

The Story of My Life, Volume 2.

Georg Ebers

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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF GEORG EBERS

THE STORY OF MY LIFE FROM CHILDHOOD TO MANHOOD

Volume 2.

CHAPTER VI.

MY INTRODUCTION TO ART, AND ACQUAINTANCES GREAT AND SMALL IN THE LENNESTRASSE.

The Drakes mentioned in my sister's journal are the family of the sculptor, to whom Berlin and many another German city owe such splendid works of art.

He was also one of our neighbours, and a warm friendship bound him and his young wife to my mother. He was kind to us children, too, and had us in his studio, which was connected with the house like the other and larger one in the Thiergarten. He even gave us a bit of clay to shape. I have often watched him at work for hours, chattering to him, but happier still to listen while he told us of his childhood when he was a poor boy. He exhorted us to be thankful that we were better off, but generally added that he would not exchange for anything in the world those days when he went barefoot. His bright, clear artist's eyes sparkled as he spoke, and it must indeed have been a glorious satisfaction to have conquered the greatest hindrances by his own might, and to have raised himself to the highest pinnacle of life--that of art. I had a dim impression of this when he talked to us, and now I consider every one enviable who has only himself to thank for all he is, like Drake, his friend in art Ritschl, and my dear friend Josef Popf, in Rome, all three laurel-crowned masters in the art of sculpture.

In Drake's studio I saw statues, busts, and reliefs grow out of the rude mass of clay; I saw the plaster cast turned into marble, and the master, with his sure hand, evoking splendid forms from the primary limestone. What I could not understand, the calm, kindly man explained with unflinching patience, and so I got an early insight into the sculptor's creative art.

It was these recollections of my childhood that suggested to me the character of little Pennu in Uarda, of Polykarp in Homo Sum, of Pollux in The Emperor, and the cheery Alexander in Per Aspera.

I often visited also, during my last years in Berlin, the studio of another sculptor. His name was Streichenberg, and his workshop was in our garden in the Linkstrasse.

If a thoughtful earnestness was the rule in Drake's studio, in that of Prof. Streichenberg artistic gaiety reigned. He often whistled or sang at his work, and his young Italian assistant played the guitar. But

while I still know exactly what Drake executed in our presence, so that I could draw the separate groups of the charming relief, the Genii of the Thiergarten, I do not remember a single stroke of Streichenberg's work, though I can recall all the better the gay manner of the artist whom we again met in 1848 as a demagogue.

At the Schmidt school Franz and Paul Meyerheim were among our comrades, and how full of admiration I was when one of them--Franz, I think, who was then ten or eleven years old--showed us a hussar he had painted himself in oil on a piece of canvas! The brothers took us to their home, and there I saw at his work their kindly father, the creator of so many charming pictures of country and child life.

There was also a member of the artist family of the Begas, Adalbert, who was one of our contemporaries and playmates, some of whose beautiful portraits I saw afterward, but whom, to my regret, I never met again.

Most memorable of all were our meetings with Peter Cornelius, who also lived in the Lennestrasse. When I think of him it always seems as if he were looking me in the face. Whoever once gazed into his eyes could never forget them. He was a little man, with waxen-pale, and almost harsh, though well-formed features, and smooth, long, coal-black hair. He might scarcely have been noticed save for his eyes, which overpowered all else, as the sunlight puts out starlight. Those eyes would have drawn attention to him anywhere. His peculiar seriousness and his aristocratic reserve of manner were calculated to keep children at a distance, even to repel them, and we avoided the stern little man whom we had heard belonged to the greatest of the great. When he and his amiable wife became acquainted with our mother, however, and he called us to him, it is indescribable how his harsh features softened in the intercourse with us little ones, till they assumed an expression of the utmost benevolence, and with what penetrating, I might say fatherly kindness, he talked and even jested with us in his impressive way. I had the best of it, for my blond curly head struck him as usable in some work of his, and my mother readily consented to my being his model. So I had to keep still several hours day after day, though I confess, to my shame, that I remember nothing about the sittings except having eaten some particularly good candied fruit.

Even now I smile at the recollection of his making an angel or a spirit of peace out of the wild boy who perhaps just before had been scuffling with the enemy from the flower-cellar.

There was another celebrated inhabitant of the Lennestrasse whose connection with us was still closer than that of Peter Cornelius. It was the councillor of consistory and court chaplain Strauss, who lived at No. 3.

Two men more unlike than he and his great artist-neighbour can hardly be imagined, though their cradles were not far apart, for the painter was born in Dusseldorf, and the clergyman at Iserlohn, in Westphalia.

Cornelius appears to me like a peculiarly delicate type of the Latin race, while Strauss might be called a prototype of the sturdy Lower Saxons. Broad-shouldered, stout, ruddy, with small but kindly blue eyes, and a resonant bass voice suited to fill great spaces, he was always at his ease and made others easy. He had a touch of the assured yet fine dignity of a well-placed and well-educated Catholic prelate, though combined with the warlike spirit of a Protestant.

Looking more closely at his healthy face, it revealed not only benevolent amiability but superior sense and plain traces of that cheery elasticity of soul which gave him such power over the hearts of the listening congregation, and the disposition and mind of the king.

His religious views I do not accept, but I believe his strictly orthodox belief was based upon conviction, and cannot be charged to any odious display of piety to ingratiate himself with the king. It was in the time of our boyhood that Alexander von Humboldt, going once with the king to church, in Potsdam, in answer to the sneering question how he, who passed for a freethinker at court, could go to the house of God, made the apt reply, "In order to get on, your Excellency."

When Strauss met us in the street and called to us with a certain unction in his melodious voice, "Good-morning, my dear children in Christ!" our hearts went out to him, and it seemed as if we had received a blessing. He and his son Otto used to call me "Marcus Aurelius," on account of my curly blond head; and how often did he put his strong hand into my thick locks to draw me toward him!

Strauss was in the counsels of the king, Frederick William IV, and at important moments exercised an influence on his political decisions. Yet that somewhat eccentric prince could not resist his inclination to make cheap jokes at Strauss's expense. After creating him court-chaplain, he said to Alexander von Humboldt: "A trick in natural history which you cannot copy! I have turned an ostrich (Strauss) into a bullfinch (Dompfaffer)"--in allusion to Strauss's being a preacher at the cathedral (Dom).

Fritz, the worthy man's eldest son, came to see me in Leipsic. Our studies in the department of biblical geography had led us to different conclusions, but our scientific views were constantly intermingled with recollections of the Lennestrasse.

But better than he, who was much older, do I remember his brother Otto, then a bright, amiable young man, and his mother, who was from the Rhine country, a warm-hearted, kindly woman of aristocratic bearing.

Our mother had a very high opinion of the court chaplain, who had christened us all and afterward confirmed my sisters, and officiated at Martha's marriage. But, much as she appreciated him as a friend and counsellor, she could not accept his strict theology. Though she received the communion at his hands, with my sisters, she preferred the sermons of the regimental chaplain, Bollert, and later those of the excellent Sydow. I well remember her grief when Bollert, whose free interpretation of Scripture had aroused displeasure at court, was sent to Potsdam.

I find an amusing echo of the effect of this measure in Paula's journal, and it would have been almost impossible for a growing girl of active mind to take no note of opinions which she heard everywhere expressed.

Our entire circle was loyal; especially Privy-Councillor Seiffart, one of our most intimate friends, a sarcastic Conservative, who was credited with the expression, "The limited intellect of subjects," which, however, belonged to his superior, Minister von Rochow. Still, almost all my mother's acquaintances, and the younger ones without exception, felt a desire for better political conditions and a constitution for the

brave, loyal, reflecting, and well-educated Prussian people. In the same house with us lived two men who had suffered for their political convictions--the brothers Grimm. They had been ejected from their chairs among the seven professors of Gottingen, who were sacrificed to the arbitrary humour of King Ernst August of Hanover.

Their dignified figures are among the noblest and most memorable recollections of the Lennestrasse. They were, it might be said, one person, for they were seldom seen apart; yet each had preserved his own distinct individuality.

If ever the external appearance of distinguished men corresponded with the idea formed of them from their deeds and works, it was so in their case. One did not need to know them to perceive at the first glance that they were labourers in the department of intellectual life, though whether as scientists or poets even a practised observer would have found it difficult to determine. Their long, flowing, wavy hair, and an atmosphere of ideality which enveloped them both, might have inclined one to the latter supposition; while the form of their brows, indicating deep thought and severe mental labor, and their slightly stooping shoulders, would have suggested the former. Wilhelm's milder features were really those of a poet, while Jakob's sterner cast of countenance, and his piercing eyes, indicated more naturally a searcher after knowledge.

But just as certainly as that they both belonged to the strongest champions of German science, the Muse had kissed them in their cradle. Not only their manner of restoring our German legends, but almost all their writings, give evidence of a poetical mode of viewing things, and of an intuition peculiar to the spirit of poetry. Many of their writings, too, are full of poetical beauties.

That both were men in the fullest meaning of the word was revealed at the first glance. They proved it when, to stand by their convictions, they put themselves and their families at the mercy of a problematical future; and when, in advanced years, they undertook the gigantic work of compiling so large and profound a German dictionary. Jakob looked as if nothing could bend him;

Wilhelm as if, though equally strong, he might yield out of love.

And what a fascinating, I might almost say childlike, amiability was united to manliness in both characters! Yes, theirs was indeed that sublime simplicity which genius has in common with the children whom the Saviour called to him. It spoke from the eyes whose gaze was so searching, and echoed in their language which so easily mastered difficult things, though when they condescended to play with their children and with us, and jested so naively, we were half tempted to think ourselves the wiser.

But we knew with what intellectual giants we had to do; no one had needed to tell us that, at least; and when they called me to them I felt as if the king himself had honoured me.

Only Wilhelm was married, and his wife had hardly her equal for sunny and simple kindness of heart. A pleasanter, more motherly, sweeter matron I never met.

Hermann, who won good rank as a poet, and was one of the very foremost of our aestheticians, was much older than we. The tall young man, who often

walked as if he were absorbed in thought, seemed to us a peculiar and unapproachable person. His younger brother, Rudolf, on the other hand, was a cheery fellow, whose beauty and brightness charmed me unspeakably. When he came along with elastic tread as if he were challenging life to a conflict, and I saw him spring up the stairs three steps at a time, I was delighted, and I knew that my mother was very fond of him. It was just the same with "Gustel," his sister, who was as amiable and kindly as her mother.

I can still see the torchlight procession with which the Berlin students honoured the beloved and respected brothers, and which we watched from the Grimms' windows because they were higher than ours. But there is a yet brighter light of fire in my memory. It was shed by the burning opera house. Our mother, who liked to have us participate in anything remarkable which might be a recollection for life, took us out of our beds to the next house, where the Seiffarts lived, and which had a little tower on it. Thence we gazed in admiration at the ever-deepening glow of the sky, toward which great tongues of flame kept streaming up, while across the dusk shot formless masses like radiant spark-showering birds. Pillars of smoke mingled with the clouds, and the metallic note of the fire-bells calling for help accompanied the grand spectacle. I was only six years old, but I remember distinctly that when Ludo and I were taken to the Lutz swimming-baths next day, we found first on the drill-ground, then on the bank of the Spree, and in the water, charred pieces, large and small, of the side-scenes of the theatre. They were the glowing birds whose flight I had watched from the tower of the Crede house.

This remark reminds me how early our mother provided for our physical development, for I clearly remember that the tutor who took us little fellows to the bath called our attention to these bits of decoration while we were swimming. When I went to Keilhau, at eleven years old, I had mastered the art completely.

I did, in fact, many things at an earlier age than is customary, because I was always associated with my brother, who was a year and a half older.

We were early taught to skate, too, and how many happy hours we passed, frequently with our sisters, on the ice by the Louisa and Rousseau Islands in the Thiergarten! The first ladies who at that time distinguished themselves as skaters were the wife and daughter of the celebrated surgeon Dieffenbach--two fine, supple figures, who moved gracefully over the ice, and in their fur-bordered jackets and Polish caps trimmed with sable excited universal admiration.

On the whole, we had time enough for such things, though we lost many a free hour in music lessons. Ludo was learning to play on the piano, but I had chosen another instrument. Among our best friends, the three fine sons of Privy-Councillor Oesterreich and others, there was a pleasant boy named Victor Rubens, whose parents were likewise friends of my mother. In the hospitable house of this agreeable family I had heard the composer Vieuxtemps play the violin when I was nine years old. I went home fairly enraptured, and begged my mother to let me take lessons. My wish was fulfilled, and for many years I exerted myself zealously, without any result, to accomplish something on the violin. I did, indeed, attain to a certain degree of skill, but I was so little satisfied with my own performances that I one day renounced the hope of becoming a practical musician, and presented my handsome violin--a gift from my grandmother--to a talented young virtuoso, the son of my sisters' French teacher.

The actress Crelinger, when she came to see my mother, made a great impression on me, at this time, by her majestic appearance and her deep, musical voice. She, and her daughter, Clara Stich, afterward Frau Liedtcke, the splendid singer, Frau Jachmann-Wagner, and the charming Frau Schlegel-Koster, were the only members of the theatrical profession who were included among the Gepperts' friends, and whose acquaintance we made in consequence.

Frau Crelinger's husband was a highly respected jurist and councillor of justice, but among all the councillors' wives by whom she was surrounded I never heard her make use of her husband's title. She was simply "Frau" in society, and for the public Crelinger. She knew her name had an importance of its own. Even though posterity twines no wreaths for actors, it is done in the grateful memory of survivors. I shall never forget the ennobling and elevating hours I afterward owed to that great and noble interpreter of character.

I am also indebted to Frau Jachmann-Wagner for much enjoyment both in opera and the drama. She now renders meritorious service by fitting on the soundest artistic principles--younger singers for the stage.

Among my mother's papers was a humorous note announcing the arrival of a friend from Oranienburg, and signed:

"Your faithful old dog, Runge,
Who was born in a quiet way
At Neustadt, I've heard say."

He came not once, but several times. He bore the title of professor, was a chemist, and I learned from friends versed in that science that it was indebted to him for interesting discoveries.

He had been an acquaintance of my father, and no one who met him, bubbling over with animation and lively wit, could easily forget him. He had a full face and long, straight, dark hair hanging on his short neck, while intellect and kindness beamed from his twinkling eyes. When he tossed me up and laughed, I laughed too, and it seemed as if all Nature must laugh with us.

I have not met so strong and original a character for many a long year, and I was very glad to read in the autobiography of Wackernagel that when it went ill with him in Berlin, Hoffman von Fallersleben and this same Runge invited him to Breslau to share their poverty, which was so great that they often did not know at night where they should get the next day's bread.

How many other names with and without the title of privy-councillor occur to me, but I must not allow myself to think of them.

Fraulein Lamperi, however, must have a place here. She used to dine with us at least once a week, and was among the most faithful adherents of our family. She had been governess to my father and his only sister, and later was in the service of the Princess of Prussia, afterward the Empress Augusta, as waiting-woman.

She, too, was one of those original characters whom we never find now.

She was so clever that, incredible as it sounds, she made herself a wig and some false teeth, and yet she came of a race whose women were not

accustomed to serve themselves with their own hands; for the blood of the venerable and aristocratic Altoviti family of Florence flowed in her veins. Her father came into the world as a marquis of that name, but was disinherited when, against the will of his family, he married the dancer Lamperi. With her he went first to Warsaw, and then to Berlin, where he supported himself and his children by giving lessons in the languages. One daughter was a prominent member of the Berlin ballet, the other was prepared by a most careful education to be a governess. She gave various lessons to my sisters, and criticised our proceedings sharply, as she did those of her fellow-creatures in general. "I can't help it--I must say what I think," was the palliating remark which followed every severe censure; and I owe to her the conviction that it is much easier to express disapproval, when it can be done with impunity, than to keep it to one's self, as I am also indebted to her for the subject of my fairy tale, The Elixir.

I shall return to Fraulein Lamperi, for her connection with our family did not cease until her death, and she lived to be ninety. Her aristocratic connections in Florence--be it said to their honour--never repudiated her, but visited her when they came to Berlin, and the equipage of the Italian ambassador followed at her funeral, for he, too, belonged to her father's kindred. The extreme kindness extended to her by Emperor William I and his sovereign spouse solaced her old age in various ways.

One of the dearest friends of my sister Paula and of our family knew more of me, unfortunately, at this time than I of her. Her name was Babette Meyer, now Countess Palckreuth. She lived in our neighbourhood, and was a charming, graceful child, but not one of our acquaintances.

When she was grown up--we were good friends then--she told me she was coming from school one winter day, and some boys threw snowballs at her. Then Ludo and I appeared--"the Ebers boys" and she thought that would be the end of her; but instead of attacking her we fell upon the boys, who turned upon us, and drove them away, she escaping betwixt Scylla and Charybdis.

Before this praiseworthy deed we had, however, thrown snow at a young lady in wanton mischief. I forgive our heedlessness as we were forgiven, but it is really a painful thought to me that we should have snowballed a poor insane man, well known in the Thiergarten and Lennestrasse, and who seriously imagined that he was made of glass.

I began to relate this, thinking of our uproarious laughter when the poor fellow cried out: "Let me alone! I shall break! Don't you hear me clink?" Then I stopped, for my heart aches when I reflect what terrible distress our thoughtlessness caused the unfortunate creature. We were not bad-hearted children, and yet it occurred to none of us to put ourselves in the place of the whimpering man and think what he suffered. But we could not do it. A child is naturally egotistical, and unable in such a case to distinguish between what is amusing and what is sad. Had the cry, "It hurts me!" once fallen from the trembling lips of the "glass man," I think we should have thrown nothing more at him.

But our young hearts did not, under all circumstances, allow what amused us to cast kinder feelings into the shade. The "man of glass" had a feminine 'pendant' in the "crazy Frau Councillor with the velvet envelope." This was a name she herself had given to a threadbare little velvet cloak, when some naughty boys--were we among them?--were

snowballing her, and she besought us not to injure her velvet envelope. But when there was ice on the ground and one of the boys was trying to get her on to a slide, Ludo and I interfered and prevented it. Naturally, there was a good fight in consequence, but I am glad of it to this day.

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT A BERLIN CHILD ENJOYED ON THE SPREE AND AT HIS GRANDMOTHER'S IN DRESDEN.

In the summer we were all frequently taken to the new Zoological Garden, where we were especially delighted with the drollery of the monkeys. Even then I felt a certain pity for the deer and does in confinement, and for the wild beasts in their cages, and this so grew upon me that many a visit to a zoological garden has been spoiled by it. Once in Keilhau I caught a fawn in the wood and was delighted with my beautiful prize. I meant to bring it up with our rabbits, and had already carried it quite a distance, when suddenly I began to be sorry for it, and thought how its mother would grieve, upon which I took it back to the spot where I had found it and returned to the institution as fast as I could, but said nothing at first about my "stupidity," for I was ashamed of it.

Excursions into the country were the most delightful pleasures of the summer. The shorter ones took us to the suburbs of the capital, and sometimes to Charlottenburg, where several of our acquaintances lived, and our guardian, Alexander Mendelssohn, had a country house with a beautiful garden, where there was never any lack of the owner's children and grandchildren for playmates. Sometimes we were allowed to go there with other boys. We then had a few Groschen to get something at a restaurant, and were generally brought home in a Kremser carriage. These carriages were to be found in a long row by the wall outside of the Brandenburg Gate or at the Palace in Charlottenburg or by the "Turkish tent"--for at that time there were no omnibuses running to the decidedly rural neighbouring city. Even when the carriages were arranged to carry ten or twelve persons there was but one horse, and it was these Rosinantes which probably gave rise to the following rhyme:

"A Spandau wind,
A child of Berlin,
A Charlottenburg horse,
Are all not worth a pin."

The Berlin children were, on the whole, better than their reputation, but not so the Charlottenburg horses. The Kremser carriages were named from the man who owned most of them. The business was carried on by an association. A single individual rarely hired one; either a family took possession of it, or you got in and waited patiently till enough persons had collected for the driver to think it worth while to take his whip and say, "Well, get up!"

But this same Herr Kremser also had nice carriages for excursions into the country, drawn by two or four horses, as might be required. For the four-horse Kremser chariots there was even a driver in jockey costume, who rode the saddle-horse.

Other excursions took us to the beautiful Humboldt's Tegel, to the Muggel and Schlachten Lakes, to Franzosisch Buchholz, Treptow, and Stralau. We were, unfortunately, never allowed to attend the celebrated fishing festival at Stralau.

But the crowning expedition of all was on our mother's birthday, either to the Pichelsbergen, wooded hills mirrored in ponds where fish abounded, or to the Pfaueninsel at Potsdam.

The country around Berlin is considered hopelessly ugly, but with great injustice. I have convinced myself since that I do not look back as fondly on the Pichelsbergen and the Havelufer at Potsdam, where it was granted us to pass such happy hours in the springtime of life, because the force of imagination has clothed them with fancied charms. No, these places have indeed a singularly peaceful attractiveness, and if I prefer them, as a child of the century, to real mountains, there was a time when the artist's eye would have given them the preference over the grand landscapes of the Alpine world.

At the beginning of the last century the latter were considered repelling. They oppressed the soul by their immensity. No painter then undertook to depict giant mountains with eternal snow upon summits which towered above the clouds. A Salvator Rosa or Poussin, or even the great Ruysdael, would have preferred to set up his easel at the Pichelsbergen or in the country about Potsdam, rather than at the foot of Mont Blanc, the Kunitssee, or the Eibsee, in which the rocks of the Zugspitze--my vis-a-vis at Tutzingen--are magnificently reflected.

There is nothing more beautiful than the moderate, finely rounded heights at these peaceful spots rich in vegetation and in water, when gilded by the fading light of a lovely summer evening or illumined by the rosy tinge of the afterglow. Many of our later German painters have learned to value the charm of such a subject, while of our writers Fontane has seized and very happily rendered all their witchery. At my brother Ludo's manorhouse on the banks of the Dahme, at his place Dolgenbrodt, in Mark Brandenburg, Fontane experienced all the attraction of the plain, which I have never felt more deeply than in that very spot and on a certain evening at Potsdam when the bells of the little church of Sakrow seemed to bid farewell to the sinking sun and invite him to return.

In the East I have seen the day-star set more brilliantly, but never met with a more harmonious and lovely splendour of colour than on summer evenings in the Mark, except in Holland on the shore of the North Sea.

Can I ever forget those festal days when, after saying our little congratulatory verses to our mother, and admiring her birthday table, which her friends always loaded with flowers, we awaited the carriages that were to take us into the country? Besides a great excursion wagon, there were generally some other coaches which conveyed us and the families of our nearest friends on our jaunt.

How the young faces beamed, and how happy the old ones looked, and what big baskets there were full of good things beside the coachman and behind the carriage!

We were soon out of the city, and the birds by the wayside could not have twittered and sung in May more gaily than we during these drives.

Once we let the horses rest, and took luncheon at Stimming near the Wannsee, where Heinrich von Kleist with the beloved of his heart put an end to his sad life. Before we stopped we met a troop of travelling journeymen, and our mother, in the gratitude of her heart, threw them a thaler, and said "Drink to my happiness; to-day is my birthday."

When we had rested and gone on quite a distance we found the journeymen ranged beside the road, and as they threw into the carriage an immense bouquet of field flowers which they had gathered, one of them exclaimed: "Long live the birthday-child! And health and happiness to the beautiful, kind lady!" The others, and we, too, joined with all our might in a "Hurrah!"

We felt like pagan Romans, who on starting out had perceived the happiest omens in earth and sky.

And at the Pfaueninsel!

Frau Friedrich, the wife of the man in charge of the fountains, kept a neat inn, in which, however, she by no means dished up to all persons what they would like. But our mother knew her through Lenne, by whom her husband was employed, and she took good care of us. How attractive to us children was the choice yet large collection she possessed! Most of the members of the royal house had often been her guests, and had increased it to a little museum which contained countless milk and cream jugs of every sort and metal, even the most precious, and of porcelain and glass of every age. Many would have been rare and welcome ornaments to any trades-museum. Our mother had contributed a remarkably handsome Japanese jug which her brother had sent her.

After the banquet we young ones ran races, while the older people rested till coffee and punch were served. Whether dancing was allowed at the Pfaueninsel I no longer remember, but at the Pichelsbergen it certainly was, and there were even three musicians to play.

And how delightful it was in the wood; how pleasant the rowing on the water, during which, when the joy of existence was at its height, the saddest songs were sung! Oh, I could relate a hundred things of those birthdays in the country, but I have completely forgotten how we got home. I only know that we waked the next morning full of happy recollections.

In the summer holidays we often took journeys--generally to Dresden, where our father's mother with her daughter, our aunt Sophie, had gone to live, the latter having married Baron Adolf von Brandenstein, an officer in the Saxon Guard, who, after laying aside the bearskin cap and red coat, the becoming uniform of that time, was at the head of the Dresden post office.

I remember these visits with pleasure, and the days when our grandmother and aunt came to Berlin. I was fond of both of them, especially my lively aunt, who was always ready for a joke, and my affection was returned. But these, our nearest relatives, in early childhood only passed through our lives like brilliant meteors; the visits we exchanged lasted only a few days; and when they came to Berlin, in spite of my mother's pressing invitations, they never stayed at our house, but in a hotel. I cannot imagine, either, that our grandmother would ever have consented to visit any one. There was a peculiar exclusiveness about her, I might almost say a cool reserve, which, although proofs of her

cordial love were not wanting, prevented her from caressing us or playing with us as grandmothers do. She belonged to another age, and our mother taught us, when greeting her, to kiss her little white hand, which was always covered up to the fingers with waving lace, and to treat her with the utmost deference. There was an air of aristocratic quiet in her surroundings which caused a feeling of constraint. I can still see the suite of spacious rooms she occupied, where silence reigned except when Coco, the parrot, raised his shrill voice. Her companion, Fraulein Raffius, always lowered her voice in her presence, though when out of it she could play with us very merrily. The elderly servant, who, singularly enough, was of noble family--his real name was Von Wurmessel--did his duty as noiselessly as a shadow. Then there was a faint perfume of mignonette in most of the rooms, which makes me think of them whenever I see the pretty flower, for, as is well known, smell is the most powerful of all the senses in awakening memory.

I never sat in my grandmother's lap. When we wished to talk with her we had to sit beside her; and if we kept still she would question us searchingly about everything--our play, our friends, our school.

This silence, which always struck us children at first with astonishment, was interrupted very gaily by our aunt, whose liveliness broke in upon it like the sound of a horn amid the stillness of a forest. Her cheerful voice was audible even in the hall, and when she crossed the threshold we flew to her, and the spell was broken. For she, the only daughter, put no restraint on herself in the reserved presence of her mother. She kissed her boisterously, asked how she was, as if she were the mother, the other the child. Indeed, she took the liberty sometimes of calling the old lady "Henrietta"--that was her name--or even "Hetty." Then, when grandmother pointed to us and exclaimed reproachfully, "Why, Sophie!" our aunt could always disarm her with gay jests.

Though the two were generally at a distance, their existence made itself felt again and again either through letters or presents or by their coming to Berlin, which always brought holidays for us.

These journeys were accomplished under difficulties. Our aunt had always used an open carriage, and was really convinced that she would stifle in a closed railway compartment. But as she would not forego the benefit of rapid transit, our grandmother was obliged, even after her daughter's marriage, to hire an open truck for her, on which, with her faithful maid Minna, and one of her dogs, or sometimes with her husband or a friend as a companion, she established herself comfortably in an armchair of her own, with various other conveniences about her. The railway officials knew her, and no doubt shrugged their shoulders, but the warmheartedness shining in her eyes and her unvarying cheerfulness carried everything before them, so that her eccentricity was readily overlooked. And she had plenty of similar caprices. I was visiting her once in the Christmas holidays, when I was a schoolboy in the upper class, and we had retired for the night. At one o'clock my aunt suddenly appeared at my bedside, waked me, and told me to get up. The first snow had fallen, and she had had the horses harnessed for us to go sleighing, which she particularly enjoyed.

Resistance was useless, and the swift flight over the snow by moonlight proved to be very enjoyable. Between four and five o'clock in the morning we were at home again.

Winter brought many other amusements. I remember with particular

pleasure the Christmas fair, which now, as I learn to my regret, is no longer held. And yet, what a source of delight it once was to children! What rich food it offered to their minds! The Christmas trees and pyramids at the Stechbahn, the various wares, the gingerbread and toys in the booths, offered by no means the greatest charm. A still stronger attraction were the boys with the humming "baboons," the rattles and flags, for from them purchases had always to be made, with jokes thrown into the bargain--bad ones, which are invariably the most amusing; and what a pleasure it was to twirl the "baboon" with one's own little hand, and, if the hand got cold during the process, one did not feel it, for it seemed like midsummer with a swarm of flies buzzing about one!

But most enjoyable of all was probably the throng of people, great and small, and all there was to hear and see among them and to answer. It seemed as if the Christmas joy of the city was concentrated there, and filled the not over-clear atmosphere like the pungent odour of Christmas trees.

Put there were other things to experience as well as mere gaiety--the pale child in the corner, with its little bare feet, holding in its cold, red hands the six little sheep of snow-white wool on a tiny green board; and that other yonder, with the little man made of prunes spitted on tiny sticks.

How small and pale the child is! And how eloquently the blue eyes invite a purchaser, for it is only with looks that the wares are extolled! I still see them both before me! The threepenny pieces they get are to help their starving mother to heat the attic room in those winter days which, cold though they are, may warm the heart. Looking at them our mother told us how hunger hurts, and how painful want and misery are to bear, and we never left the Christmas fair without buying a few sheep or a prune man, though all we could do with them was to give them away again. When I wrote my fairy-tale, *The Nuts*, I had the Christmas fair at Berlin in my mind's eye, and I seemed to see the wretched little girl who, among all the happy folk, had found nothing but cold, pain, anguish, and a handful of nuts, and who afterward fared so happily--not, indeed, among men, but with the most beautiful angels in heaven.

Why are the Berlin children defrauded of this bright and innocent pleasure, and their hearts denied the practice of exercising charity?

Turning my thoughts backward, it seems to me as if almost too much beauty and pleasure were crowded together at Christmas, richly provided with presents as we were besides, for over and above the Christmas fair there was Kroll's Christmas exhibition, where clever heads and skilful hands transformed a series of great halls, at one time into the domain of winter, at another into the kingdom of the fairies. There was nothing to do but look.

Imagination came to a standstill, for what could it add to these wonders? Yet the fairyland of which Ludo and I had dreamed was more beautiful and more real than this palpable magnificence of tin and pasteboard; which is, perhaps, one reason why the overexcited imagination of a city child shrinks back and tries to find in reality what a boy brought up in the quiet of the country can conjure up before his mind himself.

Then, too, there were delightful sights in the Gropius panorama and Fuchs's confectioner's shop--in the one place entertaining things, in the other instructive. At the panorama half the world was spread out before

us in splendid pictures, so presented and exhibited as to give the most vivid impression of reality.

From the letters of our mother's brothers, who were Dutch officials in Java and Japan, as well as from books of travel which had been read to us, we had already heard much of the wonders of the Orient; and at the Gropius panorama the inner call that I had often seemed to hear--"Away! to the East"--only grew the stronger. It has never been wholly silent since, but at that time I formed the resolution to sail around the world, or--probably from reading some book--to be a noble pirate. Nor should I have been dissatisfied with the fate of Robinson Crusoe. The Christmas exhibition at Fuchs's, Unter den Linden, was merely entertaining--Berlin jokes in pictures mainly of a political or satirical order. Most distinctly of all I remember the sentimental lady of rank who orders her servant to catch a fly on a tea-tray and put it carefully out of the window. The obedient Thomas gets hold of the insect, takes it to the window, and with the remark, "Your ladyship, it is pouring, the poor thing might take cold," brings it back again to the tea-tray.

There was plenty of such entertainment in winter, and we had our part in much of it. Rellstab, the well-known editor of Voss's journal, made a clever collection of such jokes in his Christmas Wanderings. We could read, and whatever was offered by that literary St. Nicholas and highly respected musical critic for cultivated Berlin our mother was quite willing we should enjoy.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD

BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

On the 18th of March, the day of the fighting in the streets of Berlin, we had been living for a year in the large suite of apartments at No. 7 Linkstrasse.

Of those who inhabited the same house with us I remember only the sculptor Streichenberg, whose studio was next to our pretty garden, and the Beyers, a married couple. He, later a general and commander of the troops besieging Strasburg in 1870, was at that time a first lieutenant. She was a refined, extremely amiable, and very musical woman, who had met our mother before, and now entered into the friendliest relations with her.

A guest of their quiet household, a little Danish girl, one of Fran Beyer's relatives, shared our play in the garden, and worked with us at the flower beds which had been placed in our charge. I remember how perfectly charming I thought her, and that her name was Detta Lvsenor.

All the details of our intercourse with her and other new acquaintances who played with us in the garden have vanished from my memory, for the occurrences of that time are thrown into shadow by the public events and political excitement around us. Even children could not remain untouched by what was impending, for all that we saw or heard referred to it and, in our household, views violently opposed to each other, with the exception of extreme republicanism, were freely discussed.

The majority of our conservative acquaintances were loud in complaint, and bewailed the king's weakness, and the religious corruption and hypocritical aspirations which were aroused by the honest, but romantic and fanatical religious zeal of Frederick William IV.

I must have heard the loudest lamentations concerning this cancer of society at this time, for they are the most deeply imprinted in my memory. Even such men as the Gepperts, Franz Kugler, H. M. Romberg, Drake, Wilcke, and others, with whose moderate political views I became acquainted later, used to join us. Loyal they all were, and our mother was so strongly attached to the house of Hohenzollern that I heard her request one of the younger men, when he sharply declared it was time to force the king to abdicate, either to moderate his speech or cease to visit her house.

Our mother could not prevent, however, similar and worse speeches from coming to our ears.

A particularly deep impression was made upon us by a tall man with a big blond beard, whose name I have forgotten, but whom we generally met at the sculptor Streichenberg's when he took us with him in our play hours into his great workshop. This man appeared to be in very good circumstances, for he always wore patent-leather boots, and a large diamond ring on his finger; but with his vivacious, even passionate temperament, he trampled in the dust the things I had always revered. I hung on his lips when he talked of the rights of the people, and of his own vocation to break the way for freedom, or when he anathematized those who oppressed a noble nation with the odious yoke of slavery.

Catch phrases, like "hanging the last king with the guts of the last priest," I heard for the first time from him, and although such speeches did not please me, they made an impression because they awakened so much surprise, and more than once he called upon us to be true sons of our time and not a tyrant's bondmen. We heard similar remarks elsewhere in a more moderate form, and from our companions at school in boyish language.

There were two parties there also, but besides loyalty another sentiment flourished which would now be called chauvinism, yet which possessed a noble influence, since it fostered in our hearts that most beautiful flower of the young mind, enthusiasm for a great cause.

And during the history lessons on Brandenburg-Prussia our cheeks would glow, for what German state could boast a grander, prouder history than Prussia under the Hohenzollerns, rising by ability, faithfulness to duty, courage, and self-sacrificing love of country from small beginnings to the highest power?

The Liebe school had been attended only by children of good families, while in the Schmidt school a Count Waldersee and Hoym, the son of a capmaker and dealer in eatables, sat together on the same bench. The most diverse tendencies were represented, and all sorts of satirical songs and lampoons found their way to us. Such parodies as this in the Song of Prussia we could understand very well:

"I am a Prussian, my colours you know,
From darkness to light they boldly go;
But that for Freedom my fathers died,
Is a fact which I have not yet descried."

Nor did more delicate allusions escape us; for who had not heard, for instance, of the Friends of Light, who played a part among the Berlin liberals? To whose ears had not come some longing cry for freedom, and especially freedom of the press?

And though that ever-recurring word *Pressfreiheit* (freedom of the press) was altered by the wags for us boys into *Fressfreiheit* (liberty to stuff yourself); though, too, it was condemned in conservative circles as a dangerous demand, threatening the peace of the family and opening the door to unbridled license among writers for the papers, still we had heard the other side of the question; that the right freely to express an opinion belonged to every citizen, and that only through the power of free speech could the way be cleared for a better condition of things. In short, there was no catchword of that stormy period which we ten and twelve-year-old boys could not have interpreted at least superficially.

To me it seemed a fine thing to be able to say what one thought right, still I could not understand why such great importance should be attributed to freedom of the press. The father of our friend Bardua was entitled a counsellor of the Supreme Court, but then he had also filled the office of a censor, and what a nice, bright boy his son was!

Among our comrades was also the son of Prof. Hengstenberg, who was the head of the pietists and Protestant zealots, whom we had heard mentioned as the darkest of all obscurants, and his influence over the king execrated. By the central flight of steps at the little terrace in front of the royal palace stood the fine statues of the horse-tamers, and the steps were called Hengstenberg (Hengste, horses, and Berg, mountain). And this name was explained by the circumstance that whoever would approach the king must do so by the way of "Hengstenberg."

We knew that quip, too, and yet the son of this mischievous enemy of progress was a particularly fine, bright boy, whom we all liked, and whose father, when I saw him, astonished me, for he was a kindly man and could laugh as cheerfully as anybody.

It was all very difficult to understand; and, as we had more friends among the conservatives than among the democrats, we played usually with the former, and troubled ourselves very little about the politics of our friends' fathers. There was, however, some looking askance at each other, and cries of "Loyal Legioner!" "Pietist!" "Democrat!" "Friend of Light!" were not wanting.

As often happens in the course of history, uncomprehended or only half-comprehended catchwords serve as a banner around which a great following collects.

The parties did not come to blows, probably for the sole reason that we conservatives were by far the stronger. Yet there was a fermentation among us, and a day came when, young as I was, I felt that those who called the king weak and wished for a change were in the right.

In the spring of 1847 every one felt as if standing on a volcano.

When, in 1844, it was reported that Burgomaster Tschech had fired at the king--I was then seven years old--we children shared the horror and indignation of our mother, although in the face of such a serious event we boys joined in the silly song which was then in everybody's mouth, and

which began somewhat in this fashion:

"Was there ever a man so insolent
As Tschech, the mayor, on mischief bent?"

What did we not hear at that time about all the hopes that had been placed on the crown-prince, and how ill he had fulfilled them as king! How often I listened quietly in some corner while my mother discussed such topics with gentlemen, and from the beginning of the year 1847 there was hardly a conversation in Berlin which did not sooner or later touch upon politics and the general discontent or anxiety. But I had no need to listen in order to hear such things. On every walk we took they were forced upon our ears; the air was full of them, the very stones repeated them.

Even we boys had heard of Johann Jacoby's "Four Questions," which declared a constitution a necessity.

I have not forgotten the indignation called forth, even among our acquaintances of moderate views, by Hassenpflug's promotion; and if his name had never come to my ears at home, the comic papers, caricatures, and the talk everywhere would have acquainted me with the feelings awakened among the people of Berlin by the favour he enjoyed. And added to this were a thousand little features, anecdotes, and events which all pointed to the universal discontent.

The wars for freedom lay far behind us. How much had been promised to the people when the foreign foe was to be driven out, and how little had been granted! After the July revolution of 1830, many German states had obtained a constitution, while in Prussia not only did everything remain in the same condition, but the shameful time of the spying by the agitators had begun, when so many young men who had deserved well of their country, like Ernst Moriz, Arndt, and Jahn, distinguished and honourable scholars like Welcker, suffered severely under these odious persecutions. One must have read the biography of the honest and laborious Germanist Wackernagel to be able to credit the fact that that quiet searcher after knowledge was pursued far into middle life by the most bitter persecution and rancorous injuries, because as a schoolboy--whether in the third or fourth class I do not know--he had written a letter in which was set forth some new division, thought out in his childish brain, for the united German Empire of which he dreamed.

Such men as Kamptz and Dambach kept their places by casting suspicion upon others and condemning them, but they little dreamed when they summoned before their execrable tribunal the insignificant student Fritz Reuter, of Mecklenburg, how he would brand their system and their names. Most of these youths who had been plunged into misery by such rascally abuse of office and the shameful way in which a king naturally anything but malignant, was misled and deceived, were either dead and gone, or had been released from prison as mature men. What hatred must have filled their souls for that form of government which had dared thus to punish their pure enthusiasm for a sacred cause--the unity and well-earned freedom of their native land! Ah, there were dangerous forces to subdue among those grey-haired martyrs, for it was their fiery spirit and high hearts which had brought them to ruin.

Those who had been disappointed in the results of the war for liberty, and those who had suffered in the demagogue period, had ventured to hope once more when the much-extolled crown-prince, Frederick William IV,

mounted the throne. What disappointment was in store for them; what new suffering was laid upon them when, instead of the rosy dawn of freedom which they fancied they had seen, a deeper darkness and a more reckless oppression set in! What they had taken for larks announcing the breaking of a brighter day turned out to be bats and similar vermin of the night. In the state the exercise of a boundless arbitrary power; in the Church, dark intolerance; and, in its train, slavish submission, favour-seeking, rolling up of the eyes, and hypocrisy as means to unworthy ends, and especially to that of speedy promotion--the deepest corruption of all--that of the soul.

What naturally followed caused the loyalists the keenest pain, for the injury done to the strong monarchical feeling of the Prussian people in the person and the conduct of Frederick William IV was not to be estimated. Only the simple heroic greatness and the paternal dignity of an Emperor William could have repaired it.

In the year preceding the revolution there had been a bad harvest, and frightful stories were told of famine in the weaving districts of Silesia. Even before Virchow, in his free-spoken work on the famine-typhus, had faithfully described the full misery of those wretched sufferers, it had become apparent to the rulers in Berlin that something must be done to relieve the public distress.

The king now began to realize distinctly the universal discontent, and in order to meet it and still further demands he summoned the General Assembly.

I remember distinctly how fine our mother thought the speech with which he opened that precursor of the Prussian Chambers, and the address showed him in fact to be an excellent orator.

To him, believing as he did with the most complete conviction in royalty by the grace of God and in his calling by higher powers, any relinquishing of his prerogative would seem like a betrayal of his divine mission. The expression he uttered in the Assembly in the course of his speech--"I and my people will serve the Lord"--came from the very depths of his heart; and nothing could be more sincerely meant than the remark, "From one weakness I know myself to be absolutely free: I do not strive for vain public favour. My only effort is to do my duty to the best of my knowledge and according to my conscience, and to deserve the gratitude of my people, though it should be denied me."

The last words have a foreboding sound, and prove what is indeed evident from many other expressions--that he had begun to experience in his own person the truth of the remark he had made when full of hope, and hailed with joyful anticipations at his coronation--"The path of a king is full of sorrow, unless his people stand by him with loyal heart and mind."

His people did not do that, and it was well for them; for the path indicated by the royal hand would have led them to darkness and to the indignity of ever-increasing bondage, mental and temporal.

The prince himself is entitled to the deepest sympathy. He wished to do right, and was endowed with great and noble gifts which would have done honour to a private individual, but could not suffice for the ruler of a powerful state in difficult times.

Hardly had the king opened the General Assembly in April, 1848, and, for

the relief of distress among the poorer classes in the capital, repealed the town dues on corn, when the first actual evidences of discontent broke out. The town tax was so strictly enforced at that time at all the gates of Berlin that even hacks entering the city were stopped and searched for provisions of meat or bread--a search which was usually conducted in a cursory and courteous manner.

In my sister Paula's journal I have an almost daily account of that period, with frequent reference to political events, but it is not my task to write a history of the Berlin revolution.

Those of my sister's records which refer to the revolutionary period begin with a mention of the so-called potato revolution, which occurred ten days after the opening of the General Assembly, though it had no connection with it.

[Excessive prices had been asked for a peck of potatoes, which enraged the purchasers, who threw them into the gutter and laid hands on some of the market-women. The assembled crowd then plundered some bakers' and butchers' shops, and was finally dispersed by the military. A certain Herr Winckler is said to have lost his life. Many windows were broken, etc.]

This riot took place on the 21st of April, and on the 2d of May Paula alludes to a performance at the opera-house, which Ludo and I attended. It was the last appearance of Fran Viardot Garcia as Iphigenia, but I fear Paula is right in saying that the great singer did her best for an ungrateful public, for the attention of the audience was directed chiefly to the king and queen. The latter appeared in the theatre for the first time since a severe illness, the enthusiasm was great, and there was no end to the cries of "Long live the king and queen!" which were repeated between every act.

I relate the circumstance to show with what a devoted and faithful affection the people of Berlin still clung to the royal pair. On the other hand, their regard for the Prince of Prussia, afterward Emperor William, was already shaken. He who alone remained firm when all about the king were wavering, was regarded as the embodiment of military rule, against which a violent opposition was rising.

Our mother was even then devoted to him with a reverence which bordered upon affection, and we children with her.

We felt more familiar with him, too; than with any other members of the ruling house, for Fraulein Lamperi, who was in a measure like one of our own family, was always relating the most attractive stories about him and his noble spouse, whose waiting-woman she had been.

Of Frederick William IV it was generally jokes that were told, some of them very witty ones. We once came in contact with him in a singular way.

Our old cook, Frau Marx, who called herself "the Marxen," was nearly blind, and wished to enter an institution, for which it was necessary to have his Majesty's consent. Many years before, when she was living in a count's family, she had taught the king, as a young prince, to churn, and on the strength of this a petition was drawn up for her by my family. This she handed into the king's carriage, in the palace court-yard, and to his question who she was, she replied, "Why, I'm old Marxen, and your

Majesty is my last retreat." This speech was repeated to my mother by the adjutant who came to inquire about the petitioner, and he assured her that his Majesty had been greatly amused by the old woman's singular choice of words, and had repeated it several times to persons about him. Her wish was fulfilled at once.

The memory of those March days of 1848 is impressed on my soul in ineffaceable characters. More beautiful weather I never knew. It seemed as if May had taken the place of its stormy predecessor. From the 13th the sun shone constantly from a cloudless sky, and on the 18th the fruit-trees in our garden were in full bloom. Whoever was not kept in the house by duty or sickness was eager to be out. The public gardens were filled by afternoon, and whoever wanted to address the people had no need to call an audience together. Whatever rancour, indignation, discontent, and sorrow had lurked under ground now came forth, and the buds of longing and joyful expectation hourly unfolded in greater strength and fuller bloom.

The news of the Paris revolution, whose confirmation had reached Berlin in the last few days of February, had caused all this growth and blossoming like sunshine and warm rain. There was no repressing it, and the authorities felt daily more and more that their old measures of restraint were failing.

The accounts from Paris were accompanied by report after report from the rest of Germany, shaking the old structure of absolutism like the repeated shocks of a battering-ram.

Freedom of the press was not yet granted, but tongues had begun to move freely--indeed, often without any restraint. As early as the 7th of March, and in bad weather, too, meetings began to be held in tents. As soon as the fine spring days came we found great crowds listening to bearded orators, who told them of the revolution in Paris and of the addresses to the king--how they had passed hither and thither, and how they had been received. They had all contained very much the same demands--freedom of the press, representatives of the people to be chosen by free election, all religious confessions to be placed on an equal footing in the exercise of political rights, and representation of the people in the German Confederacy.

These demands were discussed with fiery zeal, and the royal promise, just given, of calling together the Assembly again and issuing a law on the press, after the Confederate Diet should have been moved to a similar measure, was condemned in strong terms as an insufficient and half-way procedure--a payment on account, in order to gain time.

On the 15th the particulars of the Vienna revolution and Metternich's flight reached Berlin; and we, too, learned the news, and heard our mother and her friends asking anxiously, "How will this end?"

Unspeakable excitement had taken possession of young and old--at home, in the street, and at school--for blood had already flowed in the city. On the 13th, cavalry had dispersed a crowd in the vicinity of the palace, and the same thing was repeated on the two following days. Fortunately, few were injured; but rumour, ever ready to increase and enhance the horrible desire of many fanatics to stir up the fire of discontent, had conspired to make wounded men dead ones, and slight injuries severe.

These exaggerations ran through the city, arousing indignation; and the

correspondents of foreign papers, knowing that readers often like best what is most incredible, had sent the accounts to the provinces and foreign countries.

But blood had flowed. Hatred of the soldiery, to which, however, some among the insurgents had once been proud to belong, grew with fateful rapidity, and was still further inflamed by those who saw in the military the brazen wall that stood between them and the fulfillment of their most ardent wishes.

A spark might spring the open and overcharged mine into the air; an ill-chosen or misunderstood expression, a thoughtless act, might bring about an explosion.

The greatest danger threatened from fresh conflicts between the army and the people, and it was to the fear of this that various young or elderly gentlemen owed their office of going about wherever a crowd was assembled and urging the populace to keep the peace. They were distinguished by a white band around the arm bearing the words, "Commissioner of Protection," and a white rod a foot and a half long designed to awaken the respect accorded by the English to their constables. We recognized many well-known men; but the Berlin populace, called by Goethe insolent, is not easily impressed, and we saw constables surrounded by street boys like an owl with a train of little birds fluttering teasingly around it. Even grown persons called them nicknames and jeered at their sticks, which they styled "cues" and "tooth-picks."

A large number of students, too, had expressed their readiness to join this protective commission, either as constables or deputies, and had received the wand and band at the City Hall.

How painful the exercise of their vocation was made to them it would be difficult to describe. News from Austria and South Germany, where the people's cause seemed to be advancing with giant strides to the desired goal, hourly increased the offensive strength of the excited populace.

On the afternoon of the 16th the Potsdam Platz, only a few hundred steps from our house, was filled with shouting and listening throngs, crowded around the sculptor Streichenberg, his blond-bearded friend, and other violently gesticulating leaders. This multitude received constant reinforcements from the city and through Bellevuestrasse. On the left, at the end of the beautiful street with its rows of budding chestnut-trees, lay "Kemperhof," a pleasure resort where we had often listened to the music of a band clad in green hunting costume. Many must have come thence, for I find that on the 16th an assemblage was held there from which grew the far more important one on the morning of the 17th, with its decisive conclusion in Koppenickerstrasse.

At this meeting, on the afternoon of the 17th, it was decided to set on foot a peaceful manifestation of the wishes of the people, and a new address to the king was drawn up. It was settled that on the 28th of March, at two o'clock, thousands of citizens with the badges of the protective commission should appear before the palace and send in a deputation to his Majesty with a document which should clearly convey the principal requirements of the people.

What they were to represent to the king as urgently necessary was: The withdrawal of the military force, the organization of an armed citizen guard, the granting of an unconditional freedom of the press, which had

been promised for a lifetime, and the calling of the General Assembly. I shall return to the address later.

CHAPTER IX.

THE EIGHTEENTH OF MARCH.

THE 17th passed so quietly that hopes of a peaceable outcome of the fateful conflict began to awake. My own recollections confirm this.

People believed so positively that the difficulty would be adjusted, that in the forenoon of the 18th my mother sent my eldest sister Martha to her drawing-lesson, which was given at General Baeyer's, in the Friedrichstrasse.

Ludo and I went to school, and when it was over the many joyful faces in the street confirmed what we had heard during the school hours.

The king had granted the Constitution and the "freedom of the press."

Crowds were collected in front of the placards which announced this fact, but there was no need to force our way through; their contents were read aloud at every corner and fountain.

One passer-by repeated it to another, and friend shouted to friend across the street. "Have you heard the news?" was the almost invariable question when people accosted one another, and at least one "Thank God!" was contained in every conversation. Two or three older acquaintances whom we met charged us, in all haste, to tell our mother; but she had heard it already, and her joy was so great that she forgot to scold us for staying away so long. Fraulein Lamperi, on the contrary, who dined with us, wept. She was convinced that the unfortunate king had been forced into something which would bring ruin both to him and his subjects. "His poor Majesty!" she sobbed in the midst of our joy.

Our mother loved the king too, but she was a daughter of the free Netherlands; two of her brothers and sisters lived in England; and the friends she most valued, whom she knew to be warmly and faithfully attached to the house of Hohenzollern, thought it high time that the Prussian people attained the majority to which that day had brought them. Moreover, her active mind knew no rest till it had won a clear insight into questions concerning the times and herself. So she had reached the conviction that no peace between king and people could be expected unless a constitution was granted. In Parliament she would have sat on the right, but that her adopted country should have a Parliament filled her with joyful pride.

Ludo and I were very gay. It was Saturday, and towards evening we were going to a children's ball given by Privy-Councillor Romberg--the specialist for nervous diseases--for his daughter Marie, for which new blue jackets had been made.

We were eagerly expecting them, and about three o'clock the tailor came.

Our mother was present when he tried them on, and when she remarked that now all was well, the man shook his head, and declared that the

concessions of the forenoon had had no other object than to befool the people; that would appear before long.

While I write, it seems as if I saw again that poor little bearer of the first evil tidings, and heard once more the first shots which interrupted his prophecy with eloquent confirmation.

Our mother turned pale.

The tailor folded up his cloth and hurried away. What did his words mean, and what was the firing outside?

We strained our ears to listen. The noise seemed to grow louder and come nearer; and, just as our mother cried, "For Heaven's sake, Martha!" the cook burst into the room, exclaiming, "The row began in the Schloßplatz!"

Fraulein Lamperi shrieked, seized her bonnet and cloak, and the pompadour which she took with her everywhere, to hurry home as fast as she could.

Our mother could think only of Martha. She had dined at the Baeyers' and was now perhaps on the way home. Somebody must be sent to meet her. But of what use would be the escort of a maid; and Kurschner was gone, and the porter not to be found!

The cook was sent in one direction, the chambermaid in another, to seek a male escort for Martha.

And then there was Frau Lieutenant Beyer, our neighbour in the house, whose husband was on the general staff, asking: "How is it possible? Everything was granted! What can have happened?"

The answer was a rattle of musketry. We leaned out of the window, from which we could see as far as Potsdamstrasse. What a rush there was towards the gate! Three or four men dashed down the middle of the quiet street. The tall, bearded fellow at the head we knew well. It was the upholsterer Specht, who had often put up curtains and done similar work for us, a good and capable workman.

But what a change! Instead of a neat little hammer, he was flourishing an axe, and he and his companions looked as furious as if they were going to revenge some terrible injury.

He caught sight of us, and I remember distinctly the whites of his rolling eyes as he raised his axe higher, and shouted hoarsely, and as if the threat was meant for us:

"They shall get it!"

Our mother and Frau Beyer had seen and heard him too, and the firing in the direction of which the upholsterer and his companions were running was very near.

The fight must already be raging in Leipzigerstrasse.

At last the porter came back and announced that barricades had been built at the corner of Mauer- and Friedrichstrasse, and that a violent conflict had broken out there and in other places between the soldiers and the citizens. And our Martha was in Friedrichstrasse, and did not come. We

lived beyond the gate, and it was not to be expected that fighting would break out in our neighbourhood; but back of our gardens, in the vicinity of the Potsdam railway station, the beating of drums was heard. The firing, however, which became more and more violent, was louder than any other noise; and when we saw our mother wild with anxiety, we, too, began to be alarmed for our dear, sweet Martha.

It was already dark, and still we waited in vain.

At last some one rang. Our mother hurried to the door--a thing she never did.

When we, too, ran into the hall, she had her arms around the child who had incurred such danger, and we little ones kissed her also, and Martha looked especially pretty in her happy astonishment at such a reception.

She, too, had been anxious enough while good Heinrich, General Maeyer's servant, who had been his faithful comrade in arms from 1813 to 1815, brought her home through all sorts of by-ways. But they had been obliged in various places to pass near where the fighting was going on, and the tender-hearted seventeen-year-old girl had seen such terrible things that she burst into tears as she described them.

For us the worst anxiety was over, and our mother recovered her composure. It was perhaps advisable for her, a defenceless widow, to leave the city, which might on the morrow be given over to the unbridled will of insurgents or of soldiers intoxicated with victory. So she determined to make all preparations for going with us to our grandmother in Dresden.

Meanwhile the fighting in the streets seemed to have increased in certain places to a battle, for the crash of the artillery grapeshot was constantly intermingled with the crackling of the infantry fire, and through it all the bells were sounding the tocsin, a wailing, warning sound, which stirred the inmost heart.

It was a fearful din, rattling and thundering and ringing, while the sky emulated the bloodsoaked earth and glowed in fiery red. It was said that the royal iron foundry was in flames.

At last the hour of bedtime came, and I still remember how our mother told us to pray for the king and those poor people who, in order to attain something we could not understand, were in such great peril.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Child cannot distinguish between what is amusing and what is sad
Child is naturally egotistical
Deserve the gratitude of my people, though it should be denied
Half-comprehended catchwords serve as a banner
Hanging the last king with the guts of the last priest
Readers often like best what is most incredible
Smell most powerful of all the senses in awakening memory

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK STORY OF MY LIFE, BY EBERS, V2 ***

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