

"Why should you return, my lord?" said the doctor, in terror. "Is it not sufficient that you have deprived the mother of her child? that you have branded the woman with shame before the whole world? What more would you do, my lord?"

With a strange smile, Lord Elliot laid his hand upon the doctor's shoulder.

"Flows there milk instead of blood in your veins, man? or have you forgotten that I have been hit by a poisoned arrow? I must be revenged, if I would not die of this wound."

"Let your wounds bleed, my lord—the longer they bleed, the sooner they will heal. But why destroy the arrow that wounded you? Will you recover the sooner or suffer the less?"

"Again I ask you, is there milk instead of blood in your veins? My honor is stained—I must cleanse it with the blood of my enemy."

"A duel, then, my lord? You will suffer chance to decide your most holy and sacred interests—your honor and life? And if chance is against you? If you fall, instead of your adversary?"

"Then, my friend, God will have decided it, and I shall thank Him for relieving me from a life which will from henceforth be a heavy burden to me. Farewell, doctor. I will be with you in eight days, and will again need your assistance."

"It is then irrevocable, my lord?"

"Irrevocable, doctor."

"I shall be ready. God grant that if this sad drama is to end in blood, it may not be yours!"

They pressed each other's hands tenderly. Lord Elliot sprang into the carriage, the coachman whipped his horses, and the carriage in which were the unfortunate man and the stolen child rolled merrily along the deserted streets.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DISCOVERY.

PRINCE HENRY stood at the window and looked down into the garden. He saw his wife walking in the park with her ladies, and enjoying the clear, cool winter day; he heard their gay and merry laughter, but he felt no wish to join them and share their mirth.

Since that day in the wood, a change had come upon the prince—a dark, despairing, melancholy had taken possession of him, but he would not let it be seen; he forced himself to a noisy gayety, and in the presence of his wife he was the same tender, devoted, complaisant lover he had been before; but the mask under which he

concealed his dislike and scorn was a cruel torture and terrible agony; when he heard her laugh he felt as if a sharp dagger had wounded him; when he touched her hand, he could with difficulty suppress a cry of pain; but he conquered himself, and kept his grief and jealousy down, down in his heart. It was possible he was mistaken. It was possible his wife was innocent; that his friend was true. His own heart wished this so earnestly; his noble and great soul rebelled at the thought of despising those whom he had once loved and trusted so fully. He wished to believe that he had had a hurtful dream; that a momentary madness had darkened his brain; he would rather distrust all his reflections than to believe that this woman, whom he had loved with all the strength of his nature, this man whom he had confided in so entirely, had deceived and betrayed him. It was too horrible to doubt the noblest and most beautiful, the holiest and gentlest—to be so confounded, so uncertain in his best and purest feelings. He could not banish doubt from his heart; like a death-worm, it was gnawing day and night, destroying his vitality—poisoning every hour of the day, and even in his dreams uttering horrible words of mockery. Since the *fête* in the wood he had been observant, he had watched every glance, listened to every word; but he had discovered nothing. Both appeared unembarrassed and innocent; perhaps they dissembled; perhaps they had seen him as he lay before the hut, and knew that he had been since that day following and observing them, and by their candor and simplicity they would disarm his suspicions and lull his distrust to sleep. This thought kept him ever on his guard; he would, he must know if he had been betrayed; he must have absolute certainty. He stood concealed behind the curtains of his window, and looked down into the garden. His eyes were fixed with a glowing, consuming expression upon the princess, who, with one of her ladies, now passed before his window and looked up, but she could not see him; he was completely hidden behind the heavy silk curtains.

The princess passed on, convinced that if her husband had been in his room, he would have come forward to greet her.

The prince wished her to come to this conclusion. "Now," thought he, "she feels secure; she does not suspect I am observing her, at last I may find an opportunity to become convinced."

Count Kalkreuth was there; he had gone down into the garden. He advanced to meet the princess, they greeted each other, but in their simple, accustomed manner, he, the count, respectfully and ceremoniously—the princess dignified, careless, and condescending. And now they walked near each other, chatting, laughing, charmingly vivacious, and excited by their conversation.

The prince stood behind his curtain with a loudly-beating heart,

breathless from anxiety; they came nearer; she led the way to the little lake whose smooth and frozen surface shone like a mirror. The count pointed to the lake, and seemed to ask a question; the princess nodded affirmatively, and turning to her ladies, she spoke a few words; they bowed and withdrew.

"They are going to skate," murmured the prince. "She has sent her ladies to bring her skates; she wishes to be alone with the count."

Breathless, almost in death-agony, he watched them; they stood on the borders of the lake, and talked quietly. The expressions of their countenances were unchanged, calm, and friendly; they were certainly speaking of indifferent things. But what means that? The princess dropped her handkerchief, seemingly by accident. The count raised it and handed it to her; she took it and thanked him smilingly, then in a few moments she put her hand, with a sudden movement, under her velvet mantle. The prince cried out; he had seen something white in her hand which she concealed in her bosom.

"A letter! a letter!" cried he, in a heart-breaking tone, and like a madman pursued by furies, he rushed out.

The Princess Wilhelmina was in the act of having her skates fastened on by her maid, when Prince Henry advanced with hasty steps from the alley which led to the lake.

Count Kalkreuth advanced to meet him, and greeted him with gay, jesting words; but the prince had no word of reply for him; he passed him silently, with a contemptuous glance, and stepped directly in front of the princess, who looked up with a kindly smile. He said:

"Madame, it is too cold and rough to skate to-day; I will have the honor to conduct you to your rooms."

Princess Wilhelmina laughed heartily. "It is a fresh, invigorating winter day, my husband. If you are cold, it is not the fault of the weather, but of your light clothing. I pray you to send for your furs, and then we will run a race over the ice and become warm."

Prince Henry did not answer. He seized the arm of the princess and placed it in his own. "Come, madame, I will conduct you to your apartment."

Wilhelmina gazed at him with astonishment, but she read in his excited and angry countenance that she must not dare oppose him. "Permit me, at least, to have my skates removed," said she, shortly, giving a sign to her maid. The prince stood near, while her maid knelt before her and removed the skates. Count Kalkreuth was at some distance.

Not one word interrupted the portentous silence. Once the prince uttered a hasty and scornful exclamation. He had intercepted a glance which the princess exchanged with Count Kalkreuth, and a glance full of significance and meaning.

"What is the matter with you, prince?" said Wilhelmina.

"I am cold," said he roughly, but the perspiration was standing in large drops on his forehead.

When the skates were taken off, the prince drew his wife on quickly, without a word or greeting to his friend. Kalkreuth stood pale and immovable, and gazed thoughtfully upon the glittering ice. "I fear he knows all," murmured he. "Oh my God, my God! Why will not the earth open and swallow me up? I am a miserable, guilty wretch, and in his presence I must cast my eyes with shame to the ground. I have deceived, betrayed him, and yet I love him. Woe is me!" He clasped his hands wildly over his face, as if he would hide from daylight and the glad sun the blush of shame which burned upon his cheeks; then slowly, with head bowed down, he left the garden.

The prince, during this time, had walked rapidly on with his wife; no word was exchanged between them. Only once, when he felt her arm trembling, he turned and said harshly:

"Why do you tremble?"

"It is cold!" said she, monotonously.

"And yet," said he, laughing derisively, "it is such lovely, invigorating weather."

They went onward silently; they entered the castle and ascended the steps to the apartment of the princess. Now they were in her cabinet—in this quiet, confidential family room, where Prince Henry had passed so many happy hours with his beloved Wilhelmina. Now he stood before her, with a cold, contemptuous glance, panting for breath, too agitated to speak.

The princess was pale as death; unspeakable anguish was written in her face. She dared not interrupt this fearful silence, and appeared to be only occupied in arranging her toilet; she took off her hat and velvet mantle.

"Madame," said the prince at last, gasping at every word, "I am here to make a request of you!"

Wilhelmina bowed coldly and ceremoniously. "You have only to command, my husband!"

"Well, then," said he, no longer able to maintain his artificial composure, "I command you to show me the letter you have hidden in your bosom."

"What letter, prince?" stammered she, stepping back alarmed.

"The letter which Count Kalkreuth gave you in the garden. Do

not utter a falsehood; do not dare to deny it. I am not in a mood to be restrained by any earthly consideration."

As he stood thus, opposed to her, with flashing eyes, with trembling lips, and his arm raised threateningly, Wilhelmina felt that it would be dangerous, indeed impossible to make any opposition. She knew that the decisive moment had arrived, the veil must be lifted, and that deception was no longer possible.

"The letter! give me the letter!" cried the prince, with a menacing voice.

Wilhelmina gazed at him steadily, with eyes full of scorn and hatred.

"Here it is," taking the letter calmly from her bosom, and handing it to the prince.

He snatched it like a tiger about to tear his prey to pieces; but when he had opened it and held it before him, the paper trembled so in his hands, he was scarcely able to read it. Once he murmured: "Ah! he dares to say *thou* to you; he calls you his 'adored Wilhelmina!'" He read on, groaning, sometimes crying out aloud, then muttering wild imprecations.

The princess stood in front of him, pale as death, trembling in every limb; her teeth were chattering, and she was forced to lean against her chair to keep from falling.

When the prince had finished reading the letter, he crushed it and thrust it in his bosom, then fixed his eyes upon his wife with an expression of such intense, unspeakable misery, that the princess felt her heart moved to its profoundest depths.

"Oh, my husband," she said, "curse me!—murder me!—but do not look upon me thus." She then sank as if pressed down by an invisible power, to her knees, and raised her hands to him imploringly.

The prince laughed coarsely, and stepped back. "Rise, madame," said he, "we are not acting a comedy—it is only your husband who is speaking with you. Rise, madame, and give me the key to your secretary. You will understand that after having read this letter I desire to see the others. As your husband, I have at least the right to know how much confidence you have placed in your lover, and how far you return his passion."

"You despise me," cried Wilhelmina, bursting into tears.

"I think I am justified in doing so," said he, coldly. "Stand up, and give me the key."

She rose and staggered to the table. "Here is the key."

The prince opened the secretary. "Where are the letters, madame?"

"In the upper drawer to the left."

"Ah," said he, with a rude laugh, "not even in a secret compart-

ment have you guarded these precious letters. You were so sure of my blind confidence in you that you did not even conceal your jewels."

Princess Wilhelmina did not answer, but as the prince read one after the other of the letters, she sank again upon her knees. "My God, my God!" murmured she, "have pity upon me! Send Thy lightning and crush me. Oh, my God! why will not the earth cover me and hide me from his glance!"

Rivers of tears burst from her eyes, and raising her arms to heaven, she uttered prayers of anguish and repentance.

The prince read on, on, in these unholy letters. Once he exclaimed aloud, and rushed with the letter to the princess.

"Is this true?" said he—"is this which you have written, true?"

"What? Is what true?" said Wilhelmina, rising slowly from her knees.

"He thanks you in this letter for having written to him that you have never loved any man but himself—him—Kalkreuth alone! Did you write the truth?"

"I wrote it, and it is the truth," said the princess, who had now fully recovered her energy and her composure. "Yes, sir, I have loved no one but Kalkreuth alone. I could not force my heart to love you—you who in the beginning disdained me, then one day in an idle mood were pleased to love me, to offer me your favor. I was no slave to be set aside when you were in the humor, and to count myself blessed amongst women when you should find me worthy of your high regard. I was a free born woman, and as I could not give my hand to him I loved, I gave my heart—that heart which you rejected. You have the right to kill me, but not to despise me—to dishonor me."

"Do I dishonor you when I speak the truth?" cried the prince.

"You do not speak the truth. I have sinned heavily against you. I suffered your love—I could not return it. I had not the courage when I saw you, who had so long disdained me, lying at my feet, declaring your passion and imploring my love in return, to confess to you that I could never love you—that my heart was no longer free. This is my crime—this alone. I could not force my heart to love you, but I could be faithful to my duty, and I have been so. It is not necessary for me to blush and cast my eyes down before my husband. My love is pure—my virtue untarnished. I have broken no faith with you."

"Miserable play on words!" said the prince. "You have been a hypocrite—your crime is twofold: you have sinned against me—you have sinned against your love. You have been a base coward who had not the courage to do justice to the feelings of your own

heart. What mean you by saying you have broken no faith with me? You have acted a daily lie. Oh, madame, how have I loved you! Both body and soul were lost in that wild love. When you stood with your lover and listened well pleased to those glowing confessions of his sinful love, you excused yourself and thought, forsooth, you were breaking no faith. You have defrauded me of the woman I loved and the friend whom I trusted. May God curse you, even as I do! May Heaven chastise you, even as I shall!"

He raised both his hands over her as if he would call down Heaven's curse upon her guilty head, then turned and left the room.

CHAPTER XII.

A MORNING AT SANS-SOUCI.

It was five o'clock in the morning. Deep silence reigned, the darkness of night still encompassed the world, the weary might still sleep and rest, life had recommenced nowhere, nowhere except at Sans-Souci, nowhere except in the apartment of the king; while his people slept, the king watched, he watched to work and think for his people. Without the wind howled and blew the snow against his window, and made even the fire in his room flicker; but the king heeded it not. He had completed his toilet and drunk his chocolate; now he was working. It did not disturb him that his room was cold, that the candle on his table gave but a poor light, and even seemed to increase the appearance of discomfort in his apartment; it gave sufficient light to enable him to read the letters which lay upon his table, and which had arrived the previous day. His ministers might sleep—the king waked and worked. He read every letter and petition, and wrote a few words of answer on the margin of each. After reading all business communications, the king took his own letters, those that were addressed to him personally, and came from his absent friends. His countenance, which before was grave and determined, assumed a soft and gentle expression, and a smile played upon his lips. The receipts for to-day were small. There were but few letters, and the large proportion of them came from relations of the king, or from distant acquaintances.

"No letter from D'Argens," said the king, smiling. "My ecclesiastic letter has accomplished the desired end, and the good marquis will arrive here to-day to rail at, and then forgive me. Ah, here is a letter from D'Alembert. Well, this is doubtless an agreeable letter, for it will inform me that D'Alembert accepts my pro-

posal, and has decided to become the president of my Academy of Science."

He hastily broke the seal, and while he read a dark cloud overshadowed his brow. "He declines my offer," he said, discontentedly. "His pride consists in a disregard for princes; he wishes posterity to admire him for his unselfishness. Oh, he does not yet know posterity. She will either be utterly silent on this subject or, should it be spoken of, it will be considered an act of folly which D'Alembert committed. He is a proud and haughty man, as they all are." He again took the letter and read it once more, but more slowly and more carefully than before; gradually the clouds disappeared from his brow, and his eyes beamed with pleasure.

"No," he said; "I have misjudged D'Alembert. My displeasure at a disappointed hope blinded me; D'Alembert is not a small, vain man, but a free and great spirit. He now refuses my presidency, with a salary of six thousand thalers, as he last year refused the position of tutor to the heir of the throne of Russia, with a salary of a hundred thousand francs. He prefers to be poor and needy, and to live up five flights of stairs, and be his own master, than to live in a palace as the servant of a prince. I cannot be angry with him, for he has thought and acted as a wise man; and were I not Frederick, I would gladly be D'Alembert. I will not love him less because he has refused my offer. Ah, it is a real pleasure to know that there are still men who are independent enough to exercise their will and judgment in opposition to the king. Princes would be more noble, if those with whom they associated were not so miserable and shallow-hearted. D'Alembert shall be a lesson and a consolation to me; there are still men who are not deceivers and flatterers, fools and betrayers, but really men."

He carefully refolded the letter, and, before placing it in his portfolio, nodded to it as pleasantly as if it had been D'Alembert himself. He then took another letter.

"I do not recognize this writing," he said, as he examined the address. "It is from Switzerland, and is directed to me personally. From whom is it?"

He opened the letter, and glanced first at the signature.

"Ah," he said, "from Jean Jacques Rousseau! I promised him an asylum. The free Switzers persecuted the unhappy philosopher, and my good Lord Marshal prayed my assistance for him. Lord Marshal is now in Scotland, and it will not benefit him to have his friend here. Well, perhaps it may lead to his return, if he hopes to find Rousseau here. I must see what the philosopher says."

The letter contained only a few lines, which the king read with utter astonishment.

"*Vraiment!*" he exclaimed; "philosophers all belong to the devil. This Jean Jacques does not content himself with declining my offer, but he does it in an unheard-of manner. This is a work of art; I must read it again."

The king read aloud in a most pathetic voice: "Votre majesté m'offre un asyle, et m'y prome la liberté; mais vous avez une épée, et vous êtes roi. Vous m'offrez une pension, à moi, q'i n'a rien fait pour vous. Mais en avez-vous donné à tous les braves gens qui ont perdu bras et jambes en vos services?"

"Well," said the king, laughing, "if being a ruffian makes one a philosopher, Jean Jacques Rousseau deserves to be called the greatest philosopher in the world. Truly, Fortune is playing curious pranks with me to-day, and seems determined to lower my royal pride. Two refusals at one time; two philosophers who decline my invitation. No, not two philosophers—D'Alembert is a philosopher, but Rousseau is in truth a fool."

He tore this letter, and threw the pieces in the fire. He then seized another letter, but laid it down again before opening it. He had heard the great clock in the hall strike eight. That was the sign that the business of the day, which he shared with his attendants, should begin, and that the king had no more time to devote to his private correspondence. The last stroke of the clock had scarcely sounded, as a light knock was heard at the door, which was instantly opened by the command of the king.

Baron von Kircheisen, the prefect of Berlin, entered the room. He came to make his weekly report to the king. His respectful greeting was returned merely by a dark side-glance, and the king listened to his report with evident displeasure.

"And that is your entire report?" asked his majesty, when the prefect had finished. "You are the head of police for the city of Berlin, and you have nothing more to tell me than any policemen might know. You inform me of the number of arrivals and departures, of the births and deaths, and of the thefts which have been committed, and that is the extent of your report."

"But I cannot inform your majesty of things that have not occurred," returned Baron von Kircheisen.

"So nothing else has occurred in Berlin. Berlin is then a most quiet, innocent city, where at the worst a few greatly-to-be-pitied individuals occasionally disturb the repose of the righteous by mistaking the property of others for their own. You know nothing. You do not know that Berlin is the most vicious and immoral of cities. You can tell me nothing of the crimes which are certainly not of a kind to be punished by the law, but which are creeping from house to house, poisoning the happiness of entire families, and

spreading shame and misery on every hand. You know nothing of the many broken marriage-vows, of the dissension in families, of the frivolity of the young people who have given themselves up to gambling and dissipation of all kinds. Much misery might be avoided if you knew more of these matters, and were ready with a warning at the right moment."

"Sire, will you permit me to say that is not the task of the ordinary police; for such matters a secret police is required."

"Well, why do you not have a secret police? Why do you not follow the example of the new minister of police at Paris, De Sartines? That man knows every thing that happens in Paris. He knows the history of every house, every family, and every individual. He occasionally warns the men when their wives are on the point of flying from them. He whispers to the wives the names of those who turn their husbands from them. He shows the parents the faro-bank at which their sons are losing their property, and sometimes extends a hand to save them from destruction. That is a good police, and it must be acknowledged that yours does not resemble it."

"If your majesty desires it, I can establish such a police in Berlin as De Sartines has in Paris. But your majesty must do two things: First, you must give me a million of thalers annually."

"Ah! a million! Your secret police is rather expensive. Continue. What do you desire besides the million?"

"Secondly, the permission to destroy the peace of families, the happiness of your subjects—to make the son a spy upon his father—the mother an informer against her daughter—the students and servants the betrayers of their teachers and employers. If your majesty will permit me to undermine the confidence of man to his fellow-man—of the brother to his sister—of the parents to their children—of the husbands to their wives by buying their secrets from them—if I may reward such treachery, then, your majesty, we can have such a police as De Sartines has in Paris. But I do not think that it will promote propriety or prevent crime."

The king had listened to him with increasing interest, his brow growing clearer and clearer as the bold speaker continued. When he finished, the king ceased his walk, and stood motionless before him, looking fully into his excited countenance.

"It is, then, your positive conviction that a secret police brings with it those evils you have depicted?"

"Yes, your majesty, it is my positive conviction."

"He may be right," said the king, thoughtfully. "Nothing demoralizes men so much as spies and denunciations, and a good government should punish and not reward the miserable spies who

betray their fellow-creatures for gold with the wicked intention of bringing them into misfortune. A good government should not follow the Jesuits' rule—"That the end consecrates the means."

"Will your majesty, then, graciously allow me to dispense with a secret police?"

"Well, yes. We will remain as we are, and De Sartines may keep his secret police. It would not suit us, and Berlin shall not be still further demoralized by spies and betrayers. Therefore, no more of the secret police. When crime shows itself by day we will punish it. We will leave it to Providence to bring it to light. Continue to report to me, therefore, who has died and who has been born; who have arrived and who have departed; who has stolen and who has done a good business. I am well pleased with you—you have spoken freely and bravely, and said openly what you thought. That pleases me; I am pleased when my agents have the courage to speak the truth, and dare occasionally to oppose me. I hope you will retain this virtue."

He bowed pleasantly to the prefect, and offered him his hand. He then dismissed him, and ordered the ministers to enter with their reports and proposals. After these came the council, and only after the king had worked with them uninterruptedly for three hours, did he think of taking some repose from all this work, which had occupied him from six o'clock in the morning until nearly twelve. He was on the point of entering his library as loud voices in the anteroom arrested his attention.

"But I tell you that the king gives no audiences to-day," he heard one of the servants say.

"The king has said that every man who wishes to speak to him shall be admitted!" exclaimed another voice. "I must speak to the king, and he must hear me."

"If you must speak to him, you must arrange it by writing. The king grants an audience to all who demand it, but he fixes the hour himself."

"Misery and despair cannot await a fixed hour!" cried the other. "If the king will not listen to unhappiness when it calls to him for redress, but waits until it pleases him to hear, he is not a good king."

"The man is right," said the king, "I will listen to him immediately."

He hastily advanced to the door and opened it. Without stood an old man, poorly dressed, with a pale, thin face, from whose features despair and sorrow spoke plainly enough to be understood by all. When his great, sunken eyes fell upon the king, he cried, joyfully, "God be thanked, there is the king!"

The king motioned to him to approach, and the old man sprang forward with a cry of delight.

"Come into the room," said the king; "and now tell me what you wish from me?"

"Justice, your majesty, nothing but justice. I have been through the war, and I am without bread. I have nothing to live upon, and I have twice petitioned your majesty for a situation which is now vacant."

"And I refused it to you, because I had promised it to another."

"They told me that your majesty would refuse me this situation," cried the man, despairingly. "But I cannot believe it, for your majesty owes it to me, and you are usually a just king. Hasten, your majesty, to perform your duty, and justify yourself from a suspicion which is unworthy of your kingly fame."

The king measured him with a flashing glance, which the pale, despairing suppliant bore with bold composure.

"By what authority," asked the king, in a thundering voice, as he approached the man, with his arm raised threateningly—"by what authority do you dare speak to me in such a tone? and on what do you ground your shameless demands?"

"On this, your majesty, that I must starve if you refuse my request. That is the most sacred of all claims, and to whom on earth dare I turn with it if not to my king?"

There lay in these words a sorrow so heart-breaking, a plaint so despairing in the voice, that the king was involuntarily much moved. He let fall his uplifted arm, and the expression of his countenance became gentle and tender.

"I see that you are very unhappy and despairing," he said, kindly; "you were right to come to me. You shall have the place for which you asked. I will arrange it. Come here to-morrow to the Councillor Muller. I will give you some money, that you may not starve until then."

He silenced the delighted man's expressions of gratitude, and ringing his bell he summoned Deesen, who kept his purse, in order to give the man a gold piece. But Deesen did not appear, and the second chamberlain announced in an embarrassed manner that he was not in the palace. The king commanded him to give the man the promised gold piece and then to return to him.

"Where is Deesen?" asked the king, as the chamberlain returned.

"Sire, I do not know," he stammered, his eyes sinking beneath the piercing glance of the king.

"You do know!" said the king, gravely. "Deesen has positive orders from me to remain in the anteroom, because I might need

him. If he dares to disobey my orders, he must have a powerful reason, and you know it. Out with it! I will know it."

"If your majesty commands, I must speak," said the chamberlain, sighing. "Your majesty will not permit us to be married, but we were made with hearts, and we sometimes fall in love."

"Deesen is in love, then?" said the king.

"Yes, your majesty, he loves a beautiful girl in Potsdam, whose name is Maria Siegert. And although he cannot marry her, she has consented to be his beloved. And as to-day was the great report day, Deesen thought that your majesty would not need him, and that he had time to go to Potsdam to visit his sweetheart. He seems to have been delayed. That is the reason, your majesty, that Deesen is not in the anteroom."

"Very well," said the king; "as soon as Deesen returns he must come to my library. I forbid you, however, to repeat one word of this conversation."

"Ah, your majesty, I am well pleased that I need not do it, for Deesen is very passionate, and if he learns that I have betrayed his secret he is capable of giving me a box on the ear."

"Which would, perhaps, be very wholesome for you," said the king, as he turned toward his library.

A quarter of an hour later, Deesen entered the library with a heated, anxious face.

The king, who was reading his beloved Lucretius while he paced the floor, turned his great, piercing eyes with a questioning expression on the anxious face of his attendant. "I called for you, and you did not come," said the king.

"I beg your majesty to pardon me," stammered Deesen.

"Where were you?"

"I was in my room writing a letter, sire."

"Ah, a letter. You were no doubt writing to that beautiful barmaid at the hotel of the Black Raven at Amsterdam, who declined the attentions of the servant of the brothers Zoller."

This reference to the journey to Amsterdam showed Deesen that the king was not very angry. He dared, therefore, to raise his eyes to those of the king, and to look pleadingly at him.

"Sit down," said the king, pointing to the writing-table. "I called you because I wished to dictate a letter for you to write. Sit down and take a pen."

Deesen seated himself at the table, and the king began walking up and down as before, his hands and book behind him.

"Are you ready?" asked the king.

"I am ready, sire," returned Deesen, dipping his pen into the ink.

"Write then," commanded the king, as he placed himself immediately in front of Deesen—"write, then, first the heading: 'My beloved—'"

Deesen started, and glanced inquiringly at the king. Frederick looked earnestly at him, and repeated, 'My beloved—'

Deesen uttered a sigh, and wrote.

"Have you written that?" asked the king.

"Yes, sire, I have it—'My beloved.'"

"Well, then, proceed. 'My beloved, that old bear, the king—' Write," said the king, interrupting himself as he saw that Deesen grew pale and trembled, and could scarcely hold the pen—"write without hesitation, or expect a severe punishment."

"Will your majesty have the kindness to dictate? I am ready to write every thing," said Deesen, as he wiped his brow.

"Now then, quickly," ordered the king, and he dictated—"That old bear, the king, counts every hour against me that I spend so charmingly with you. That my absence may be shorter in the future, and less observed by the old scold, I wish you to rent a room near here in the suburbs of Brandenburg, where we can meet more conveniently than in the city. I remain yours until death.

"DEESEN."

"Have you finished?" asked the king.

"Yes, sire, I have finished," groaned Deesen.

"Then fold the letter and seal it, and write the address 'To the unmarried Maria Siegert, Yunker Street, Potsdam.'"

"Mercy, sire, mercy!" cried Deesen, springing up and throwing himself at the feet of the king. "I see that your majesty knows all—that I have been betrayed."

"You have betrayed yourself, for to-day is the tenth time that I have called for you when you were absent. Now send your letter off, and see that your Siegert gets a room here. If, however, you are again absent when I call, I will send your beautiful Maria to Spandau, and dismiss you. Go, now, and dispatch your letter."

Deesen hurried off, and the king looked smilingly after him for a moment, and was on the point of returning to his reading, when his attention was attracted by the approach of a carriage.

"Ah," he murmured anxiously, "I fear that I shall be disturbed again by some cousin, who has come to rob me of my time by hypocritical professions of love."

He looked anxiously toward the door. It was soon opened, and a servant announced Prince Henry.

The king's countenance cleared, and he advanced to meet his brother with a bright smile. But his greeting was not returned, and the prince did not appear to see the extended hand of the king.

A heavy cloud lay upon his brow—his cheeks were colorless and his lips compressed, as if he wished to suppress the angry and indignant words which his flashing eyes expressed.

"Ah, my brother," said the king, sadly, "it seems that you have come to announce a misfortune."

"No," said the prince, "I only came, your majesty, to recall a conversation which I held with you ten years ago in this same room, on this very spot."

"Ten years ago?" said the king. "That was at the time of your marriage, Henry."

"Yes, the conversation I refer to concerned my marriage, sire. You had pursued me so long with that subject, that I had at length concluded to submit to the yoke which was to free me from those unworthy and humiliating persecutions."

"I think that you could select more fitting expressions, my brother," said the king, with flashing eyes. "You forget that you are speaking to your king."

"But I remember that I am speaking to my brother, whose duty is to hear the complaints which I have to utter against the king."

"Speak," said the king, after a slight pause. "Your brother will hear you."

"I come to remind you of that hour," said the prince, solemnly, "in which I gave my consent to be married. As I did so, sire, I said to you that I should hold you responsible for this marriage which was made for political purposes and not from love—that I would call you to account before the throne of God, and there ask you by what right you robbed me of my liberty, by what right you laid a chain upon my hand and heart which love could not help me to bear. I said further, sire—if the weight of this chain should become too heavy, and this unnatural connection of a marriage without love should drive me to despair, that upon your head would rest the curse of my misery, and that you would be answerable for my destroyed existence, for my perished hopes."

"And I," said the king, "I took this responsibility upon me. As your king and your elder brother, I reminded you of your duty to give the state a family—sons who would be an example of courage and honor to the men, and daughters who would be a pattern of virtue and propriety to the women. In view of these duties, I demanded of you to be married."

"I come now to call you to account for this marriage," exclaimed the prince, solemnly. "I have come to tell you that my heart is torn with pain and misery; that I am the most wretched of men, and that you have made me so—you, who forced me into this marriage, although you knew the shame and despair of a marriage

without love. You had already taken a heavy responsibility upon yourself by your own marriage; and if you were compelled to endure it so long as my father lived, you should have relieved yourself from it so soon as you were free; that is, so soon as you were king. But you preferred to continue in this unnatural connection, or rather you put the chains from your hands, and let them drag at your feet. Not to outrage the world by your divorce, you gave it the bad example of a wretched marriage. You made yourself free, and you made a slave of your poor wife, who has been a martyr to your humors and cruelty. You profaned the institution of marriage. You gave a bad and dangerous example to your subjects, and it has done its work. Look around in your land, sire. Everywhere you will see unhappy women who have been deserted by their husbands, and miserable men who have been dishonored by their faithless wives. Look at your own family. Our sister of Baireuth died of grief, and of the humiliation she endured from the mistress of her husband. Our brother, Augustus William, died solitary and alone. He withdrew in his grief to Oranienburg, and his wife remained in Berlin. She was not with him when he died; strangers received his last breath—strangers closed his eyes. Our sister of Anspach quarrelled with her husband, until finally she submitted, and made a friend of his mistress. And I, sire, I also stand before you with the brand of shame upon my brow. I also have been betrayed and deceived, and all this is your work. If the king mocks at the sacred duties of marriage, how can he expect that his family and subjects should respect them? It is the fashion in your land for husbands and wives to deceive one another, and it is you who have set this fashion."

"I have allowed you to finish, Henry," said the king, when the prince was at length silent. "I have allowed you to finish, but I have not heard your angry and unjust reproaches, I have only heard that my brother is unhappy, and it is, I know, natural for the unhappy to seek the source of their sorrows in others and not in themselves. I forgive all that you have said against me; but if you hold me responsible for the miserable consequences of the war, which kept the men at a distance for years and loosened family ties, that shows plainly that your judgment is unreliable, and that you cannot discriminate with justice. I did not commence this war heedlessly; I undertook it as a heavy burden. It has made an old man of me; it has eaten up my life before my time. I see all the evil results, and I consider it my sacred duty to bind up the wounds which it has inflicted on my country. I work for this object day and night; I give all of my energies to this effort; I have sacrificed to it all my personal inclinations. But I must be contented to bind

up the wounds. I cannot make want disappear; I cannot immediately change sorrow into gladness."

"Ah, sire, you seek to avoid the subject, and to speak of the general unhappiness instead of my special grief. I call you to account, because you forced me to take a wife that I did not know—a wife who has made me the most miserable of men—a wife who has outraged my honor, and betrayed my heart. You gave me a wife who has robbed me of all I held dear on earth—of the wife I loved, and of the friend I trusted."

"Poor brother," said the king, gently, "you are enduring the torments from which I also suffered, before my heart became hardened as it now is. Yes, it is a fearful pain to be forced to despise the friend that you trusted—to be betrayed by those we have loved. I have passed through that grief. The man suffered deeply in me before his existence was merged in that of the king."

"Sire," said the prince, suddenly, "I have come to you to demand justice and punishment. You have occasioned the misery of my house, it is therefore your duty to alleviate it, as far as in you lies. I accuse my wife, the Princess Wilhelmina, of infidelity and treachery. I accuse Count Kalkreuth, who dares to love my wife, of being a traitor to your royal family. I demand your consent to my divorce from the princess, and to the punishment of the traitor. That is the satisfaction which I demand of your majesty for the ruin which you have wrought in my life."

"You wish to make me answerable for the capriciousness of woman and the faithlessness of man," asked the king, with a sad smile. "You do that because I, in performing my duty as a king, forced you to marry. It is true you did not love your intended wife, because you did not know her, but you learned to love her. That proves that I did not make a bad choice; your present pain is a justification for me. You are unhappy because you love the wife I gave you with your whole heart. For the capriciousness of women you cannot hold me responsible, and I did not select the friend who has so wickedly betrayed you. You demand of me that I should punish both. Have you considered, my brother, that in punishing them I should make your disgrace and misery public to the world? Do not imagine, Henry, that men pity us for our griefs; when they seem most deeply to sympathize with us they feel an inward pleasure, especially if it is a prince who suffers. It pleases men that fate, which has given us an exceptional position, does not spare us the ordinary sorrows of humanity."

"I understand, then, that you refuse my request," said the prince. "You will not consent to my divorce, you will not punish the traitor?"

"No, I do not refuse your request, but I beg you will take three days to consider what I have said to you. At the end of that time, should you come to me, and make the same demand, I will give my consent; that is, I will have you publicly separated from your wife, I will have Count Kalkreuth punished, and will thus give the world the right to laugh at the hero of Freiburg."

"Very well, sire," said the prince, thoughtfully, "I will remind you of your promise. I beg you will now dismiss me, for you see I am a very man and no philosopher, unworthy to be a guest at Sans-Souci."

He bowed to the king, who tenderly pressed his hand and silently left the room.

Frederick looked after him with an expression of unutterable pity.

"Three days will be long enough to deaden his pain, and then he will be more reasonable and form other resolutions."

CHAPTER XIII.

A HUSBAND'S REVENGE.

CAMILLA lay upon a sofa in her boudoir, and listened with breathless attention to the account her *beau cousin* gave of the adventures of the last eight days. She listened with sparkling eyes to the witty description he gave of his duel with Lord Elliot, and declared that she found him extraordinarily brilliant. Camilla was indeed proud of her handsome lover. Kindar explained minutely how he had compelled Lord Elliot, who for a long time avoided and fled from him, to fight a duel with him. How he forced him on his knees to acknowledge that he had done his wife injustice, and to apologize for the insult he had offered to Kindar, in charging him with being the lover of his pure and virtuous wife.

"And he did this?" cried Camilla; "he knelt before you and begged your pardon?"

"Yes, he knelt before me, and begged my pardon."

"Then he is even more pitiful than I thought him," said Camilla, "and I am justified before the whole world in despising him. Nothing can be more contemptible than to beg pardon rather than fight a duel, to kneel to a man to save one's miserable life. I am a woman, but I would scorn such cowardice. I would despise the man I loved most fondly if he were guilty of such an act of shame."

Camilla was much excited; she did not notice how Kindar started, turned pale, and fixed his eyes on the floor. She was so charmed