

ТОМАС КАРЛЕЙЛЬ

HISTORY OF FRIEDRICH
II OF PRUSSIA —
VOLUME 04

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of Prussia — Volume 04

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Thomas Carlyle

History of Friedrich II of Prussia — Volume 04

BOOK IV. — FRIEDRICH'S APPRENTICESHIP, FIRST STAGE. - 1713-1728

CHAPTER I. — CHILDHOOD: DOUBLE EDUCATIONAL ELEMENT

Of Friedrich's childhood, there is not, after all our reading, much that it would interest the English public to hear tell of. Perhaps not much of knowable that deserves anywhere to be known. Books on it, expressly handling it, and Books on Friedrich Wilhelm's Court and History, of which it is always a main element, are not wanting: but they are mainly of the sad sort which, with pain and difficulty, teach us nothing, Books done by pedants and tenebrific persons, under the name of men; dwelling not on things, but, at endless length, on the outer husks

of things: of unparalleled confusion, too;—not so much as an Index granted you; to the poor half-peck of cinders, hidden in these wagon-loads of ashes, no sieve allowed! Books tending really to fill the mind with mere dust-whirlwinds,—if the mind did not straightway blow them out again; which it does. Of these let us say nothing. Seldom had so curious a Phenomenon worse treatment from the Dryasdust, species.

Among these Books, touching on Friedrich's childhood, and treating of his Father's Court, there is hardly above one that we can characterize as fairly human: the Book written by his little Sister Wilhelmina, when she grew to size and knowledge of good and evil; [*Memoires de Frederique Sophie Wilhelmine de Prusse, Margrave de Bareith* (Brunswick, Paris et Londres, 1812), 2 vols. 8vo.]—and this, of what flighty uncertain nature it is, the world partly knows. A human Book, however, not a pedant one: there is a most shrill female soul busy with intense earnestness here; looking, and teaching us to look. We find it a VERACIOUS Book, done with heart, and from eyesight and insight; of a veracity deeper than the superficial sort. It is full of mistakes, indeed; and exaggerates dreadfully, in its shrill female way; but is above intending to deceive: deduct the due subtrahend,—say perhaps twenty-five per cent, or in extreme cases as high as seventy-five,—you will get some human image of credible actualities from Wilhelmina. Practically she is our one resource on this matter. Of the strange King Friedrich Wilhelm and his strange Court, with such an Heir-Apparent growing up in it,

there is no real light to be had, except what Wilhelmina gives,—or kindles dark Books of others into giving. For that, too, on long study, is the result of her, here and there. With so flickery a wax-taper held over Friedrich's childhood,—and the other dirty tallow-dips all going out in intolerable odor,—judge if our success can be very triumphant!

We perceive the little creature has got much from Nature; not the big arena only, but fine inward gifts, for he is well-born in more senses than one;—and that in the breeding of him there are two elements noticeable, widely diverse: the French and the German. This is perhaps the chief peculiarity; best worth laying hold of, with the due comprehension, if our means allow.

FIRST EDUCATIONAL ELEMENT, THE FRENCH ONE

His nurses, governesses, simultaneous and successive, mostly of French breed, are duly set down in the Prussian Books, and held in mind as a point of duty by Prussian men; but, in foreign parts, cannot be considered otherwise than as a group, and merely with generic features. He had a Frau von Kamecke for Head Governess,—the lady whom Wilhelmina, in her famed *Memoires*, always writes KAMKEN; and of whom, except the floating gossip found in that Book, there is nothing to be remembered. Under her, as practical superintendent, SOUS-GOUVERNANTE and quasi-mother, was the Dame de

Roucoulles, a more important person for us here. Dame de Roucoulles, once de Montbail, the same respectable Edict-of-Nantes French lady who, five-and-twenty years ago, had taken similar charge of Friedrich Wilhelm; a fact that speaks well for the character of her performance in that office. She had done her first edition of a Prussian Prince in a satisfactory manner; and not without difficult accidents and singularities, as we have heard: the like of which were spared her in this her second edition (so we may call it); a second and, in all manner of ways, an improved one. The young Fritz swallowed no shoe-buckles; did not leap out of window, hanging on by the hands; nor achieve anything of turbulent, or otherwise memorable, in his infantine history; the course of which was in general smooth, and runs, happily for it, below the ken of rumor. The Boy, it is said, and is easily credible, was of extraordinary vivacity; quick in apprehending all things, and gracefully relating himself to them. One of the prettiest, vividest little boys; with eyes, with mind and ways, of uncommon brilliancy;—only he takes less to soldiering than the paternal heart could wish; and appears to find other things in the world fully as notable as loud drums, and stiff men drawn up in rows. Moreover, he is apt to be a little unhealthy now and then, and requires care from his nurses, over whom the judicious Roucoulles has to be very vigilant.

Of this respectable Madame de Roucoulles I have read, at least seven times, what the Prussian Books say of her by way of Biography; but it is always given in their dull tombstone

style; it has moreover next to no importance; and I,—alas, I do not yet too well remember it! She was from Normandy; of gentle blood, never very rich; Protestant, in the Edict-of-Nantes time; and had to fly her country, a young widow, with daughter and mother-in-law hanging on her; the whole of them almost penniless. However, she was kindly received at the Court of Berlin, as usual in that sad case; and got some practical help towards living in her new country. Queen Sophie Charlotte had liked her society; and finding her of prudent intelligent turn, and with the style of manners suitable, had given her Friedrich Wilhelm to take charge of. She was at that time Madame de Montbail; widow, as we said: she afterwards wedded Roucoules, a refugee gentleman of her own Nation, who had gone into the Prussian Army, as was common for the like of him: She had again become a widow, Madame de Roucoules this time, with her daughter Montbail still about her, when, by the grateful good sense of Friedrich Wilhelm, she was again intrusted as we see;—and so had the honor of governessing Frederick the Great for the first seven years of his life. Respectable lady, she oversaw his nurses, pap-boats,—"beer-soup and bread," he himself tells us once, was his main diet in boyhood,—beer-soups, dress-frocks, first attempts at walking; and then also his little bits of intellectualities, moralities; his incipencies of speech, demeanor, and spiritual development; and did her function very honestly, there is no doubt.

Wilhelmina mentions her, at a subsequent period; and we have

a glimpse of this same Roucoules, gliding about among the royal young-folk, "with only one tooth left" (figuratively speaking), and somewhat given to tattle, in Princess Wilhelmina's opinion. Grown very old now, poor lady; and the dreadfulest bore, when she gets upon Hanover and her experiences, and Queen Sophie Charlotte's, in that stupendously magnificent court under Gentleman Ernst. Shun that topic, if you love your peace of mind! [*Memoires* (above cited).]—She did certainly superintend the Boy Fritzkin for his first seven years; that is a glory that cannot be taken from her. And her pupil, too, we agreeably perceive, was always grateful for her services in that capacity. Once a week, if he were in Berlin, during his youthful time, he was sure to appear at the Roucoules Soiree, and say and look various pleasant things to his "CHER MAMAN (dear Mamma)," as he used to call her, and to the respectable small parts she had. Not to speak of other more substantial services, which also were not wanting.

Roucoules and the other female souls, mainly French, among whom the incipient Fritz now was, appear to have done their part as well as could be looked for. Respectable Edict-of-Nantes French ladies, with high head-gear, wide hoops; a clear, correct, but somewhat barren and meagre species, tight-laced and high-frizzled in mind and body. It is not a very fertile element for a young soul: not very much of silent piety in it; and perhaps of vocal piety more than enough in proportion. An element founding on what they call "enlightened Protestantism,"

"freedom of thought," and the like, which is apt to become loquacious, and too conscious of itself; terming, on the whole, rather to contempt of the false, than to deep or very effective recognition of the true.

But it is, in some important senses, a clear and pure element withal. At lowest, there are no conscious semi-falsities, or volunteer hypocrisies, taught the poor Boy; honor, clearness, truth of word at least; a decorous dignified bearing; various thin good things, are honestly inculcated and exemplified; nor is any bad, ungraceful or suspicious thing permitted there, if recognized for such. It might have been a worse element; and we must be thankful for it. Friedrich, through life, carries deep traces of this French-Protestant incipency: a very big wide-branching royal tree, in the end; but as small and flexible a seedling once as any one of us.

The good old Dame de Roucoules just lived to witness his accession; on which grand juncture and afterwards, as he had done before, he continued to express, in graceful and useful ways, his gratitude and honest affection to her and hers. Tea services, presents in cut-glass and other kinds, with Letters that were still more precious to the old Lady, had come always at due intervals, and one of his earliest kingly gifts was that of some suitable small pension for Montbail, the elderly daughter of this poor old Roucoules, [Preuss, *Friedrich der Grosse, eine Lebensgeschichte* (5 vols. Berlin, 1832-1834), v. (Urkundenbuch, p. 4). *OEuvres de Frederic* (same Preuss's Edition, Berlin, 1846-1850, &c.), xvi.

184, 191.—The Herr Doctor J. D. E. Preuss, "Historiographer of Brandenburg," devoted wholly to the study of Friedrich for five-and-twenty years past, and for above a dozen years busily engaged in editing the *OEuvres de Frederic*,—has, besides that *Lebensgeschichte* just cited, three or four smaller Books, of indistinctly different titles, on the same subject. A meritoriously exact man; acquainted with the outer details of Friedrich's Biography (had he any way of arranging, organizing or setting them forth) as few men ever were or will be. We shall mean always this *Lebensgeschichte* here, when no other title is given: and *OEuvres de Frederic* shall signify HIS Edition, unless the contrary be stated.] who was just singing her DIMITTAES as it were, still in a blithe and pious manner. For she saw now (in 1740) her little nursling grown to be a brilliant man and King; King gone out to the Wars, too, with all Europe inquiring and wondering what the issue would be. As for her, she closed her poor old eyes, at this stage of the business; piously, in foreign parts, far from her native Normandy; and did not see farther what the issue was. Good old Dame, I have, as was observed, read some seven times over what they call biographical accounts of her; but have seven times (by Heaven's favor, I do partly believe) mostly forgotten them again; and would not, without cause, inflict on any reader the like sorrow. To remember one worthy thing, how many thousand unworthy things must a man be able to forget!

From this Edict-of-Mantes environment, which taught our

young Fritz his first lessons of human behavior,—a polite sharp little Boy, we do hope and understand,—he learned also to clothe his bits of notions, emotions, and garrulous utterabilities, in the French dialect. Learned to speak, and likewise, what is more important; to THINK, in French; which was otherwise quite domesticated in the Palace, and became his second mother-tongue. Not a bad dialect; yet also none of the best. Very lean and shallow, if very clear and convenient; leaving much in poor Fritz unuttered, unthought, unpractised, which might otherwise have come into activity in the course of his life. He learned to read very soon, I presume; but he did not, now or afterwards, ever learn to spell. He spells indeed dreadfully ILL, at his first appearance on the writing stage, as we shall see by and by; and he continued, to the last, one of the bad spellers of his day. A circumstance which I never can fully account for, and will leave to the reader's study.

From all manner of sources,—from inferior valetaille, Prussian Officials, Royal Majesty itself when not in gala,—he learned, not less rootedly, the corrupt Prussian dialect of German; and used the same, all his days, among his soldiers, native officials, common subjects and wherever it was most convenient; speaking it, and writing and misspelling it, with great freedom, though always with a certain aversion and undisguised contempt, which has since brought him blame in some quarters. It is true, the Prussian form of German is but rude; and probably Friedrich, except sometimes in Luther's Bible, never read any

German Book. What, if we will think of it, could he know of his first mother-tongue! German, to this day, is a frightful dialect for the stupid, the pedant and dullard sort! Only in the hands of the gifted does it become supremely good. It had not yet been the language of any Goethe, any Lessing; though it stood on the eve of becoming such. It had already been the language of Luther, of Ulrich Hutten, Friedrich Barbarossa, Charlemagne and others. And several extremely important things had been said in it, and some pleasant ones even sung in it, from an old date, in a very appropriate manner,—had Crown-Prince Friedrich known all that. But he could not reasonably be expected to know:—and the wiser Germans now forgive him for not knowing, and are even thankful that he did not.

Chapter II. — THE GERMAN ELEMENT

So that, as we said, there are two elements for young Fritz, and highly diverse ones, from both of which he is to draw nourishment, and assimilate what he can. Besides that Edict-of-Nantes French element, and in continual contact and contrast with it, which prevails chiefly in the Female Quarters of the Palace,—there is the native German element for young Fritz, of which the centre is Papa, now come to be King, and powerfully manifesting himself as such. An abrupt peremptory young King; and German to the bone. Along with whom, companions to him in his social hours, and fellow-workers in his business, are a set of very rugged German sons of Nature; differing much from the French sons of Art. Baron Grumkow, Leopold Prince of Anhalt-Dessau (not yet called the "OLD Dessauer," being under forty yet), General Glasenap, Colonel Derschau, General Flans; these, and the other nameless Generals and Officials, are a curious counterpart to the Camases, the Hautcharmoyes and Forcades, with their nimble tongues and rapiers; still more to the Beausobres, Achards, full of ecclesiastical logic, made of Bayle and Calvin kneaded together; and to the high-frizzled ladies rustling in stiff silk, with the shadow of Versailles and of the Dragonnades alike present to them.

Born Hyperboreans these others; rough as hemp, and stout of

fibre as hemp; native products of the rigorous North. Of whom, after all our reading, we know little.—O Heaven, they have had long lines of rugged ancestors, cast in the same rude stalwart mould, and leading their rough life there, of whom we know absolutely nothing! Dumb all those preceding busy generations, and this of Friedrich Wilhelm is grown almost dumb. Grim semi-articulate Prussian men; gone all to pipe-clay and mustache for us. Strange blond-complexioned, not unbeautiful Prussian honorable women, in hoops, brocades, and unintelligible head-gear and hair-towers,—ACH GOTT, they too are gone; and their musical talk, in the French or German language, that also is gone; and the hollow Eternities have swallowed it, as their wont is, in a very surprising manner!—

Grumkow, a cunning, greedy-hearted, long-headed fellow, of the old Pomeranian Nobility by birth, has a kind of superficial polish put upon his Hyperboreanisms; he has been in foreign countries, doing legations, diplomacies, for which, at least for the vulpine parts of which, he has a turn. He writes and speaks articulate grammatical French; but neither in that, nor in native Pommerish Platt-Deutsch, does he show us much, except the depths of his own greed, of his own astucities and stealthy audacities. Of which we shall hear more than enough by and by.

OF THE DESSAUER, NOT YET "OLD."

As to the Prince of Anhalt-Dessau, rugged man, whose very

face is the color of gunpowder, he also knows French, and can even write in it, if he like,—having duly had a Tutor of that nation, and strange adventures with him on the grand tour and elsewhere;—but does not much practise writing, when it can be helped. His children, I have heard, he expressly did not teach to read or write, seeing no benefit in that effeminate art, but left them to pick it up as they could. His Princess, all rightly ennobled now,—whom he would not but marry, though sent on the grand tour to avoid it,—was the daughter of one Fos an Apothecary at Dessau; and is still a beautiful and prudent kind of woman, who seems to suit him well enough, no worse than if she had been born a Princess. Much talk has been of her, in princely and other circles; nor is his marriage the only strange thing Leopold has done. He is a man to keep the world's tongue wagging, not too musically always; though himself of very unvocal nature. Perhaps the biggest mass of inarticulate human vitality, certainly one of the biggest, then going about in the world. A man of vast dumb faculty; dumb, but fertile, deep; no end of ingenuities in the rough head of him:—as much mother-wit, there, I often guess, as could be found in whole talking parliaments, spouting themselves away in vocables and eloquent wind!

A man of dreadful impetuosity withal. Set upon his will as the one law of Nature; storming forward with incontrollable violence: a very whirlwind of a man. He was left a minor; his Mother guardian. Nothing could prevent him from marrying this Fos the Apothecary's Daughter; no tears nor contrivances of his

Mother, whom he much loved, and who took skilful measures. Fourteen months of travel in Italy; grand tour, with eligible French Tutor,—whom he once drew sword upon, getting some rebuke from him one night in Venice, and would have killed, had not the man been nimble, at once dexterous and sublime:—it availed not. The first thing he did, on re-entering Dessau, with his Tutor, was to call at Apothecary Fos's, and see the charming Mamsell; to go and see his Mother, was the second thing. Not even his grand passion for war could eradicate those; he went to his grand passion for Dutch William's wars; the wise mother still counselling, who was own aunt to Dutch William, and liked the scheme. He besieged Namur; fought and besieged up and down,—with insatiable appetite for fighting and sieging; with great honor, too, and ambitions awakening in him;—campaign after campaign: but along with the flamy-thunderly ideal bride, figuratively called Bellona, there was always a soft real one, Mamsell Fos of Dessau, to whom he continued constant. The Government of his Dominions he left cheerfully to his Mother, even when he came of age: "I am for learning War, as the one right trade; do with all things as you please, Mamma,— only not with Mamsell, not with her!"—

Readers may figure this scene too, and shudder over it. Some rather handsome male Cousin of Mamsell, Medical Graduate or whatever he was, had appeared in Dessau:—"Seems, to admire Mamsell much; of course, in a Platonic way," said rumor:—"He? Admire?" thinks Leopold;—thinks a good deal of it, not in the

philosophic mood. As he was one day passing Fos's, Mamsell and the Medical Graduate are visible, standing together at the window inside. Pleasantly looking out upon Nature,—of course quite casually, say some Histories with a sneer. In fact, it seems possible this Medical Graduate may have been set to act shoeing-horn; but he had better not. Leopold storms into the House, "Draw, scandalous canaille, and defend yourself!"—And in this, or some such way, a confident tradition says, he killed the poor Medical Graduate there and then. One tries always to hope not: but Varnhagen is positive, though the other Histories say nothing of it. God knows. The man was a Prince; no Reichshofrath, Speyer-Wetzlar KAMMER, or other Supreme Court, would much trouble itself, except with formal shakings of the wig, about such a peccadillo. In fine, it was better for Leopold to marry the Miss Fos; which he actually did (1698, in his twenty-second year), "with the left-hand,"—and then with the right and both hands; having got her properly ennobled before long, by his splendid military services. She made, as we have hinted, an excellent Wife to him, for the fifty or sixty ensuing years.

This is a strange rugged specimen, this inarticulate Leopold; already getting mythic, as we can perceive, to the polished vocal ages; which mix all manner of fables with the considerable history he has. Readers will see him turn up again in notable forms. A man hitherto unknown except in his own country; and yet of very considerable significance to all European countries whatsoever; the fruit of his activities, without his name attached,

being now manifest in all of them. He invented the iron ramrod; he invented the equal step; in fact, he is the inventor of modern military tactics. Even so, if we knew it: the Soldierly of every civilized country still receives from this man, on parade-fields and battle-fields, its word of command; out of his rough head proceeded the essential of all that the innumerable Drill-sergeants, in various languages, daily repeat and enforce. Such a man is worth some transient glance from his fellow-creatures,—especially with a little Fritz trotting at his foot, and drawing inferences from him.

Dessau, we should have said for the English reader's behoof, was and still is a little independent Principality; about the size of Huntingdonshire, but with woods instead of bogs;—revenue of it, at this day, is 60,000 pounds, was perhaps not 20, or even 10,000 in Leopold's first time. It lies some fourscore miles southwest of Berlin, attainable by post-horses in a day. Leopold, as his Father had done, stood by Prussia as if wholly native to it. Leopold's Mother was Sister of that fine Louisa, the Great Elector's first Wife; his Sister is wedded to the Margraf of Schwedt, Friedrich Wilhelm's half-uncle. Lying in such neighborhood, and being in such affinity to the Prussian House, the Dessauers may be said to have, in late times, their headquarters at Berlin. Leopold and Leopold's sons, as his father before him had done, without neglecting their Dessau and Principality, hold by the Prussian Army as their main employment. Not neglecting Dessau either; but going thither in

winter, or on call otherwise; Leopold least of all neglecting it, who neglects nothing that can be useful to him.

He is General Field-Marshal of the Prussian Armies, the foremost man in war-matters with this new King; and well worthy to be so. He is inventing, or brooding in the way to invent, a variety of things,—"iron ramrods," for one; a very great improvement on the fragile ineffective wooden implement, say all the Books, but give no date to it; that is the first thing; and there will be others, likewise undated, but posterior, requiring mention by and by. Inventing many things;—and always well practising what is already invented, and known for certain. In a word, he is drilling to perfection, with assiduous rigor, the Prussian Infantry to be the wonder of the world. He has fought with them, too, in a conclusive manner; and is at all times ready for fighting.

He was in Malplaquet with them, if only as volunteer on that occasion. He commanded them in Blenheim itself; stood, in the right or Eugene wing of that famed Battle of Blenheim, fiercely at bay, when the Austrian Cavalry had all fled;—fiercely volleying, charging, dexterously wheeling and manoeuvring; sticking to his ground with a mastiff-like tenacity,—till Marlborough, and victory from the left, relieved him and others. He was at the Bridge of Cassano; where Eugene and Vendome came to hand-grips;—where Mirabeau's Grandfather, COL-D'ARGENT, got his six-and-thirty wounds, and was "killed" as he used to term it. [Carlyle's *Miscellanies*, v. ? Mirabeau.] "The hottest fire I

ever saw," said Eugene, who had not seen Malplaquet at that time. While Col-d'Argent sank collapsed upon the Bridge, and the horse charged over him, and again charged, and beat and were beaten three several times,—Anhalt-Dessau, impatient of such fiddling hither and thither, swashed into the stream itself with his Prussian Foot: swashed through it, waist-deep or breast-deep; and might have settled the matter, had not his cartridges got wetted. Old King Friedrich rebuked him angrily for his impetuosity in this matter, and the sad loss of men.

Then again he was at the Storming of the Lines of Turin,—Eugene's feat of 1706, and a most volcanic business;—was the first man that got-over the entrenchment there. Foremost man; face all black with the smoke of gunpowder, only channelled here and there with rivulets of sweat;—not a lovely phenomenon to the French in the interior! Who still fought like madmen, but were at length driven into heaps, and obliged to run. A while before they ran, Anhalt-Dessau, noticing some Captain posted with his company in a likely situation, stepped aside to him for a moment, and asked, "Am I wounded, think you?—No? Then have you anything to drink?" and deliberately "drank a glass of aqua-vitae," the judicious Captain carrying a pocket-pistol of that sort, in case of accident; and likewise "eat, with great appetite, a bit of bread from one of the soldiers' haversacks; saying, He believed the heat of the job was done, and that there was no fear now!"—*[Des weltberumkten Leopoldi, &c. (Anonymous, by Ranfft, cited above), pp. 42-45, 52, 65.]*

A man that has been in many wars; in whose rough head, are schemes hatching. Any religion he has is of Protestant nature; but he has not much,—on the doctrinal side, very little. Luther's Hymn, *Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott*, he calls "God Almighty's grenadier-march." On joining battle, he audibly utters, with bared head, some growl of rugged prayer, far from orthodox at times, but much in earnest: that lifting of his hat for prayer, is his last signal on such occasions. He is very cunning as required, withal; not disdaining the serpentine method when no other will do. With Friedrich Wilhelm, who is his second-cousin (Mother's grand-nephew, if the reader can count that), he is from of old on the best footing, and contrives to be his Mentor in many things besides War. Till his quarrel with Grumkow, of which we shall hear, he took the lead in political advising, too; and had schemes, or was thought to have, of which Queen Sophie was in much terror.

A tall, strong-boned, hairy man; with cloudy brows, vigilant swift eyes; has "a bluish tint of skin," says Wilhelmina, "as if the gunpowder still stuck to him." He wears long mustaches; triangular hat, plume and other equipments, are of thrifty practical size. Can be polite enough in speech; but hides much of his meaning, which indeed is mostly inarticulate, and not always joyful to the by-stander. He plays rough pranks, too, on occasion; and has a big horse-laugh in him, where there is a fop to be roasted, or the like. We will leave him for the present, in hope of other meetings.

Remarkable men, many of those old Prussian soldiers: of whom one wishes, to no purpose, that there had more knowledge been attainable. But the Books are silent; no painter, no genial seeing-man to paint with his pen, was there. Grim hirsute Hyperborean figures, they pass mostly mute before us: burly, surly; in mustaches, in dim uncertain garniture, of which the buff-belts and the steel, are alone conspicuous. Growling in guttural Teutsoh what little articulate meaning they had: spending, of the inarticulate, a proportion in games, of chance, probably too in drinking beer; yet having an immense overplus which they do not so spend, but endeavor to utter in such working as there may be. So have the Hyperboreans lived from of old. From the times of Tacitus and Pytheas, not to speak of Odin and Japhet, what hosts of them have marched across Existence, in that manner;—and where is the memory that would, even if it could, speak of them all!—

We will hope the mind of our little Fritz has powers of assimilation. Bayle-Calvin logics, and shadows of Versailles, on this hand, and gunpowder Leopolds and inarticulate Hyperboreans on that: here is a wide diversity of nutriment, all rather tough in quality, provided for the young soul. Innumerable unconscious inferences he must have drawn in his little head! Prince Leopold's face, with the whiskers and blue skin, I find he was wont, at after periods, to do in caricature, under the figure of a Cat's;—horror and admiration not the sole feelings raised in him by the Field-Marshal.—For bodily nourishment

he had "beer-soup;" a decided Spartan tone prevailing, wherever possible, in the breeding and treatment of him.

And we need not doubt, by far the most important element of his education was the unconscious Apprenticeship he continually served to such a Spartan as King Friedrich Wilhelm. Of whose works and ways he could not help taking note, angry or other, every day and hour; nor in the end, if he were intelligent, help understanding them, and learning from them. A harsh Master and almost half-mad, as it many times seemed to the poor Apprentice; yet a true and solid one, whose real wisdom was worth that of all the others, as he came at length to recognize.

Chapter III. — FRIEDRICH WILHELM IS KING

With the death of old King Friedrich, there occurred at once vast changes in the Court of Berlin; a total and universal change in the mode of living and doing business there. Friedrich Wilhelm, out of filial piety, wore at his father's funeral the grand French peruke and other sublimities of French costume; but it was for the last time: that sad duty once done, he flung the whole aside, not without impatience, and on no occasion wore such costume again. He was not a friend to French fashions, nor had ever been; far the contrary. In his boyhood, say the Biographers, there was once a grand embroidered cloth-of-gold, or otherwise supremely magnificent, little Dressing-gown given him; but he would at no rate put it on, or be concerned with it; on the contrary, stuffed it indignantly "into the fire;" and demanded wholesome useful duffel instead.

He began his reform literally at the earliest moment. Being summoned into the apartment where his poor Father was in the last struggle, he could scarcely get across for KAMMERJUNKER, KAMMERHERRN, Goldsticks, Silversticks, and the other solemn histrionic functionaries, all crowding there to do their sad mimicry on the occasion: not a lovely accompaniment in Friedrich Wilhelm's eyes. His poor Father's death-struggle once done, and all reduced to

everlasting rest there, Friedrich Wilhelm looked in silence over the Unutterable, for a Short space, disregardful of the Goldsticks and their eager new homaging; walked swiftly away from it to his own room, shut the door with a slam; and there, shaking the tears from his eyes, commenced by a notable duty,—the duty nearest hand, and therefore first to be done, as it seemed to him. It was about one in the afternoon, 25th February, 1713; his Father dead half an hour before: "Tears at a Father's death-bed, must they be dashed with rage by such a set of greedy Histrios?" thought Friedrich Wilhelm. He summoned these his Court-people, that is to say, summoned their OBER-HOFMARSCHALL and representative; and through him signified to them, That, till the Funeral was over, their service would continue; and that on the morrow after the Funeral, they were, every soul of them, discharged; and from the highest Goldstick down to the lowest Page-in-waiting, the King's House should be swept entirely clean of them;—said House intending to start afresh upon a quite new footing. [Forster, i. 174; Pollnitz, *Memoiren*, ii. 4.] Which spread such a consternation among the courtier people, say the Histories, as was never seen before.

The thing was done, however; and nobody durst whisper discontent with it; this rugged young King, with his plangent metallic voice, with his steady-beaming eyes, seeming dreadfully in earnest about it, and a person that might prove dangerous if you crossed him. He reduced his Household accordingly, at once, to the lowest footing of the indispensable; and discharged a whole

regiment of superfluous official persons, court-flunkies, inferior, superior and supreme, in the most ruthless manner. He does not intend keeping any OBER-HOFMARSCHALL, or the like idle person, henceforth; thinks a minimum of the Goldsticks ought to suffice every man.

Eight Lackeys, in the ante-chambers and elsewhere, these, with each a JAGERBURSCH (what we should call an UNDER-KEEPER) to assist when not hunting, will suffice: Lackeys at "eight THALERS monthly," which is six shillings a week. Three active Pages, sometimes two, instead of perhaps three dozen idle that there used to be. In King Friedrich's time, there were wont to be a thousand saddle-horses at corn and hay: but how many of them were in actual use? Very many of them were mere imaginary quadrupeds; their price and keep pocketed by some knavish STALLMEISTER, Equerry or Head-groom. Friedrich Wilhelm keeps only thirty Horses; but these are very actual, not imaginary at all; their corn not running into any knave's pocket; but lying actually in the mangers here; getting ground for you into actual four-footed speed, when, on turf or highway, you require such a thing. About, thirty for the saddle,—with a few carriage-teams, are what Friedrich Wilhelm can employ in any reasonable measure: and more he will not have about him.

In the like ruthless humor he goes over his Pension-list; strikes three fourths of that away, reduces the remaining fourth to the very bone. In like humor, he goes over every department of his Administrative, Household and other Expenses: shears

everything down, here by the hundred thalers, there by the ten, willing even to save HALF A THALER. He goes over all this three several times;—his Papers, the three successive Lists he used on that occasion, have been printed. [Rodenbeck, *Beitrage zur Bereicherung der Lebembeschreibungen Friedrich Wilhelms I. und Friedrichs des Grossen* (Berlin, 1836), pp. 99-127.] He has satisfied himself, in about two months, what, the effective minimum is; and leaves it so. Reduced to below the fifth of what it was; 55,000 THALERS, instead of 276,000. [Stenzel, iii. 237.]

By degrees he went over, went into and through, every department of Prussian Business, in that fashion; steadily, warily, irresistibly compelling every item of it, large and little, to take that same character of perfect economy and solidity, of utility pure and simple. Needful work is to be rigorously well done; needless work, and ineffectual or imaginary workers, to be rigorously pitched out of doors. What a blessing on this Earth; worth purchasing almost at any price! The money saved is something, nothing if you will; but the amount of mendacity expunged, has any one computed that? Mendacity not of tongue; but the far feller sort, of hand, and of heart, and of head; short summary of all Devil's-worship whatsoever. Which spreads silently along, once you let it in, with full purse or with empty; some fools even praising it: the quiet DRY-ROT of Nations! To expunge such is greatly the duty of every man, especially of every King. Unconsciously, not thinking of Devil's-worship, or spiritual dry-rot, but of money chiefly, and led by Nature and the

ways she has with us, it was the task of Friedrich Wilhelm's life to bring about this beneficent result in all departments of Prussian Business, great and little, public and even private. Year after year, he brings it to perfection; pushes it unweariedly forward every day and hour. So that he has Prussia, at last, all a Prussia made after his own image; the most thrifty, hardy, rigorous and Spartan country any modern King ever tied over; and himself (if he thought of that) a King indeed. He that models Nations according to his own image, he is a King, though his sceptre were a walking-stick; and, properly no other is.

Friedrich Wilhelm was wondered at, and laughed at, by innumerable mortals for his ways of doing; which indeed were very strange. Not that he figured much in what is called Public History, or desired to do so; for, though a vigilant ruler, he did not deal in protocolling and campaigning,—he let a minimum of that suffice him. But in court soirees, where elegant empty talk goes on, and of all materials for it scandal is found incomparably the most interesting. I suppose there turned up no name oftener than that of his Prussian Majesty; and during these twenty-seven years of his Reign, his wild pranks and explosions gave food for continual talk in such quarter.

For he was like no other King that then existed, or had ever been discovered. Wilder Son of Nature seldom came into the artificial world; into a royal throne there, probably never. A wild man, wholly in earnest, veritable as the old rocks,—and with a terrible volcanic fire in him too. He would have been

strange anywhere; but among the dapper Royal gentlemen of the Eighteenth Century, what was to be done with such an Orson of a King?—Clap him in Bedlam, and bring out the ballot-boxes instead? The modern generation, too, still takes its impression of him from these rumors,—still more now from Wilhelmina's Book; which paints the outside savagery of the royal man, in a most striking manner; and leaves the inside vacant, undiscovered by Wilhelmina or the rumors.

Nevertheless it appears there were a few observant eyes even of contemporaries, who discerned in him a surprising talent for "National Economics" at least. One Leipzig Professor, Saxon, not Prussian by nation or interest, recognizes in Friedrich Wilhelm "DEN GROSSEN WIRTH (the great Manager, Husbandry-man, or Landlord) of the epoch;" and lectures on his admirable "works, arrangements and institutions" in that kind. [Rodenbeck's *Beitrag* (p. 14),—Year, or Name of Lecturer, not mentioned.] Nay the dapper Royal gentlemen saw, with envy, the indubitable growth of this mad savage Brother; and ascribed it to "his avarice," to his mean ways, which were in such contrast to their sublime ones. That he understood National Economics has now become very certain. His grim semi-articulate Papers and Rescripts, on these subjects, are still almost worth reading, by a lover of genuine human talent in the dumb form. For spelling, grammar, penmanship and composition, they resemble nothing else extant; are as if done by the paw of a bear: indeed the utterance generally sounds more like the growling of a bear than

anything that could be handily spelt or parsed. But there is a decisive human sense in the heart of it; and there is such a dire hatred of empty bladders, unrealities and hypocritical forms and pretences, what he calls "wind and humbug (WIND UND BLAUER DUNST)," as is very strange indeed. Strange among all mankind; doubly and trebly strange among the unfortunate species called Kings in our time. To whom,—for sad reasons that could be given,—"wind and blue vapor (BLAUER DUNST)," artistically managed by the rules of Acoustics and Optics, seem to be all we have left us!—

It must be owned that this man is inflexibly, and with a fierce slow inexorable determination, set upon having realities round him. There is a divine idea of fact put into him; the genus sham was never hatefuler to any man. Let it keep out of his way, well beyond the swing of that rattan of his, or it may get something to remember! A just man, too; would not wrong any man, nor play false in word or deed to any man. What is Justice but another form of the REALITY we love; a truth acted out? Of all the humbugs or "painted vapors" known, Injustice is the least capable of profiting men or kings! A just man, I say; and a valiant and veracious: but rugged as a wild bear; entirely inarticulate, as if dumb. No bursts of parliamentary eloquence in him, nor the least tendency that way. His talent for Stump-Oratory may be reckoned the minimum conceivable, or practically noted a ZERO. A man who would not have risen in modern Political Circles; man unchoosable at hustings or in caucus; man forever

invisible, and very unadmirable if seen, to the Able Editor and those that hang by him. In fact, a kind of savage man, as we say; but highly interesting, if you can read dumb human worth; and of inexpressible profit to the Prussian Nation.

For the first ten years of his reign, he had a heavy, continual struggle, getting his finance and other branches of administration extricated from their strangling imbroglios of coiled nonsense, and put upon a rational footing. His labor in these years, the first of little Fritz's life, must have been great; the pushing and pulling strong and continual. The good plan itself, this comes not of its own accord; it is the fruit of "genius" (which means transcendent capacity of taking trouble, first of all): given a huge stack of tumbled thrums, it is not in your sleep that you will find the vital centre of it, or get the first thrum by the end! And then the execution, the realizing, amid the contradiction, silent or expressed, of men and things? Explosive violence was by no means Friedrich Wilhelm's method; the amount of slow stubborn broad-shouldered strength, in all kinds, expended by the man, strikes us as very great. The amount of patience even, though patience is not reckoned his forte.

That of the RITTER-DIENST (Knights'-Service), for example, which is but one small item of his business, the commuting of the old feudal duty of his Landholders to do Service in Wartime, into a fixed money payment: nothing could be fairer, more clearly advantageous to both parties; and most of his "Knights" gladly accepted the proposal: yet a certain

factions set of them, the Magdeburg set, stirred up by some seven or eight of their number, "hardly above seven or eight really against me," saw good to stand out; remonstrated, recalcitrated; complained in the Diet (Kaiser too happy to hear of it, that he might have a hook on Friedrich Wilhelm); and for long years that paltry matter was a provocation to him. [1717-1725. Forster, ii. 162-165, iv. 31-34; Stenzel, iii. 316-319; Samuel Buchholz, *Neueste Preussisch-Brandenburgische Geschichte* (Berlin, 1775), i. 197.] But if your plan is just, and a bit of Nature's plan, persist in it like a law of Nature. This secret too was known to Friedrich Wilhelm. In the space of ten years, by actual human strength loyally spent, he had managed many things; saw all things in a course towards management. All things, as it were, fairly on the road; the multiplex team pulling one way, in rational human harness, not in imbroglios of coiled thrums made by the Nightmares.

How he introduced a new mode of farming his Domain Lands, which are a main branch of his revenue, and shall be farmed on regular lease henceforth, and not wasted in speculation and indolent mismanagement as heretofore; [Forster, ii. 206, 216.] new modes of levying his taxes and revenues of every kind: [Ib. ii. 190, 195.] How he at last concentrated, and harmonized into one easy-going effective GENERAL DIRECTORY, [Completed 19th January, 1723 (Ib. ii. 172).] the multifarious conflicting Boards, that were jolting and jangling in a dark use-and-wont manner, and leaving their work half done, when he first

came into power: [Dohm, *Denkwürdigkeiten meiner Zeit* (Lemgo und Hanover, 1814-1819), iv. 88.] How he insisted on having daylight introduced to the very bottom of every business, fair-and-square observed as the rule of it, and the shortest road adopted for doing it: How he drained bogs, planted colonies, established manufactures, made his own uniforms of Prussian wool, in a LAGERHAUS of his own: How he dealt with the Jew Gompert about farming his Tobacco;—how, from many a crooked case and character he, by slow or short methods, brought out something straight; would take no denial of what was his, nor make any demand of what was not; and did prove really a terror to evildoers of various kinds, especially to prevaricators, defalcators, imaginary workers, and slippery unjust persons: How he urged diligence on all mortals, would not have the very Apple-women sit "without knitting" at their stalls; and brandished his stick, or struck it fiercely down, over the incorrigibly idle:—All this, as well as his ludicrous explosions and unreasonable violences, is on record concerning Friedrich Wilhelm, though it is to the latter chiefly that the world has directed its unwise attention, in judging of him. He was a very arbitrary King. Yes, but then a good deal of his ARBITRIUM, or sovereign will, was that of the Eternal Heavens as well; and did exceedingly behoove to be done, if the Earth would prosper. Which is an immense consideration in regard to his sovereign will and him! He was prompt with his rattan, in urgent cases; had his gallows also, prompt enough, where needful. Let him see that no mistakes

happen, as certainly he means that none shall!

Yearly he made his country richer; and this not in money alone (which is of very uncertain value, and sometimes has no value at all, and even less), but in frugality, diligence, punctuality, veracity,—the grand fountains from which money, and all real values and valors spring for men. To Friedrich Wilhelm in his rustio simplicity, money had no lack of value; rather the reverse. To the homespun man it was a success of most excellent quality, and the chief symbol of success in all kinds. Yearly he made his own revenues, and his people's along with them and as the source of them, larger: and in all states of his revenue, he had contrived to make his expenditure less than it; and yearly saved masses of coin, and "reposited them in barrels in the cellars of his Schloss,"—where they proved very useful, one day. Much in Friedrich Wilhelm proved useful, beyond even his expectations. As a Nation's HUSBAND he seeks his fellow among Kings, ancient and modern. Happy the Nation which gets such a Husband, once in the half-thousand years. The Nation, as foolish wives and Nations do, repines and grudges a good deal, its weak whims and will being thwarted very often; but it advances steadily, with consciousness or not, in the way of well-doing; and after long times the harvest of this diligent sowing becomes manifest to the Nation and to all Nations.

Strange as it sounds in the Republic of Letters, we are tempted to call Friedrich Wilhelm a man of genius;—genius fated and promoted to work in National Husbandry, not in writing Verses

or three-volume Novels. A silent genius. His melodious stanza, which he cannot bear to see halt in any syllable, is a rough fact reduced to order; fact made to stand firm on its feet, with the world-rocks under it, and looking free towards all the winds and all the stars. He goes about suppressing platitudes, ripping off futilities, turning deceptions inside out. The realm of Disorder, which is Unveracity, Unreality, what we call Chaos, has no fiercer enemy. Honest soul, and he seemed to himself such a stupid fellow often; no tongue-learning at all; little capable to give a reason for the faith that was in him. He cannot argue in articulate logic, only in inarticulate bellowings, or worse. He must DO a thing, leave it undemonstrated; once done, it will itself tell what kind of thing it is, by and by. Men of genius have a hard time, I perceive, whether born on the throne or off it; and must expect contradictions next to unendurable,—the plurality of blockheads being so extreme!

I find, except Samuel Johnson, no man of equal veracity with Friedrich Wilhelm in that epoch: and Johnson too, with all his tongue-learning, had not logic enough. In fact, it depends on how much conviction you have. Blessed be Heaven, there is here and there a man born who loves truth as truth should be loved, with all his heart and all his soul; and hates untruth with a corresponding perfect hatred. Such men, in polite circles, which understand that certainly truth is better than untruth, but that you must be polite to both, are liable to get to the end of their logic. Even Johnson had a bellow in him; though Johnson could at any time

withdraw into silence, HIS kingdom lying all under his own hat. How much more Friedrich Wilhelm, who had no logic whatever; and whose kingdom lay without him, far and wide, a thing he could not withdraw from. The rugged Orson, he needed to be right. From utmost Memel down to Wesel again, ranked in a straggling manner round the half-circumference of Europe, all manner of things and persons were depending on him, and on his being right, not wrong, in his notion.

A man of clear discernment, very good natural eyesight; and irrefragably confident in what his eyes told him, in what his belief was;—yet of huge simplicity withal. Capable of being coaxed about, and led by the nose, to a strange degree, if there were an artist dexterous enough, daring enough! His own natural judgment was good, and, though apt to be hasty and headlong, was always likely to come right in the end; but internally, we may perceive, his modesty, self-distrust, anxiety and other unexpected qualities, must have been great. And then his explosiveness, impatience, excitability; his conscious dumb ignorance of all things beyond his own small horizon of personal survey! An Orson capable enough of being coaxed and tickled, by some first-rate conjurer;—first-rate; a second-rate might have failed, and got torn to pieces for his pains. But Seckendorf and Grumkow, what a dance they led him on some matters,—as we shall see, and as poor Fritz and others will see!

He was full of sensitiveness, rough as he was and shaggy of skin. His wild imaginations drove him hither and thither at a sad

rate. He ought to have the privileges of genius. His tall Potsdam Regiment, his mad-looking passion for enlisting tall men; this also seems to me one of the whims of genius,—an exaggerated notion to have his "stanza" polished to the last punctilio of perfection; and might be paralleled in the history of Poets. Stranger "man of genius," or in more peculiar circumstances, the world never saw!

Friedrich Wilhelm, in his Crown-Prince days, and now still more when he was himself in the sovereign place, had seen all along, with natural arithmetical intellect, That his strength in this world, as at present situated, would very much depend upon the amount of potential-battle that lay in him,—on the quantity and quality of Soldiers he could maintain, and have ready for the field at any time. A most indisputable truth, and a heartfelt one in the present instance. To augment the quantity, to improve the quality, in this thrice-essential particular: here lay the keystone and crowning summit of all Friedrich Wilhelm's endeavors; to which he devoted himself, as only the best Spartan could have done. Of which there will be other opportunities to speak in detail. For it was a thing world-notable; world-laughable, as was then thought; the extremely serious fruit of which did at length also become notable enough.

In the Malplaquet time, once on some occasion, it is said, two English Officers, not well informed upon the matter, and provoking enough in their contemptuous ignorance, were reasoning with one another in Friedrich Wilhelm's hearing, as

to the warlike powers of the Prussian State, and Whether the King of Prussia could on his own strength maintain a standing army of 15,000? Without subsidies, do you think, so many as 15,000? Friedrich Wilhelm, incensed at the thing and at the tone, is reported to have said with heat: "Yes, 30,000!" [Forster, i. 138.] whereat the military men slightly wagged their heads, letting the matter drop for the present. But he makes it good by degrees; twofold or threefold;—and will have an army of from seventy to a hundred thousand before he dies, ["72,000 field-troops, 30,000 garrison-troops" (*Geständnisse eines OEsterreichischen Veterans*, Breslau, 1788, i. 64).] the best-drilled of fighting men; and what adds much to the wonder, a full Treasury withal. This is the Brandenburg Spartan King; acquainted with National Economics. Alone of existing Kings he lays by money annually; and is laying by many other and far more precious things, for Prussia and the little Boy he has here.

Friedrich Wilhelm's passion for drilling, recruiting and perfecting his army attracted much notice: laughing satirical notice; in the hundred months of common rumor, which he regarded little; and notice iracund and minatory, when it led him into collision with the independent portions of mankind, now and then. This latter sort was not pleasant, and sometimes looked rather serious; but this too he contrived always to digest in some tolerable manner. He continued drilling and recruiting,—we may say not his Army only, but his Nation in all departments of it,—as no man before or since ever did: increasing, by every devisable

method, the amount of potential-battle that lay in him and it.

In a military, and also in a much deeper sense, he may be defined as the great Drill-sergeant of the Prussian Nation. Indeed this had been the function of the Hohenzollerns all along; this difficult, unpleasant and indispensable one of drilling. From the first appearance of Burggraf Friedrich, with good words and with HEAVY PEG, in the wreck of anarchic Brandenburg, and downwards ever since, this has steadily enough gone on. And not a little good drilling these populations have had, first and last; just orders given them (wise and just, which to a respectable degree were Heaven's orders as well): and certainly Heavy Peg, for instance,—Heavy Peg, bringing Quitzow's strong House about his ears,—was a respectable drummer's cat to enforce the same. This has been going on these three hundred years. But Friedrich Wilhelm completes the process; finishes it off to the last pitch of perfection. Friedrich Wilhelm carries it through every fibre and cranny of Prussian Business, and so far as possible, of Prussian Life; so that Prussia is all a drilled phalanx, ready to the word of command; and what we see in the Army is but the last consummate essence of what exists in the Nation everywhere. That was Friedrich Wilhelm's function, made ready for him, laid to his hand by his Hohenzollern foregoers; and indeed it proved a most beneficent function.

For I have remarked that, of all things, a Nation needs first to be drilled; and no Nation that has not first been governed by so-called "Tyrants," and held tight to the curb till it became

perfect in its paces and thoroughly amenable to rule and law, and heartily respectful of the same, and totally abhorrent of the want of the same, ever came to much in this world. England itself, in foolish quarters of England, still howls and execrates lamentably over its William Conqueror, and rigorous line of Normans and Plantagenets; but without them, if you will consider well, what had it ever been? A gluttonous race of Jutes and Angles, capable of no grand combinations; lumbering about in pot-bellied equanimity; not dreaming of heroic toil and silence and endurance, such as leads to the high places of this Universe, and the golden mountain-tops where dwell the Spirits of the Dawn. Their very ballot-boxes and suffrages, what they call their "Liberty," if these mean "Liberty," and are such a road to Heaven, Anglo-Saxon high-road thither,—could never have been possible for them on such terms. How could they? Nothing but collision, intolerable interpressure (as of men not perpendicular), and consequent battle often supervening, could have been appointed those undrilled Anglo-Saxons; their pot-bellied equanimity itself continuing liable to perpetual interruptions, as in the Heptarchy time. An enlightened Public does not reflect on these things at present; but will again, by and by. Looking with human eyes over the England that now is, and over the America and the Australia, from pole to pole; and then listening to the Constitutional litanies of Dryasaust, and his lamentations on the old Norman and Plantagenet Kings, and his recognition of departed merit and causes of effects,—the mind

of man is struck dumb!

Chapter IV. — HIS MAJESTY'S WAYS

Friedrich Wilhelm's History is one of ECONOMICS; which study, so soon as there are Kings again in this world, will be precious to them. In that happy state of matters, Friedrich Wilhelm's History will well reward study; and teach by example, in a very simple and direct manner. In what is called the Political, Diplomatic, "Honor-to-be" department, there is not, nor can ever be, much to be said of him; this Economist King having always kept himself well at home, and looked steadily to his own affairs. So that for the present he has, as a King, next to nothing of what is called History; and it is only as a fellow-man, of singular faculty, and in a most peculiar and conspicuous situation, that he can be interesting to mankind. To us he has, as Father and daily teacher and master of young Fritz, a continual interest; and we must note the master's ways, and the main phenomena of the workshop as they successively turned up, for the sake of the notable Apprentice serving there.

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