

# ТОМАС КАРЛЕЙЛЬ

HISTORY OF FRIEDRICH  
II OF PRUSSIA —  
VOLUME 11

Томас Карлейль

**History of Friedrich II  
of Prussia — Volume 11**

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# Thomas Carlyle

## History of Friedrich II of Prussia — Volume 11

### BOOK XI. — FRIEDRICH TAKES THE REINS IN HAND. — June-December, 1740

#### Chapter I. — PHENOMENA OF FRIEDRICH'S ACCESSION

In Berlin, from Tuesday, 31st May, 1740, day of the late King's death, till the Thursday following, the post was stopped and the gates closed; no estafette can be despatched, though Dickens and all the Ambassadors are busy writing. On the Thursday, Regiments, Officers, principal Officials having sworn, and the new King being fairly in the saddle, estafettes and post-boys shoot forth at the top of their speed; and Rumor, towards every point of the compass, apprises mankind what immense news there is. [Dickens (in State-Paper Office), 4th June, 1740.]

A King's Accession is always a hopeful phenomenon to the public; more especially a young King's, who has been talked of for his talents and aspirings,—for his sufferings, were it nothing more,—and whose ANTI-MACHIAVEL is understood to be in the press. Vaguely everywhere there has a notion gone abroad that this young King will prove considerable. Here at last has a Lover of Philosophy got upon the throne, and great philanthropies and magnanimities are to be expected, think rash editors and idle mankind. Rash editors in England and elsewhere, we observe, are ready to believe that Friedrich has not only disbanded the Potsdam Giants; but means to "reduce the Prussian Army one half" or so, for ease (temporary ease which we hope will be lasting) of parties concerned; and to go much upon emancipation, political rose-water, and friendship to humanity, as we now call it.

At his first meeting of Council, they say, he put this question, "Could not the Prussian Army be reduced to 45,000?" The excellent young man. To which the Council had answered, "Hardly, your Majesty! The Julich-and-Berg affair is so ominous hitherto!" These may be secrets, and dubious to people out of doors, thinks a wise editor; but one thing patent to the day was this, surely symbolical enough: On one of his Majesty's first drives to Potsdam or from it, a thousand children,—in round numbers a thousand of them, all with the RED STRING round their necks, and liable to be taken for soldiers, if needed in the regiment of their Canton,—a thousand children met this young King at a turn of his road; and with shrill unison of wail, sang out: "Oh, deliver us from slavery,"—from the red threads, your Majesty. Why should poor we be liable to suffer hardship for our Country or otherwise, your Majesty! Can no one else be got to do it? sang out the thousand children. And his Majesty assented on the spot, thinks the rash editor. [*Gentleman's Magazine* (London, 1740), x. 318; Newspapers, &c.] "Goose, Madam?" exclaimed a philanthropist projector once, whose scheme of sweeping chimneys by pulling a live goose down through them was objected to: "Goose, Madam? You can take two ducks, then, if you are so sorry for the goose!"—Rash editors think there is to be a reign of *Astraea Redux* in Prussia, by means of this young King; and forget to ask themselves, as the young King must by no means do, How far *Astraea* may be possible, for Prussia and him?

At home, too, there is prophesying enough, vague hope enough, which for most part goes wide of the mark. This young King, we know, did prove considerable; but not in the way shaped out for him by the public;—it was in far other ways! For no public in the least knows, in such cases: nor does the man himself know, except gradually and if he strive to learn. As to the public,—"Doubtless," says a friend of mine, "doubtless it was the Atlantic Ocean that carried Columbus to America; lucky for the Atlantic, and for Columbus and us: but the Atlantic did not quite vote that way from the first;

may ITS votes, I believe, were very various at different stages of the matter!" This is a truth which kings and men, not intending to be drift-logs or waste brine obedient to the Moon, are much called to have in mind withal, from perhaps an early stage of their voyage.

Friedrich's actual demeanor in these his first weeks, which is still decipherable if one study well, has in truth a good deal of the brilliant, of the popular-magnanimous; but manifests strong solid quality withal, and a head steadier than might have been expected. For the Berlin world is all in a rather Auroral condition; and Friedrich too is,—the chains suddenly cut loose, and such hopes opened for the young man. He has great things ahead; feels in himself great things, and doubtless exults in the thought of realizing them. Magnanimous enough, popular, hopeful enough, with Voltaire and the highest of the world looking on:—but yet he is wise, too; creditably aware that there are limits, that this is a bargain, and the terms of it inexorable. We discern with pleasure the old veracity of character shining through this giddy new element; that all these fine procedures are at least unaffected, to a singular degree true, and the product of nature, on his part; and that, in short, the complete respect for Fact, which used to be a quality of his, and which is among the highest and also rarest in man, has on no side deserted him at present.

A trace of airy exuberance, of natural exultancy, not quite repressible, on the sudden change to freedom and supreme power from what had gone before: perhaps that also might be legible, if in those opaque bead-rolls which are called Histories of Friedrich anything human could with certainty be read! He flies much about from place to place; now at Potsdam, now at Berlin, at Charlottenburg, Reinsberg; nothing loath to run whither business calls him, and appear in public: the gazetteer world, as we noticed, which has been hitherto a most mute world, breaks out here and there into a kind of husky jubilation over the great things he is daily doing, and rejoices in the prospect of having a Philosopher King; which function the young man, only twenty-eight gone, cannot but wish to fulfil for the gazetteers and the world. He is a busy man; and walks boldly into his grand enterprise of "making men happy," to the admiration of Voltaire and an enlightened public far and near.

Bielfeld speaks of immense concourses of people crowding about Charlottenburg, to congratulate, to solicit, to &c.; tells us how he himself had to lodge almost in outhouses, in that royal village of hope, His emotions at Reinsberg, and everybody's, while Friedrich Wilhelm lay dying, and all stood like greyhounds on the slip; and with what arrow-swiftness they shot away when the great news came: all this he has already described at wearisome length, in his fantastic semi-fabulous way. [Bielfeld, i. 68-77; ib. 81.] Friedrich himself seemed moderately glad to see Bielfeld; received his high-flown congratulations with a benevolent yet somewhat composed air; and gave him afterwards, in the course of weeks, an unexpectedly small appointment: To go to Hanover, under Truchsess von Waldburg, and announce our Accession. Which is but a simple, mostly formal service; yet perhaps what Bielfeld is best equal to.

The Britannic Majesty, or at least his Hanover people have been beforehand with this civility; Baron Munchhausen, no doubt by orders given for such contingency, had appeared at Berlin with the due compliment and condolence almost on the first day of the New Reign; first messenger of all on that errand; Britannic Majesty evidently in a conciliatory humor,—having his dangerous Spanish War on hand. Britannic Majesty in person, shortly after, gets across to Hanover; and Friedrich despatches Truchsess, with Bielfeld adjoined, to return the courtesy.

Friedrich does not neglect these points of good manners; along with which something of substantial may be privately conjoined. For example, if he had in secret his eye on Julich and Berg, could anything be fitter than to ascertain what the French will think of such an enterprise? What the French; and next to them what the English, that is to say, Hanoverians, who meddle much in affairs of the Reich. For these reasons and others he likewise, probably with more study than in the Bielfeld case, despatches Colonel Camas to make his compliment at the French Court, and in an expert way take soundings there. Camas, a fat sedate military gentleman, of advanced years, full of observation, experience and sound sense,—"with one arm, which he makes do the work of two, and

nobody can notice that the other arm resting in his coat-breast is of cork, so expert is he,"—will do in this matter what is feasible; probably not much for the present. He is to call on Voltaire, as he passes, who is in Holland again, at the Hague for some months back; and deliver him "a little cask of Hungary Wine," which probably his Majesty had thought exquisite. Of which, and the other insignificant passages between them, we hear more than enough in the writings and correspondences of Voltaire about this time.

In such way Friedrich disposes of his Bielfelds; who are rather numerous about him now and henceforth. Adventurers from all quarters, especially of the literary type, in hopes of being employed, much hovered round Friedrich through his whole reign. But they met a rather strict judge on arriving; it cannot be said they found it such a Goshen as they expected.

Favor, friendly intimacy, it is visible from the first, avails nothing with this young King; beyond and before all things he will have his work done, and looks out exclusively for the man ablest to do it. Hence Bielfeld goes to Hanover, to grin out euphuisms, and make graceful courtbows to our sublime little Uncle there. On the other hand, Friedrich institutes a new Knighthood, ORDER OF MERIT so called; which indeed is but a small feat, testifying mere hope and exuberance as yet; and may even be made worse than nothing, according to the Knights he shall manage to have. Happily it proved a successful new Order in this last all-essential particular; and, to the end of Friedrich's life, continued to be a great and coveted distinction among the Prussians.

Beyond doubt this is a radiant enough young Majesty; entitled to hope, and to be the cause of hope. Handsome, to begin with; decidedly well-looking, all say, and of graceful presence, though hardly five feet seven, and perhaps stouter of limb than the strict Belvedere standard. [Height, it appears, was five feet five inches (Rhenish), which in English measure is five feet seven or a hair's-breadth less. Preuss, twice over, by a mistake unusual with him, gives "five feet two inches three lines" as the correct cipher (which it is of NAPOLEON'S measure in FRENCH feet); then settles on the above dimensions from unexceptionable authority (Preuss, *Buch fur Jedermann*, i. 18; Preuss, *Fredrich der Grosse*, i. 39 and 419).] Has a fine free expressive face; nothing of austerity in it; not a proud face, or not too proud, yet rapidly flashing on you all manner of high meanings. [Wille's Engraving after Pesne (excellent, both Picture and Engraving) is reckoned the best Likeness in that form.] Such a man, in the bloom of his years; with such a possibility ahead, and Voltaire and mankind waiting applause!—Let us try to select, and extricate into coherence and visibility out of those Historical dust-heaps, a few of the symptomatic phenomena, or physiognomic procedures of Friedrich in his first weeks of Kingship, by way of contribution to some Portraiture of his then inner-man.

## **FRIEDRICH WILL MAKE MEN HAPPY: CORN-MAGAZINES**

On the day after his Accession, Officers and chief Ministers taking the Oath, Friedrich, to his Officers, "on whom he counts for the same zeal now which he had witnessed as their comrade," recommends mildness of demeanor from the higher to the lower, and that the common soldier be not treated with harshness when not deserved: and to his Ministers he is still more emphatic, in the like or a higher strain. Officially announcing to them, by Letter, that a new Reign has commenced, he uses these words, legible soon after to a glad Berlin public: "Our grand care will be, To further the Country's well-being, and to make every one of our subjects (EINEN JEDEN UNSERER UNTERTHANEN) contented and happy. Our will is, not that you strive to enrich Us by vexation of Our subjects; but rather that you aim steadily as well towards the advantage of the Country as Our particular interest, forasmuch as We make no difference between these two objects," but consider them one and the same. This is written, and gets into print within the month; and his Majesty, that same day (Wednesday, 2d June), when it came to personal reception, and actual taking of the Oath, was pleased to add in words, which also were printed shortly, this comfortable corollary: "My will

henceforth is, If it ever chance that my particular interest and the general good of my Countries should seem to go against each other,—in that case, my will is, That the latter always be preferred." [Dickens, Despatch, 4th June, 1740: Preuss, *Friedrichs Jugend und Thronbesteigung* (Berlin, 1840), p. 325;—quoting from the Berlin Newspapers of 28th June and 2d July, 1740.]

This is a fine dialect for incipient Royalty; and it is brand-new at that time. It excites an admiration in the then populations, which to us, so long used to it and to what commonly comes of it, is not conceivable at once. There can be no doubt the young King does faithfully intend to develop himself in the way of making men happy; but here, as elsewhere, are limits which he will recognize ahead, some of them perhaps nearer than was expected.

Meanwhile his first acts, in this direction, correspond to these fine words. The year 1740, still grim with cold into the heart of summer, bids fair to have a late poor harvest, and famine threatens to add itself to other hardships there have been. Recognizing the actualities of the case, what his poor Father could not, he opens the Public Granaries,—a wise resource they have in Prussian countries against the year of scarcity;—orders grain to be sold out, at reasonable rates, to the suffering poor; and takes the due pains, considerable in some cases, that this be rendered feasible everywhere in his dominions. "Berlin, 2d June," is the first date of this important order; fine program to his Ministers, which, we read, is no sooner uttered, than some performance follows. An evident piece of wisdom and humanity; for which doubtless blessings of a very sincere kind rise to him from several millions of his fellow-mortals.

Nay furthermore, as can be dimly gathered, this scarcity continuing, some continuous mode of management was set on foot for the Poor; and there is nominated, with salary, with outline of plan and other requisites, as "Inspector of the Poor," to his own and our surprise, M. Jordan, late Reader to the Crown-Prince, and still much the intimate of his royal Friend. Inspector who seems to do his work very well. And in the November coming this is what we see: "One thousand poor old women, the destitute of Berlin, set to spin," at his Majesty's charges; vacant houses, hired for them in certain streets and suburbs, have been new-planked, partitioned, warmed; and spinning is there for any diligent female soul. There a thousand of them sit, under proper officers, proper wages, treatment;—and the hum of their poor spindles, and of their poor inarticulate old hearts, is a comfort, if one chance to think of it.—Of "distressed needlewomen" who cannot sew, nor be taught to do it; who, in private truth, are mutinous maid-servants come at last to the net upshot of their anarchies; of these, or of the like incurable phenomena, I hear nothing in Berlin; and can believe that, under this King, Indigence itself may still have something of a human aspect, not a brutal or diabolic as is commoner in some places.—This is one of Friedrich's first acts, this opening of the Corn-magazines, and arrangements for the Destitute; [*Helden-Geschichte*, i. 367. Rodenbeck, *Tagebuch aus Friedrichs des Grossen Regentenleben* (Berlin, 1840), i. 2, 26 (2d June, October, 1740): a meritorious, laborious, though essentially chaotic Book, unexpectedly futile of result to the reader; settles for each Day of Friedrich's Reign, so far as possible, where Friedrich was and what doing; fatally wants all index &c., as usual.] and of this there can be no criticism. The sound of hungry pots set boiling, on judicious principles; the hum of those old women's spindles in the warm rooms: gods and men are well pleased to hear such sounds; and accept the same as part, real though infinitesimally small, of the sphere-harmonies of this Universe!

## ABOLITION OF LEGAL TORTURE

Friedrich makes haste, next, to strike into Law-improvements. It is but the morrow after this of the Corn-magazines, by KABINETS-ORDRE (Act of Parliament such as they can have in that Country, where the Three Estates sit all under one Three-cornered Hat, and the debates are kept silent, and only the upshot of them, more or less faithfully, is made public),—by Cabinet Order, 3d June, 1740, he abolishes the use of Torture in Criminal Trials. [Preuss, *Friedrichs Jugend und*

*Thronbesteigung* (Berlin, 1840,—a minor Book of Preuss's), p. 340. Rodenbeck, i. 14 ("3d June").] Legal Torture, "Question" as they mildly call it, is at an end from this date. Not in any Prussian Court shall a "question" try for answer again by that savage method. The use of Torture had, I believe, fallen rather obsolete in Prussia; but now the very threat of it shall vanish,—the threat of it, as we may remember, had reached Friedrich himself, at one time. Three or four years ago, it is farther said, a dark murder happened in Berlin: Man killed one night in the open streets; murderer discoverable by no method,—unless he were a certain CANDIDATUS of Divinity to whom some trace of evidence pointed, but who sorrowfully persisted in absolute and total denial. This poor Candidatus had been threatened with the rack; and would most likely have at length got it, had not the real murderer been discovered,—much to the discredit of the rack in Berlin. This Candidatus was only threatened; nor do I know when the last actual instance in Prussia was; but in enlightened France, and most other countries, there was as yet no scruple upon it. Barbier, the Diarist at Paris, some time after this, tells us of a gang of thieves there, who were regularly put to the torture; and "they blabbed too, ILS ONT JASE," says Barbier with official jocosity. [Barbier, *Journal Historique du Regne de Louis XV.* (Paris, 1849), ii. 338 (date "Dec. 1742").]

Friedrich's Cabinet Order, we need not say, was greeted everywhere, at home and abroad, by three rounds of applause;—in which surely all of us still join; though the PER CONTRA also is becoming visible to some of us, and our enthusiasm grows less complete than formerly. This was Friedrich's first step in Law-Reform, done on his fourth day of Kingship. A long career in that kind lies ahead of him; in reform of Law, civil as well as criminal, his efforts ended with life only. For his love of Justice was really great; and the mendacities and wiggeries, attached to such a necessary of life as Law, found no favor from him at any time.

## **WILL HAVE PHILOSOPHERS ABOUT HIM, AND A REAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES**

To neglect the Philosophies, Fine Arts, interests of Human Culture, he is least of all likely. The idea of building up the Academy of Sciences to its pristine height, or far higher, is evidently one of those that have long lain in the Crown-Prince's mind, eager to realize themselves. Immortal Wolf, exiled but safe at Marburg, and refusing to return in Friedrich Wilhelm's time, had lately dedicated a Book to the Crown-Prince; indicating that perhaps, under a new Reign, he might be more persuadable. Friedrich makes haste to persuade; instructs the proper person, Reverend Herr Reinbeck, Head of the Consistorium at Berlin, to write and negotiate. "All reasonable conditions shall be granted" the immortal Wolf,—and Friedrich adds with his own hand as Postscript: "I request you (IHN) to use all diligence about Wolf. A man that seeks truth, and loves it, must be reckoned precious in any human society; and I think you will make a conquest in the realm of truth if you persuade Wolf hither again." [In *OEuvres de Frederic* (xxvii. ii. 185), the Letter given.] This is of date June 6th; not yet a week since Friedrich came to be King. The Reinbeck-Wolf negotiation which ensued can be read in Busching by the curious. [Busching's *Beitrag* (? Freiherr von Wolf), i. 63-137.] It represents to us a croaky, thrifty, long-headed old Herr Professor, in no haste to quit Marburg except for something better: "obliged to wear woollen shoes and leggings;" "bad at mounting stairs;" and otherwise needing soft treatment. Willing, though with caution, to work at an Academy of Sciences;—but dubious if the French are so admirable as they seem to themselves in such operations. Veteran Wolf, one dimly begins to learn, could himself build a German Academy of Sciences, to some purpose, if encouraged! This latter was probably the stone of stumbling in that direction. Veteran Wolf did not get to be President in the New Academy of Sciences; but was brought back, "streets all in triumph," to his old place at Halle; and there, with little other work that was heard of, but we hope in warm shoes and without much mounting of stairs, lived peaceably victorious the rest of his days. Friedrich's thoughts are not of a German home-built Academy, but of a French one: and for this he already knows a

builder; has silently had him in his eye, these two years past,—Voltaire giving hint, in the LETTER we once heard of at Loo. Builder shall be that sublime Maupertuis; scientific lion of Paris, ever since his feat in the Polar regions, and the charming Narrative he gave of it. "What a feat, what a book!" exclaimed the Parisian cultivated circles, male and female, on that occasion; and Maupertuis, with plenty of bluster in him carefully suppressed, assents in a grandly modest way. His Portraits are in the Printshops ever since; one very singular Portrait, just coming out (at which there is some laughing): a coarse-featured, blustering, rather triumphant-looking man, blustering, though finely complacent for the nonce; in copious dressing-gown and fur cap; comfortably SQUEEZING the Earth and her meridians flat (as if HE had done it), with his left hand; and with the other, and its outstretched finger, asking mankind, "Are not you aware, then?"—"Are not we!" answers Voltaire by and by, with endless waggeries upon him, though at present so reverent. Friedrich, in these same days, writes this Autograph; which who of men or lions could resist?

TO MONSIEUR DE MAUPERTUIS, at Paris.

(No date;—datable, June, 1740.)

"My heart and my inclination excited in me, from the moment I mounted the throne, the desire of having you here, that you might put our Berlin Academy into the shape you alone are capable of giving it. Come, then, come and insert into this wild crab-tree the graft of the Sciences, that it may bear fruit. You have shown the Figure of the Earth to mankind; show also to a King how sweet it is to possess such a man as you.

"Monsieur de Maupertuis,—votre tres-affectionne

"FEDERIC" (SIC). [*OEuvres*, xvii. i. 334. The fantastic "Federic," instead of "Frederic," is, by this time, the common signature to French Letters.]

This Letter—how could Maupertuis prevent some accident in such a case?—got into the Newspapers; glorious for Friedrich, glorious for Maupertuis; and raised matters to a still higher pitch. Maupertuis is on the road, and we shall see him before long.

## AND EVERY ONE SHALL GET TO HEAVEN IN HIS OWN WAY

Here is another little fact which had immense renown at home and abroad, in those summer months and long afterwards.

June 22d, 1740, the GEISTLICHE DEPARTEMENT (Board of Religion, we may term it) reports that the Roman-Catholic Schools, which have been in use these eight years past, for children of soldiers belonging to that persuasion, "are, especially in Berlin, perverted, directly in the teeth of Royal Ordinance, 1732, to seducing Protestants into Catholicism;" annexed, or ready for annexing, "is the specific Report of Fiscal-General to this effect:"—upon which, what would it please his Majesty to direct us to do?

His Majesty writes on the margin these words, rough and ready, which we give with all their grammatical blotches on them; indicating a mind made up on one subject, which was much more dubious then, to most other minds, than it now is:—

"Die Religionen Musen (MUSSEN) alle Tollerirt (TOLERIRT) werden, und Mus (MUSS) der Fiscal nuhr (NUR) das Auge darauf haben, das (DASS) keine der andern abrug Tuhe (ABBRUCH THUE), den (DENN) hier mus (MUSS) ein jeder nach seiner Fasson Selich (FACON SELIG) werden." [Preuss, *Thronbesteigung*, p. 333; Rodenbeck, IN DIE.]

Which in English might run as follows:—

"All Religions must be tolerated (TOLLERATED), 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 in his own way."

Wonderful words; precious to the then leading spirits, and which (the spelling and grammar being mended) flew abroad over all the world: the enlightened Public everywhere answering his

Majesty, once more, with its loudest "Bravissimo!" on this occasion. With what enthusiasm of admiring wonder, it is now difficult to fancy, after the lapse of sixscore years! And indeed, in regard to all these worthy acts of Human Improvement which we are now concerned with, account should be held (were it possible) on Friedrich's behalf how extremely original, and bright with the splendor of new gold, they then were: and how extremely they are fallen dim, by general circulation, since that. Account should be held; and yet it is not possible, no human imagination is adequate to it, in the times we are now got into.

## FREE PRESS, AND NEWSPAPERS THE BEST INSTRUCTORS

Toleration, in Friedrich's spiritual circumstances, was perhaps no great feat to Friedrich: but what the reader hardly expected of him was Freedom of the Press, or an attempt that way! From England, from Holland, Friedrich had heard of Free Press, of Newspapers the best Instructors: it is a fact that he hastens to plant a seed of that kind at Berlin; sets about it "on the second day of his reign," so eager is he. Berlin had already some meagre INTELLIGENZ-BLATT (Weekly or Thrice-Weekly Advertiser), perhaps two; but it is a real Newspaper, frondent with genial leafy speculation, and food for the mind, that Friedrich is intent upon: a "Literary-Political Newspaper," or were it even two Newspapers, one French, one German; and he rapidly makes the arrangements for it; despatches Jordan, on the second day, to seek some fit Frenchman. Arrangements are soon made: a Bookselling Printer, Haude, Bookseller once to the Prince-Royal,—whom we saw once in a domestic flash-of-lightning long ago, [Antea, Book vi. c. 7.]—is encouraged to proceed with the improved German article, MERCURY or whatever they called it; vapid Formey, a facile pen, but not a forcible, is the Editor sought out by Jordan for the French one. And, in short, No. 1 of Formey shows itself in print within a month; ["2d July, 1740:" Preuss, *Thronbesteigung*, p. 330; and Formey, *Souvenirs*, i. 107, rectified by the exact Herr Preuss.] and Haude and he, Haude picking up some grand Editor in Hamburg, do their best for the instruction of mankind.

In not many months, Formey, a facile and learned but rather vapid gentleman, demitted or was dismissed; and the Journals coalesced into one, or split into two again; and went I know not what road, or roads, in time coming,—none that led to results worth naming. Freedom of the Press, in the case of these Journals, was never violated, nor was any need for violating it. General Freedom of the Press Friedrich did not grant, in any quite Official or steady way; but in practice, under him, it always had a kind of real existence, though a fluctuating, ambiguous one. And we have to note, through Friedrich's whole reign, a marked disinclination to concern himself with Censorship, or the shackling of men's poor tongues and pens; nothing but some officious report that there was offence to Foreign Courts, or the chance of offence, in a poor man's pamphlet, could induce Friedrich to interfere with him or it,—and indeed his interference was generally against his Ministers for having wrong informed him, and in favor of the poor Pamphleteer appealing at the fountain-head. [Anonymous (Laveaux), *Vie de Frederic II., Roi de Prusse* (Strasbourg, 1787), iv. 82. A worthless, now nearly forgotten Book; but competent on this point, if on any; Laveaux (a handy fellow, fugitive Ex-Monk, with fugitive Ex-Nun attached) having lived much at Berlin, always in the pamphleteering line.] To the end of his life, disgusting Satires against him, *Vie Privee* by Voltaire, *Matinees du Roi de Prusse*, and still worse Lies and Nonsenses, were freely sold at Berlin, and even bore to be printed there, Friedrich saying nothing, caring nothing. He has been known to burn Pamphlets publicly,—one Pamphlet we shall ourselves see on fire yet;—but it was without the least hatred to them, and for official reasons merely. To the last, he would answer his reporting Ministers, "LE PRESSE EST LIBRE (Free press, you must consider)!"—grandly reluctant to meddle with the press, or go down upon the dogs barking at his door. Those ill effects of Free Press (first stage of the ill effects) he endured in this manner; but the good effects seem to have fallen below his expectation. Friedrich's enthusiasm for freedom of the press, prompt enough, as we see, never rose to the extreme pitch, and it rather sank than

increased as he continued his experiences of men and things. This of Formey and the two Newspapers was the only express attempt he made in that direction; and it proved a rather disappointing one. The two Newspapers went their way thenceforth, Friedrich sometimes making use of them for small purposes, once or twice writing an article himself, of wildly quizzical nature, perhaps to be noticed by us when the time comes; but are otherwise, except for chronological purposes, of the last degree of insignificance to gods or men.

"Freedom of the Press," says my melancholic Friend, "is a noble thing; and in certain Nations, at certain epochs, produces glorious effects,—chiefly in the revolutionary line, where that has grown indispensable. Freedom of the Press is possible, where everybody disapproves the least abuse of it; where the 'Censorship' is, as it were, exercised by all the world. When the world (as, even in the freest countries, it almost irresistibly tends to become) is no longer in a case to exercise that salutary function, and cannot keep down loud unwise speaking, loud unwise persuasion, and rebuke it into silence whenever printed, Freedom of the Press will not answer very long, among sane human creatures: and indeed, in Nations not in an exceptional case, it becomes impossible amazingly soon!"—

All these are phenomena of Friedrich's first week. Let these suffice as sample, in that first kind. Splendid indications surely; and shot forth in swift enough succession, flash following flash, upon an attentive world. Betokening, shall we say, what internal sea of splendor, struggling to disclose itself, probably lies in this young King; and how high his hopes go for mankind and himself? Yes, surely;—and introducing, we remark withal, the "New Era," of Philanthropy, Enlightenment and so much else; with French Revolution, and a "world well suicided" hanging in the rear! Clearly enough, to this young ardent Friedrich, foremost man of his Time, and capable of DOING its inarticulate or dumb aspirings, belongs that questionable honor; and a very singular one it would have seemed to Friedrich, had he lived to see what it meant!

Friedrich's rapidity and activity, in the first months of his reign, were wonderful to mankind; as indeed through life he continued to be a most rapid and active King. He flies about; mustering Troops, Ministerial Boards, passing Edicts, inspecting, accepting Homages of Provinces;—decides and does, every day that passes, an amazing number of things. Writes many Letters, too; finds moments even for some verses; and occasionally draws a snatch of melody from his flute.

His Letters are copiously preserved; but, as usual, they are in swift official tone, and tell us almost nothing. To his Sisters he writes assurances; to his friends, his Suhms, Duhan, Voltaires, eager invitations, general or particular, to come to him. "My state has changed," is his phrase to Voltaire and other dear intimates; a tone of pensiveness, at first even of sorrow and pathos traceable in it; "Come to me,"—and the tone, in an old dialect, different from Friedrich's, might have meant, "Pray for me." An immense new scene is opened, full of possibilities of good and bad. His hopes being great, his anxieties, the shadow of them, are proportionate. Duhan (his good old Tutor) does arrive, Algarotti arrives, warmly welcomed, both: with Voltaire there are difficulties; but surely he too will, before long, manage to arrive. The good Suhm, who had been Saxon Minister at Petersburg to his sorrow this long while back, got in motion soon enough; but, alas, his lungs were ruined by the Russian climate, and he did not arrive. Something pathetic still in those final LETTERS of Suhm. Passionately speeding on, like a spent steed struggling homeward; he has to pause at Warsaw, and in a few days dies there,—in a way mournful to Friedrich and us! To Duhan, and Duhan's children afterwards, he was punctually, not too lavishly, attentive; in like manner to Suhm's Nephews, whom the dying man had recommended to him.—We will now glance shortly at a second and contemporaneous phasis of Friedrich's affairs.

## INTENDS TO BE PRACTICAL WITHAL, AND EVERY INCH A KING

Friedrich is far indeed from thinking to reduce his Army, as the Foreign Editor imagines. On the contrary, he is, with all industry, increasing it. He changed the Potsdam Giants into four regiments of the usual stature; he is busy bargaining with his Brother-in-law of Brunswick, and with other neighbors, for still new regiments;—makes up, within the next few months, Eight Regiments, an increase of, say, 16,000 men. It would appear he means to keep an eye on the practicalities withal; means to have a Fighting-Apparatus of the utmost potentiality, for one thing! Here are other indications.

We saw the Old Dessauer, in a sad hour lately, speaking beside the mark; and with what Olympian glance, suddenly tearless, the new King flashed out upon him, knowing nothing of "authority" that could reside in any Dessauer. Nor was that a solitary experience; the like befell wherever needed. Heinrich of Schwedt, the Ill Margraf, advancing with jocose countenance in the way of old comradeship, in those first days, met unexpected rebuff, and was reduced to gravity on the sudden: "JETZT BIN ICH KONIG,—My Cousin, I am now King!" a fact which the Ill Margraf could never get forgotten again. Lieutenant-General Schulenburg, too, the didactic Schulenburg, presuming, on old familiarity, and willing to wipe out the misfortune of having once condemned us to death, which nobody is now upbraiding him with, rushes up from Landsberg, unbidden, to pay his congratulations and condolences, driven by irresistible exuberance of loyalty: to his astonishment, he is reminded (thing certain, manner of the thing not known), That an Officer cannot quit his post without order; that he, at this moment, ought to be in Landsberg! [Stenzel, iv. 41; Preuss, *Thronbesteigung*; &c.] Schulenburg has a hard old military face; but here is a young face too, which has grown unexpectedly rigorous. Fancy the blank look of little Schulenburg; the light of him snuffed out in this manner on a sudden. It is said he had thoughts of resigning, so indignant was he: no doubt he went home to Landsberg gloomily reflective, with the pipe-clay of his mind in such a ruinous condition. But there was no serious anger, on Friedrich's part; and he consoled his little Schulenburg soon after, by expediting some promotion he had intended him. "Terribly proud young Majesty this," exclaim the sweet voices. And indeed, if they are to have a Saturnian Kingdom, by appearance it will be on conditions only!

Anticipations there had been, that old unkindnesses against the Crown-Prince, some of which were cruel enough, might be remembered now: and certain people had their just fears, considering what account stood against them; others, VICE VERSA, their hopes. But neither the fears nor the hopes realized themselves; especially the fears proved altogether groundless. Derschau, who had voted Death in that Copenick Court-Martial, upon the Crown-Prince, is continued in his functions, in the light of his King's countenance, as if nothing such had been. Derschau, and all others so concerned; not the least question was made of them, nor of what they had thought or had done or said, on an occasion once so tragically vital to a certain man.

Nor is reward much regulated by past services to the Crown-Prince, or even by sufferings endured for him. "Shocking ingratitude!" exclaim the sweet voices here too,—being of weak judgment, many of them! Poor Katte's Father, a faithful old Soldier, not capable of being more, he does, rather conspicuously, make Feldmarschall, make Reichsgraf; happy, could these honors be a consolation to the old man. The Munchows of Custrin,—readers remember their kindness in that sad time; how the young boy went into petticoats again, and came to the Crown-Prince's cell with all manner of furnishings,—the Munchows, father and sons, this young gentleman of the petticoats among them, he took immediate pains to reward by promotion: eldest son was advanced into the General Directorium; two younger sons, to Majorship, to Captaincy, in their respective Regiments; him of the petticoats "he had already taken altogether to himself," [Preuss, i. 66.] and of him we shall

see a glimpse at Wilhelmina's shortly, as a "milkbeard (JEUNE MORVEUX)" in personal attendance on his Majesty. This was a notable exception. And in effect there came good public service, eminent some of it, from these Munchows in their various departments. And it was at length perceived to have been, in the main, because they were of visible faculty for doing work that they had got work to do; and the exceptional case of the Munchows became confirmatory of the rule.

Lieutenant Keith, again, whom we once saw galloping from Wesel to save his life in that bad affair of the Crown-Prince's and his, was nothing like so fortunate. Lieutenant Keith, by speed on that Wesel occasion, and help of Chesterfield's Secretary, got across to England; got into the Portuguese service; and has there been soldiering, very silently, these ten years past,—skin and body safe, though his effigy was cut in four quarters and nailed to the gallows at Wesel;—waiting a time that would come. Time being come, Lieutenant Keith hastened home; appealed to his effigy on the gallows;—and was made a Lieutenant-Colonel merely, with some slight appendages, as that of STALLMEISTER (Curator of the Stables) and something else; income still straitened, though enough to live upon. [Preuss, *Friedrich mit Verwandten und Freunden*, p. 281.] Small promotion, in comparison with hope, thought the poor Lieutenant; but had to rest satisfied with it; and struggle to understand that perhaps he was fit for nothing bigger, and that he must exert himself to do this small thing well. Hardness of heart in high places! Friedrich, one is glad to see, had not forgotten the poor fellow, could he have done better with him. Some ten years hence, quite incidentally, there came to Keith, one morning, a fine purse of money from his Majesty, one pretty gift in Keith's experience;—much the topic in Berlin, while a certain solemn English gentleman happened to be passing that way (whom we mean to detain a little by and by), who reports it for us with all the circumstances. [Sir Jonas Hanway, *Travels, &c.* (London, 1753), ii. 202. Date of the Gift is 1750.]

Lieutenant Spaen too had got into trouble for the Crown-Prince's sake, though we have forgotten him again; had "admitted Katte to interviews," or we forget what;—had sat his "year in Spandau" in consequence; been dismissed the Prussian service, and had taken service with the Dutch. Lieutenant Spaen either did not return at all, or disliked the aspects when he did, and immediately withdrew to Holland again. Which probably was wise of him. At a late period, King Friedrich, then a great King, on one of his Cleve Journeys, fell in with Spaen; who had become a Dutch General of rank, and was of good manners and style of conversation: King Friedrich was charmed to see him; became his guest for the night; conversed delightfully with him, about old Prussian matters and about new; and in the colloquy never once alluded to that interesting passage in his young life and Spaen's. [Nicolai, *Anekdoten*, vi. 178.] Hard as polished steel! thinks Spaen perhaps; but, if candid, must ask himself withal, Are facts any softer, or the Laws of Kingship to a man that holds it?—Keith silently did his Lieutenant-Colonelcy with the appendages, while life lasted: of the Page Keith, his Brother, who indeed had blabbed upon the Prince, as we remember, and was not entitled to be clamorous, I never heard that there was any notice taken; and figure him to myself as walking with shouldered firelock, a private Fusileer, all his life afterwards, with many reflections on things bygone. [These and the other Prussian Keiths are all of Scotch extraction; the Prussians, in natural German fashion, pronounce their name KAH-IT (English "KITE" with nothing of the Y in it), as may be worth remembering in a more important instance.]

Old friendship, it would seem, is without weight in public appointments here: old friends are somewhat astonished to find this friend of theirs a King every inch! To old comrades, if they were useless, much more if they were worse than useless, how disappointing! "One wretched Herr [name suppressed, but known at the time, and talked of, and whispered of], who had, like several others, hoping to rise that way, been industrious in encouraging the Crown-Prince's vices as to women, was so shocked at the return he now met, that in despair he hanged himself in LobeJun." (Lobegun, Magdeburg Country): here is a case for the humane! [Kuster, *Characterzuge des &c. von Saldern* (Berlin, 1793), p. 63.]

Friend Keyserling himself, "Caesarion" that used to be, can get nothing, though we love him much; being an idle topsy-turvy fellow with revenues of his own. Jordan, with his fine-drawn wit, French logics, LITERARY TRAVELS, thin exactitude; what can be done for Jordan? Him also his new Majesty loves much; and knows that, without some official living, poor Jordan has no resource. Jordan, after some waiting and survey, is made "Inspector of the Poor;"—busy this Autumn looking out for vacant houses, and arrangements for the thousand spinning women;—continues to be employed in mixed literary services (hunting up of Formey, for Editor, was one instance), and to be in much real intimacy. That also was perhaps about the real amount of amiable Jordan. To get Jordan a living by planting him in some office which he could not do; to warm Jordan by burning our royal bed for him: that had not entered into the mind of Jordan's royal friend. The Munchows he did promote; the Finks, sons of his Tutor Finkenstein: to these and other old comrades, in whom he had discovered fitness, it is no doubt abundantly grateful to him to recognize and employ it. As he notably does, in these and in other instances. But before all things he has decided to remember that he is King; that he must accept the severe laws of that trust, and do IT, or not have done anything.

An inverse sign, pointing in the same way, is the passionate search he is making in Foreign Countries for such men as will suit him. In these same months, for example, he bethinks him of two Counts Schmettau, in the Austrian Service, with whom he had made acquaintance in the Rhine Campaign; of a Count von Rothenburg, whom he saw in the French Camp there; and is negotiating to have them if possible. The Schmettaus are Prussian by birth, though in Austrian Service; them he obtains under form of an Order home, with good conditions under it; they came, and proved useful men to him. Rothenburg, a shining kind of figure in Diplomacy as well as Soldiership, was Alsatian German, foreign to Prussia; but him too Friedrich obtained, and made much of, as will be notable by and by. And in fact the soul of all these noble tendencies in Friedrich, which surely are considerable, is even this, That he loves men of merit, and does not love men of none; that he has an endless appetite for men of merit, and feels, consciously and otherwise, that they are the one thing beautiful, the one thing needful to him.

This, which is the product of all fine tendencies, is likewise their centre or focus out of which they start again, with some chance of fulfilment;—and we may judge in how many directions Friedrich was willing to expand himself, by the multifarious kinds he was inviting, and negotiating for. Academicians,—and not Maupertuis only, but all manner of mathematical geniuses (Euler whom he got, at Gravesande, Muschenbroek whom he failed of); and Literary geniuses innumerable, first and last. Academicians, Musicians, Players, Dancers even; much more Soldiers and Civil-Service men: no man that carries any honest "CAN DO" about with him but may expect some welcome here. Which continued through Friedrich's reign; and involved him in much petty trouble, not always successful in the lower kinds of it. For his Court was the cynosure of ambitious creatures on the wing, or inclined for taking wing: like a lantern kindled in the darkness of the world;—and many owls impinged upon him; whom he had to dismiss with brevity.

Perhaps it had been better to stand by mere Prussian or German merit, native to the ground? Or rather, undoubtedly it had! In some departments, as in the military, the administrative, diplomatic, Friedrich was himself among the best of judges: but in various others he had mainly (mainly, by no means blindly or solely) to accept noise of reputation as evidence of merit; and in these, if we compute with rigor, his success was intrinsically not considerable. The more honor to him that he never wearied of trying. "A man that does not care for merit," says the adage, "cannot himself have any." But a King that does not care for merit, what shall we say of such a King!—

## **BEHAVIOR TO HIS MOTHER; TO HIS WIFE**

One other fine feature, significant of many, let us notice: his affection for his Mother. When his Mother addressed him as "Your Majesty," he answered, as the Books are careful to tell us: "Call me

Son; that is the Title of all others most agreeable to me!" Words which, there can be no doubt, came from the heart. Fain would he shoot forth to greatness in filial piety, as otherwise; fain solace himself in doing something kind to his Mother. Generously, lovingly; though again with clear view of the limits. He decrees for her a Title higher than had been customary, as well as more accordant with his feelings; not "Queen Dowager," but "Her Majesty the Queen Mother." He decides to build her a new Palace; "under the Lindens" it is to be, and of due magnificence: in a month or two, he had even got bits of the foundation dug, and the Houses to be pulled down bought or bargained for; [Rodenbeck, p. 15 (30th June-23d Aug. 1740); and correct Stenzel (iv. 44).]—which enterprise, however, was renounced, no doubt with consent, as the public aspects darkened. Nothing in the way of honor, in the way of real affection heartily felt and demonstrated, was wanting to Queen Sophie in her widowhood. But, on the other hand, of public influence no vestige was allowed, if any was ever claimed; and the good kind Mother lived in her Monbijou, the centre and summit of Berlin society; and restricted herself wisely to private matters. She has her domesticities, family affections, readings, speculations; gives evening parties at Monbijou. One glimpse of her in 1742 we get, that of a perfectly private royal Lady; which though it has little meaning, yet as it is authentic, coming from Busching's hand, may serve as one little twinkle in that total darkness, and shall be left to the reader and his fancy:—

A Count Henkel, a Thuringian gentleman, of high speculation, high pietistic ways, extremely devout, and given even to writing of religion, came to Berlin about some Silesian properties,—a man I should think of lofty melancholic aspect; and, in severe type, somewhat of a lion, on account of his Book called "DEATH-BED SCENES, in four Volumes." Came to Berlin; and on the 15th August, 1742, towards evening (as the ever-punctual Busching looking into Henkel's Papers gives it), "was presented to the Queen Mother; who retained him to supper; supper not beginning till about ten o'clock. The Queen Mother was extremely gracious to Henkel; but investigated him a good deal, and put a great many questions," not quite easy to answer in that circle, "as, Why he did not play? What he thought of comedies and operas? What Preachers he was acquainted with in Berlin? Whether he too was a Writer of Books? [covertly alluding to the DEATH-BED SCENES, notes Busching]. And abundance of other questioning. She also recounted many fantastic anecdotes (VIEL ABENTEUERLICHES) about Count von Zinzendorf [Founder of HERNNHUTH, far-shining spiritual Paladin of that day, whom her Majesty thinks rather a spiritual Quixote]; and declared that they were strictly true." [Busching's *Beitrag*, iv. 27.] Upon which, EXIT Henkel, borne by Busching, and our light is snuffed out.

This is one momentary glance I have met with of Queen Sophie in her Dowager state. The rest, though there were seventeen years of it in all, is silent to mankind and me; and only her death, and her Son's great grief about it, so great as to be surprising, is mentioned in the Books.

Actual painful sorrow about his Father, much more any new outburst of weeping and lamenting, is not on record, after that first morning. Time does its work; and in such a whirl of occupations, sooner than elsewhere: and the loved Dead lie silent in their mausoleum in our hearts,—serenely sad as Eternity, not in loud sorrow as of Time. Friedrich was pious as a Son, however he might be on other heads. To the last years of his life, as from the first days of his reign, it was evident in what honor he held Friedrich Wilhelm's memory; and the words "my Father," when they turned up in discourse, had in that fine voice of his a tone which the observers noted. "To his Mother he failed no day, when in Berlin, however busy, to make his visit; and he never spoke to her, except hat in hand."

With his own Queen, Friedrich still consorts a good deal, in these first times; is with her at Charlottenburg, Berlin, Potsdam, Reinsberg, for a day or two, as occasion gives; sometimes at Reinsberg for weeks running, in the intervals of war and business: glad to be at rest amid his old pursuits, by the side of a kind innocent being familiar to him. So it lasts for a length of time. But these happy intervals, we can remark, grow rarer: whether the Lady's humor, as they became rarer, might not sink withal, and produce an acceleration in the rate of decline? She was thought to be capable of "pouting (FAIRE LA FACHEE)," at one period! We are left to our guesses; there is not anywhere

the smallest whisper to guide us. Deep silence reigns in all Prussian Books.—To feel or to suspect yourself neglected, and to become MORE amiable thereupon (in which course alone lies hope), is difficult for any Queen! Enough, we can observe these meetings, within two or three years, have become much rarer; and perhaps about the end of the third or fourth year, they altogether cease; and pass merely into the formal character. In which state they continued fixed, liable to no uncertainty; and were transacted, to the end of Friedrich's life, with inflexible regularity as the annual reviews were. This is a curious section of his life; which there will be other opportunities of noticing. But there is yet no thought of it anywhere, nor for years to come; though fables to the contrary were once current in Books. [Laveaux, &c.]

## NO CHANGE IN HIS FATHER'S METHODS OR MINISTRIES

In the old mode of Administration, in the Ministries, Government Boards, he made no change. These administrative methods of his wise Father's are admirable to Friedrich, who knows them well; and they continue to be so. These men of his Father's, them also Friedrich knows, and that they were well chosen. In methods or in men, he is inclined to make the minimum of alteration at present. One Finance Hofrath of a projecting turn, named Eckart, who had abused the last weak years of Friedrich Wilhelm, and much afflicted mankind by the favor he was in: this Eckart Friedrich appointed a commission to inquire into; found the public right in regard to Eckart, and dismissed him with ignominy, not with much other punishment. Minister Boden, on the contrary, high in the Finance Department, who had also been much grumbled at, Friedrich found to be a good man: and Friedrich not only retained Boden, but advanced him; and continued to make more and more use of him in time coming. His love of perfection in work done, his care of thrift, seemed almost greater than his late Father's had been,—to the disappointment of many. In the other Departments, Podewils, Thulmeyer and the rest went on as heretofore;—only in general with less to do, the young King doing more himself than had been usual. Valori, "MON GROS VALORI (my fat Valori)," French Minister here, whom we shall know better, writes home of the new King of Prussia: "He begins his government, as by all appearance he will carry it on, in a highly satisfactory way: everywhere traits of benevolence, sympathy for his subjects, respect shown to the memory of the Deceased," [*Memoires des Negociations du Marquis de Valori* (a Paris, 1820), i. 20 ("June 13th, 1740"). A valuable Book, which we shall often have to quote: edited in a lamentably ignorant manner.]—no change made, where it evidently is not for the better.

Friedrich's "Three principal Secretaries of State," as we should designate them, are very remarkable. Three Clerks he found, or had known of, somewhere in the Public Offices; and now took, under some advanced title, to be specially his own Private Clerks: three vigorous long-headed young fellows, "Eichel, Schuhmacher, Lautensack" the obscure names of them; [Rodenbeck, 15th June, 1740.] out of whom, now and all along henceforth, he got immensities of work in that kind. They lasted all his life; and, of course, grew ever more expert at their function. Close, silent; exact as machinery: ever ready, from the smallest clear hint, marginal pencil-mark, almost from a glance of the eye, to clothe the Royal Will in official form, with the due rugged clearness and thrift of words. "Came punctually at four in the morning in summer, five in winter;" did daily the day's work; and kept their mouths well shut. A very notable Trio of men; serving his Majesty and the Prussian Nation as Principal Secretaries of State, on those cheap terms;—nay almost as Houses of Parliament with Standing Committees and appendages, so many Acts of Parliament admittedly rather wise, being passed daily by his Majesty's help and theirs!—Friedrich paid them rather well; they saw no society; lived wholly to their work, and to their own families. Eichel alone of the three was mentioned at all by mankind, and that obscurely; an "abstruse, reserved, long-headed kind of man;" and "made a great deal of money in the end," insinuates Busching, [*Beitrage*, v. 238, &c.] no friend of Friedrich's or his.

In superficial respects, again, Friedrich finds that the Prussian King ought to have a King's Establishment, and maintain a decent splendor among his neighbors,—as is not quite the case at present. In this respect he does make changes. A certain quantity of new Pages, new Goldsticks; some considerable, not too considerable, new furbishing of the Royal Household,—as it were, a fair coat of new paint, with gilding not profuse,—brought it to the right pitch for this King. About "a hundred and fifty" new figures of the Page and Goldstick kind, is the reckoning given. [*Helden Geschichte*, i. 353.] So many of these; and there is an increase of 16,000 to one's Army going on: that is the proportion noticeable. In the facts as his Father left them Friedrich persisted all his life; in the semblances or outer vestures he changed, to this extent for the present.—These are the Phenomena of Friedrich's Accession, noted by us.

Readers see there is radiance enough, perhaps slightly in excess, but of intrinsically good quality, in the Aurora of this new Reign. A brilliant valiant young King; much splendor of what we could call a golden or soft nature (visible in those "New-Era" doings of his, in those strong affections to his Friends); and also, what we like almost better in him, something of a STEEL-BRIGHT or stellar splendor (meaning, clearness of eyesight, intrepidity, severe loyalty to fact),—which is a fine addition to the softer element, and will keep IT and its philanthropies and magnanimities well under rule. Such a man is rare in this world; how extremely rare such a man born King! He is swift and he is persistent; sharply discerning, fearless to resolve and perform; carries his great endowments lightly, as if they were not heavy to him. He has known hard misery, been taught by stripes; a light stoicism sits gracefully on him.

"What he will grow to?" Probably to something considerable. Very certainly to something far short of his aspirations; far different from his own hopes; and the world's concerning him. It is not we, it is Father Time that does the controlling and fulfilling of our hopes; and strange work he makes of them and us. For example, has not Friedrich's grand "New Era," inaugurated by him in a week, with the leading spirits all adoring, issued since in French Revolution and a "world well suicided,"—the leading spirits much thrown out in consequence! New Era has gone to great lengths since Friedrich's time; and the leading spirits do not now adore it, but yawn over it, or worse! Which changes to us the then aspect of Friedrich, and his epoch and his aspirations, a good deal.—On the whole, Friedrich will go his way, Time and the leading spirits going theirs; and, like the rest of us, will grow to what he can. His actual size is not great among the Kingdoms: his outward resources are rather to be called small. The Prussian Dominion at that date is, in extent, about four-fifths of an England Proper, and perhaps not one-fifth so fertile: subject Population is well under Two Millions and a Half; Revenue not much above One Million Sterling,' [The exact statistic cipher is, at Friedrich's Accession: PRUSSIAN TERRITORIES, 2,275 square miles German (56,875 English); POPULATION, 2,240,000; ANNUAL REVENUE, 7,371,707 thalers 7 groschen (1,105,756 pounds without the pence). See Preuss, *Buch fur Jedermann*, i. 49; Stenzel, iii. 692; &c.]—very small, were not thrift such a VECTIGAL.

This young King is magnanimous; not much to be called ambitious, or not in the vulgar sense almost at all,—strange as it may sound to readers. His hopes at this time are many;—and among them, I perceive, there is not wanting secretly, in spite of his experiences, some hope that he himself may be a good deal "happier" than formerly. Nor is there any ascetic humor, on his part, to forbid trial. He is much determined to try. Probably enough, as we guess and gather, his agreeablest anticipations, at this time, were of Reinsberg: How, in the intervals of work well done, he would live there wholly to the Muses; have his chosen spirits round him, his colloquies, his suppers of the gods. Why not? There might be a King of Intellects conceivable withal; protecting, cherishing, practically guiding the chosen Illuminative Souls of this world. A new Charlemagne, the smallest new Charlemagne of Spiritual type, with HIS Paladins round him; how glorious, how salutary in the dim generations now going!—These too were hopes which proved signally futile. Rigorous Time could not grant these at

all;—granted, in his own hard way, other things instead. But, all along, the Life-element, the Epoch, though Friedrich took it kindly and never complained, was ungenial to such a man.

"Somewhat of a rotten Epoch, this into which Friedrich has been born, to shape himself and his activities royal and other!"—exclaims Smelfungus once: "In an older earnest Time, when the eternally awful meanings of this Universe had not yet sunk into dubieties to any one, much less into levities or into mendacities, into huge hypocrisies carefully regulated,—so luminous, vivid and ingenuous a young creature had not wanted divine manna in his Pilgrimage through Life. Nor, in that case, had he come out of it in so lean a condition. But the highest man of us is born brother to his Contemporaries; struggle as he may, there is no escaping the family likeness. By spasmodic indignant contradiction of them, by stupid compliance with them,—you will inversely resemble, if you do not directly; like the starling, you can't get out!—Most surely, if there do fall manna from Heaven, in the given Generation, and nourish in us reverence and genial nobleness day by day, it is blessed and well. Failing that, in regard to our poor spiritual interests, there is sure to be one of two results: mockery, contempt, disbelief, what we may call SHORT-DIET to the length of very famine (which was Friedrich's case); or else slow-poison, carefully elaborated and provided by way of daily nourishment.

"Unhappy souls, these same! The slow-poison has gone deep into them. Instead of manna, this long while back, they have been living on mouldy corrupt meats sweetened by sugar-of-lead; or perhaps, like Voltaire, a few individuals prefer hunger, as the cleaner alternative; and in contemptuous, barren, mocking humor, not yet got the length of geniality or indignation, snuff the east-wind by way of spiritual diet. Pilgriming along on such nourishment, the best human soul fails to become very ruddy!—Tidings about Heaven are fallen so uncertain, but the Earth and her joys are still Interesting: 'Take to the Earth and her joys;—let your soul go out, since it must; let your five senses and their appetites be well alive.' That is a dreadful 'Sham-Christian Dispensation' to be born under! You wonder at the want of heroism in the Eighteenth Century. Wonder rather at the degree of heroism it had; wonder how many souls there still are to be met with in it of some effective capability, though dieting in that way,—nothing else to be had in the shops about. Carterets, Belleisles, Friedrichs, Voltaires; Chathams, Franklins, Choiseuls: there is an effective stroke of work, a fine fire of heroic pride, in this man and the other; not yet extinguished by spiritual famine or slow-poison; so robust is Nature the mighty Mother!—

"But in general, that sad Gospel, 'Souls extinct, Stomachs well alive!' is the credible one, not articulately preached, but practically believed by the abject generations, and acted on as it never was before. What immense sensualities there were, is known; and also (as some small offset, though that has not yet begun in 1740) what immense quantities of Physical Labor and contrivance were got out of mankind, in that Epoch and down to this day. As if, having lost its Heaven, it had struck desperately down into the Earth; as if it were a BEAVER-kind, and not a mankind any more. We had once a Barbaossa; and a world all grandly true. But from that to Karl VI., and HIS Holy Romish Reich in such a state of 'Holiness'—!" I here cut short my abstruse Friend.

Readers are impatient to have done with these miscellaneous preludings, and to be once definitely under way, such a Journey lying ahead. Yes, readers; a Journey indeed! And, at this point, permit me to warn you that, where the ground, where Dryasdust and the Destinies, yield anything humanly illustrative of Friedrich and his Work, one will have to linger, and carefully gather it, even as here. Large tracts occur, bestrewn with mere pedantisms, diplomatic cobwebberies, learned marine-stores, and inhuman matter, over which we shall have to skip empty-handed: this also was among the sad conditions of our Enterprise, that it has to go now too slow and again too fast; not in proportion to natural importance of objects, but to several inferior considerations withal. So busy has perverse Destiny been on it; perverse Destiny, edacious Chance;—and the Dryasdusts, too, and Nightmares, in Prussia as elsewhere, we know how strong they are!

Friedrich's character in old age has doubtless its curious affinities, its disguised identities, with these prognostic features and indications of his youth: and to our readers,—if we do ever get them

to the goal, of seeing Friedrich a little with their own eyes and judgments,—there may be pleasant contrasts and comparisons of that kind in store, one day. But the far commoner experience (which also has been my own),—here is Smelfungus's stern account of that:—

"My friend, you will be luckier than I, if, after ten years, not to say, in a sense, twenty years, thirty years, of reading and rummaging in those sad Prussian Books, ancient and new (which often are laudably authentic, too, and exact as to details), you can gather any character whatever of Friedrich, in any period of his life, or conceive him as a Human Entity at all! It is strange, after such thousand-fold writing, but it is true, his History is considerably unintelligible to mankind at this hour; left chaotic, enigmatic, in a good many points,—the military part of it alone being brought to clearness, and rendered fairly conceivable and credible to those who will study. And as to the Man himself, or what his real Physiognomy can have been—! Well, it must be owned few men were of such RAPIDITY of face and aspect; so difficult to seize the features of. In his action, too, there was such rapidity, such secrecy, suddenness: a man that could not be read, even by the candid, except as in flashes of lightning. And then the anger of by-standers, uncandid, who got hurt by him; the hasty malevolences, the stupidities, the opacities: enough, in modern times, what is saying much, perhaps no man's motives, intentions, and procedure have been more belied, misunderstood, misrepresented, during his life. Nor, I think, since that, have many men fared worse, by the Limner or Biographic class, the favorable to him and the unfavorable; or been so smeared of and blotched of, and reduced to a mere blur and dazzlement of cross-lights, incoherences, incredibilities, in which nothing, not so much as a human nose, is clearly discernible by way of feature!"—Courage, reader, nevertheless; on the above terms let us march according to promise.

## Chapter II. — THE HOMAGINGS

Young Friedrich, as his Father had done, considers it unnecessary to be crowned. Old Friedrich, first of the name, and of the King series, we did see crowned, with a pinch of snuff tempering the solemnities. That Coronation once well done suffices all his descendants hitherto. Such an expense of money,—of diluted mendacity too! Such haranguing, gesturing, symbolic fudging, all grown half false:—avoid lying, even with your eyes, or knees, or the coat upon your back, so far as you easily can!

Nothing of Coronation: but it is thought needful to have the HULDIGUNGEN (Homagings) done, the Fealties sworn; and the young Majesty in due course goes about, or gives directions, now here now there, in his various Provinces, getting that accomplished. But even in that, Friedrich is by no means strait-laced or punctilious; does it commonly by Deputy: only in three places, Königsberg, Berlin, Cleve, does he appear in person. Mainly by deputy; and always with the minimum of fuss, and no haranguing that could be avoided. Nowhere are the old STANDE (Provincial Parliaments) assembled, now or afterwards: sufficient for this and for every occasion are the "Permanent Committees of the STANDE;" nor is much speaking, unessential for despatch of business, used to these.

"STANDE—of Ritterschaft mainly, of Gentry small and great—existed once in all those Countries, as elsewhere," says one Historian; "and some of them, in Preussen, for example, used to be rather loud, and inclined to turbulence, till the curb, from a judicious bridle-hand, would admonish them. But, for a long while past,—especially since the Great Elector's time, who got an 'Excise Law' passed, or the foundations of a good Excise Law laid; [Preuss, iv. 432; and *Thronbesteigung*, pp. 379-383.] and, what with Excise, what with Domain-Farms, had a fixed Annual Budget, which he reckoned fair to both parties,—they have been dying out for want of work; and, under Friedrich Wilhelm, may be said to have gone quite dead. What work was left for them? Prussian Budget is fixed, many things are fixed: why talk of them farther? The Prussian King, nothing of a fool like certain others,"—which indeed is the cardinal point, though my Author does not say so,—"is respectfully aware of the facts round him; and can listen to the rumors too, so far as he finds good. The King sees himself terribly interested to get into the right course in all things, and avoid the wrong one! Probably he does, in his way, seek 'wise Advice concerning the arduous matters of the Kingdom;' nay I believe he is diligent to have it of the wisest:—who knows if STANDE would always give it wiser; especially STANDE in the haranguing condition?"—Enough, they are not applied to. There is no Freedom in that Country. "No Freedom to speak of," continues he: "but I do a little envy them their Fixed Budget, and some other things. What pleasure there can be in having your household arrangements tumbled into disorder every new Year, by a new-contrived scale of expenses for you, I never could ascertain!"—

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