

will travel by way of Mentz and Strasburg, and in five days you must be at Fontainebleau, where the emperor is awaiting you to give you further instructions. Well, when do you intend to set out?"

"When shall I set out? I feel as one dreaming, or as if all this were the play of my imagination."

"You will have to admit, however, that it is at least brilliant. It is worth while, I should think, to make a journey to Paris to receive the appointment of cabinet-minister. I ask you again, When will you set out? Remember, it is the emperor that calls you."

"Oh, then he has not forgotten me, the great man!" exclaimed Müller. "After so many victories, he still remembers that interview in which I learned to admire him. I must not be ungrateful for so gratifying a remembrance. Only sublime and salutary ideas spring from the head of Jove; hence, I submit in every respect to his will, and shall go to him to receive his orders and comply with his wishes."

"Well said!" exclaimed Clarke. "You will set out tomorrow morning. I shall prepare every thing that is necessary. But, remember, the courier is waiting for your reply. Quick, my friend! write an answer to the minister. But few words are required. Just say to him: 'Your excellency, I come!' That will be sufficient."

Johannes von Müller, almost intoxicated with delight, hastened to his desk, and wrote a few lines. "I have written what you told me," he said, smiling, and handing the paper to the general. "I have written: 'Your excellency, I come!'"

"Now fold it up and direct it," said Clarke.

Müller did so, and gave the sealed letter to Clarke: "Well, general, here is the letter—I deliver it into your hands, and with it my future."

"Mr. Minister, permit me to congratulate you," said Clarke, smiling, and, going to the door, he gave the letter to the courier.

"Minister!" said Johannes von Müller, with a joyful air, "I am to be a minister!" But suddenly his face became gloomy. "Alas!" he murmured, "now my country will call me a traitor indeed, and Gentz will seem to be right in denouncing me as an apostate, and accusing me of having tendered my resignation to obtain a more lucrative office. Well, no matter," he exclaimed, after a pause, "let them denounce

and slander me! My conscience acquits me, and I may be permitted, after all, to be useful to Germany in my new position. May God in His mercy guide me!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

FINANCIAL CALAMITIES.

"HEAVEN be praised that you are again restored to us!" exclaimed the queen, smiling gratefully, and offering her hand to Minister von Stein. "Oh, believe me, such a sunbeam is welcome to us in these dreary days of Memel."

"It is true," said Stein, sighing. "Your majesty has passed disastrous days, and I am glad that I am able again to assist my adored queen in her troubles."

She shook her head mournfully. "I do not believe in the possibility of any alleviation or change. We have suffered great misfortunes, and greater may befall us. Since the days of Jena and Auerstadt our sorrows have increased. We are constantly experiencing some new humiliation; even the treaty of Tilsit is not the climax of our calamities. They come as an avalanche, and sometimes I wish to be buried beneath them."

"Then the last ray of hope for Prussia would disappear," said Stein. "If your majesty desert us, we are irretrievably lost, for your life, your courage, and your spirit, are the support of your husband. Without Louisa, Prussia and her king would perish."

"Oh, it is true he loves me," cheerfully exclaimed the queen. "The king treats me more affectionately than ever. And that is great happiness after a wedded life of fourteen years! I will be grateful to him as long as I live, and to Prussia for loving me. But, alas! I have no other thanks for them than my devotion and my prayers!"

"You have still your courage and a strong hope in the future of your country. You must animate the desponding and strengthen the weak. Let that be your majesty's great and holy duty."

"You are right, I must not despair," responded the queen, "and I thank you for having admonished me. Oh, it is sometimes very difficult to bear such disasters, and I feel that my health is giving way more and more. And tell me where

am I to look for consolation? The storm is upon us, and where shall we find a refuge? How shall we escape the thunderbolt?"

"In our hopes for a more glorious future," said Stein, energetically.

"Future!" exclaimed Louisa. "There is no future without independence, and where is that to be found to-day? All are slaves and bow in the most abject humility to a master who, in his turn, is but the slave of his own boundless ambition and arrogance, and, alas! there is no man living who would dare to set bounds to them! Do you know how disdainfully our envoy, M. von Knobelsdorf, was treated? He was utterly unable to prefer his remonstrances and prayers that Prussia might be protected from further extortion, and that the French armies might be withdrawn. Napoleon received him but once, and then, as it were, accidentally. The Prince of Baden and Cambacères were in the room, and our ambassador was no more noticed than a crumb of bread. The emperor's attendants treated him in the same manner, and Minister Champagny remarked to Knobelsdorf that they would see how Prussia behaved. He hoped we would comply as much as possible with the emperor's wishes, for such a course would alone be likely to give us relief, and that we ought to blame no one but ourselves. Are you aware of this, and are you still hopeful and speak of a happy future?"

"Yes, I am aware of all this, and it is precisely for this reason I speak as I do," said Stein. "We must work to dispel the dangers to which your majesty referred; we must erect lightning-rods to attract the dangerous fire. If your majesty had a less vigorous soul, I should conceal from you the calamities still threatening Prussia, notwithstanding the treaty of Tilsit; but Queen Louisa is the genius of Prussia, and I apply to her for assistance!"

"Oh!" exclaimed the queen, anxiously, "bad tidings again, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Stein, sadly—"bad tidings! We have received the last propositions or rather decrees of Napoleon. He imposes on Prussia contributions amounting to one hundred and fifty millions, one-third to be paid immediately in cash; bills will be accepted for fifty millions, and estates are to be ceded to France for the last fifty millions. The five fortresses of Graudenz, Kolberg, Stettin, Küstrin, and Glogau are demanded as security for the payment. Forty thousand French

soldiers are to garrison the fortresses, ten thousand of whom will be cavalry, uniformed, armed, and fed by Prussia, which is to furnish twelve millions for this purpose. The estates of the king in the districts of Magdeburg and Brandenburg, between the Elbe and the Oder, and in Pomerania, are to be ceded and disposed of in what manner the emperor may deem prudent. As the forty thousand men will be unable to find sufficient room in the five fortresses, certain districts of Prussia will have to be assigned them."

"And what remains then to the king?" exclaimed Louisa, with flaming eyes. "What remains to us?"

"This must not be," said Stein. "We must leave nothing undone—we must strain every nerve to prevent it. The disasters of Prussia compel us to shrink from nothing to avert this last and terrible blow, or the country will be hopelessly ruined. Oh, I cannot describe to you the distress, the misery, the disgrace I witnessed in the cities through which I passed on my journey. Your majesty knows that I was at Berlin; I saw that Daru and Clarke behaved in the most reckless and scornful manner, refusing with sneers to listen to any remonstrances. They seemed to be bent on oppressing and impoverishing the country, and drinking the last drop of its heart's blood! I beheld everywhere the same heart-rending spectacle that I witnessed at the capital. Every city and fortress has its systematic tormentor in some governor or commander, distinguished for arrogance and cruelty. The distress is unutterable, and yet the people hope for speedy deliverance. The eyes of all are turning with tears, it is true, but with love and hope, to Memel, the heart of the Prussian monarchy. All the hopes of your subjects are centred in the king and the queen; to you they look for alleviation."

"Alas!" exclaimed the queen, bursting into tears, "is there, then, any way by which we can help them? Oh, name it! What can the king—what can I do to procure relief for Prussia?"

"The greatest burden at this moment is the presence of the French troops, and the oppressive conduct of the public officials, who are openly disregarding all the laws and institutions of the country, and trampling under foot the most solemn rights. We must make every possible effort to rid Prussia of these men. To accomplish this, we must, in the first place, try to find means to pay the first third of the contribution; and next, to induce Napoleon to grant us better

terms for the payment of the remainder. We must endeavor to induce him to consent to a gradual liquidation (which would be more in accordance with our ability), and without insisting on retaining the fortresses as security, and oppressing us with an army of forty thousand men. In this way our exhausted treasury would not be required to pay the additional twelve millions for equipping the French soldiers, and the country would be preserved from the tyranny of a hostile occupation."

"But you may depend on it, there is no way to soften that heart of Napoleon," said the queen, sighing. "He is certainly a victorious warrior, but he is not great in the highest sense—he is not good, for he knows neither compassion nor love. He has marked out his path in lines of blood, and he pursues it over the slain of the battle-field and the ruins of once prosperous and happy nations. Napoleon has no pity, and our complaints would but gratify his pride."

"And yet we must try to dispose him to comply with our wishes," said Stein. "The king has resolved upon writing to-day to the Emperor Alexander, and imploring him to instruct Count Tolstoy, his ambassador in Paris, to remonstrate with Napoleon, and convince him of the cruelty and injustice of his demands. Oh, the king is ready, with an energy deserving the highest admiration, to do every thing to lessen the burdens under which his subjects are groaning. He himself has drawn up a financial plan to procure the first twelve millions, which we shall offer to pay immediately. He is ready to order reductions in the budget of the army, the opera, the ballet, and the extraordinary pensions. He himself sets an example of self-denial and economy. He will reduce further his household, and retain only the most indispensable servants. Notwithstanding my protestations, he insists on refusing to accept the civil list due him."

"Oh," exclaimed the queen, "who can call me unhappy when I am the wife of the noblest of men? But I will also take part in these sacrifices, and I hope the king has also refused to accept the money paid me by the state treasury."

"No, your majesty. That should not be curtailed; I would never advise it, and the king would not consent."

"But I insist," replied the queen, firmly. "My king and husband must forgive me if I choose for once to have a will of my own. If the king is ready to suffer privations, then it is my right and duty to share them."

"But your majesty ought to think of your children, who would also suffer. Pray take into consideration that the royal family would be reduced to a very small income, and that the most rigid economy could not preserve you from embarrassments. A portion of the royal estates is to be mortgaged or sold for the purpose of defraying part of the French contribution; considering the universal distress, it is very probable that the income to be derived from the other estates will not be paid at all, or very tardily. The king, moreover, gave up very considerable resources by sending the large gold dinner-set to the mint to be converted into coin, which he did not use for himself or his household, but paid into the state treasury. If your majesty, like the king, refuses to accept money from the treasury, pecuniary difficulties will arise, which will be the more painful to you, as your children will suffer, deprived of the comforts to which they have been accustomed."

"That will produce a salutary effect," said the queen, quickly. "Circumstances educate men, and it will certainly be good for my children to be familiar with something more than the sunniest side of life. If they had grown up in opulence, they would ever consider it as a matter of course; but that there may be a change, they learn now from the gravity of their father, and the tears of their mother. It is especially good for the crown prince to become acquainted with adversity—when, as I hope, happier times come, he will better appreciate his prosperity. Let them share our adverse fortune! I know how to protect them from real want. I have still some means left, and the Lord will not forsake us. Do not call this stubbornness or presumption. You know we have not refrained from every exertion to lessen our calamities. I have even gone so far as to beg the Duke de Rovigo, who is now governor of East Prussia, to intercede with the emperor concerning the contributions, and to have restored to us our estates, because they were our only possessions. Do you know the reply the duke made? He told me that all solicitations would be in vain, and even the intercession of Russia would be of no avail in regard to this matter. He added that there remained to us one way of procuring money, and he advised us to sell our plate and jewels."

"The impudent villain!" exclaimed Stein, indignantly. "How could he go so far as to use such language toward your majesty!"

"It is true," said the queen, gently, "it pained me griev-

ously, and brought tears. Not that my heart cares for worldly splendor, but there is something inexpressibly offensive in the scorn with which those men, and particularly the Duke de Rovigo, imitate the example of their master. But, after all, that sagacious duke was right, perhaps, for useless jewels may be converted into money. I admit," added the queen, with a smile, "that I had never thought of it; it would never have occurred to me that we might get money by selling our personal property. In fact, I ought to be grateful to M. Savary for his advice."

"Your majesty," said Stein, deeply affected, "you must not think of selling your jewels. Better times will come. Even in these days of adversity there will be occasions when you must show yourself to your people at public festivities and demonstrations; they like to see their queen adorned in a regal and becoming manner."

"My most becoming ornament will be simplicity, and the tears of gratitude with which I shall receive those who wish to honor me."

"But your jewels are the heirlooms of your children, your majesty."

"The only inheritance of our children which we are not allowed to part with is our honor," said the queen, firmly. "We would not sell it for all the empires of the world. That must remain to us. As for the rest, we must learn to do without it."

"But it will greatly pain the king should your majesty sell your jewels. It will be another humiliation."

"Oh, I can conceal it from him," exclaimed the queen. "I shall sell those superfluous articles secretly. There will be no festivities here, and hence it will be unnecessary for me to appear in royal attire. Two-thirds of the money realized will pay the pensions of the king's old servants; for I know the unsettled arrears cause my husband many a pang. When these worthy men, who are to be deprived of the salaries which they so richly deserve, send in their receipts, then let my husband find out whence we have obtained the money; then, I hope, he will forgive my having taken this step without his permission. You must assist me in this matter, and take upon yourself the payment of the pensions and salaries; will you promise me to do so?"

Baron von Stein endeavored to reply, but the words died on his lips; he bowed over the hand the queen offered him, and tears fell on it as he pressed it to his lips.

"Oh," said the queen, "was I not right in saying that I should never lack ornaments? Are there any more precious than the sympathizing tears of a high-minded man?"

"Pardon me," whispered Baron von Stein. "I wish I could transmute them into diamonds, and lay them at the feet of my queen."

"And what," asked Louisa, "would they be worth compared with your noble and faithful heart? We can do without jewelry, but not without your services."

"Henceforth all my thought and energy shall be devoted to Prussia," said the minister. "But your majesty must be so kind as to assist me. I must implore you to unite with me to obtain from Napoleon less rigorous terms, and the withdrawal of the French troops."

"Alas! what can I do? You see I am ready to do any thing to lessen the sorrows of Prussia. Tell me, therefore, what I am to do."

"I have the honor to inform your majesty. I have drawn up a plan which will enable Prussia to pay this burdensome debt in the course of three years. It is true, we have to consent to large reductions, collect the war-debt due from Russia, negotiate loans, impose on the subjects of Prussia, besides the ordinary taxes, extraordinary contributions, and an income-tax, and issue paper money. These onerous expedients will deliver us at least from the present pressure by furnishing us the means of paying the French contributions. It is only necessary to send my plan to Paris—to deliver it safely into the hands of Napoleon, and induce him to accept it."

"I hope you will not ask me to go to Paris for this purpose!" exclaimed the queen, in dismay.

"No," answered Stein, "I have proposed to his majesty to intrust this task to his brother, Prince William. The king has approved my proposition, and sent for the prince to request him to undertake this difficult and dangerous mission."

"He will joyfully consent to do so," exclaimed Louisa. "He loves his king and his country, and will shrink from no sacrifice. Alas, he will have to endure many a humiliation, and in vain; it will lead to nothing."

"We must send powerful auxiliaries with him," said Stein, quickly. "And now I shall state the request which I desire to make to your majesty. You must support the prince, and help him in his difficult undertaking. I beseech you, therefore, to give him an autograph letter to Napoleon; condescend

to entreat the emperor to be merciful and generous; depict to him the distress of your country, the sufferings of your subjects, and the privations of your family, and appeal to his magnanimity to desist from his demands, and accept our plan of payment. Oh, your majesty, in your enthusiasm and patriotic love, you are inspired with a power of expression which even Napoleon will be unable to resist; and whatever he would refuse to the prayers of the prince he will yield to those of Queen Louisa!"

"Never!" she exclaimed. "Never can I subject myself to this humiliation! Never can I stoop so low as to write to that man! Oh, you do not know how pitilessly he insulted me; otherwise you would not dare to ask me. Remember what I have already done, how low I have humbled myself, and all for nothing. Can I forget those days of Tilsit, when I seemed to live only for the purpose of heightening the conqueror's pride by my woe-begone appearance—when I felt as if chained in a triumphal car, and endeavored with a mournful smile to conceal my shame and misery, in order to meet him politely whose heartless glances made my soul tremble? How can I write to him whom I implored at Tilsit, but who carried his cruelty so far as to make promises which he afterward renounced—who designated as acts of gallantry the assurances he had given in reply to the tears of my motherly heart? If I could save Prussia, and secure the happiness of my husband and children, I would willingly suffer death, but this renewed humiliation is beyond my strength."

The minister, folding his arms, looked with deep emotion at the excited queen, as she rapidly walked up and down the apartment. Standing in front of him, she said in a gentle, imploring voice: "I am sure you feel that your request cannot possibly be granted."

"May I repeat to your majesty," said Stein, solemnly, "the words you uttered just now with regard to Prince William?—'The prince will joyfully consent to undertake the difficult mission. He loves his king and his country, and will shrink from no sacrifice.'"

The queen burst into tears, and, turning away from Stein, again but slowly paced the room, her head thrown back, her eyes turned upward with a suppliant expression, and her lips quivering.

"She is undergoing a terrible struggle," said Stein to himself, "but she will be victorious, for her heart is noble, and

eternal love is in her and with her." He was not mistaken. Gradually she grew calmer; her eyes became more cheerful, and her features assumed a serene expression.

"Baron von Stein," she said, "I will do what you ask of me; I will conquer myself. As you believe it prudent, I will write to the Emperor Napoleon, and entreat him to spare Prussia. I desire you to draw up the letter for me, so that it may be only necessary to copy it."

"I foresaw this, and complied with it in advance," said the minister, taking out his memorandum-book, and presenting a sheet of paper. "Here," he said, "is a draught of the needed letter. If your majesty approve it, I venture to request you to copy it speedily, for this business must not be delayed, and if the prince accepts the propositions of the king, it would be advisable and necessary for him to set out to-day."

The queen hastily glanced over the letter. "It is all right," she said; "I approve all you have written. I wish to get through at once with this painful matter, and I request you to wait until I have copied it. You may take it with you, and lay it before the king."

She hastened to her desk, and wrote rapidly, but at times hesitating, as though her pen refused the humiliating words. But at last she finished, and having quickly read what she had written, she called Minister von Stein to her side. "Here," she said, sighing, and handing the paper to him, "take it, the sacrifice has been made. Will my people," she added, weeping, "will my children be hereafter grateful to me for having humbled myself for their sake? Will they ever think how painful must have been these sacrifices? Will they remember and thank me for them in happier days?"

"Your majesty," said Stein, enthusiastically, "never will they forget such devotion to your country; and when our great-grandchildren talk of these days of wretchedness, they will say: 'Prussia could be humiliated, but she could never perish; for Louisa was her good genius, praying, acting, and suffering for her.'"

"Well," whispered the queen, sadly, "my slumber in the grave will be sweet." Starting suddenly, she laid her hand on her heart. "Oh," she groaned, "how long before this troubled life of mine shall cease!—I will tell you something, Baron von Stein. Death is not far from me, and I feel that he comes nearer every day. There is no future for me on

earth. But God's will be done. I read the other day somewhere, 'Sufferings and afflictions are blessings when they are overcome.' Oh, how true that is! I myself say, in the midst of my afflictions that they are blessings! How much nearer I am to God!—how clear and true my ideas of the immortality of the soul! Seen through these tears, the solemn facts of the future come to me with resistless power. Adversity, if rightly used, does instruct and bless. I do not complain therefore that I have been called to weep." A low knocking at the door interrupted her, and the footman announced the arrival of Prince William.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PRINCE WILLIAM.

THE queen met her husband's brother with a pleasant smile, and offered him her hand. "I suppose, my brother, you come to bid me farewell?" she asked.

"I come to get from my noble sister the letter that I am to deliver to the Emperor Napoleon," said the prince, respectfully kissing the hand of his sister-in-law.

Louisa turned her eyes toward the minister. "The king knew, then, that you were to request me to write the letter?"

"Yes, but he forbade me to say that he deemed it necessary. It was to depend on your majesty's unbiassed judgment whether it should be written or not."

"You see, my sister," exclaimed the prince, "I had no doubt whatever as to your decision."

"Nor I that you would set out to-day," said Louisa, smiling.

"But will your majesty pardon me when I confess that I have not come merely for the letter, and to take leave of you?" asked the prince. "I heard from the king that Minister von Stein was with your majesty, and as I am going to set out to-night, and my time accordingly is very limited, I decided to have settled a little business affair with the minister."

"It affords me pleasure," said the queen.

"And you, minister," asked the prince, bowing to the baron, "will you grant me a brief audience to-day?"

"I shall immediately repair to the anteroom of your royal

highness, and wait until you return," said Stein, approaching the door.

"Oh, no! pray, stay here," exclaimed the queen. "I offer this room to the prince as a *salle de conférences*, and shall retire into my cabinet."

The prince followed the queen, who was about to withdraw, and conducted her back to the sofa. "Pardon, my sister," he said, "I do not desire to confer with the minister about secrets that your majesty cannot hear. I only wish to ask a favor of his excellency, the minister of finance. You, doubtless, need a great deal of money at the present time, while my wife and I are spending much less than heretofore, because we are living here in very humble style. We have made our calculations, and ascertained that we are able to do with two-thirds of our income. Accordingly, I request you to accede to my resolution that, until times are better, I give up one-third, and beg you to pay this amount into the state treasury."

"Ah, my brother," replied the queen, "you are worthy of being the brother of the best of kings, for you vie with him in every virtue. Prussia cannot be crushed so long as such princes stand by her side."

"And so long as she is protected by such a queen," said the prince, kissing the offered hand of his sister-in-law. He then turned again to the minister. "Your excellency," he said, "I am commissioned to reveal the same resolution to you in the name of my brother. Prince Henry also gives one-third of his income, and requests the minister of finance to pay this amount into the state treasury. Is this verbal declaration sufficient, or will it be necessary for us to repeat it in writing?"

"It will be necessary for your royal highness, as well as for Prince Henry, to make a written declaration to this effect, and hand it to the minister of state. It will then be deposited in the archives of the royal house, and will one day be a splendid monument of your patriotism."

"In that case, a declaration in writing being required, I request you to be so kind as to accompany me to my house. We will settle the matter at once, and invite Prince Henry to participate in the transaction. Can you spare us fifteen minutes, and will you accept a seat in my carriage?"

"I am at the service of your royal highness," said Stein, bowing.

"Then I beg my sister to dismiss us," said the prince, ap-