

enter Saxony with his army and take possession of my cities. You can depart, sir; I have no further answer for his majesty!"

The count, bowing reverentially to the king and queen, left the royal tent.

Every eye was fixed upon the prime minister. From him alone, who was considered the soul of the kingdom of Saxony, help and counsel was expected. All important questions were referred to him, and all were now eagerly looking for his decision. But the powerful favorite was in despair. He knew how utterly impossible it was to withstand the King of Prussia's army. Every arrangement for this war had been made on paper, but in reality little had been accomplished. The army was not in readiness! The prime minister had been in want of a few luxuries of late, and had, therefore, as he believed there would be no war until the following spring, reduced it. He knew how little Saxony was prepared to battle against the King of Prussia's disciplined troops, and the ambassador's friendly assurances did not deceive him.

"Well, count," said the king, after a long pause, "how is this strange request of Frederick II., that we should remain neutral, to be answered?"

Before the count was able to answer, the queen said, in a loud voice:

"By a declaration of war, my husband! This is due to your honor. We have been insulted; it therefore becomes you to throw down the gauntlet to your presumptuous adversary."

"We will continue this conversation in my apartments," said the king, rising; "this is no place for it. Our beautiful feast has been disturbed in a most brutal manner. Count Brühl, notify the different ambassadors that, in an hour, I will receive them at my palace."

"This hour is mine!" thought the queen, as she arose; "in it I will stimulate my husband's soft and gentle heart to a brave, war-like decision; he will yield to my prayers and tears." She took the king's arm with a gay smile, and left the tent, followed by the princes, and the host and hostess.

Silently they passed the festive tables, from which the guests had risen to greet them. The courtiers sought to read in their countenances the solution of that riddle which had occupied them since the arrival of the Prussian ambassador, and about which they had been anxiously debating.

But, upon the queen's countenance there was now her general look of indifference. It is true, the king was not smiling as was his wont when amongst his subjects, but his pleasant countenance betrayed no fear or sorrow. The queen maintained her exalted bearing; nothing had passed to bow her proud head.

After the royal guests had left, Count Brühl returned. He also had regained his usual serenity. With ingenious friendliness he turned to his guests, and while requesting them, in a flattering manner, to continue to grace his wife's *fête* by their presence, demanded for himself leave of absence. Then passing on, he whispered here and there a few words to the different ambassadors. They and the count then disappeared.

The *fête* continued quietly; the music recommenced its gay, melodious sounds, the birds carolled their songs, and the flowers were as beautiful and as sweet as before. The jewels of the courtiers sparkled as brilliantly. Their eyes alone were not so bright, and the happy smile had left their lips. They were all weighed down by a presentiment that danger was hovering around them.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ARCHIVES AT DRESDEN.

COUNT MATZAHN'S prophecy came true. The King of Prussia came to Dresden, and there, as in every other part of Saxony, found no resistance. Fear and terror had gone before him, disarming all opposition. The king and prince-elector were not accustomed to have a will of their own; and Count Brühl, the favorite of fortune, showed himself weak and helpless in the hour of adversity. It needed the queen's powerful energy, and the forcible representations of the French ambassador, Count Broglio, to arouse them from their lethargy; and what Count Broglio's representations, and the queen's prayers and tears commenced, hatred finished. Count Brühl's sinking courage rose at the thought of the possibility of still undermining the King of Prussia, and putting an end to his victorious march. It was only necessary to detain him, to prevent him from reaching the Bohemian borders, until the Austrian army came to their assistance, until the French troops had entered and taken possession of Prussia. Therefore, Count Brühl sent courier after courier to Saxony's allies, to spread her cry for help to every friendly court. He then collected the army, ordered them to camp at Pirna, which was very near the boundary of Bohemia, and, as it was guarded on one side by the Elbe, and on the other by high rocks, appeared perfectly secure. When these preparations were commenced, the count's courage rose considerably, and he determined to prove himself a hero, and to give the Saxon army the inspiring consciousness that, in the hour of danger, their king would be in their midst.

The king therefore left for the fortress of Königstein, accompanied by Count Brühl, leaving the army, consisting of about seventeen thousand men, to follow under the command of General Rütosky, and to encamp at the foot of Königstein. Arrived at Königstein, where they thought themselves perfectly secure, they gave themselves up to the free and careless life of former days. They had only changed their residence, not their character; their dreams were of future victories, of the many provinces they would take from the King of Prussia; and with this delightful prospect the old gay, luxurious, and wanton life was continued. What difference did it make to Count Brühl that the army was only provided with commissary stores for fourteen days, and that this time was almost past, and no way had been found to furnish them with additional supplies. The King of Prussia had garrisoned every outlet, and only the King of Saxony's forage-wagon was allowed to pass.

Frederick knew better than the Saxon generals the fearful, invincible enemy that was marching to the camp of Pirna. What were the barricades, the palisades, and ambushes, by which the camp was surrounded, to this enemy? This foe was in the camp, not outside of it—he had no need to climb the barricades—he came hither flying through the air, breathing, like a gloomy bird of death, his horrible cries of woe. This enemy was hunger—enervating, discouraging, demoralizing hunger!

The fourteen days had expired, and in the camp of Pirna languished seventeen thousand men! The bread rations became smaller and smaller; but the third part of the usual meat ration was given; the horses' food also was considerably shortened. Sorrow and starvation reigned in the camp. Why should this distress Count Brühl? He lived in his usual luxurious splendor, with the king. Looking out from his handsome apartments upon the valley lying at his feet, he saw on a little meadow by which the Elbe was flowing, herds of cows and calves, sheep and beeves, which were there to die, like the Saxon soldiers, for their king. These herds were for the royal table; there was, therefore, no danger that the enemy visiting the army should find its way to the fortress. It was also forbidden, upon pain of death, to force one of these animals intended for the royal table, from their noble calling, and to satisfy therewith the hungry soldiers. Count Brühl could therefore wait patiently the arrival of the Austrian army, which was already in motion, under the command of General Brown.

While the King of Poland was living gay and joyous in the fortress of Königstein, the queen with the princes of the royal house had remained in Dresden; and though she knew her husband's irresolute character, and knew that the King of Prussia, counting

upon this, was corresponding with him, endeavoring to persuade him to neutrality, still she had no fears of her husband succumbing to his entreaties. For was not Count Brühl, the bitter, irreconcilable enemy of Prussia, at his side?—and had not the king said to her, in a solemn manner, before leaving: "Better that every misfortune come upon us than to take the part of our enemies!" The queen, therefore, felt perfectly safe upon this point. She remained in Dresden for two reasons: first, to watch the King of Prussia, and then to guard the archives—those archives which contained the most precious treasures of Saxon diplomacy—the most important secrets of their allies. These papers were prized more highly by the queen than all the crown jewels now lying in their silver casket; and though the keeping of the latter was given over to some one else, no one seemed brave enough to shield the former. No one but herself should guard these rich treasures. The state archives were placed in those rooms of the palace which had but one outlet, and that leading into one of the queen's apartments. In this room she remained—she took her meals, worked, and slept there—there she received the princes and the foreign ambassadors—always guarding the secret door, of which she carried the key fastened to a gold chain around her neck. But still the queen was continually in fear her treasure would be torn from her, and the King of Prussia's seeming friendliness was not calculated to drive away this anxiety. It is true the king had sent her his compliments by Marshal Keith, with the most friendly assurances of his affection, but notwithstanding this, the chancery, the colleges, and the mint department had been closed; all the artillery and ammunition had been taken from the Dresden arsenal and carried to Magdeburg; some of the oldest and worthiest officers of the crown had been dismissed; and the Swiss guard, intended for service in the palace, had been disarmed. All this agreed but badly with the king's quieting assurances, and was calculated to increase the hatred of his proud enemy. She had, nevertheless, stifled her anger so far as to invite the King of Prussia, who was staying in the palace of the Countess Morizinska, not far from his army, to her table.

Frederick had declined this invitation. He remained quietly in the palace, whose doors were open to all, giving audience to all who desired it, listening to their prayers, and granting their wishes.

The Queen of Poland heard this with bitter anger; and the more gracious the King of Prussia showed himself to the Saxons, the more furious and enraged became the heart of this princess.

"He will turn our people from their true ruler," said she to Countess Ogliva, her first maid of honor, who was sitting at her side upon a divan placed before the princess's door. "This hypo-

critical affability will only serve to gain the favor of our subjects, and turn them from their duty."

"It has succeeded pretty well," said the countess, sighing. "The Saxon nobility are continually in the antechamber of this heretical king; and yesterday several of the city authorities, accompanied by the foreign ambassadors, waited upon him, and he received them."

"Yes, he receives every one; he gives gay balls every evening, at which he laughs and jokes merrily. He keeps open house, and the poor people assemble there in crowds to see him eat." Maria Josephine sighed deeply. "I hate this miserable, changeable people!" murmured she.

"And your majesty does well," said the countess, whose wrinkled, yellow countenance was now illuminated by a strange fire. "The anger of God will rest upon this heretical nation that has turned from her salvation, and left the holy mother church in haughty defiance. The King of Poland cannot even appoint true Catholic-Christians as his officers—every position of any importance is occupied by heretics. But the deluge will surely come again upon this sinful people and destroy them."

The queen crossed herself, and prayed in a low voice.

The countess continued: "This Frederick stimulates these heretical Saxons in their wicked unbelief. He, who it is well known, laughs and mocks at every religion, even his own—attended, yesterday, the Protestant church, to show our people that he is a protector of that church."

"Woe, woe to him!" said the queen.

"With listening ear he attended to his so-called preacher's sermon, and then loudly expressed his approval of it, well knowing that this preacher is a favorite of heretics in Dresden. This cunning king wished to give them another proof of his favor. Does your majesty wish to know of the present he made this preacher?"

"What?" said the queen, with a mocking laugh. "Perhaps a Bible, with the marginal observations of his profligate friends, Voltaire and La Mettrie?"

"No, your majesty; the king sent this learned preacher a dozen bottles of champagne!"

"He is a blasphemous scoffer, even with that which he declares holy. But punishment will overtake him. Already the voice of my exalted nephew, the Emperor of Germany, is to be heard throughout the entire land, commanding the King of Prussia to return at once to his own kingdom, and to make apologies to the King of Poland for his late insults. It is possible that, in his haughty pride, Frederick will take no notice of this command. But it will be otherwise with the generals and commandants of this usurper.

They have been commanded by the emperor to leave their impious master, and not to be the sharers of his frightful crime."

"I fear," said Countess Ogliva, sighing, and raising her eyes heavenward—"I fear they will not listen to the voice of our good emperor."

"But they will hear the voice of his cannon," cried the queen, impetuously; "the thunder of our artillery and the anger of God will annihilate them, and they will fall to the ground as if struck by lightning before the swords blessed by our holy priests."

The door of the antechamber was at this moment opened violently, and the queen's chamberlain appeared upon its threshold.

"Your majesty, a messenger from the King of Prussia requests an audience," said he.

The queen's brow became clouded, and she blushed with anger.

"Tell this messenger that I am not in a condition to receive his visit, and that he must therefore impart to you his message."

"It is, no doubt, another of his hypocritical, friendly assurances," said the queen, as the chamberlain left. "He has, no doubt, some evil design, and wishes to soothe us before he strikes."

The chamberlain returned, but his countenance was now white with terror.

"Well!" said the queen, "what is this message?"

"Ah, your majesty," stammered the trembling courtier, "my lips would not dare to repeat it; and I could never find the courage to tell you what he demands."

"What he demands!" repeated the queen; "has it come to that, that a foreign prince commands in our land? Go, countess, and in my name, fully empowered by me, receive this King of Prussia's message; then return, and dare not keep the truth from me."

Countess Ogliva and the chamberlain left the royal apartment, and Maria Josephine was alone. And now, there was no necessity of guarding this mask of proud quietude and security. Alone, with her own heart, the queen's woman nature conquered. She did not now force back the tears which streamed from her eyes, nor did she repress the sighs that oppressed her heart. She wept, and groaned, and trembled. But hearing a step in the antechamber, she dried her eyes, and again put on the proud mask of her royalty. It was the countess returning. Slowly and silently she passed through the apartment. Upon her colorless countenance there was a dark, angry expression, and a scoffing smile played about her thin, pale lips.

"The King of Prussia," said she, in a low, whispering voice, as she reached the queen, "demands that the key to the state archives be delivered at once to his messenger, Major von Vangenheim."

The queen raised herself proudly from her seat.

"Say to this Major von Vangenheim that he will never receive this key!" said she, commandingly.

The countess bowed, and left the room.

"He has left," said she, when she returned to the queen; "though he said that he or another would return."

"Let us now consult as to what is to be done," said the queen. "Send for Father Guarini, so that we may receive his advice."

Thanks to the queen's consultation with her confessor and her maid of honor, the King of Prussia's messenger, when he returned, was not denied an audience. This time, it was not Major von Vangenheim, but General von Wylich, the Prussian commandant at Dresden, whom Frederick sent.

Maria Josephine received him in the room next to the archives, sitting upon a divan, near to the momentous door. She listened with a careless indifference, as he again demanded, in the king's name, the key to the state archives.

The queen turned to her maid of honor.

"How is it that you are so negligent, countess?" said she; "did I not tell you to answer to the messenger of the king, that I would give this key, which is the property of the Prince-Elector of Saxony, and which he intrusted to me, to no one but my husband?"

"I had the honor to fulfil your majesty's command," said the countess, respectfully.

"How is it, then," said she, turning to General von Wylich, "that you dare to come again with this request, which I have already answered?"

"Oh, may your majesty graciously pardon me," cried the general, deeply moved; "but his majesty, my king and master, has given me the sternest commands to get the key, and bring him the papers. I am therefore under the sad necessity to beseech your majesty to agree to my master's will."

"Never!" said the queen, proudly. "That door shall never be opened; you shall never enter it."

"Be merciful. I dare not leave here without fulfilling my master's commands. Have pity on my despair, your majesty, and give me the key to that door."

"Listen! I shall not give you the key," said the queen, white and trembling with anger; "and if you open the door by force, I will cover it with my body; and now, sir, if you wish to murder the Queen of Poland, open the door." And raising her proud, imposing form, the queen placed herself before the door.

"Mercy! mercy! queen," cried the general; "do not force me to do something terrible; do not make me guilty of a crime against your sacred royalty. I dare not return to my king without these

papers. I therefore implore your majesty humbly, upon my knees, to deliver this key to me."

He fell upon his knees before the queen, humbly supplicating her to repent her decision.

"I will not give it to you," said she, with a triumphant smile. "I do not move from this door; it shall not be opened."

General Wylich rose from his lowly position. He was pale, but there was a resolute expression upon his countenance. Looking upon it, you could not but see that he was about to do something extremely painful to his feelings.

"Queen of Poland," said he, in a loud, firm voice, "I am commanded by my king to bring to him the state archives. Below, at the castle gate, wagons are in attendance to receive them; they are accompanied by a detachment of Prussian soldiers. I have only to open that window, sign to them, and they are here. In the antechamber are the four officers who came with me; by opening the door, they will be at my side."

"What do you mean by this?" said the queen, in a faltering voice, moving slightly from the door.

"I mean, that at any price, I must enter that room. If the key is not given to me, I will call upon my soldiers to break down the door; as they have learned to tear down the walls of a fortress, it will be an easy task; that if the Queen of Poland does not value her high position sufficiently to guard herself against any attack, I will be compelled to lay hands upon a royal princess, and lead her by force from that door, which my soldiers must open! But, once more, I bend my knee, and implore your majesty to preserve me from this crime, and to have mercy on me."

And again he fell upon his knees supplicating for pity.

"Be merciful! be merciful!" cried the queen's confessor and the Countess Ogliva, who both knew that General Wylich would do all that he had said, and had both fallen on their knees, adding their entreaties to his. "Your majesty has done all that human power can do. It is now time to guard your holy form from insult. Have mercy on your threatened royalty."

"No, no!" murmured the queen, "I cannot! I cannot! Death would be sweet in comparison to this humiliating defeat."

The queen's confessor, Father Guarini, now rose from his knees, and, approaching the queen, he said, in a solemn, commanding voice:

"My daughter, by virtue of my profession, as a servant of the holy mother church, to whom is due obedience and trust, I command you to deliver up to this man the key of this door."

The queen's head fell upon her breast, and hollow, convulsive

groans escaped her. Then, with a hasty movement, she severed the key from her chain.

"I obey you, my father," said she. "There is the key, general; this room can now be entered."

General Wylich took the key, kissing reverentially the hand that gave it to him. He then said to her, in a voice full of emotion:

"I have but this last favor to ask of your majesty, that you will now leave this room, so that my soldiers may enter it."

Without answering, the queen, accompanied by her confessor and maid of honor, left the apartment.

"And now," said the queen to Countess Ogliva, as she entered her reception-room, "send messengers at once to all the foreign ambassadors, and tell them I command their presence."

CHAPTER XIV.

SAXONY HUMILIATED.

A HALF an hour later the ambassadors of France, Austria, Holland, Russia, and Sweden, were assembled in the queen's reception-room. The queen was there, pale, and trembling with anger. With the proud pathos of misfortune, and humiliated royalty, she apprised them of the repeated insults she had endured, and commanded them to write at once to their different courts, imploring their rulers to send aid to her sorely threatened kingdom.

"And if these princes," said she, impetuously, help us to battle against this usurper, in defending us they will be defending their own rights and honor. For my cause is now the cause of all kings; for if my crown falls, the foundation of their thrones will also give way. For this little Margrave of Brandenburg, who calls himself King of Prussia, will annihilate us all if we do not ruin him in advance. I, for my part, swear him a perpetual resistance, a perpetual enmity! I will perish willingly in this fight if only my insults are revenged and my honor remains untarnished. Hasten, therefore, to acquaint your courts with all that has occurred here."

"I will be the first to obey your majesty," said the French ambassador, Count Broglio, approaching the queen. "I will repeat your words to my exalted master; I will portray to your majesty's lovely daughter, the Dauphine of France, the sufferings her royal mother has endured, and I know she will strain every nerve to send you aid. With your gracious permission, I will now take my leave, for to-day I start for Paris."

"To Paris!" cried the queen; "would you leave my court in the hour of misfortune?"

"I would be the last to do this, unless forced by necessity," said the count; "but the King of Prussia has just dismissed me, and sent me my passport!"

"Your passport! dismissed you!" repeated the queen. "Have I heard aright? Do you speak of the King of Prussia? Has he then made himself King of Saxony?"

Before any one had time to answer the queen's painful questions, the door was opened, and the king's ministers entered; beside them was to be seen the pale, terrified countenance of Count Leuke, the king's chamberlain.

Slowly and silently these gentlemen passed through the room and approached the queen.

"We have come," said Count Hoymb, bowing lowly, "to take leave of your majesty."

The queen fell slightly back, and gazed in terror at the four ministers standing before her with bowed heads.

"Has the king, my husband, sent for you? Are you come to take leave of me before starting to Königstein?"

"No, your majesty; we come because we have been dismissed from our offices by the King of Prussia."

The queen did not answer, but gazed wildly at the sad countenances about her; and now she fixed a searching glance upon the royal chamberlain.

"Well, and you?" said she. "Have you a message for me from my husband? Are you from Königstein?"

"Yes, your majesty, I come from Königstein. But I am not a bearer of pleasant news. I am sent to Dresden by the King of Poland to request of the King of Prussia passports for himself and Count Brühl. The king wishes to visit Warsaw, and is therefore desirous of obtaining these passports."

"Ah!" said the queen, sighing, "to think that my husband requires permission to travel in his own kingdom, and that he must receive it from our enemy! Well, have you obeyed the king's command, Count Leuke? Have you been to the King of Prussia and received the passports?"

"I was with the King of Prussia," said the count, in a faltering voice.

"Well, what more?"

"He refused me! He does not give his consent to this visit."

"Listen, listen!" said the queen, wildly; "hear the fresh insult thrown at our crown! Can God hear this and not send His lightning to destroy this heretical tyrant? Ah, I will raise my voice; it

shall be a cry of woe and lamentation, and shall resound throughout all Europe; it shall reach every throne, and every one shall hear my voice calling out: 'Woe! woe! woe to us all; our thrones are tottering, they will surely fall if we do not ruin this evil-doer who threatens us all!'

With a fearful groan, the queen fell fainting into the arms of Countess Ogliva. But the sorrows and humiliations of this day were not the only ones experienced by Maria Josephine from her victorious enemy.

It is true her cry for help resounded throughout Europe. Preparations for war were made in many places, but her allies were not able to prevent the fearful blow that was to be the ruin of Saxony. Though the Dauphine of France, daughter of the wretched Maria Josephine, and the mother of the unfortunate King of France, Louis XVI., threw herself at the feet of Louis XV., imploring for help for her mother's tottering kingdom, the French troops came too late to prevent this disaster. Even though Maria Theresa, Empress of Austria, and niece to the Queen of Saxony, as her army were in want of horses, gave up all her own to carry the cannon. The Austrian cannon was of as little help to Saxony as the French troops.

Starvation was a more powerful ally to Prussia than Austria, France, Russia, and Sweden were to Saxony, for in the Saxon camp also a cry of woe resounded.

It was hunger that compelled the brave Saxon General Rutrosky to capitulate. It was the same cause that forced the King of Saxony to bind himself to the fearful stipulations which the victorious King of Prussia, after having tried in vain for many years to gain an ally in Saxony, made.

In the valley of Lilienstein the first of that great drama, whose scenes are engraved in blood in the book of history, was performed, and for whose further developments many sad, long years were necessary.

In the valley of Lilienstein the Saxon army, compelled to it by actual starvation, gave up their arms; and as these true, brave soldiers, weeping over their humiliation, with one hand laid down their weapons, the other was extended toward their enemies for bread.

Lamentation and despair reigned in the camp at Lilienstein, and there, at a window of the castle of Königstein, stood the Prince-Elector of Saxony, with his favorite Count Brühl, witnesses to their misery.

After these fearful humiliations, by which Frederick punished the Saxons for their many intrigues, by which he revenged himself for their obstinate enmity, their proud superiority—after these

humiliations, after their complete defeat, the King of Prussia was no longer opposed to the King of Saxony's journey. He sent him the desired passports; he even extended their number, and not only sent one to the king and to Count Brühl, but also to the Countess Brühl, with the express command to accompany her husband. He also sent a pass to Countess Ogliva, compelling this bigoted woman to leave her mistress.

And when the queen again raised her cry of woe, to call her allies to her aid, the King of Prussia answered her with the victorious thunder of the battle of Losovitz, the first battle fought in this war, and in which the Prussians, led by their king, performed wonders of bravery, and defeated for the third time the tremendous Austrian army, under the command of General Brown.

"Never," says Frederick, "since I have had the honor to command the Prussian troops, have they performed such deeds of daring as to-day."

The Austrians, in viewing these deeds, cried out:

"We have found again the old Prussians!"

And still they fought so bravely, that the Prussians remarked in amazement:

"These cannot be the same Austrians!"

This was the first act of that great drama enacted by the European nations, and of which King Frederick II. was the hero.