condition. "To form an idea," he writes, "of the general subversion, and how great were the desolation and discouragement, you must represent to yourself countries entirely ravaged, the very traces of the old habitations hardly discoverable: of the towns, some were ruined from top to bottom, others half destroyed by fire. Of thirteen thousand houses, the very vestiges were gone; there was no field in seed, no grain for the food of the inhabitants; noble and peasant had been pillaged, ransomed, foraged, eaten out by so many different armies, that nothing was now left them but life and miserable rags."

CHAPTER IV.

THE PARTITION OF POLAND, AND THE INVASION OF FRANCE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the acquisitions which Frederick had made to his domains, Prussia was still but a feeble kingdom, compared with the great monarchies of Austria, France, and Russia. To place Prussia upon any thing like an equality with these first-class powers, it was necessary for his Prussian majesty still more to enlarge his realms.

The kingdom of Poland occupied a territory of two hundred and eighty-four thousand square miles. It contained a population of twenty millions. Poland was surrounded by Austria, Russia, and Prussia. It is not certain with whom the idea originated, of dismembering this kingdom, — whether with the Russian empress, or with Frederick. The king was chosen by the nobles. Upon the death of Augustus, King of Poland, on the 5th of October, 1763, Catharine, by bribery, succeeded in placing upon the throne a handsome young Pole, Stanislaus Poniatowski, who had for some time been a very special favorite at her court. He was crowned King of Poland on the 7th of September, 1764.

Two or three years passed away of wars and insurrections, and all the usual tumult and woe which have

characterized the progress of the nations. There were some secret interviews between the courts of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, in which it is supposed that the question of the dismemberment of Poland was agitated. Frederick, however, informs us that he at length sent to Catharine a sketch of a plan for partitioning several provinces in Poland; "to which," he says, "the court at Petersburg, intoxicated with its own outlooks on Turkey, paid not the least attention." [1]

Joseph, the son of Maria Theresa, had become emperor, through the agency of his mother, after the death of his father, the Emperor Francis. On the 25th of August, 1769, he visited Frederick, at Neisse. Under cloak of the festivities, the all-important question was discussed, of the partition of Poland, which was then in such a state of anarchy as to render any attempt at resistance hopeless. Another interview took place between the King of Prussia and the emperor, on the 3d of September, 1770, at Neustadt, near Austerlitz.

Not long after this interview, Frederick drew up a new plan of partition, which he presented to Russia and Austria. By this plan, which was adopted, Russia took eighty-seven thousand five hundred square miles. Austria received sixty-two thousand five hundred. The share which was allotted to Prussia was but nine thousand four hundred and sixty-four square miles. Small, in respect to territory, as was Prussia's share, it was regarded, in consequence of its position and the character of the region, equally valuable with the other portions.

In the carrying-out of these measures of partition, which the world has usually regarded as one of the most

[1] Œuvres de Frédéric, vi. 26.

atrocious acts of robbery on record, resort was had both to bribery and force. A common fund was raised by the three powers to purchase the acquiescence of the leading members of the Polish diet. Each of the confederate powers also sent an army to the frontiers of Poland to crush the distracted people, should any forcible resistance be attempted. Thus the deed was accomplished.

It would seem that the conscience of Maria Theresa recoiled from the political crime; but she was overborne by her son, the emperor, and by the imperious spirit of the prime-minister, Kaunitz. While, therefore, reluctantly she gave her assent to the measure, she issued the following extraordinary document: —

"When all my lands were invaded, and I knew not where in the world to be brought to bed in, I relied on my good right and the help of God. But in this thing, where not only public law cries to heaven against us, but also all natural justice and sound reason, I must confess never in my life to have been in such trouble. I am ashamed to show my face. Let the prince (Kaunitz) consider what an example we are giving to the world, if, for a miserable piece of Poland, we throw our honor and reputation to the winds. I see well that I am alone, and no more in vigor: therefore I must, though to my very great sorrow, let things take their course." [1]

In allusion to the same subject, Frederick writes, "A new career came to open itself to me; and one must have been either without address, or buried in stupidity, not to have profited by an opportunity so advantageous. I seized this unexpected opportunity by the forelock. By dint of negotiating and intriguing, I succeeded in

[1] "Hormayr, Taschenbuch, 1831, s. 66." — Cited by Dr. J. D. E. Preuss, historiographer of Brandenburg, in his Life of Frederick the Great, iv. 38.

indemnifying our monarchy for its past losses by incorporating Polish Prussia with my old provinces."

It was unquestionably a great benefit to the region, thus acquired, to be brought under the energetic administration of Frederick. "As Frederick's seven years struggle of war may be called superhuman, so was there also, in his present labor of peace, something enormous, which appeared to his contemporaries almost preternatural, — at times inhuman. It was grand, but also terrible, that the success of the whole was to him, at all moments, the one thing to be striven after. The comfort of the individual was of no concern at all." [1]

Frederick died, as he had lived, a dreary death of pain and hopelessness. He had no faith in the immortality of the soul, or in the existence of any God who takes an interest in the affairs of men. In the severe anguish of his dying-hours, he avoided any allusions to religious subjects. There is no royal road to the tomb. The sufferings of the dying monarch were very severe; but he bore them without a murmur. The king was unreasonably dissatisfied with his physicians, who could not relieve him from pain; and sent for the renowned Dr. Zimmerman of Hanover. In the following terms, Dr. Zimmerman describes the appearance of the king at his first interview: —

"When I entered the apartment of the king, I found him sitting in an elbow-chair, with his back turned toward that side of the room by which I had entered. He had on his head a large hat very much worn, ornamented with a plume of feathers equally ancient. His dress consisted of a cloak of sky-blue satin, all bedaubed

[1] Freytag, p. 397.

and tinged (of a brownish-yellow color) with Spanish snuff. He wore boots, and rested one of his legs, which was very much swelled, upon a stool; while the other hung down to the floor.

"When he perceived me, he pulled off his hat in a very civil and condescending manner, and in a mild tone of voice said, 'I return you many thanks, sir, for your kindness in coming hither, and for the speed with which you have performed your journey.'" [1]

At times, the king appeared exceedingly dejected. There could have been but little in the memory of the past to give him pleasure. The present was shrouded in the gloom of sickness in its most painful and revolting forms. The future opened before him but the abyss of annihilation. One day, as the doctor entered his room, the king greeted him with the words: —

"Doctor, I am an old carcass, fit only to be thrown to the dogs."

The doctor at length was compelled to leave his royal patient, and return to Hanover. "I left the king," he writes, "not only in a dangerous, but in a desperate condition, — with a confirmed dropsy, to all appearance an abscess in the lungs, and such a prostration of strength, that he could neither stand nor move without support."

In taking leave of Dr. Zimmerman, the king said, "Adieu, my good, my dear Mr. Zimmerman! I ask pardon of your patients for having deprived them of your assistance. I thank you for your kindness in staying with me so long. May you be always happy! Do not forget the old man you have seen here."

[1] Entretiens de Frédéric, Roi de Prusse, avec le Docteur Zimmerman.

For six weeks longer, the dying king remained in a state of constant suffering. The dropsy was in his stomach and chest. His limbs were greatly swollen, frequently bursting into loathsome and very offensive wounds. Asthma caused him to gasp for breath. He could not lie down by night or by day, but was confined to a wearisome position in his chair. Mirabeau, who was in Berlin at the time, writes, —

"The king has not been in bed for six weeks. The swelling augments. He sees it, but will not perceive what it is, or, at least, will not appear to do so. He talks as if it were a swelling accompanying convalescence. He is determined not to die if violent remedies can save him, but to submit to punctures and incisions to draw off the water."

It is not difficult, in youth, health, and prosperity, to reject the religion of Jesus; but when these dark, sad hours of the dying-chamber come, if one have not the consolations which Christianity proffers, the most dreadful and impenetrable gloom must overshadow the soul. One can scarcely conceive of a scene more utterly joyless and dismal than the dying-chamber of Frederick the Great.

On the 17th of August, 1786, at twenty minutes past two in the morning, he died, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, and the forty-sixth of his reign. There was one clause in his will which was judiciously disregarded. "He had directed himself to be buried near his dogs, in the gardens of Sans-Souci, — a last mark of his contempt for his own species. He was buried in a small chapel in the church of the garrison, at Potsdam, where, side by side, repose Frederick and his father, — the former in a coffin of block tin, the latter

in one of copper, and equally without ornament of any kind."[1]

The Prussian territory had been nearly doubled under the reign of this extraordinary man. He left the crown to his nephew, his deceased brother's son. Frederick William II. commenced his reign in possession of a territory of 71,670 square miles, being but little larger than the State of Missouri. It contained nearly six million inhabitants. This little realm, proud of its military prestige, maintained a standing army of two hundred and twenty thousand men. This army consumed four-fifths of the revenues of the state.

Frederick William II. was a profligate and a weak man. He was a feeble ruler, and a wretched financier; speedily exhausting his treasury, and involving the kingdom in debt.

The French Revolution soon began, like a moral earthquake, to shake all the thrones in Europe. In the first partition of Poland, to which we have referred, there had still been a considerable portion of the kingdom left under its king, Poniatowski. The example of France had reached the wilds of Sarmatia. On the 3d of May, 1791, the Poles ventured to establish a republican constitution under monarchical forms. Perpetuating an *hereditary* monarchy, they proclaimed religious toleration, the emancipation of the *bourgeoisie*, and the progressive emancipation of the serfs.

Burke said of this movement, "In it humanity has every thing to rejoice and glory in. It is probably the most pure public good ever yet conferred on mankind. Ten millions of men were placed in a way

[1] Life of Frederick II., by Lord Dover, vol. ii. p. 328.

to be freed gradually, and therefore, to themselves, safely, not from civil or political chains, which, bad as they are, only fetter the mind, but from substantial personal bondage. Not one drop of blood was spilled; no insults on religion, morals, or manners."[1]

Prussia and Russia assumed that this constitution was bringing dangerous Jacobinism too near their thrones. They united their armies for a second dismemberment. In overwhelming numbers, their combined troops crossed the frontiers, and were cantoned in the provinces they had seized. Thus was Poland overrun by the armies of the two most powerful military monarchies in Europe.

The chivalric Poles were roused to energies of despair such as the world had never witnessed before. Kosciusko was chosen as military leader. With his brave band he retook Warsaw, driving out the Russian and Prussians. To recapture the city, Frederick William II. sent thirty thousand of his perfectly-drilled soldiers to co-operate with forty thousand Russian veterans sent by Catharine. After a series of bloody conflicts, Warsaw was taken by storm on the 4th of November, 1794. Amidst conflagrations, bombardments, shrieks, and death, the Polish battalions were driven into the Vistula. Ten thousand soldiers perished; ten thousand were taken prisoners; and twelve thousand of the inhabitants of Warsaw were put to the sword. Stanislaus was sent captive into Russia, where he died. The conquerors divided Poland between them.[2]

[1] Burke's Appeal to the Old Whigs. Works, vol. ii. p. 224.
[2] Alison's History of Europe, vol. i. p. 358.

In reference to this great crime, the poet Campbell has written beautifully in his "Pleasures of Hope:"—

"Oh bloodiest picture in the book of Time!
Sarmatia fell unwept, without a crime;
Found not a generous friend, a pitying foe,
Strength in her arms, nor mercy in her woe;
Dropped from her nerveless grasp the shattered spear;
Closed her bright eye, and curbed her high career.
Hope for a season bade the world farewell;
And Freedom shrieked as Kosciusko fell."

Frederick William II., the King of Prussia, died at Berlin on the 16th of Nov. 1797. He did not leave behind him an enviable reputation in any respect. In the final partition of Poland, Prussia received twenty-one thousand square miles, with one million inhabitants. In all, Prussia had robbed Poland of fifty-seven thousand square miles, and two million five hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants.[1]

Frederick William III., son of the deceased king, who now ascended the throne, was twenty-seven years of age. Sir Archibald Alison, whose predilections are strongly in favor of kings and nobles, thus describes him:—

"His character and habits already presaged the immortal glories of his reign. Severe and regular in private life, he had lived, amid a dissolute court, a pattern of every domestic virtue. Married early to a beautiful and high-spirited princess, he bore to her that faithful attachment which her captivating qualities were so well fitted to excite, and which afterwards attracted the admiration, though they could not relax the policy, or meet

[1] Encyclopædia Americana.

the sternness, or excite a spark of chivalry in the cold and intellectual breast, of Napoleon." [1]

The young king wrested from the Countess Lichstenau, one of his deceased father's guilty favorites, many crown-jewels which were found in her possession, and a large portion of the enormous wealth which had been lavished upon her. She was assigned a retreat near Berlin, with a salary of three thousand dollars.

All the Continental monarchs were soon alarmed by the revolutionary principles which were so rapidly spreading throughout France. Prussia and Austria entered into a coalition to unite with the royalist party in France, crush out the popular movement with the tread of their armies, and restore the absolutism of the ancient *régime*. With that purpose they assembled an immense army at Coblentz, on the Rhine. The march of the invaders was commenced on the 25th of July, 1792.

The allied troops consisted of eighty thousand of the veteran soldiers of Prussia, and sixty-eight thousand Austrians.[2] These troops were placed under the command of the Duke of Brunswick. His mother was one of the sisters of Frederick the Great. His wife was the Princess Augusta of England.

In three great divisions, this army, one hundred and forty thousand strong, entered France. The Duke of Brunswick ascended the left bank of the Moselle, to march upon Paris by the way of Verdun and Chalons. His immense force, in all its immense array of infantry, cavalry, guns, and baggage, crowded forty miles of road.

Prince Hohenlohe, marching twenty miles on the left,

[1] Alison's History of Europe, vol. i. p. 473.

[2] Ibid., vol. i. p. 126; also Thiers' History of the French Revolution vol. i p. 278.

pursued a route which passed through Thionville and Metz. Count de Clairfayt led his battalions on the right, by the Mézières and Sedan.

The Duke of Brunswick issued a proclamation, which at once became world-renowned, and which exasperated the popular party in France to the highest degree.

"Their majesties," said the duke in his famous manifesto, "the Emperor of Germany and the King of Prussia, having intrusted me with the command of the combined armies assembled by their orders on the frontiers of France, I desire to acquaint the inhabitants of that kingdom with the motives which have determined the measures of the two sovereigns, and the intentions by which they are guided.

"They wish to put an end to the anarchy in the interior of France; to stop the attacks against the throne and the altar; to re-establish the royal power; to restore to the king the security and liberty of which he is deprived, and to place him in a condition to exercise the authority which is his own.

"Such of the national guards as shall have fought against the troops of the two allied courts, and who shall be taken in arms, shall be treated as rebels, and punished as rebels to their king.

"The members of the departments, districts, and municipalities, shall be responsible, with their lives and property, for all misdemeanors, fires, murders, pillage, and acts of violence, which they shall suffer to be committed, or which they shall notoriously not strive to prevent in their territory.

"The inhabitants of the cities, towns, and villages, who shall dare to defend themselves against the troops of their imperial and royal majesties, and to fire upon

them, either in the open field, or from the windows, doors, and apertures of their houses, shall be instantly punished with all the rigor of the law of war, and their houses demolished or burned.

"The city of Paris, and all its inhabitants, without distinction, are required to submit immediately, and without delay, to the king; to set that prince at full and entire liberty; and to insure to him, as well as to all the royal personages, the inviolability and respect which the laws of nature and nations render obligatory on subjects toward their sovereigns.

"Their imperial and royal majesties will hold personally responsible, with their lives, for all that may happen, to be tried militarily, and without hope of pardon, all the members of the national assembly, of the department of the district of the municipality, and of the national guard of Paris, the justices of the peace, and all others whom it may concern.

"Their majesties declare, moreover, on their faith and word as emperor and king, that if the Palace of the Tuileries is forced or insulted, that if the least violence, the least outrage, is offered to their majesties, the king and queen, and to the royal family, if immediate provision is not made for their safety, they will take exemplary and ever-memorable vengeance by giving up Paris to military execution and total destruction, and the rebels guilty of outrages to the punishments they shall have deserved," &c.[1]

"The greatest sensation," writes Prof. Smyth, "was produced in our own country of Great Britain, and all over Europe, by a manifesto like this, which went

[1] Thiers' History of the French Revolution, vol. i. p. 314.

in truth to say that two military powers were to march into a neighboring and independent kingdom, to settle the civil dissensions there as they thought best, and to punish by military law all who presumed to resist them. No friend to freedom could, for a moment, tolerate such a procedure as this."[1]

The result was, the Palace of the Tuileries was stormed by the exasperated populace of Paris; the royal family was taken captive, and incarcerated in the Temple; and soon both king and queen were led to the guillotine. Onward pressed the allies with resistless tramp. All opposition melted before their solid battalions. Thionville and Verdun were surrounded and captured. The victorious invaders crowded the defiles of the Argonne. The army of Dumouriez, sent to oppose them, was almost annihilated. Fugitives rushed into Paris, pale and breathless, declaring that no further opposition was possible.

Terrible was the consternation in Paris. France rose *en masse*. Every man on the popular side, pale with deathless resolve, grasped his arms. All who were suspected of being in alliance with the Prussians were mercilessly assassinated. The venerable Vergniaud uttered a word which nerved every arm.

"The plan of the enemy," said he, "is to march directly upon Paris, leaving the fortresses behind him. Let him do so: this course will be our salvation, and his ruin. Our armies, too weak to withstand him, will be strong enough to harass him in the rear. When he arrives, pursued by our battalions, he will find himself face to face with our Parisian army, drawn up in bat-

[1] Prof. Smyth's Lectures on the French Revolution, vol. ii. p. 326.

tle array under the walls of the capital. There, surrounded on all sides, he will be swallowed up by the soil which he has profaned."

The excesses committed in Paris against royalists in the blind frenzy of the hour are beyond the powers of any pen to describe. Dr. Moore, an English gentleman, who was an eye-witness, writes, —

"Amid the disorders which have taken place, it is impossible not to admire the generous spirit which glows all over the nation in support of its independence. No country ever displayed a nobler or more patriotic enthusiasm." [1]

On the 20th of September, 1792, the Duke of Brunswick encountered, to his surprise, a French army, strongly intrenched upon the heights of Valmy, near Chalons. Seventy thousand men, peasants and artisans, had rushed to those heights. For twenty days, the storm of battle raged there with tremendous fury. The young men from the shops and the fields fought from behind their ramparts with the bravery of veterans. From all parts of France, re-enforcements were hurrying to the scene of the conflict. The supplies of the invaders were cut off. Sickness decimated their camp. The freezing gales of winter were at hand. In deep humiliation, the Prussians broke up their camp on the 15th of October, and retired to their fortresses on the Rhine. They left behind them twenty-five thousand, who had perished of sickness, the bullet, and the sword.

"The force," writes Alison, "with which the Prussians retired, was about seventy thousand. Their retreat was conducted in the most imposing manner; taking position, and facing about, on occasion of every halt. They left behind them, on their route, most melancholy proofs of the disasters of the campaign. All the villages were filled with the dead and dying. The allies had lost by dysentery and fevers more than a fourth of their numbers."

[1] Journal of Sir John Moore, vol. i. p. 160.