

or a professor of philosophy. His ordinary mode of life was simple and unostentatious, and his favorite residence was the palace of Sans Souci, at Potsdam. He was very fond of music, and of the society of literary men; but he mortified them by his patronizing arrogance, and worried them by his practical jokes. His favorite literary companions were infidel philosophers, and Voltaire received from him marks of the highest distinction. But the king of letters could not live with the despot who solicited his society, and an implacable hatred succeeded familiarity and friendship. The king had considerable literary reputation, and was the author of several works. He was much admired by his soldiers, and permitted in them uncommon familiarity. He was ever free from repulsive formality and bolstered dignity. He was industrious, frugal, and vigilant. Nothing escaped his eye, and he attended to the details of his administration. He was probably the most indefatigable sovereign that ever existed, but displayed more personal ability than enlarged wisdom.

But able and successful as he was as a ruler, he was one of those men for whom it is impossible to entertain a profound respect. He was cruel, selfish, and parsimonious. He was prodigal of the blood of his subjects, and ungenerous in his treatment of those who had sacrificed every thing for his sake. He ruled by fear rather than by love. He introduced into every department the precision of a rigid military discipline, and had no faith in any power but that of mechanical agencies. He quarrelled with his best friends, and seemed to enjoy the miseries he inflicted. He was contemptuous of woman, and disdainful of Christianity. His egotism was not redeemed by politeness or affability, and he made no efforts to disguise his unmitigated selfishness and heartless injustice. He had no loftiness of character, and no appreciation of elevation of sentiment in others. He worshipped only himself and rewarded those only who advanced his ambitious designs.

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Character of Frederic II.

CHAPTER XXIV

MARIA THERESA AND CATHARINE II

CONTEMPORANEOUS with Frederic the Great were Maria Theresa and Catharine II. — two sovereigns who claim an especial notice as representing two mighty empires. The part which Maria Theresa took in the Seven Years' War has been often alluded to and it is not necessary to recapitulate the causes or events of that war. She and Catharine II. were also implicated with Frederic in the partition of Poland. The misfortunes of that unhappy country will be separately considered. In alluding to Maria Theresa, we cannot but review the history of that great empire over which she ruled, the most powerful of the German states. The power of Austria, at different times since the death of the Emperor Charles V., threatened the liberties of Europe; and, to prevent her ascendancy, the kings of France, England, and Prussia have expended the treasure and wasted the blood of their subjects.

By the peace of Westphalia, in 1648, at the close of the Thirty Years' War, the constitution of Germany was established upon a firm basis. The religious differences between the Catholics and the Protestants were settled, and religious toleration secured in all the states of the empire. It was settled that no decree of the Diet was to pass without a majority of suffrages, and that the Imperial Chamber and the Aulic Council should be composed of a due proportion of Catholics and Protestants. The former was instituted by the Emperor Maximilian I., in 1495, at the Diet of Worms, and was a judicial tribunal, and the highest court of appeal. It consisted of seventeen judges nominated by the emperor, and took cognizance of Austrian affairs chiefly. The Aulic Council was also judicial, and was composed of eighteen persons and attended chiefly to business connected with the empire. The members of these two great judicial tribunals were Catholics; and there were also frequent disputes between them as to their respective jurisdictions. It was ordained by the treaty of Westphalia that a

Maria Theresa. Germanic Constitution.

perfect equality should be observed in the appointment of the members of these two important courts; but, in fact, twenty-four Protestants and twenty-six Catholics were appointed to the Imperial Chamber. The various states had the right of presenting members, according to political importance. The Aulic Council was composed of six Protestants and twelve Catholics, and was a tribunal to settle difficulties between the various states of which Germany was composed.

These states were nearly independent of each other, but united under one common head. Each state had its own peculiar government, which was generally monarchical, and regulated its own coinage, police, and administration of justice. Each kingdom, electorate, principality, and imperial city, which were included in the states of Germany, had the right to make war, form alliances, conclude peace, and send ambassadors to foreign courts.

The Diet of the empire consisted of representatives of each of the states, appointed by the princes themselves, and took cognizance of matters of common interest, such as regulations respecting commerce, the license of books, and the military force which each state was required to furnish.

The emperor had power, in some respects, over all these states; but it was chiefly confined to his hereditary dominions. He could not exercise any despotic control over the various princes of the empire; but, as hereditary sovereign of Austria, Styria, Moravia, Bohemia, Hungary, and the Tyrol, he was the most powerful prince in Europe until the aggrandizement of Louis XIV.

Ferdinand III. was emperor of Germany at the peace of Westphalia; but he did not long survive it. He died in 1657, and his son Leopold succeeded him as sovereign of all the Austrian dominions. He had not completed his eighteenth year, but nevertheless was, five months after, elected Emperor of Germany by the Electoral Diet.

Great events occurred during the reign of Leopold I.—the Turkish war, the invasion of the Netherlands by Louis XIV., the heroic struggles of the Prince of Orange, the French invasion of the Palatinate, the accession of a Bourbon prince to the throne of Spain, the discontents of Hungary, and the victories of Marlborough and Eugene. Most of these have been already alluded

to, especially in the chapter on Louis XIV., and, therefore, will not be further discussed.

The most important event connected with Austrian affairs, as distinct from those of France, England, and Holland, was the Hungarian war. Hungary was not a province of Austria, but was a distinct state. In 1526, the crowns of the two kingdoms were united, like those of England and Hanover under George I. But the Hungarians were always impatient of the rule of the Emperor of Germany, and, in the space of a century, arose five times in defence of their liberties.

In 1667, one of these insurrections took place, occasioned by the aggressive policy and government of Leopold. The Hungarians conspired to secure their liberties, but in vain. So soon as the emperor was aware of the conspiracy of his Hungarian subjects, he adopted vigorous measures, quartered thirty thousand additional troops in Hungary, loaded the people with taxes, occupied the principal fortresses, banished the chiefs, and changed the constitution of the country. He also attempted to suppress Protestantism, and committed all the excesses of a military despotism. These accumulated oppressions drove a brave but turbulent people to despair, and both Catholics and Protestants united for their common safety. The insurgents were assisted by the Prince of Transylvania, and were supplied with money and provisions by the French. They also found a noble defender in Emeric Tekeli, a young Hungarian noble, who hated Austria as intensely as Hannibal hated Rome, and who, at the head of twenty thousand men, defended his country against the emperor. Moreover, he successfully intrigued with the Turks, who invaded Hungary with two hundred thousand men, and advanced to lay siege to Vienna. This immense army was defeated by John Sobieski, to whom Leopold appealed in his necessities, and the Turks were driven out of Hungary. Tekeli was gradually insulated from those who had formed the great support of his cause, and, in consequence of jealousies which Leopold had fomented between him and the Turks, was arrested and sent in chains to Constantinople. New victories followed the imperial army, and Leopold succeeded in making the crown of Hungary, hitherto elective, hereditary in his family. He instituted in the conquered country

a horrible inquisitorial tribunal, and perpetrated cruelties which scarcely find a parallel in the proscriptions of Marius and Sylla. His son Joseph, at the age of ten, was crowned king of Hungary with great magnificence, and with the usual solemnities.

When the Hungarian difficulties were settled, Leopold had more leisure to prosecute his war with the Turks, in which he gained signal successes. The Ottoman Porte was humbled and crippled, and a great source of discontent to the Christian powers of Europe was removed. By the peace of Carlovitz, (1697,) Leopold secured Hungary and Slavonia, which had been so long occupied by the Turks, and consolidated his empire by the acquisition of Transylvania.

Leopold I. lived only to witness the splendid victories of Marlborough and Eugene, by which the power of his great rival, Louis, was effectually reduced. He died in 1705, having reigned forty-six years; the longest reign in the Austrian annals, except that of Frederic III.

He was a man of great private virtues; pure in his morals, faithful to his wife, a good father, and a kind master. He was minute in his devotions, unbounded in his charities, and cultivated in his taste. But he was reserved, cold, and phlegmatic. His jealousy of Sobieski was unworthy of his station, and his severities in Hungary made him the object of execration. He was narrow, bigoted, and selfish. But he lived in an age of great activity, and his reign forms an era in the military and civil institutions of his country. The artillery had been gradually lightened, and received most of the improvements which at present are continued. Bayonets had been added to muskets, and the use of pikes abandoned. Armies were increased from twenty or thirty thousand men to one hundred thousand, more systematically formed. A police was established in the cities, and these were lighted and paved. Jurisprudence was improved, and numerous grievances were redressed.

Leopold was succeeded by his eldest son, Joseph, who had an energetic and aspiring mind. His reign is memorable for the continuation of the great War of the Spanish Succession, signalized by the victories of Marlborough and Eugene, the humiliation of the French, and the career of Charles XII. of Sweden. He also restored Bohemia to its electoral rights, rewarded the elector pala-

une with the honors and territories wrested from his family by the Thirty Years' War, and confirmed the house of Hanover in the possession of the ninth electorate. He had nearly restored tranquillity to his country, when he died (1711) of the small-pox—a victim to the ignorance of his physicians. He was a lover and patron of the arts, and spoke several languages with elegance and fluency. But he had the usual faults of absolute princes; was prodigal in his expenditures, irascible in his temper, fond of pageants and pleasure, and enslaved by women.

He was succeeded by his brother, the Archduke Charles, under the title of Charles VI. Soon after his accession, the tranquillity of Europe was established by the peace of Utrecht, and Austria once more became the preponderating power in Europe. But Charles VI. was not capable of appreciating the greatness of his position, or the true sources of national power. He, however, devoted himself zealously to the affairs of his empire, and effected some useful reforms. As he had no male issue, he had drawn up a solemn law, called the *Pragmatic Sanction*, according to which he transferred to his daughter, Maria Theresa, his vast hereditary possessions. He found great difficulty in securing the assent of the European powers to this law; but, after a while, he effected his object. On his death, (1740,) Maria Theresa succeeded to all the dominions of the house of Austria.

No princess ever ascended a throne under circumstances of greater peril, or in a situation which demanded greater energy and fortitude. Her army had dwindled to thirty thousand; her treasury contained only one hundred thousand florins; a general scarcity of provisions distressed the people, and the vintage was cut off by the frost.

Under all these embarrassing circumstances, the Elector of Bavaria laid claim to her territory, and Frederic II. marched into Silesia. It has been already stated that England sympathized with her troubles, and lent a generous aid. Her appeal to her Hungarian subjects, and the enthusiasm they manifested in her cause have also been described. The boldness of Frederic and the distress of Maria Theresa drew upon them the eyes of all Europe. Hostilities were prosecuted four years, which resulted in the acquisition of Silesia by the King of Prussia. The peace of Dresden (1745)

gave a respite to Germany, and Frederic and Maria Theresa prepared for new conflicts.

The Seven Years' War has been briefly described, in connection with the reign of Frederic, and need not be further discussed. The war was only closed by the exhaustion of all the parties engaged in it.

In 1736, Maria Theresa was married to Francis Stephen, Grand Duke of Tuscany, and he was elected (1745) Emperor of Germany, under the title of *Francis I.* He died soon after the peace of Hubertsburg was signed, and his son Joseph succeeded to the throne of the empire, and was co-regent, as his father had been, with Maria Theresa. But the empress queen continued to be the real, as she was the legitimate, sovereign of Austria, and took an active part in all the affairs of Europe.

When the tranquillity of her kingdom was restored, she founded various colleges, reformed the public schools, promoted agriculture and instituted many beneficial regulations for the prosperity of her subjects. She reformed the church, diminished the number of superfluous clergy, suppressed the Inquisition and the Jesuits, and formed a system of military economy which surpassed the boasted arrangements of Frederic II. "She combined private economy with public liberality, dignity with condescension, elevation of soul with humility of spirit, and the virtues of domestic life with the splendid qualities which grace a throne." Her death, in 1780, was felt as a general loss to the people, who adored her; and her reign is considered as one of the most illustrious in Austrian annals.

Her reign was, however, sullied by the partition of Poland, in which she was concerned with Frederic the Great and Catharine II. Before this is treated, we will consider the reign of the Russian empress.

THE reign of Catharine II., like that of Maria Theresa, is interlinked with that of Frederic. But some remarks concerning her predecessors, after the death of Peter the Great, are first necessary.

Catharine, the wife of Peter, was crowned empress before his

death. The first years of her reign were agreeable to the people, because she diminished the taxes, and introduced a mild policy in the government of her subjects. She intrusted to Prince Menzikoff an important share in the government of the realm.

But Catharine, who, during the reign of Peter I., had displayed so much enterprise and intrepidity, very soon disdained business, and abandoned herself to luxury and pleasure. She died in 1727, and Peter II. ascended her throne, chiefly in consequence of the intrigues of Menzikoff, who, like Richelieu, wished to make the emperor his puppet.

Peter II. was only thirteen years of age when he became emperor. He was the son of Alexis, and, consequently, grandson of Peter I. His youth did not permit him to assume the reins of government, and every thing was committed to the care of Menzikoff, who reigned, for a time, with absolute power. But he, at last, incurred the displeasure of his youthful master, and was exiled to Siberia. But Peter II. did not long survive the disgrace of his minister. He died of the small-pox, in 1730.

He was succeeded by Anne, Duchess of Holstein, and eldest daughter of Catharine I. But she lived but a few months after her accession to the throne, and the Princess Elizabeth succeeded her.

The Empress Elizabeth resembled her mother, the beautiful Catharine, but was voluptuous and weak. She abandoned herself to puerile amusements and degrading follies. And she was as superstitious as she was debauched. She would continue whole hours on her knees before an image, to which she spoke, and which she ever consulted; and then would turn from bigotry to infamous sensuality. She hated Frederic II., and assisted Maria Theresa in her struggle. Russia gained no advantage from the Seven Years' War, except that of accustoming the Russians to the tactics of modern warfare. She died in 1762, and was succeeded by the Grand Duke Peter Fedorowitz, son of the Duke of Holstein and Anne, daughter of Peter I. He assumed the title of Peter III.

Peter III. was a weak prince, but disposed to be beneficent. One of his first acts was to recall the numerous exiles whom the jealousy of Elizabeth had consigned to the deserts of Siberia. Among them was Biren, the haughty lover and barbarous minister of the Empress Anne and Marshal Munich, a veteran of eighty-two

years of age. Peter also abolished the Inquisition, established by Alexis Michaelowitz, and promoted commerce the arts, and sciences. He attempted to imitate the king of Russia, for whom he had an extravagant admiration. He set at liberty the Prussian prisoners, and made peace with Frederic II. He had a great respect for Germany, but despised the country over which he was called to reign. But his partiality for the Germans, and his numerous reforms, alienated the affections of his subjects, and he was not sufficiently able to curb the spirit of discontent. He imitated his immediate predecessors in the vices of drunkenness and sensuality, and was guilty of great imprudences. He reigned but a few months, being dethroned and murdered. His wife, the Empress Catharine, was the chief of the conspirators; and she was urged to the bloody act by her own desperate circumstances. She was obnoxious to her husband, who probably would have destroyed her, had his life been prolonged. She, in view of his hostility, and prompted by an infernal ambition, sought to dethrone her husband. She was assisted by some of the most powerful nobles, and gained over most of the regiments of the imperial guard. The Archbishop of Novgorod and the clergy were friendly to her, because they detested the reforms which Peter had attempted to make. Catharine became mistress of St. Petersburg, and caused herself to be crowned Empress of Russia, in one of the principal churches. Peter had timely notice of the revolt, but not the energy to suppress it. He listened to the entreaties of women, rather than to the counsels of those veteran generals who still supported his throne. He was timid, irresolute, and vacillating. He was doomed. He was a weak and infatuated prince, and nothing could save him. He surrendered himself into the hands of Catharine. He abdicated his empire, and, shortly after, died of poison. His wife seated herself, without further opposition, on his throne; and the principal nobles of the empire, the army, and the clergy, took the oath of allegiance, and the monarchs of Europe acknowledged her as the absolute sovereign of Russia. In 1763, she was firmly established in the power which had been before wielded by Catharine I. She had dethroned an imbecile prince, whom she abhorred; but the revolution was accomplished without bloodshed, and resulted in the prosperity of Russia.

Catharine was a woman of great moral defects; but she had many excellences to counterbalance them; and her rule was, on the whole, able and beneficent. She was no sooner established in the power which she had usurped, than she directed attention to the affairs of her empire, and sought to remedy the great evils which existed. She devoted herself to business, advanced commerce and the arts, regulated the finances, improved the jurisprudence of the realm, patronized all works of internal improvement, rewarded eminent merit, encouraged education, and exercised a liberal and enlightened policy in her intercourse with foreign powers. After engaging in business with her ministers, she would converse with scholars and philosophers. With some she studied politics, and with others literature. She tolerated all religions, abolished odious courts, and enacted mild laws. She held out great inducements for foreigners to settle in Russia, and founded colleges and hospitals in all parts of her empire.

Beneficent as her reforms were, she nevertheless committed some great political crimes. One of these was the assassination of the dethroned Ivan, the great-grandson of the Czar Ivan Alexejewitsch, who was brother of Peter the Great. On the death of the Empress Anne, in 1731, he had been proclaimed emperor; but when Elizabeth was placed upon the throne, the infant was confined in the fortress of Schlussenburg. Here he was so closely guarded and confined, that he was never allowed access to the open air or the light of day. On the accession of Catharine, he was twenty-three years of age, and was extremely ignorant and weak. But a conspiracy was formed to liberate him, and place him on the throne. The attempt proved abortive, and the prince perished by the sword of his jailers, who were splendidly rewarded for their infamous services.

Her scheme of foreign aggrandizement, and especially her interference in the affairs of Poland, caused the Ottoman Porte to declare war against her, which war proved disastrous to Turkey, and contributed to aggrandize the empire of Russia. The Turks lost several battles on the Pruth, Dniester, and Danube; the provinces of Wallachia, and Moldavia, and Bessarabia submitted to the Russian arms; while a great naval victory, in the Mediterranean, was gained by Alexis Orloff, whose share in the late revolution had raised him from the rank of a simple soldier to that of a

general of the empire, and a favorite of the empress. The naval defeat of the Turks at Tschesmé, by Orloff and Elphinstone, was one of the most signal of that age, and greatly weakened the power of Turkey. The war was not terminated until 1774, when the Turks were compelled to make peace, by the conditions of which, Russia obtained a large accession of territory, a great sum of money, the free navigation of the Black Sea, and a passage through the Dardanelles.

In 1772 occurred the partition of Poland between Austria, Prussia, and Russia. Catharine and Frederic II. were the chief authors of this great political crime, which will be treated in the notice on Poland.

The reign of Catharine was not signalized by any other great political events which affected materially the interests of Europe except the continuation of the war with the Turks, which broke out again in 1778, and which was concluded in 1792, by the treaty of Jassy. In this war, Prince Potemkin, the favorite and prime minister of Catharine, greatly distinguished himself; also General Suwarrow, afterwards noted for his Polish campaigns. In this war Russia lost two hundred thousand men, and the Turks three hundred and thirty thousand, besides expending two hundred and fifty millions of piasters. The most important political consequence was the aggrandizement of Russia, whose dominion was established on the Black Sea.

Catharine, having acquired, either by arms or intrigues, almost half of Poland, the Crimea, and a part of the frontiers of Turkey then turned her arms against Persia. But she died before she could realize her dreams of conquest. At her death, she was the most powerful sovereign that ever reigned in Russia. She was succeeded by her son, Paul I., (1796,) and her remains were deposited by the side of her murdered husband, while his chief murderers, Alexis Orloff and Prince Baratinski, were ordered to stand at her funeral, on each side of his coffin as chief mourners.

Catharine, though a woman of great energy and talent, was ruled by favorites; the most distinguished of whom were Gregory Orloff and Prince Potemkin. The former was a man of brutal manners and surprising audacity; the latter was more civilized, but was a man disgraced, like Orloff, by every vice. His memory, however, is still cherished in Russia on account of his military

successes. He received more honors and rewards from his sovereign than is recorded of any favorite and minister of modern times. His power was equal to what Richelieu enjoyed, and his fortune was nearly as great as Mazarin's. He was knight of the principal orders of Prussia, Sweden, Poland, and Russia, field-marshal, commander-in-chief of the Russian armies, high admiral of the fleets, great hetman of the Cossacks, and chamberlain of the empress. He received from her a fortune of fifty millions of roubles; equal to nearly twenty-five millions of dollars. The Orloffs received also about seventeen millions in lands, and palaces and money, with forty-five thousand peasants.

Catharine had two passions which never left her but with her last breath—the love of the other sex, which degenerated into the most unbounded licentiousness, and the love of glory, which sunk into vanity. She expended ninety millions of roubles on her favorites, the number of which is almost incredible; and she was induced to engage in wars, which increased the burdens of her subjects.

With the exception of these two passions, her character is interesting and commanding. Her reign was splendid, and her court magnificent. Her institutions and monuments were to Russia what the magnificence of Louis XIV. was to France. She was active and regular in her habits; was never hurried away by anger, and was never a prey to dejection; caprice and ill humor were never perceived in her conduct; she was humorous, gay, and affable; she appreciated literature, and encouraged good institutions; and with all her faults, obtained the love and reverence of her subjects. She had not the virtues of Maria Theresa, but had, perhaps, greater energy of character. Her foulest act was her part in the dismemberment of Poland, which now claims a notice.

REFERENCES.—For the reign of Maria Theresa, see Archdeacon Coxe's *Memoirs of the House of Austria*, which is the most interesting and complete. See also Putter's *Constitution of the Germanic Empire*; Kolhrausch's *History of Germany*; Heeren's *Modern History*; Smyth's *Lectures*; also a history of Germany, in Dr. Lardner's *Cyclopædia*. For a life of Catharine, see Castina's *Life*, translated by Hunter; Tooke's *Life of Catharine II.*; Ségur's *Vie de Catharine II.*; Coxe's *Travels*; Heeren's and Russell's *Modern History*.