

reason of the valor of the opposing force, but by the extreme and fatal cold, which caused the death of his hardy soldiers. At length, as the fearless king was exposed on a parapet cheering and encouraging his men, a shot from a cannon struck him on the right temple, causing instant death. Thus fell, at the age of thirty-six and a half years, Charles XII. of Sweden. It is fitting that so gallant a soldier should pass from earth in just this way. He never said "Go" to his troops; it was always, "Come."

He was of commanding stature; his eye of a piercing deep blue; somewhat aquiline nose; towering forehead, and about his beardless mouth there ran lines of defiance. Contrary to the custom of his time, he never wore a wig; his long auburn hair waved in freedom about his proud head. His dress was essentially Swedish. A loose blue coat, turned-down collar, and large, plain, brass buttons, buff waistcoat, and black kerchief folded doubly about his neck, a coarse felt hat, and high, broad-toed riding boots, completed his costume. The name of Charles XII. is a household word in Sweden, while the youth of every age and in every land are taught to emulate his virtues and honor the true nobility of his character.

CHAPTER X.

FREDERICK WILLIAM (LITTLE FRITZ).

Early History—Military Inclinations—The Prescribed Course of Instructions—Discipline—Youthful Hardships—Attempt to Escape—Execution of his Friend—Fritz saved by the Interference of European Sovereigns—Married—Pursuing his Studies—King—What a King should be—Personal Observations—Invading Austria—At Prague—Return to Berlin—Reception—Making a Strong Coalition—In Saxony—Defeat at Kollin—Resigning Command of the Army—Genius to the Front—At Peace—Serving his Subjects—Vain Attempt of his Secretary to arouse him—Peaceful Death.

THE subject of this sketch, better known as Frederick the Great, was born January 17, 1712. He was the grandson of Frederick I. of Prussia, and son of Frederick William and Sophie Dorothea, daughter of George II. of England. The crown prince Frederick William was twenty-four years of age at the time of the birth of "Little Fritz," as he was called. The reigning king, his grandfather, was old and infirm, and the joy with which he greeted the young prince was shared by the Prussian nation. Great rejoicing was made throughout the empire, and with much pomp and ceremony he was christened Charles Frederick. He afterwards dropped the name of Charles, and was designated Frederick only.

His grandfather, the king, died when Frederick was

destiny, that in less than three months from the time of the publication of these ideas, he was involved in a war, the avowed object of which was ambition.

It was believed that the accession to the throne of a "philosopher king" would usher in a new epoch of peace and plenty. That such a king would make the happiness of his subjects his sole care; that his attention would be given to the cultivation of arts and sciences, rather than to preparation for war. Such expectation was delusive. He did, indeed, make a show of reducing the army by disbanding the celebrated Potsdam Giants, a regiment of gigantic men whom his father had collected from all parts of Europe, and which Frederick had commanded when a mere boy; but he afterwards increased the army to 16,000. Some noble reforms, however, were accomplished by the young king.

One of his very first acts was to supply the poor of his famine-stricken provinces with corn from the public granaries, at a low price. He abolished legal torture, except in a few special cases. He established perfect freedom of the press, and also declared for absolute toleration in religion. Upon a document presented to him relating to certain Catholic schools, his majesty wrote as follows: "All religions must be tolerated, and the Fiscal must have an eye that none of them make unjust encroachment on the other; for in this country every man must get to heaven his own way." "Wonderful words!" says Carlyle, and truly they were wonderful in that century.

The power of the King of Prussia was very great, perhaps greater than in any other country of Europe, being less under control of great nobles and ecclesiastics,

and Frederick was an aristocrat at heart, notwithstanding his leaning toward French philosophy and his declarations about equality. He possessed many qualities that go to make a great ruler, viz.: a strong will, great self-reliance, indefatigable industry, love of order. All these were added to a mind of rare capacity for forming great schemes and attending to the minutest details of them. He had, besides, the keenest insight into men and things. His personal character is, perhaps, less to be admired. Soured by the coarse brutality of his father, his nature seemed to harden. The gentle, kindly boy grew into the haughty, reserved, cynical man. He possessed a dangerous gift in conversation, sarcasm, and at times he used it unsparingly. But he was popular with the mass of his subjects, to whom he seems to have shown the genial side of his nature. To them and to his soldiers he permitted the plainest manner of speech, and many stories are told which show the kindly good humor with which he bound their hearts to him. An austere education and severe discipline had given his character firmness and maturity. It had also given him an aversion to much that was usual at that time, and probably led him to adopt the principles of the French philosophy.

His character was made up of opposing traits; depth of insight and lightness of judgment; roughness and elegance of manner; noble resolution and offensive wit; but at the bottom it was sound and magnanimous. He wrote to Voltaire, for whom he had great admiration, though he fully appreciated the dark side of that philosopher's character: "Since the death of my father, I belong entirely to my country, and in this spirit I have labored to the utmost of my power to adopt as speedily

as possible all measures necessary for the general good."

Frederick saw in the death of Charles VI. and the accession of Maria Theresa to the throne of Austria, his opportunity of making himself a name. Silesia, a fair and fertile province, full of towns and villages, seemed naturally to belong to Northern Germany rather than to Austria, from which it was cut off by mountains. It was Protestant, too, and if conquered would enlarge Prussia by one-third in area, and add one-half to her population and revenue. After four days' consideration of ways and means, and consultation with two of his most trusty ministers, Frederick resolved to seize upon this fair domain. Accordingly, on December 16, 1740, he entered Silesia with an army of 28,000 men. He declared that he had no hostile intentions towards Austria, but intended merely to guard his own interests during the troublous times he foresaw coming in consequence of the dispute about the Austrian succession. The Silesians offered no opposition to his occupation of the country, two-thirds of them being Protestants, and they welcomed him as the champion of their religion. Before the end of January he was master of Silesia, except a few fortresses, which he blockaded. This invasion of the Austrian dominion was a gross insult to the young sovereign, Maria Theresa, and she persistently refused to treat with Frederick so long as he had a man in Silesia. In the spring Glogau was taken; and the battle of Molwitz, fought April 10, 1741, showed that a new power had arisen in Europe. The Prussians were completely victorious. Following close upon the victory at Molwitz came others at Britz and

Neisse, and all Europe was astonished, if not alarmed, at the daring of the "philosopher king."

Frederick at this time entered into an alliance with France; the terms were somewhat vague, but France guaranteed Lower Silesia and Breslau to Frederick, and he promised to relinquish his claim to Juliers and Berg, and to vote for the Elector of Bavaria as emperor. Notwithstanding this compact, Frederick entered into certain secret negotiations with Maria Theresa which were of great advantage to that sovereign. The Austrian allies afterwards gained some successes. Frederick became alarmed about his Silesian possessions, which as yet were not secured by any treaty, and determined to meet the Austrian army, which he heard was advancing against him, and hazard another battle. It was fought at Chotusitz, and again Frederick was victorious. The Austrians were now ready for peace, and a treaty was concluded. The peace of Breslau secured to Frederick his prize, and for two years afterward Maria Theresa had an almost unbroken tide of success. Frederick began to fear she might turn her victorious armies against him in spite of the peace of Breslau, and attempt to recover Silesia. England had become her powerful ally, and Frederick sought to form a union of all the German princes to uphold the emperor and resist the power of Austria.

The first Silesian war was undertaken for conquest, and to make Prussia a position among the great nations of Europe. The second was to secure her influence in Germany. Frederick's scheme for a union of the German princes failing, he again looked to France for help, and concluded a treaty with that nation.

He did not declare war against Austria, but an-

only fourteen months old, and Frederick William ascended the throne of Prussia. He was a man of coarse, almost brutal nature, uncultured, miserly, of a fierce, ungovernable temper, and "with perhaps a touch of insanity." Army or military organizations seem to have been the chief aim of his life, and he ardently desired that his son Fritz should be an exact copy of himself. To this end he ordered every detail of his son's education. When Frederick was seven years old he was taken from the care of his female teachers, and three tutors, all military men, were provided for him.

These gentlemen were furnished with a document drawn up by the king himself, in a bungling way and badly spelled, setting forth in the minutest manner all that the young prince should learn. After charging that no false religion or sects should be so much as named in his son's hearing, he says: "Let him learn arithmetic, mathematics, artillery, economy, to the very bottom; history in particular; ancient history only slightly, but the history of the last hundred and fifty years to the exactest pitch. He must be completely master of geography, as also of whatever is remarkable in each country. With increasing years you will more and more to an especial degree go upon fortifications, the formation of a camp, and other war sciences, that the prince may from youth upward be trained to act as officer and general, and to seek all his glory in the soldier profession. You have in the highest measure to make it your care to infuse into my son a true love for the soldier business, and to impress on him that, as there is nothing in the world which can bring a prince renown and honor like the sword, so he would be a despised creature before all men if he did not love it and seek his glory therein."

In addition to these orders, Fritz was to be subjected to the most rigid discipline, his father even dictating the number of times and the hours that he shall wash himself each day, and stipulating the exact time to be consumed in these duties. The young prince was of a gentle and refined nature, fond of music, and inclined to literary tastes. His father's coarseness and vulgarity were abhorrent to him, and though he seems to have tried with filial duty to accomplish all that his stern and irascible father exacted of him, yet at an early age he incurred his father's displeasure by his peaceful disposition and love of music and literature. This displeasure ripened into actual hatred, and the young crown prince was more than once subjected to the most brutal treatment at the hands of his irate father, being publicly whipped by him with the rattan cane which the king always carried. In a fit of anger he one day tried to hang the young prince with the cord of the window-curtain, and was only prevented by the interference of a chamberlain.

The queen, his mother, and his sister Wilhelmina, three years older than the crown prince, were his warm friends and sympathizers. To them alone he could look for sympathy and help. His life became so intolerable to him under his father's brutal treatment that he determined to make his escape from it. He made the attempt while on a journey with his father through the empire, at a village near Frankfort. He was nineteen years old. The attempt failed, and he found himself at the mercy of his father. His guilt was aggravated by his being an officer in the army, and his desertion rendered him liable to the penalty of death. He was tried by court-martial with his friend

and accomplice Van Katlè. The latter was condemned, and suffered the death-penalty in the yard of the prison where the young prince was incarcerated, and in full view of his window. Frederick was also sentenced to death, and it is supposed he would have been executed had not the sovereigns of Europe and the generals of the Prussian army begged Frederick William not to stain his hands with so unnatural a crime.

The king relented, but more than a year elapsed before father and son met.

From a gentle, pleasure-loving boy he grew into a cold, proud, reserved man, capable of deep dissimulation, but outwardly conforming to all his father's requirements.

It had long been his mother's most cherished wish that a double marriage should be made between the family of her brother, George II. of England, and her own. The princess Amelia she considered the only desirable match for Frederick, and the young prince of Wales for her daughter Wilhelmina. Frederick himself had desired this marriage, and even went so far as to write secretly to England that unless he were allowed to marry his cousin Amelia he would wed no one. The princess was ardently attached to Frederick, and though he afterwards recalled his promise, and never saw her nor gave token of his love for her, she remained faithful to him in her heart to the end of her life. At his father's command, Frederick, now twenty-one years of age, married the princess Elizabeth Christine of Brunswick. She was a peculiarly amiable and virtuous young woman, and much attached to the crown prince, but Frederick was cold and indifferent to her, though very punctilious in all the outward ob-

servances of etiquette due to her as the wife of the crown prince. His real object in consenting to the marriage was to gain the favor of his royal father, and to have an establishment of his own, where he could pursue his studies of literature, music and art, according to his own pleasure, and in the society of his chosen friends.

He erected a palace at Reinsberg, upon an estate which his father purchased for him, and there he led a luxurious life, indulging his tastes for music and philosophy. No one suspected that the easy-going voluptuary, the "flute-player," as his father contemptuously called him, the correspondent of Voltaire, was all the while supplementing his meagre education by closely studying military science and political matters, and so fitting himself for the wonderful career that was before him.

During the last years of Frederick William's life he became reconciled to his son, who seems to have found under the rough and brutal exterior of his father's character something wiser and better than was suspected to exist there.

By the death of his father he became, on the 31st of May, 1740, King of Prussia. He was in his twenty-eighth year, good-looking, rather below the average height, and inclined to stoutness. He was little known except to a few intimate friends, and perhaps only superficially to them. While at Reinsberg he wrote the "Anti-Machiavel," which was published anonymously, though its authorship was an open secret.

In that work he set forth his ideas of what a king should be, and indignantly protested against ambition, arbitrary government and conquest. Strange irony of