

the army, the treasury, the arsenal, all is in our power. I shall conquer all for Maria Theresa. Oh, King Frederick! King Frederick! I shall avenge myself on you for these long years of misery, for the martyrdom of this fearful imprisonment. Trenck will not be obliged to leave Magdeburg; he will drive away the Prussians, and make himself master."

He laughed so loudly that the old walls echoed the sound, and a wailing sigh seemed to glide along the building. Trenck started and looked timidly around him.

"I am still alone," he murmured, "no one has heard my words; no, no one but you," he continued cheerfully, "my old silent friend, my faithful prison. To-morrow morning the officer on guard will enter and order the sentinels to remove the bed; as soon as they enter I shall rush out and lock the door. The sentinels being locked up, I put on the clothes which are lying in readiness for me in the passage, and then forward to my soldiers. I shall distribute gold freely among them—a friend will meet me with the money at the house of Captain von Kleist, and if he has not sufficient, Amelia has richly supplied me. Arise, arise from your grave, my secret treasures."

He crouched close to the wall and removed the mortar and chalk carefully; he then drew out a stone and took from under it a purse full of gold.

His eye, accustomed to the darkness, saw the gold through the silk net; he nodded to it and laughed with delight as he poured it out and played madly with it. His countenance suddenly assumed an earnest expression.

"Poor Amelia," he murmured softly, "you have sacrificed your life, your beauty, and your youth for me. With never-failing zeal you have moved around me like my guardian angel, and how am I repaying you? By taking from your brother, King Frederick, his finest fortress, his money, his provisions; by compelling you and yours to fly from a city which no longer belongs to you, but to the Empress of Austria, your enemy. With your money I have taken this city; Amelia, you are ignorant of this now, and when you learn it, perhaps you will curse me and execrate the love which has poisoned your whole life. Oh, Amelia! Amelia, forgive me for betraying you also. My unfortunate duty is forcing me onward, and I must obey. Yes," he said, springing from his seat, "I must yield to my fate, I must be free again—I must be a man once more; I can sit no longer like a wild animal in his cage, and tell my grief and my despair to the cold walls. I must reconquer life—I must again see the sun, the world, and mankind—I must live, suffer, and act."

He walked violently to and fro, his whole being was in feverish

expectation and excitement, and he felt alarmed. Suddenly he remained standing; pressing his two hands against his beating temples, he murmured:

"I shall indeed go mad. Joy at my approaching deliverance confuses my poor head; I will try to sleep, to be calm—collect my strength for to-morrow."

He lay down upon his miserable couch, and forced himself to be quiet and silent—not to speak aloud to himself in his lonely cell, as he was accustomed to do. Gradually the mad tension of his nerves relaxed, gradually his eyes closed, and a soft, beneficial slumber came over him.

All was still in the dark cell; nothing was to be heard but the loud breathing of the sleeper; but even in sleep, visions of life and liberty rejoiced his heart—his face beamed with heavenly joy; he murmured softly, "I am free!—free at last!"

The hours passed away, but Trenck still slumbered—profound stillness surrounded him. The outer world had long since been awake—the sun was up, and had sent a clear beam of its glory through the small, thickly-barred window, even into the comfortless, desolate cell, and changed the gloom of darkness into a faint twilight.

CHAPTER X.

"TRENCK, ARE YOU THERE?"

TRENCK slept. Sleep on, sleep on, unfortunate prisoner, for while asleep you are free and joyous; when you awake, your happy dreams will vanish; agony and despair will be your only companions.

Listen! there are steps in the passage; Trenck does not hear them—he still sleeps. But now a key is turned, the door is opened, and Trenck springs from his pallet.

"Are you there, my friends? Is all ready?"

But he totters back with a fearful shriek, his eyes fixed despairingly upon the door. There stood Von Bruckhäusen, the prison commandant, beside him several officers, behind them a crowd of soldiers.

This vision explained all to Trenck. It told him that his plan had miscarried—that again all had been in vain. It told him that he must remain what he was, a poor, wretched prisoner—more wretched than before, for they would now find out that when alone he could release himself from his chains. They would find his gold,

which he had taken from its hiding-place, and was now lying loosely upon the floor.

"I am lost!" said he, covering his face with his hands, and throwing himself upon his bed.

A malignant smile brightened up Von Bruckhausen's disagreeable countenance, as his eye took in the broken chains, the glittering gold, and the despairing prisoner. He then ordered the soldiers to raise the chains and fasten them on him.

Trenck made no resistance. He suffered them quietly to adjust his iron belt, to fasten the chain around his neck. He seemed insensible to all that was passing. This fearful blow had annihilated him; and the giant who, but a short time before, had thought to conquer the world, was now a weak, trembling, defenceless child. When he was ordered to rise to have the chains annexed to his iron girdle, and fastened to the wall, he rose at once, and stretched out his hand for the manacles. Now the commandant dared approach Trenck; he had no fear of the chained lion, he could jeer at and mock without danger. He did it with the wrath of a soul hard and pitiless; with the deep, unutterable hate of an implacable enemy; for Trenck was his enemy, his much-feared enemy; he drove sleep from his eyes—he followed him in his dreams. Often at midnight Von Bruckhausen rose in terror from his couch, because he dreamed that Trenck had escaped, and that he must now take his place in that dark, fearful tomb. Surrounded by gay companions, he would turn pale and shudder at the thought of Trenck's escaping—Trenck, whose fearful cell was then destined to be his. This constant fear and anxiety caused the commandant to see in Trenck not the king's prisoner, but his own personal enemy, with whom he must do battle to his utmost strength, with all the wrath and fear of a timid soul. With a cold, malicious smile he informed him that his plot had been discovered, that his mad plan was known; he had wished to take the fortress of Magdeburg and place upon it the Austrian flag. With a jeering smile he held up to him the letter Trenck had sent to his friend in Vienna, in which, without mentioning names, he had made a slight sketch of his plan.

"Will you deny that you wrote this letter?" cried the commandant, in a threatening voice.

Trenck did not answer. His head was bowed upon his breast; he was gazing down in silence.

"You will be forced to name your accomplices," cried the enraged commandant; "there is no palliation for a traitor, and if you do not name them at once, I shall subject you to the lash."

An unearthly yell issued from Trenck's pale lips, and as he raised his head, his countenance was expressive of such wild, such terrible

rage, that Bruckhausen drew away from him in affright. Trenck had awakened from his lethargy; he had found again his strength and energy, he was Trenck once more—the Trenck feared by Von Bruckhausen, though lying in chains, the Trenck whom nothing could bend, nothing discourage.

"He who dares to whip me shall die," said he, gazing wildly at the commandant. "With my nails, with my teeth, will I kill him."

"Name your accomplices!" cried Bruckhausen, stamping upon the ground in his rage.

It was Trenck who now laughed. "Ah, you think to intimidate me with your angry voice," said he. "You think your word has power to make me disclose that which I wish to keep secret. You think I will betray my friends, do you? Learn what a poor, weak, incapable human being you are, for not one of the things you wish shall occur. No, I shall not be so contemptible as to betray my friends. Were I to do so, then were I a traitor deserving of this wretched cell, of these fearful chains, for I would then be a stranger to the first, the holiest virtue, gratitude. But no, I will not. I was innocent when these chains were put on me—innovent I will remain."

"Innovent!" cried the commandant; "you who wished to deliver to the enemy a fortress of your sovereign! You call yourself innovent?"

Trenck raised himself from his bed, and threw back his head proudly. "I am no longer a subject of the King of Prussia," said he; "he is no longer my sovereign. Many years ago I was thrown into prison at Glatz without court-martial or trial. When I escaped, all my property was confiscated. If I had not sought my bread elsewhere, I would have starved to death, or gone to ruin. Maria Theresa made me a captain in her army—to her I gave my allegiance. She alone is my sovereign. I owe no duty to the King of Prussia—he condemned me unheard—by one act he deprived me of bread, honor, country, and freedom. He had me thrown into prison, and fettered like some fearful criminal. He has degraded me to an animal that lies grovelling in his cage, and who only lives to eat, who only eats to live. I do not speak to you, sir commandant," continued he—"I speak, soldiers, to you, who were once my comrades in arms. I would not have you call Trenck a traitor. Look at me; see what the king has made of me; and then tell me, was I not justified in fleeing from these tortures? Even if Magdeburg had been stormed, and thousands of lives lost, would you have called me a traitor? Am I a traitor because I strive to conquer for myself what you, what every man, receives from God as his holy right—

my freedom?" While he spoke, his pale, wan countenance beamed with inspiration.

The soldiers were struck and touched with it—their low murmurs of applause taught the commandant that he had committed a mistake in having so many witnesses to his conversation with the universally pitied and admired prisoner.

"You will not name your accomplices?" said he.

"No," said Trenck, "I will not betray my friends. And what good would it do you to know their names? You would punish them, and would thereby sow dragons' teeth from which new friends would rise for me. For undeserved misfortune, and unmerited reproach, make for us friends in heaven and on earth. Look there, sir commandant—look there at your soldiers. They came here indifferent to me—they leave as my friends; and if they can do no more, they will pray for me."

"Enough! enough of this," cried the commandant. "Be silent! And you," speaking to the soldiers, "get out of here! Send the blacksmith to solder these chains at once. Go into the second passage—I want no one but the blacksmith."

The soldiers withdrew, and the smith entered with his hot coals, his glowing iron, and his panful of boiling lead. The commandant leaned against the prison-door gazing at the smith; Trenck was looking eagerly at the ceiling of his cell watching the shadows thrown there by the glowing coals.

"It is the *ignis fatuus* of my freedom," said he, with a weary smile. "It is the fourth time they have danced on this ceiling—it is the fourth time my chains have been forged. But I tell you, commandant, I will break them again, and the shadows flickering on these walls will be changed to a glorious sun of freedom—it will illuminate my path so that I can escape from this dungeon, in which I will leave nothing but my curse for you my cruel keeper."

"You have not, then, despaired?" said the commandant, with a cold smile. "You will still attempt to escape?"

Trenck fixed his keen, sparkling eyes upon Von Bruckhäusen, and stretching out his left arm to the smith, he said: "Listen, sir commandant, to what I have to say to you, and may my words creep like deadly poison through your veins! Hear me; as soon as you have left my cell—as soon as that door has closed behind you—I will commence a new plan of escape. You have thrown me in a cell under the earth. The floor in my other cell was of wood—I cut my way through it. This is of stone—I shall remove it. You come daily and search my room to see if there is not some hole or some instrument hidden by which I might effect my escape. Nevertheless I shall escape. God created the mole, and of it I will learn how

to burrow in the ground, and thus I will escape. You will see that I have no instruments, no weapons, but God gave me what He gave the mole—He gave my fingers nails, and my mouth teeth; and if there is no other way, I will make my escape by them."

"It is certainly very kind of you to inform me of all this," cried the commandant. "Be assured I shall not forget your words. I shall accommodate myself to them. You seek to escape—I seek to detain you here. I am convinced I shall find some means of assuring myself every quarter of an hour that your nails and teeth have not freed you. The smith's work I see is done, and we dare entertain the hope that for the present you will remain with us. Or perhaps you mean to bite your chains in two as soon as I leave?"

"God gave Samson strength to crush with his arms the temple columns," said Trenck, gazing at the blacksmith, who was now leaving the room. "See, the *ignis fatuus* has disappeared from my cell, the sun will soon shine."

"Trenck, be reasonable," said Von Bruckhäusen, in an entreating tone. "Do not increase your misery—do not force me to be more cruel to you. Promise to make no more attempts to escape, and you shall not be punished for your treacherous plot!"

Trenck laughed aloud. "You promise not to punish me. How could you accomplish it? Has not your cruelty bound me in irons, in chains, whose invention can only be attributed to the devil? Do I not live in the deepest, most forlorn cell in the fortress? Is not my nourishment bread and water? Do you not condemn me to pass my days in idleness, my nights in fearful darkness? What more could you do to me?—how could you punish any new attempt to escape? No, no, sir commandant; as soon as that door has closed on you, the mole will commence to burrow, and some day, in spite of all your care, he will escape."

"That is your last word!" cried Von Bruckhäusen, infuriated. "You will not promise to abandon these idle attempts at escape? You will not name your accomplices?"

"No! and again no!"

"Well, then, farewell. You shall remember this hour, and I promise you, you shall regret it."

Throwing a fearful look of malignant wrath at Trenck, who was leaning against his pallet, laughing at his rage, the commandant left the prison. The iron door closed slowly; the firm, even tread of the disappearing soldiers was audible, then all was quiet.

A death-like stillness reigned in the prisoner's cell; no sound of life disturbed the fearful quiet. Trenck shuddered; a feeling of inexpressible woe, of insupportable despair came over him. He could now yield to it, no one was present to hear his misery and wretch-

edness. He need not now suppress the sighs and groans that had almost choked him; he could give the tears, welling to his eyes like burning fire, full vent; he could cool his feverish brow upon the stone floor, in the agony of his soul. As a man trembles at the thought of death, Trenck trembled at the thought of life. He knew not how long he had sighed, and wept, and groaned. For him there was no time, no hour, no night—it was all merged into one fearful day. But still he experienced some hours of pleasure and joy. These were the hours of sleep, the hours of dreams. Happier than many a king, than many powerful rulers and rich nobles upon their silken couches, was this prisoner upon his hard pallet. He could sleep—his spirit, busy during the day in forming plans for his escape, needed and found the rest of sleep; his body needed the refreshment and received it.

Yes, he could sleep. Men were hard and cruel to him, but God had not deserted him, for at night He sent an angel to his cell who consoled and refreshed him. It was the angel of slumber—when night came, after all his sorrow, his agony, his despair endured during the day, the consoling angel came and took his seat by the wretched prisoner. This night he kissed his eyes, he laid his soft wings on the prisoner's wounded heart, he whispered glorious dreams of the future into his ear. A beautiful smile, seldom seen when he was awake, now rested upon his lips.

Keep quiet, ye guards, without there—keep quiet, the prisoner sleeps; the sleep of man is sacred, and more sacred than all else is the sleep of the unfortunate. Do not disturb him—pass the door stealthily. Be still, be still! the prisoner sleeps—reverence his rest.

This stillness was now broken by a loud cry.

“Trenck, Trenck!” cried a thundering voice—“Trenck, are you asleep?”

He woke from his pleasant dreams and rose in terror from his bed. He thought he had heard the trumpets of the judgment-day, and listened eagerly for the renewing of the sound.

And again the cry resounded through his cell. “Trenck, are you there?”

With a wild fear he raised his hand to his burning brow.

“Am I mad?” murmured he; “I hear a voice in my brain calling me; a voice—”

The bolts were pushed back, and Commandant Von Bruckhäusen, accompanied by a soldier, with a burning torch, appeared on the threshold.

“Why did you not answer, Trenck?” said he.

“Answer—answer what?”

“The sentinel's call. As you swore to me you would make new

attempts to escape, I was compelled to make arrangements to prevent your succeeding. The guards at your door are commanded to call you every quarter of an hour during the night. If you do not answer at once, they will enter your cell to convince themselves of your presence. Accommodate yourself to this, Trenck. We shall now see if you are able to free yourself with your nails and teeth!”

He left the room, the door was closed. It was night once more in the prisoner's cell—but he did not sleep. He sat upon his pallet and asked himself if what had passed was true, or if it was not some wild and fearful dream.

“No, no, it cannot be true; they could not rob me of my last and only pleasure—my sleep! soft, balmy sleep!”

But listen. There is a voice again. “Trenck, Trenck, are you there?”

He answered by a fearful yell, and sprang from his bed, trembling with terror. It was no dream!

“It is true!—they will let me sleep no more. Cowardly thieves! may God curse as I curse you. May He have no pity with you, who have none with me! Ah, you cruel men, you increase my misery a thousandfold. You murder my sleep. God's curse upon you!”

CHAPTER XI.

THE KING AND THE GERMAN SCHOLAR.

It was the winter of 1760. Germany, unhappy Germany, bleeding from a thousand wounds, was for a few months freed from the scourge of war; she could breathe again, and gather new strength for new contests. Stern winter with its ice and snow had alone given peace to the people for a short time. The rulers thought of and willed nothing but war; and the winter's rest was only a time of preparation for new battles. The allies had never yet succeeded in vanquishing the little King of Prussia. Notwithstanding the disappointments and adversities crowded upon him—though good fortune and success seemed forever to have abandoned him—Frederick stood firm and undaunted, and his courage and his confidence augmented with the dangers which surrounded him.

But his condition appeared so sad, so desperate, that even the heroic Prince Henry despaired. The king had in some degree repaired the disasters of Künersdorf and Mayen by his great victories at Leignitz and Torgau; but so mournful, so menacing was his position on every side, that even the victories which had driven his

enemies from Saxony, and at least assured him his winter quarters, brought him no other advantages, and did not lessen the dangers which threatened him. His enemies stood round about him—they burned with rage and thirst to destroy utterly that king who was always ready to tear from them their newly-won laurels. Only by his complete destruction could they hope to quench the glowing enthusiasm which the people of all Europe expressed by shouts and exultation.

The Russians had their winter quarters for the first time in Pomerania. The Austrians lay in Silesia and Bohemia. The newly-supplied French army, and the army of the States, were on the Rhine. While the enemies of Frederick remained thus faithful to each other in their war against him, he had just lost his only ally.

King George II. of England was dead, and the weak George III. yielded wholly to the imperious will of his mother and to that of Lord Bute. He broke off his league with Prussia, and refused to pay the subsidy.

Thus Prussia stood alone—without money, without soldiers, without friends—surrounded by powerful and eager enemies—alone and seemingly hopeless, with so many vindictive adversaries.

All this made Prince Henry not only unhappy, but dispirited—palsied his courage, and made him wish to leave the army and take refuge in some vast solitude where he could mourn over the misfortunes of his distracted country. Accordingly he wrote to the king and asked for his discharge.

The king replied:

"It is not difficult, my brother, in bright and prosperous times, to find men willing to serve the state. Those only are good citizens who stand undaunted at the post of danger in times of great crises and disaster. The true calling of a man consists in this: that he should intrepidly carry out the most difficult and dangerous enterprises. The more difficulty, the more danger—the more bright honor and undying fame. I cannot, therefore, believe that you are in earnest in asking for your discharge. It is unquestionable that neither you nor I can feel certain of a happy issue to the circumstances which now surround us. But when we have done all which lies in our power, our consciences and public opinion will do us justice. We contend for our fatherland and for honor. We must make the impossible possible, in order to succeed. The number of our enemies does not terrify me. The greater their number, the more glorious will be our fame when we have conquered them."*

Prince Henry, ashamed of his despondency, gave to this letter of his brother the answer of a hero. He marched against the Russians,

* Preuss, "History of Frederick the Great," vol. ii., p. 246.

drove them from Silesia, and raised the siege of Breslau, around which the Austrians under Loudon were encamped. Tautentzein, with fearless energy and with but three thousand Prussians, had fortified himself in Breslau against this powerful enemy. So in the very beginning of the winter the capital of Silesia had been retaken. By Torgau the king had fought and won his twelfth battle for the possession of Silesia—yes, fought and won from his powerful and irreconcilable enemies. And all this had been in vain, and almost without results. The prospect of peace seemed far distant, and the hope of happiness for Frederick even as remote.

But now winter was upon them. This stern angel of peace had sheathed the sword, and for the time ended the war.

While the pious Maria Theresa and her court ladies made it the *mode* to prepare lint in their splendid saloons during the winter for the wounded soldiers—while the Russian General Soltikow took up his winter quarters at Posen, and gave sumptuous feasts and banquets—Frederick withdrew to Leipsic, in which city philosophy and learning were at that time most flourishing. The Leipsigers indeed boasted that they had given an asylum to poetry and art.

The warrior-hero was now changed for a few happy months into the philosopher, the poet, and the scholar. Frederick's brow, contracted by anxiety and care, was now smooth; his eye took again its wonted fire—a smile was on his lip, and the hand which had so long brandished the sword, gladly resumed the pen. He who had so long uttered only words of command and calls to battle, now bowed over his flute and drew from it the tenderest and most melting melodies. The evening concerts were resumed. The musical friends and comrades of the king had been summoned from Berlin; and that nothing might be wanting to make his happiness complete, he had called his best-beloved friend, the Marquis d'Argens, to his side.

D'Argens had much to tell of the siege of Berlin by the Russians—of the firm defence of the burghers—of their patriotism and their courage. Frederick's eyes glistened with emotion, and in the fullness of his thankful heart he promised to stand by his faithful Berliners to the end. But when D'Argens told of the desolation which the Russians had wrought amongst the treasures of art in Charlottenburg, the brow of the king grew dark, and with profound indignation he said:

"Ah, the Russians are barbarians, who labor only for the downfall of humanity.* If we do not succeed in conquering them, and destroying their rude, despotic sovereignty, they will again and ever disquiet the whole of Europe. In the mean time, however,"

* The king's own words.—Archenholtz, vol. i., p. 282.

said Frederick, "the vandalism of the Russians shall not destroy our beautiful winter rest. If they have torn my paintings and crushed my statues, we must collect new art-treasures. Gotzkowsky has told me that in Italy, that inexhaustible mine of art, there are still many glorious pictures of the great old masters; he shall procure them for me, and I will make haste to finish this war in order to enjoy my new paintings, and to rest in my beautiful Sans-Souci. Ah, marquis, let us speak no longer of it, in this room at least, let us forget the war. It has whitened my hair, and made an old man of me before my time. My back is bent, and my face is wrinkled as the founce on a woman's dress. All this has the war brought upon me. But my heart and my inclinations are unchanged, and I think I dare now allow them a little satisfaction and indulgence. Come, marquis, I have a new poem from Voltaire, sent to me a few days since. We will see if he can find grace before your stern tribunal. I have also some new sins to confess. That is to say, I have some poems composed in the hours of rest during my campaigns. You are my literary father confessor, and we will see if you can give me absolution."

But the king did not dedicate the entire winter to music, and French poems, and gay, cheerful conversation with his friends. A part of this happy time was consecrated to the earnest study of the ancients. For the first time he turned his attention to German literature, and felt an interest in the efforts of German philosophers and poets.

Quintus Icilius, the learned companion of Frederick, had often assured him that the scholarship, the wit, the poetry of Germany, found at this time their best representatives in Leipsic, that he at length became curious to see these great men, of whom Quintus Icilius asserted that they far surpassed the French in scholarship, and in wit and intellect might take their places unchallenged side by side with the French.

The king listened to this assurance with rather a contemptuous smile. He directed Icilius, however, to present to him some of the Leipsic scholars and authors.

"I will present to your majesty the most renowned scholar and philologist of Leipsic, Professor Gottsched, and the celebrated author, Gellert," said Icilius, with great animation. "Which of the two will your majesty receive first?"

"Bring me first the scholar and philologist," said the king, laughing. "Perhaps the man has already discovered in this barbarous Dutch tongue a few soft notes and turns, and if so, I am curious to hear them. Go, then, and bring me Professor Gottsched. I have often heard of him, and I know that Voltaire dedicated an ode to

him. In the mean time I will read a little in my Lucretius and prepare my soul for the interview with this great Dutchman."

Icilius hastened off to summon the renowned professor to the king.

Gottsched, to whom, at that time, all Germany rendered homage, and who possessed all the pride and arrogance of a German scholar, thought it most natural that the king should wish to know him, and accepted the invitation with a gracious smile. In the complete, heart-felt conviction of his own glory, in the rigid, pedantic array of a magnificent, long-tailed wig, the German professor appeared before the king. His majesty received him in his short, simple, unostentatious manner, and smiled significantly at the pompous manner of the renowned man. They spoke at first of the progress of German philosophy, and the king listened with grave attention to the learned deductions of the professor, but he thought to himself that Gottsched understood but little how to make his knowledge palatable; he was probably a learned, but most certainly a very uninteresting man.

The conversation was carried on with more vivacity when they spoke of poetry and history, and the king entered upon this theme with warm interest.

"In the history of Germany, I believe there is still much concealed," said Frederick; "I am convinced that many important documents are yet hidden away in the cloisters."

Gottsched looked up at him proudly. "Pardon, sire," said he, in his formal, pedantic way. "I believe those can be only unimportant documents. To my view, at least, there is no moment of German history concealed—all is clear, and I can give information on every point!"

The king bowed his head with a mocking smile. "You are a great scholar, sir; I dare not boast of any prééminence. I only know the history of the German States written by Père Barré."

"He has written a German history as well as a foreigner could write it," said Gottsched. "For this purpose he made use of a Latin work, written by Struve, in Jena. He translated this book—nothing more. Had Barré understood German, his history would have been better; he would have had surer sources of information at his command."

"But Barré was of Alsace, and understood German," said Frederick, eagerly. "But you, who are a scholar, an author, and a grammarian, tell me, if any thing can be made of the German language?"

"Well, I think we have already made many beautiful things of it," said Gottsched, in the full consciousness of his own fame.

"But you have not been able to give it any melody, or any grace," said Frederick. "The German language is a succession of barbarous sounds; there is no music in it. Every tone is rough and harsh, and its many discords make it useless for poetry or eloquence. For instance, in German you call a rival 'Nebenbuhler,' what a fatal, disgusting sound—'Buhler!'"*

"Ah, your majesty," said Gottsched, impatiently, "that is also a sound in the French tongue. You should know this, for no one understands better, more energetically than yourself, how to circumvent the 'boules!'"

Frederick laughed; and this gay rejoinder of the learned professor reconciled him somewhat to his puffed-up and haughty self-conceit. "It is true," said he, "this time you are right; but you must admit that, in general, the French language is softer and more melodious!"

"I cannot admit it," said Gottsched, fiercely. "I assert that German is more musical. How harsh, how detestable sounds, for instance, the French '*amour*;' how soft and tender—yes, I may say, how characteristic—sounds the word '*liebe*!'"

"Aha!" said the king, "you are certainly most happily married, or you would not be so enthusiastic about German '*liebe*,' which I admit is a very different thing from French '*amour*.' I am, however, convinced that the French language has many advantages over the German. For instance, in the French one word may often suffice to convey many different meanings, while for this purpose several German words must be combined."

"That is true. There your majesty is right," said Gottsched, thoughtfully. "The French language has this advantage. But this shall be no longer so—we will change it! Yes, yes—we will reform it altogether!"

Frederick looked astonished and highly diverted. This assumption of the learned scholar, "to change all that," impressed him through its immensity.† "Bring that about sir," said the king, gayly. "Wave your field-marshal's staff and give to the German language that which it has never possessed, grace, significance, and facility; then breathe upon it the capability to express soft passion and tender feeling, and you will do for the language what Julius Cæsar did for the people. You will be a conqueror, and will cultivate and polish barbarians!"

Gottsched did not perceive the mockery which lay in these words of the king, but received them smilingly as agreeable flattery.

* The king's own words.—Archenholtz, vol. ii., p. 272.

† Many years afterward the king repeated this declaration of Gottsched to the Duchess of Gotha, "We will change all that," and was highly amused.

"The German language is well fitted to express tender emotions. I pledge myself to translate any French poem faithfully, and at the same time melodiously," said he.

"I will put you to the proof, at once," said the king, opening a book which lay upon the table. "Look! These are the Odes of Rousseau, and we will take the first one which accident presents. Listen to this:

"*Sous un plus heureux auspice,
La Déesse des amours,
Vent qu'un nouveau sacrifice,
Lui consacre vos beaux jours;
Déjà le bûcher s'allume.
L'autel brille, l'encens fume,
La victime s'embellit,
L'amour même la consume,
Le mystère s'accomplit.**"

"Do you believe it is possible to translate this beautiful stanza into German?" said the king.

"If your majesty allows me, I will translate it at once," said he. "Give me a piece of paper and a pencil."

"Take them," said Frederick. "We will divert ourselves by a little rivalry in song, while you translate the verses of the French poet into German. I will sing to the praise of the German author in French rhyme. Let us not disturb each other."

Frederick stepped to the window and wrote off hastily a few verses, then waited till he saw that Gottsched had also ceased to write. "I am ready, sir," said the king.

"And I also," said the scholar, solemnly. "Listen, your majesty, and be pleased to take the book and compare as I read;" then with a loud nasal voice he read his translation:

"*Mit ungleich glücklicherm Gesichte,
Gebet die Königin zarter Pein,
Hin, Deine schönen Augenblicke,
Zum Opfer noch einmal zu weihn,
Den Holzstoss liebt man aufzugeben.
Der Altar glänzt, des Weihrauchs Dünste
Durchdringen schon die weiten Lüfte,
Das Opfer wird gedoppelt schön,
Durch Amors Glut ist es verfliegen,
Und das Geheimniß wird vollzogen.'*"

"Now, your majesty," said Gottsched, "do you not find that the German language is capable of repeating the French verses promptly and concisely?"

"I am astonished that you have been able to translate this beauti-

* See note, page 572.

ful poem. I am sorry I am too old to learn German. I regret that in my youth I had neither the courage nor the instruction necessary. I would certainly have turned many of my leisure hours to the translation of German authors, rather than to Roman and French writers; but the past cannot be recalled, and I must be content! If I can never hope to become a German writer, it will at least be granted me to sing the praises of the regenerator of the German language in French verse. I have sought to do so now—listen!”

The king read aloud a few verses to the enraptured professor. The immoderate praise enchanted him, and, in the assurance of his pride and conceit, he did not remark the fine irony concealed in them. With a raised voice, and a graceful, bantering smile, the king concluded:

“C'est à toi Cygne des Saxons,
D'arracher ce secret à la nature avare;
D'adoucir dans tes chants d'une langue barbare,
Les durs et détestables sons!”*

“Ah! your majesty,” cried Gottsched, forgetting his indignation over the *langue barbare*, in his rapture at the praise he had received, “you are kind and cruel at the same moment. You cast reproach upon our poor language, and, at the same time, give me right royal praise. *Cygne des Saxons*—that is an epithet which does honor to the royal giver, and to the happy receiver. For a king and a hero, there can be no higher fame than to appreciate and reverence men of letters. The sons of Apollo and the Muses, the scholars, the artists and authors, have no more exalted object than to attain the acknowledgment and consideration of the king and the hero. Sire, I make you a most profound and grateful reverence. You have composed a masterly little poem, and when the *Cygne des Saxons* shall sing his swanlike song, it will be in honor of the great Frederick, the Cæsar of his time.”

“Now, my dear Quintus,” said the king, after Gottsched had withdrawn, “are you content with your great scholar?”

“Sire,” said he, “I must sorrowfully confess that the great Gottsched has covered his head with a little too much of the dust of learning; he is too much of the pedant.”

“He is a puffed-up, conceited fool,” said the king, impatiently; “and you can never convince me that he is a great genius. Great men are modest; they have an exalted aim ever before them, and are never satisfied with themselves; but men like this Gottsched place themselves upon an altar, and fall down and worship. This is their only reward, and they will never do any thing truly great.”

“But Gottsched has really great and imperishable merit,” said

* Œuvres Posthumes, vol. vii., p. 216. See note, p. 572.

Quintus, eagerly. “He has done much for the language, much for culture, and for science. All Germany honors him, and, if the incense offered him has turned his head, we must forgive him, because of the great service he has rendered.”

“I can never believe that he is a great man, or a poet. He had the audacity to speak of the golden era of literature which bloomed in the time of my grandfather, Frederick I., in Germany, and he was so foolhardy as to mention some German scribblers of that time, whose barbarous names no one knows, as the equals of Racine, and Corneille, and even of Virgil. Repeat to me, once more, the names of those departed geniuses, that I may know the rivals of the great writers of the day!”

“He spoke of Bessen and Neukirch,” said Quintus; “I must confess it savors of audacity to compare these men with Racine and Corneille; he did this, perhaps, to excite the interest of your majesty, as it is well known that the great Frederick, to whom all Germany renders homage, attributes all that is good and honorable to the German, but has a poor opinion of his intellect, his learning, and his wit.”

The king was about to reply, when a servant entered and gave him a letter from the professor, Gottsched.

“I find, Quintus,” said the king, “that my brother in Apollo does me the honor to treat me with confidence. If I was at all disposed to be arrogant, I might finally imagine myself to be his equal. Let us see with what sort of dedication the *Cygne des Saxons* has honored us.” He opened the letter, and while reading, his countenance cleared, and he burst out into a loud, joyous laugh. “Well, you must read this poem, and tell me if it is pure German and true poetry.” The king, assuming the attitude of a great tragedian, stepped forward with a nasal voice, and exactly in the pompous manner of Gottsched, he read the poem aloud. “Be pleased to remark,” said the king, with assumed solemnity, “that Gottsched announces himself as the Pindar of Germany, and he will have the goodness to commend me in his rhymes to after-centuries. And now, tell me, Quintus, if this is German poetry? Is your innermost soul inspired by these exalted lines?”

“Sire,” said Quintus Icilius, “I abandon my renowned scholar, and freely confess that your majesty judged him correctly; he is an insufferable fool and simpleton.”

“Not so; but he is a German scholar,” said the king, pathetically; “one of the great pillars which support the weight of the great temple of German science and poetry.”

“Sire, I offer up my German scholar; I lay him upon the altar of your just irony. You may tear him to pieces; he is yours. But I

pray you, therefore, to be gracious, sire, and promise me to receive my poet kindly."

"I promise," said the king: "I wish also to become acquainted with this model.

"Promise me, however, one thing. If the German poet resembles the German scholar, you will make me no reproaches if I turn away from all such commodities in future?"

CHAPTER XII.

GELLERT.

GELLERT was just returning from the university, where, in the large hall, he had recommenced his lectures on morality. A large audience had assembled, who had given the most undivided attention to their beloved master. As he left the rostrum the assembly, entirely contrary to their usual custom, burst forth in loud applause, and all pressed forward to welcome the beloved teacher on his return to his academic duties after his severe illness.

These proofs of love had touched the sensitive German poet so deeply in his present nervous and suffering condition, that he reached his lodging deathly pale and with trembling knees; utterly exhausted, he threw himself into his arm-chair, the only article of luxury in his simple study.

The old man, who sat near the window in this study, was busily engaged in reading, and paid him no attention; although Gellert coughed several times, he did not appear to remark his presence, and continued to read.

"Conrad," said Gellert, at length, in a friendly, pleading tone.

"Professor," answered the old man, as he looked up unwillingly from his book.

"Conrad, it seems to me that you might stand up when I enter; not, perhaps, so much out of respect for your master, as because he is delicate and weak, and needs your assistance."

"Professor," said the old man, with composure, "I only intended finishing the chapter which I have just commenced, and then I should have risen. You came a little too soon. It was your own fault if I was compelled to read after you came."

Gellert smiled. "What book were you reading so earnestly, my old friend?"

"The 'Swedish Countess,' professor. You know it is my favorite book. I am reading it now for the twelfth time, and I still think

it the most beautiful and touching, as well as the most sensible book I ever read. It is entirely beyond my comprehension, professor, how you made it, and how you could have recollected all these charming histories. Who related all that to you?"

"No one related it to me, it came from my own head and heart," said Gellert, pleasantly. "But no, that is a very presumptuous thought; it did not come from myself, but from the great spirit, who occasionally sends a ray of his Godlike genius to quicken the hearts and imaginations of poets."

"I do not understand you, professor," said Conrad, impatiently. "Why do you not talk like the book—I understand all that the 'Swedish Countess' says, for she speaks like other people. She is an altogether sensible and lovely woman, and I have thought sometimes, professor—"

Old Conrad hesitated and looked embarrassed.

"Well, Conrad, what have you thought?"

"I have thought sometimes, sir, perhaps it would be best for you to marry the 'Swedish Countess.'"

Gellert started slightly, and a light flush mounted to his brow.

"I marry!" he exclaimed; "Heaven protect me from fastening such a yoke upon myself, or putting my happiness in the power of any creature so fickle, vain, capricious, haughty, obstinate, and heartless as a woman. Conrad, where did you get this wild idea? you know that I hate women; no, not hate, but fear them, as the lamb fears the wolf."

"Oh, sir," cried Conrad, angrily, "was your mother not a woman?"

"Yes," said Gellert, softly, after a pause—"yes, she was a woman, a whole-hearted, noble woman. She was the golden star of my childhood, the saintly ideal of the youth, as she is now in heaven the guardian angel of the man; there is no woman like her, Conrad. She was the impersonation of love, of self-sacrifice, of goodness, and of devotion."

"You are right," said Conrad, softly, "she was a true woman; the entire village loved and honored her for her benevolence and piety; when she died, it seemed as though we had all lost a mother."

"When she died," said Gellert, his voice trembling with emotion, "my happiness and youth died with her; and when the first handful of earth fell upon her coffin I felt as if my heart-strings broke, and that feeling has never left me."

"You loved your mother too deeply, professor," said Conrad; "that is the reason you are determined not to love and marry some other woman."