

rejection of the proposals. Again the belligerents gathered their resources, with still increasing vigor, for another campaign. The British cabinet seemed now to be out of all patience with Maria Theresa. They accused her of not supplying the contingents she had promised, they threatened to withhold their subsidies, many bitter recriminations passed, but still the queen, undismayed by the contentions, urged forward her preparations for the new campaign, till she was thunderstruck with the tidings that the preliminaries of peace were already signed by England, France and Holland.

Maria Theresa received the first formal notification of the terms agreed to by the three contracting powers, from the English minister, Sir Thomas Robinson, who urged her concurrence in the treaty. The indignant queen could not refrain from giving free vent to her displeasure. Listening for a moment impatiently to his words, she overwhelmed him with a torrent of reproaches.

"You, sir," she exclaimed, "who had such a share in the sacrifice of Silesia; you, who contributed more than any one in procuring the cessions to Sardinia, do you still think to persuade me? No! I am neither a child nor a fool! If you will have an instant peace, make it. I can negotiate for myself. Why am I always to be excluded from transacting my own business? My enemies will give me better conditions than my friends. Place me where I was in Italy before the war; but *your King of Sardinia* must have all, without one thought for me. This treaty was not made for me, but for him, for him singly. Great God, how have I been used by that court! There is *your King of Prussia!* Indeed these circumstances tear open too many old wounds and create too many new ones. Agree to such a treaty as this!" she exclaimed indignantly. "No, no, I will rather lose my head"

CHAPTER XXIX.

MARIA THERESA.

FROM 1748 TO 1759.

TREATY OF PEACE.—DISSATISFACTION OF MARIA THERESA.—PREPARATION FOR WAR.—RUPTURE BETWEEN ENGLAND AND AUSTRIA.—MARIA THERESA.—ALLIANCE WITH FRANCE.—INFLUENCE OF MARCHIONESS OF POMPADOUR.—BITTER REPROACHES BETWEEN AUSTRIA AND ENGLAND.—COMMENCEMENT OF THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR.—ENERGY OF FREDERIC OF PRUSSIA.—SANGUINARY BATTLES.—VICISSITUDES OF WAR.—DESPERATE SITUATION OF FREDERIC.—ELATION OF MARIA THERESA.—HER AMBITIOUS PLANS.—AWFUL DEFEAT OF THE PRUSSIAN AT BERLIN.

NOTWITHSTANDING the bitter opposition of Maria Theresa to peace, the definitive treaty was signed at Aix-la-Chapelle on the 18th of October, 1748, by France, England and Holland. Spain and Sardinia soon also gave in their adhesion. The queen, finding it impossible to resist the determination of the other powers, at length reluctantly yielded, and accepted the terms, which they were ready unitedly to enforce should she refuse to accede to them. By this treaty all the contracting powers gave their assent to the Pragmatic Sanction. The queen was required to surrender her conquests in Italy, and to confirm her cessions of Silesia to Prussia. Thus terminated this long and cruel war. Though at the commencement the queen was threatened with utter destruction, and she had come out from the contests with signal honor, retaining all her vast possessions, excepting Silesia and the Italian provinces, still she could not repress her chagrin. Her complaints were loud and reiterated. When the British minister requested an audience to congratulate her upon the return of peace, she snappishly replied,

A visit of condolence would be more proper, under these circumstances, than one of congratulation. The British minister will oblige me by making no allusion whatever to so disagreeable a topic."

The queen was not only well aware that this peace could not long continue, but was fully resolved that it should not be permanent. Her great rival, Frederic, had wrested from her Silesia, and she was determined that there should be no stable peace until she had regained it. With wonderful energy she availed herself of this short respite in replenishing her treasury and in recruiting her armies. Frederic himself has recorded the masculine vigor with which she prepared herself for the renewal of war.

"Maria Theresa," he says, "in the secrecy of her cabinet, arranged those great projects which she afterwards carried into execution. She introduced an order and economy into the finances unknown to her ancestors; and her revenues far exceeded those of her father, even when he was master of Naples, Parma, Silesia and Servia. Having learned the necessity of introducing into her army a better discipline, she annually formed camps in the provinces, which she visited herself that she might animate the troops by her presence and bounty. She established a military academy at Vienna, and collected the most skillful professors of all the sciences and exercises which tend to elucidate or improve the art of war. By these institutions the army acquired, under Maria Theresa, such a degree of perfection as it had never attained under any of her predecessors; and a woman accomplished designs worthy of a great man."

The queen immediately organized a standing army of one hundred and eight thousand men, who were brought under the highest state of discipline, and were encamped in such positions that they could, at any day, be concentrated ready for combined action. The one great object which now seemed to engross her mind was the recovery of Silesia. It was, of

course, a subject not to be spoken of openly; but in secret conference with her ministers she unfolded her plans and sought counsel. Her intense devotion to political affairs, united to a mind of great activity and native strength, soon placed her above her ministers in intelligence and sagacity; and conscious of superior powers, she leaned less upon them, and relied upon her own resources. With a judgment thus matured she became convinced of the incapacity of her cabinet, and with great skill in the discernment of character, chose Count Kaunitz, who was then her ambassador at Paris, prime minister. Kaunitz, son of the governor of Moravia, had given signal proof of his diplomatic abilities, in Rome and in Paris. For nearly forty years he remained at the head of foreign affairs, and, in conjunction with the queen, administered the government of Austria.

Policy had for some time allied Austria and England, but there had never been any real friendship between the two cabinets. The high tone of superiority ever assumed by the court of St. James; its offensive declaration that the arm of England alone had saved the house of Austria from utter ruin, and the imperious demand for corresponding gratitude, annoyed and exasperated the proud court of Vienna. The British cabinet were frequently remonstrated with against the assumption of such airs, and the employment of language so haughty in their diplomatic intercourse. But the British government has never been celebrated for courtesy in its intercourse with weaker powers. The chancellor Kaunitz entreated them, in their communications, to respect the sex and temper of the queen, and not to irritate her by demeanor so overbearing. The emperor himself entered remonstrance against the discourtesy which characterized their intercourse. Even the queen, unwilling to break off friendly relations with her unpolished allies, complained to the British ambassador of the arrogant style of the English documents.

"They do not," said the queen, "disturb me, but they give great offense to others, and endanger the amity existing between the two nations. I would wish that more courtesy might mark our intercourse."

But the amenities of polished life, the rude islanders despised. The British ambassador at Vienna, Sir Robert Keith, a gentlemanly man, was often mortified at the messages he was compelled to communicate to the queen. Occasionally the messages were couched in terms so peremptory and offensive that he could not summon resolution to deliver them, and thus he more than once incurred the censure of the king and cabinet, for his sense of propriety and delicacy. These remonstrances were all unavailing, and at length the Austrian cabinet began to reply with equal rancor.

This state of things led the Austrian cabinet to turn to France, and seek the establishment of friendly relations with that court. Louis XV., the most miserable of debauchees, was nominally king. His mistress, Jeanette Poisson, who was as thoroughly polluted as her regal paramour, governed the monarch, and through him France. The king had ennobled her with the title of Marchioness of Pompadour. Her power was so boundless and indisputable that the most illustrious ladies of the French court were happy to serve as her waiting women. Whenever she walked out, one of the highest nobles of the realm accompanied her as her attendant, obsequiously bearing her shawl upon his arm, to spread it over her shoulders in case it should be needed. Ambassadors and ministers she summoned before her, assuming that air of royalty which she had purchased with her merchantable charms. Voltaire, Diderot, Montesquieu, waited in her ante-chambers, and implored her patronage. The haughty mistress became even weary of their adulation.

"Not only," said she one day, to the Abbé de Bernis, "have I all the nobility at my feet, but even my lap-dog is weary of their fawning."

With many apologies for requiring of the high-minded Maria Theresa a sacrifice, Kaunitz suggested to her the expediency of cultivating the friendship of Pompadour. Silesia was engraved upon the heart of the queen, and she was prepared to do any thing which could aid her in the reconquest of that duchy. She stooped so low as to write a letter with her own hand to the marchioness, addressing her as "our dear friend and cousin."

This was a new triumph for Pompadour, and it delighted her beyond measure. To have the most illustrious sovereign of Europe, combining in her person the titles of Queen of Austria and Empress of Germany, solicit her friendship and her good offices, so excited the vanity of the mistress, that she became immediately the warm friend of Maria Theresa, and her all powerful advocate in the court of Versailles. England was now becoming embroiled with France in reference to the possessions upon the St. Lawrence and Ohio in North America. In case of war, France would immediately make an attack upon Hanover. England was anxious to secure the Austrian alliance, that the armies of the queen might aid in the protection of Hanover. But Austria, being now in secret conference with France, was very reserved. England coaxed and threatened, but could get no definite or satisfactory answer. Quite enraged, the British cabinet sent a final declaration that, "should the empress decline fulfilling the conditions required, the king can not take any measures in coöperation with Austria, and the present system of European policy must be dissolved."

The reply of the empress queen develops the feelings of irritation and bitterness which at that time existed between the two cabinets of Austria and England.

"The queen," Maria Theresa replied, "has never had the satisfaction of seeing England do justice to her principles. If the army of Austria were merely the hired soldiers of England, the British cabinet could not more decisively assume

the control of their movements than it now does, by requiring their removal from the center of Austria, for the defense of England and Hanover. We are reproached with the great efforts England has made in behalf of the house of Austria. But to these efforts England owes its present greatness. If Austria has derived useful succors from England, she has purchased those succors with the blood and ruin of her subjects; while England has been opening to herself new sources of wealth and power. We regret the necessity of uttering these truths in reply to unjust and unceasing reproaches. Could any consideration diminish our gratitude towards England, it would be thus diminished by her constant endeavor to represent the aid she has furnished us as entirely gratuitous, when this aid has always been and always will be dictated by her own interests."

Such goading as this brought back a roar. The British envoy was ordered to demand an explicit and categorical reply to the following questions:

1. If the French attack Hanover, will the queen render England assistance?
2. What number of troops will she send; and how soon will they be in motion to join the British and Hanoverian troops?

The Austrian minister, Kaunitz, evaded a reply, coldly answering, "Our ultimatum has been given. The queen deems those declarations as ample as can be expected in the present posture of affairs; nor can she give any further reply till England shall have more fully explained her intentions."

Thus repulsed, England turned to Prussia, and sought alliance with the most inveterate enemy of Austria. Frederic, fearing an assault from united Russia and Austria, eagerly entered into friendly relations with England, and on the 16th of January, 1756, entered into a treaty with the cabinet of Great Britain for the defense of Hanover.

Maria Theresa was quite delighted with this arrangement, for affairs were moving much to her satisfaction at Versailles. Her "dear friend and cousin" Jeanette Poisson, had dismissed all the ministers who were unfriendly to Austria, and had replaced them with her own creatures who were in favor of the Austrian alliance. A double motive influenced the Marchioness of Pompadour. Her vanity was gratified by the advances of Maria Theresa, and revenge roused her soul against Frederic of Prussia, who had indulged in a cutting witticism upon her position and character.

The marchioness, with one of her favorites, Cardinal Bernis, met the Austrian ambassador in one of the private apartments of the palace of the Luxembourg, and arranged the plan of the alliance between France and Austria. Maria Theresa, without the knowledge of her ministers, or even of her husband the emperor, privately conducted these negotiations with the Marchioness du Pompadour. M. Kaunitz was the agent employed by the queen in this transaction. Louis XV., sunk in the lowest depths of debauchery, consented to any arrangements his mistress might propose. But when the treaty was all matured it became necessary to present it to the Council of State. The queen, knowing how astounded her husband would be to learn what she had been doing, and aware of the shock it would give the ministry to think of an alliance with France, pretended to entire ignorance of the measures she had been so energetically prosecuting.

In very guarded and apologetic phrase, Kaunitz introduced the delicate subject. The announcement of the unexpected alliance with France struck all with astonishment and indignation. Francis, vehemently moved, rose, and smiting the table with his hand, exclaimed, "Such an alliance is unnatural and impracticable—it never shall take place." The empress, by nods and winks, encouraged her minister, and he went on detailing the great advantages to result from the French alliance. Maria Theresa listened with great attention to his

arguments, and was apparently convinced by them. She then gave her approbation so decisively as to silence all debate. She said that such a treaty was so manifestly for the interest of Austria, that she was fearful that France would not accede to it. Since she knew that the matter was already arranged and settled with the French court, this was a downright lie, though the queen probably regarded it as a venial fib, or as diplomacy.

Thus curiously England and Austria had changed their allies. George II. and Frederic II., from being rancorous foes became friends, and Maria Theresa and Louis XV. unfurled their flags together. England was indignant with Austria for the French alliance, Austria was indignant with England for the Prussian alliance. Each accused the other of being the first to abandon the ancient treaty. As the British ambassador reproached the queen with this abandonment, she replied,

"I have not abandoned the old system, but Great Britain has abandoned me and that system, by concluding the Prussian treaty, the first intelligence of which struck me like a fit of apoplexy. I and the King of Prussia are incompatible. No consideration on earth shall induce me to enter into any engagement to which he is a party. Why should you be surprised if, following your example in concluding a treaty with Prussia, I should enter into an engagement with France?"

"I have but two enemies," Maria Theresa said again, "whom I have to dread—the King of Prussia and the Turks. And while I and the Empress of Russia continue on the same good terms as now subsist between us, we shall, I trust, be able to convince Europe that we are in a condition to defend ourselves against those adversaries, however formidable."

The queen still kept her eye anxiously fixed upon Silesia, and in secret combination with the Empress of Russia made preparation for a sudden invasion. With as much secrecy as was possible, large armies were congregated in the vicinity of

Prague, while Russia was cautiously concentrating her troops upon the frontiers of Livonia. But Frederic was on the alert, and immediately demanded of the empress queen the significance of these military movements.

"In the present crisis," the queen replied, "I deem it necessary to take measures for the security of myself and my allies, which tend to the prejudice of no one."

So vague an answer was of course unsatisfactory, and the haughty Prussian king reiterated his demand in very imperious tones.

"I wish," said he, "for an immediate and categorical answer, not delivered in an oracular style, ambiguous and inconclusive, respecting the armaments in Bohemia, and I demand a positive assurance that the queen will not attack me either during this or the following year."

The answer returned by the queen to this demand was equally unsatisfactory with the first, and the energetic Prussian monarch, wasting no more words, instantly invaded Saxony with a powerful army, overran the duchy, and took possession of Dresden, its capital. Then wheeling his troops, with twenty-four thousand men he marched boldly into Bohemia. The queen dispatched an army of forty thousand to meet him. The fierce encounter took place at Lowositz, near the banks of the Elbe. The military genius of Frederic prevailed, and the Austrians were repulsed, though the slaughter was about equal on each side, six thousand men, three thousand upon each side, being left in their blood. Frederic took possession of Saxony as a conquered province. Seventeen thousand soldiers, whom he made prisoners, he forced into his own service. Eighty pieces of cannon were added to his artillery train, and the revenues of Saxony replenished his purse.

The anger of Maria Theresa, at this humiliation of her ally was roused to the highest pitch, and she spent the winter in the most vigorous preparations for the campaign of the spring