

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-

proaching the queen. "I have many things yet to attend to, so that every minute is precious, and, above all, I have to inform my wife of my speedy departure. Let me beg you, my sister, to be a faithful friend of Marianne in my absence; take my beloved wife under your protection, and, when she is afflicted, permit her to be near you."

"We shall weep together, my brother," said the queen, deeply moved. "All of us will miss you, and it will seem as though life had become drearier when you are absent. But, considering your generous resolution, it does not behoove me to complain of our fate. Joyfully, as you have done, we shall submit to it. I entertain the firm belief that there are better days for Prussia. Go, my brother, and assist in hastening them by word and deed. God will protect you, and the love of your wife, and of your brothers and sisters, will accompany you! Farewell!" She waved her hand, and turned away to conceal her tears.

The prince withdrew in silence, followed by the minister. The queen heard the door close after him, and, raising her arms toward heaven, exclaimed in a fervent tone: "My God, protect Prussia! Oh, bless our country and our people!" She stood thus praying, with uplifted arms.

After a pause, she murmured, "Now it is time to attend to my business with the jeweller. The king is in his cabinet, and never comes at this hour." Having rung the bell, she ordered the footman to request the court-jeweller to call at once on the queen. Going to her dressing-room, she took from the table a large leathern box containing all her jewelry. She succeeded with difficulty in carrying the heavy box into the reception-room, but she thought, smilingly: "The heavier it is, the better." Opening the caskets, the brilliant ornaments gladdened her more than they had ever done. The table was covered with them, and she contemplated their beauty and value. "Ah!" she exclaimed, "I did not know that I was so rich. These precious stones will certainly bring money enough to pay all arrears, and there will be something over for my children."

At this moment the door of the anteroom opened, and the footman announced Mr. Marcus, the court-jeweller. The queen ordered him to be admitted, adding, that no one else was to be announced while he was present. She then locked the opposite door leading into the small corridor, and thence to the rooms of the king. In the mean time the jeweller had

entered; he remained respectfully at the door, and waited for the queen to accost him.

"Mr. Marcus," said Louisa, gracefully acknowledging his bow, "I sent for you to confer about my jewelry. I should like to make some changes in it; and then, as we cannot tell whither these stormy times may drive us or our property, I wish to make an invoice of these articles, and ascertain their cash value. Please step to the table, and be kind enough to tell me how much all this is worth."

Mr. Marcus approached and carefully examined the magnificent array before him. "These are real treasures, your majesty," he said, admiringly; "several pieces among them are exceedingly rich."

"Yes," exclaimed the queen, "I suppose one could get a great deal of money for them?"

"Your majesty," said Mr. Marcus, shrugging his shoulders, "it needs much money—in fact, an enormous fortune, to buy them. Part of their value consists in their artistic setting."

"Ah, I understand; you mean to say that, if they were to be sold now, one would not get as much as was paid for them."

"Not half as much, your majesty! The intrinsic value is very different from the cost, which depends much on the setting."

"Pray tell me, then, their intrinsic value."

"Your majesty, to do so correctly, it would be necessary for me to examine every piece."

"Do so, Mr. Marcus. I will take my memorandum-book and enter each one, affixing the price. Afterward we can ascertain the whole amount."

The jeweller looked in surprise at the queen; she apparently did not notice it, but pointed with the lead-pencil, which she had in her hand, at one of the caskets. "There is my large diamond necklace; what do you think that is worth, sir?"

The jeweller took up the necklace, twinkling as a cluster of stars. "These diamonds are magnificent," he said; "they are only a little yellow, and here and there is a slight defect. I think, however, that the stones, without the setting, are worth five thousand dollars."

"Five thousand dollars," wrote the queen. "Now, the necklace of rubies and diamonds."

"These Turkish rubies belong to that very rare kind to be met with only in royal treasuries," said the jeweller. "They are antique, and look like sparkling blood. Their value is

immense, your majesty; only a connoisseur would be able to appreciate them, and it is difficult to appraise them but by the standard value of other Turkish rubies. A jeweller might, however, receive twice as much as I name—four thousand dollars, according to the ordinary standard.”

“Four thousand dollars,” wrote the queen; “now, the next.”

“Here,” he said, “is a complete set of the most beautiful round pearls: a diadem, a necklace, earrings, and bracelets,” taking up a large case which had not been opened, and raising its lid.

“No,” said the queen, blushing, “we will not appraise these pearls. I have inherited them from my lamented mother, and they are therefore of priceless value to me.” She extended her hand and laid the casket on the table at her side. “Now tell me the value of the other articles; take that necklace of Indian emeralds—”

Half an hour afterward the list was completed. “Thirty thousand dollars,” said the queen; “that, then, is the full value of my jewelry?”

“Yes, your majesty, but its cost must have been several hundred thousand dollars. I have stated only the imperishable value of the stones; it is impossible to appraise the setting.”

“Well, just now I care only for the cash equivalent,” said the queen, quickly. “And now, sir, listen to me. When I was requested to procure you the appointment of jeweller to the court, I made inquiries concerning your character, and heard nothing but the most flattering opinions. You are known as an honorable man in whom all may repose confidence. I will prove to you the high value I attach to public opinion, and I rely on you to keep secret what I am about to tell you.”

“I swear by all that is sacred that what your majesty is gracious enough to reveal shall remain buried in my heart as a precious gem in the depths of the sea.”

“I believe you,” said the queen. “I want to sell all these diamonds, emeralds, and rubies—every thing, except my pearls.”

“Sell them!” exclaimed Mr. Marcus, starting back and turning pale. “Oh, no, pardon me, your majesty, I have misunderstood you. My hearing is a little impaired. I beg pardon for my mistake, and request your majesty to be kind enough to repeat your orders.”

“You did not mistake my words,” said the queen, kindly. “I do want to sell them.”

“Has it come to this,” said the jeweller, sighing, “that our noble and beautiful queen is unwilling to wear again her accustomed ornaments; and that she considers it no longer worth while to be seen by her poor, unhappy people in the splendor of a queen?” Sobs choked his voice, and, unable to repress his tears, he turned away and covered his face with his hands.

“It has come to that, sir, that the queen will also take part in the privations of her country; that she will have no other diamonds than the grateful tears of her loyal people, and that she believes herself sufficiently adorned when at the side of her husband, and surrounded by her children. I thank you for your sympathy, for they prove your honest disposition toward me. But believe me, I need no pity. If every good man has peace in his own heart, he will have cause to rejoice. And now, sir, let us talk calmly about this matter.”

“I am ready to receive the orders of your majesty,” said Mr. Marcus, making an effort to regain his composure, “and entreat my august queen to forgive me that my feelings overcame me in her presence. But now I must examine the jewels more carefully than before. Believing that they were merely to be invoiced without reference to their sale, I stated only their lowest value. I am sure better prices might be obtained for them, and, besides, it remains for me to ascertain the value of the gold setting by weighing it.”

“Oh, no,” said the queen, smiling. “Let us not enter into such minute details. Besides, the purchaser ought to have something for his trouble, and for the risk of being unable to sell again. We will, therefore, let your first appraisal stand as it is. The question is, whether you know of any one who is willing to pay so large a sum in cash.”

The jeweller reflected a moment. “Well,” he said, “I know an opportunity to dispose of them immediately. If your majesty permits me to do so, I will purchase them myself. The Emperor Alexander of Russia, during his late sojourn at this place, gave me a large order in reference to a wedding-gift for the betrothed of the Grand-duke Constantine. I have received bills of exchange, drawn on the wealthiest banking-houses of St. Petersburg, and the emperor has authorized me to send in at once precious stones to the amount of fifty thousand dollars. I am able to pay you half

the appraised value to-day, and for the other half I will give you bills, drawn on St. Petersburg bankers, payable in two weeks. But I repeat to your majesty that I have appraised the stones at a very low rate, and that I shall make large profits, and realize at least four thousand dollars. Your majesty ought to permit me to add the value of the setting."

"I told you already that we ought not to add any thing to the first appraisement. Well, the bargain is made," said the queen, gently. "Bring me the money and the bills of exchange, and you may then take the jewelry. Let us say I have intrusted it to you to make some alterations in it."

An hour afterward, the caskets disappeared from the queen's table; in their place stood a box filled with rolls of gold-pieces, and the bills of exchange lay at its side. The queen, placing a few of the rolls in her desk and the bills in the box, hastened to write the following letter to Baron von Stein:

"I request you to grant me the same favor which the prince obtained from you. I desire likewise to pay some savings into the state treasury, and send you, therefore, twenty-five thousand dollars with this letter. Pray do not forget to pay, in accordance with our agreement, the arrears of salaries due the men of science and art, and the faithful old servants of the king.

LOUISA."

"Oh," said the queen, laying aside the pen, and looking up with a grateful expression, "how many worthy men will be delivered from distress by this unexpected payment! What fervent prayers for their king will ascend to heaven! Merciful God, hear them, and let my husband and children be again happy; then I shall have nothing more to desire on earth!"

In the evening of the same day Prince William, accompanied only by an adjutant and a footman, set out for Paris in order to deliver to the Emperor Napoleon the financial plan drawn up by Minister von Stein, and the letter of Queen Louisa, and to try to induce Napoleon by verbal remonstrances to withdraw his demands, and accept less ruinous conditions. Before entering his travelling-coach, the prince, in his cabinet, bade farewell to her whom he loved so passionately. They remained long without uttering a word or even a sigh. The beautiful face of the Princess Marianne was pale, but her tearless eyes beamed with hope. "Go, my beloved husband," she said, disengaging herself at last from the arms of

the prince, "go and perform your noble sacrifice! My love will accompany you. Your life is my life, and your death my death! Go! I fear nothing."

"But at this solemn hour I must communicate a secret to you, Marianne," said the prince, "and ask your consent to a resolution that I have taken. Should all my efforts be of no avail—should Napoleon be induced neither by Stein's plan nor by the queen's letter, nor by my own solicitations, to consent to the proposed mode of liquidation, owing to his belief that he would not have sufficient security for the payment of the contributions, then, Marianne, a last remedy would remain, and I would assuredly not shrink from it. In that case I shall offer myself as a hostage. I shall tell him that I must remain his prisoner, and allow myself to be transported to If, to Cayenne, or where he pleases, until the king has made all the promised payments. This will prove to him that I myself feel convinced that these will be made. He may be sure the king's brother will be redeemed. Tell me now, Marianne, do you approve my resolution?"

The princess laid her hand on the head of her husband. "You offer to surrender not only yourself but both of us," she said. "Both of us, William, for I want to be where you are. I will also share your devotion to Prussia. You may offer both of us as hostages to the emperor. I shall be happy when with you, whether in a dungeon or in a palace. The love uniting us will sustain us even then, and, when our captivity is over, we will return happy to our beloved country. But if it be otherwise—if circumstances occur delaying the payments, and calling down upon you the wrath of the conqueror—if he then desire to take revenge upon you—oh, then, I shall know how to find a way to his heart so that he will permit me to die with you. We are alone; our children are dead, and, therefore, we are at liberty to pursue such a course. Oh, William, then we shall be happy forever! Go, my beloved husband! and when the hour comes, call me to your side. Let us live, and, if need be, die for the fatherland! Let it be inscribed on our coffin: 'They have done their duty. The fatherland is content with them!'"*

*Prince William really carried out this resolution. He found at his first interview that Napoleon was by no means friendly toward Prussia, and particularly toward King Frederick William. Carried away by his enthusiasm and generosity, the prince took at this audience the step which he had intended to reserve if all else should prove unavailing. He offered himself and his wife as hostages to the emperor, and entreated him to permit them to remain in French captivity until the payments were made. Napoleon listened to him, and while he was speaking the countenance