ship, sailing on the wide sea; or the branch of a noble beech, waving before the window of a beautiful maiden. I am as incapable of telling you the exact aim and end of our journey, friend, as that little bird would be. We are as free as the birds of the air. Come!

come! let us fly, for see, the little sparrow has flown—let us follow it."

And with a beaming smile illuminating his countenance, like a ray of the morning sun, the king took the arm of his friend, and followed by his servant and cabinet-hussar, Deesen, left the pavilion.

As they stood at the little gate of the garden, the king said to Deesen:

"You must be for us the angel with the flaming sword, and open the gates of paradise, but not to cast us out."

Deesen opened the gate, and our adventurers entered "the wide, wide world."

"Let us stand here a few moments," said the king, as his glance rested upon the green fields spread far and wide around him. "How great and beautiful the world appears to-day! Observe Nature's grand silence, yet the air is full of a thousand voices; and the white clouds wandering dreamily in the blue heavens above, are they not the misty veils with which the gods of Olympus conceal their charms?"

"Ah! sire," said Balby, with a loving glance at the king's handsome face—"ah, sire, my eyes have no time to gaze at Nature's charms, they are occupied with yourself. When I look upon you, I feel that man is indeed made in the image of God."

"Were I a god, I should not be content to resemble this worn, faded face. Come, now, let us be off! Give me your instrument, Deesen, I will carry it. Now I look like a travelling apprentice seeking his fortune. The world is all before him where to choose his place of rest, and Providence his guide. I envy him. He is a free man!"

"Truly, these poor apprentices would not believe that a king was envying them their fate," said Balby, laughing.

"Still they are to be envied," said the king, "for they are free. No, no, at present I envy no one; the world and its sunshine belong to me. We will go to Amsterdam, and enjoy the galleries and museums."

"I thank your majesty," said Balby, laughing, "you have saved my life. I should have died of curiosity if you had not spoken. Now, I feel powerful and strong, and can keep pace with your majesty's wandering steps."

Silently they walked on until they reached a sign-post.

"We are now on the border—let us bid farewell to the Prussian colors, we see them for the last time. Sire, we will greet them with reverence."

He took off his hat and bowed lowly before the black and white

colors of Prussia, a greeting that Deesen imitated with the fervor of a patriot.

The king did not unite in their enthusiasm; he was writing with his stick upon the ground.

"Come here, Balby, and read this," he said, pointing to the lines he had traced. "Can you read them?"

"Certainly," said Balby, "the words are, 'majesty' and 'sire.'"

"So they are, friend. I leave these two words on the borders of Prussia; perhaps on our return we may find and resume them. But as long as we are on the soil of Holland there must be no majesty, no sire."

"What, then, must I call my king?"

"You must call him friend, *voilà tout*."

"And I?" asked Deesen, respectfully; "will your majesty be so gracious as to tell me your name?"

"I am Mr. Zoller, travelling musician; and should any one ask you what I want in Amsterdam, tell them I intend giving a concert. *En avant, mes amis*. There lies the first small village of Holland; in an hour we shall be there, and then we will take the stage and go a little into the interior. *En avant, en avant!*"

## CHAPTER XII.

### TRAVELLING ADVENTURES.

THE stage stood before the tavern at Grave, and awaited its passengers. The departure of the stage was an important occurrence to the inhabitants of the little town—an occurrence that disturbed the monotony of their lives for a few moments, and showed them at least now and then a new face, that gave them something to think of, and made them dream of the far-off city where the envied travellers were going.

To-day all Grave was in commotion and excitement. The strangers had arrived at the post-house, and after partaking of an excellent dinner, engaged three seats in the stage. The good people of Grave hoped to see three strange faces looking out of the stage window; many were the surmises of their destiny and their possible motives for travelling. They commenced these investigations while the strangers were still with them.

A man had seen them enter the city, dusty and exhausted, and he declared that the glance which the two men in brown coats had cast at his young wife, who had come to the window at his call, was very bold—yes, even suspicious; and it seemed very remarkable

to him that such plain, ordinary-looking wanderers should have a servant—for, doubtless, the man walking behind them, carrying the very small carpet-bag, was their servant; but, truly, he appeared to be a proud person, and had the haughty bearing of a general or a field-marshal; he would not even return the friendly greetings of the people he passed. His masters could not be distinguished or rich, for both of them carried a case under their arms. What could be in those long cases; what secret was hidden there? Perhaps they held pistols, and the good people of Grave would have to deal with robbers or murderers. The appearance of the strangers was wild and bold enough to allow of the worst suspicions.

The whole town, as before mentioned, was in commotion, and all were anxious to see the three strangers, about whom there was certainly something mysterious. They had the manners and bearing of noblemen, but were dressed like common men.

A crowd of idlers had assembled before the post-house, whispering and staring at the windows of the guests' rooms. At last their curiosity was about to be gratified—at last the servant appeared with the little carpet-bag, and placed it in the stage, and returned for the two cases, whose contents they would so greedily have known. The postilion blew his horn, the moment of departure had arrived.

A murmur was heard through the crowd—the strangers appeared, they approached the stage, and with such haughty and commanding glances that the men nearest them stepped timidly back.

The postilion sounded his horn again; the strangers were entering the stage. At the door stood the postmaster, and behind him his wife, the commanding postmistress.

"Niclas," she whispered, "I must and will know who these strangers are. Go and demand their passports."

The obedient Niclas stepped out and cried in a thundering voice to the postilion, who was just about to start, to wait. Stepping to the stage, he opened the door.

"Your passports, gentlemen," he said, roughly. "You forgot to show me your passports."

The curious observers breathed more freely, and nodded encouragingly to the daring postmaster.

"You rejoice," murmured his wife, who was still standing in the door, from whence she saw all that passed, and seemed to divine the thoughts of her gaping friends—"you rejoice, but you shall know nothing. I shall not satisfy your curiosity."

Mr. Niclas still stood at the door of the stage. His demand had not been attended to; he repeated it for the third time.

"Is it customary here to demand passports of travellers?" asked a commanding voice from the stage.