

made in speaking unkindly of you. I foolishly allowed my father's favor to you to turn me against you. I'll go to my sister at once. She will thank you quite as warmly as I do for the timely help you gave me to-day, and I assure you it will never be forgotten by either of us."

The Crown Prince threw his dressing gown to the floor, donned his military coat, and, boylike, ran impetuously to tell his sister of the incident at the harpsichord.

**W**HEN the Prince had left the room, Katt turned to Fritz Henry and asked, "You are newly arrived at court?" Katt was a fine, manly young fellow, whose face and manner were frank and engaging.

"I was never in Berlin until last night," answered Henry.

"You doubtless have already seen enough to convince you that a sad condition exists in the palace," said Katt. "The King cruelly hates Prince Frederick and Princess Wilhelmina, though there is no cause for his hatred save the machinations of Grumkow. Everyone at court except his Majesty knows that Grumkow and Seckendorf are here in the interest of Austria; but the King is so stubborn and violent that no one would dare to tell him the truth, for he would not believe it from the lips of an angel from Heaven.

"Grumkow's reason for sowing dissension between father and son is this: The Margrave of Schwedt, who is now a guest in the palace, is the first Prince of the Blood, and if Prince Frederick was dead, and the Margrave married to the Princess Wilhelmina, no power could keep Schwedt from the throne of Prussia. Grumkow's desire, prompted by Austria, I believe, is to foster hatred between the Crown Prince and the King.

"Grumkow desires, if possible, to drive the Crown Prince to do some act that the King in his madness will call treasonable, and if Prince Fritz falls into the trap, Grumkow will induce the King to order a court-martial, and the court will be composed of the minister's tools. The King will be so worked upon that he will allow the law to take its course, and I predict that the Crown Prince will meet his death on the scaffold unless it is prevented by an uprising of the Prussian people.

"If Grumkow fails in his purpose to bring the Crown Prince to the block, I believe the old devil will cause Fritz to be assassinated. I tell you, the life of our friend is in hourly peril! In case of his death, Princess Mina will be forced to marry this beast from Schwedt, and the old King's days will be numbered; for he will fall a victim to Grumkow. When the King dies, Schwedt will become King in name; but Brandenburg and Prussia will soon become a part of the map of Austria."

"I cannot help believing you are wrong," said Keith. "A terrible state of affairs exists; but I cannot believe that all you say will come to pass. While poor Schwedt is madly in love with the Princess, and desires above all things to marry her, he is still an honest fellow at heart, and more of a man than you would believe. If you knew him as well as I do, you would agree with me that he has the soul of a gentleman, and the tender, kindly heart of a child. Not all the crowns of Europe would induce the Margrave of Schwedt to be a party to the frightful plot your imagination has conjured up."

"Of course not!" cried Katt. "Do you suppose Grumkow and Austria would intrust Schwedt with knowledge of their plans? He is but their tool, and, as he is madly in love with the Princess, you will know one of these fine days that I have just uttered a true prophecy. Mina will fall into his arms—and I pray to God she may die before the hour comes!"

"You may be right," answered Keith; "but, bad as Grumkow is, I can hardly believe a heart really beats that is bad enough to hatch so hellish a plot. Surely there is no heart so evil as to work upon the half-mad brain of our King for the purpose of inducing him to kill his own son!"

"I tell you, Keith," answered Katt, who was growing excited,—"I tell you, Grumkow would murder his own mother, or strangle his own infant, if by doing so he could put money into his purse or grasp power in his hands! He has already caused the death of scores of innocent men who have stood in his way, and his career of murder has hardly begun!"

Katt trembled in his excitement. His face was flushed, his eyes glared with a wildness that seemed to have a touch of madness in it. He stood gazing vacantly at the ceiling, his hands clenched and his arms outstretched.

"I do not want to be a prophet of evil," he continued; "but I tell you the heart of the future seems bare to me at this instant! You and I, Keith, Fritz's best friends, will be Grumkow's first victims. I shall die first. God! I can see my head on the block! Your fate is not clear; but there is trouble ahead for you. Fritz, I fear, will be shot by a company of his own regiment, and Mina will be saved for Schwedt. The Queen will follow Fritz and me. Then poor Old Stumpy will go the way of all flesh, and Grumkow will be the real King of Prussia."

**F**RITZ HENRY stood aghast at this frightful prophecy, and was almost ready to believe that Katt was drunk.

Keith wiped the perspiration from his face as he said, "My God! you freeze my blood!" He covered his face with his hands and sank into a chair.

Katt stood as if in a trance. Henry placed his hand on his shoulder and spoke gently to him.

"Your fear for those you love has so wrought upon you that you magnify the danger, and I am sure that when you become calm your forebodings will pass away."

"Perhaps you are right," said Katt, relaxing and seating himself on the window sill. "I must be insane; but, upon my word, I thought I saw my own head drop from my body and I saw the Crown Prince die. But I suppose, as you say, it was my imagination, overheated by recent events and frenzied by fear. I am crazed by the King's cruelty to his daughter, to his son, and to their friends. I tell you, it is as much as a man's life is worth to be known as the Crown Prince's friend! If it was not for Fritz and Mina,—sweet, tender, beautiful Mina,—I should not remain at court one hour."

Katt rose to his feet, looked vacantly out the window for a moment, and said as if speaking to himself, "Ah, yes, Mina, Mina! God in Heaven! What will become of her? Dearly as I love her, I wish she could die!" Henry raised his hand in protest; but Katt did not allow him to speak. "Yes, yes!" he cried excitedly. "I love the Princess with every drop of my blood. Each spot of earth her foot falls on is hallowed and sacred to me. I have no thought of a like return from her heart, though I know she loves me almost as dearly as if I was her brother. But I tell you, friends, she had better die than live!"

"Is she not betrothed to the Prince of Wales?" asked Fritz Henry.

"I suppose a betrothal does exist," replied Katt; "but Grumkow will never allow it to be consummated. In my opinion, it will soon be openly repudiated, and then the Margrave of Schwedt, or Grumkow's other tool, the Duke of Weissenfels, will receive this angel for a wife. The thought maddens me; and Mina could not endure life for one month as the wife of either of these men."

"Weissenfels?" asked Henry in surprise. "I had not heard of him as a suitor for the Princess' hand. He is old enough to be her grandfather, poor enough to beg crumbs from her hand, and vile enough to contaminate the atmosphere for miles around him!"

"He's the blackest villain unhung," muttered Katt—"the blackest save Grumkow! I can put no man ahead of him for villainy."

**K**ATT had hardly finished speaking when Fritz returned and, grasping Henry by the arm, said joyfully, "Come with me! I want my sister to know you."

"Have you the King's consent to present me to your sister and to the Queen?" asked Henry.

"I have not taken the trouble to ask it," answered Prince Fritz. "Were I to speak unbidden to my father on that or any other subject, he would strike me with his cane. But I shall present you to my mother also, if she is with my sister."

"I am a stranger," suggested Henry, "and your

venturers. Many of them are spies; but the King is the dupe of them all. What my mother, my sister, and I need is friends, and a new recruit in our cause will be as welcome to the Queen and to my sister as he is to me, even though all we know of him is that his name is Captain Churchill, and that he is nimble of wit and quick to act. Your quickness in taking my place at the harpsichord is all the introduction you need. My sister will be delighted to hear you play. We have no musician at court that can compare with you. Your performance on the harpsichord to-day was the most delightful music I ever heard, and the most profitable to me."

Fritz's remark concerning the new recruit to his cause emphasized Henry's conviction that it would be safer not to meet the Queen and the Princess until the King saw fit to present him. The King's introduction might not be the high road to favor with them; but it was surely the safer road, and Henry trusted in his ability to win their favor later on by convincing them that he was really their friend.

**F**RITZ HENRY was seeking for an excuse to decline the Prince's offer, when an interruption saved him the trouble. There was a knock at the door. An officer entered the room, saluted his Colonel, Prince Fritz, and said:

"His Majesty commands Captain Churchill's attendance at the barracks, and I am to have the honor of conducting him to the King."

The Crown Prince turned pale as he asked, "Do you know what the King wants with Captain Churchill?"

"I do not know, your Highness," answered the officer.

"I hope the harpsichord has not brought you into trouble," said Katt, whose experience had caused him to fear his Majesty in every aspect.

Fritz Henry immediately departed with the officer, leaving his three friends in a state of wondering alarm. Their fears, however, were ungrounded. The King had sent for his new recruit to give him a commission and to clothe him in the regimental uniform. He kept these uncouth Grenadier uniforms on hand, always ready for a new recruit. If a Grenadier died, the King tucked the uniform carefully away to await the man who was to fill the vacant place. If the coat did not fit the new recruit, it was a pity, for the sake of both the coat and the man; but if, by stretching a garment a little here, or by taking it in a little or a great deal there, it could be made to do its duty even poorly, the new man wore it and had no alternative. Fortunately, a new and fairly well fitting uniform fell to Fritz Henry's lot. The King's delight in his Grenadier Regiment was so keen that he personally superintended the fitting of each uniform.

**W**HEN Henry arrived at the barracks, the King was present to deliver the commission in person, to pass upon the fit of the uniform, and to gloat

Fritz Henry Then and There Went to His Fate.



Highness does not know that I am worthy of the honor you wish to confer on me."

Henry felt that he was right in cautioning the Prince; but back of his words was a reluctance to be presented to the Queen and the Princess save by order of the King. The new Captain of Grenadiers did not wish to be embroiled in the bitter war that was raging between the Prince, the Princess, and the Queen on one side and the King and Grumkow on the other. To steer a clear course between these factions would require all the tact and caution at his command. A man took his life in his hands when he entered the court of Berlin at that time.

"Here at this court we are not so far above reproach that we search carefully for the mote in others' eyes," answered the Prince, with a sneering smile. "Knowing our own faults, we are not in any way particular whom our women meet. Most of the men about the court are ruffians, swindlers, and ad-

over a new six-footer added to his ranks. A six-footer who was capable of being an officer was of extraordinary value in Frederick William's estimation.

After examining the uniform the tailor had adjusted, the King said, "Ah, it fits you beautifully, and I hope you will wear it always! That rascal Fritz discards his uniform on all possible occasions. He wants to deck himself out with laces, frills, gold buttons, and French finery. I wear the uniform of my Grenadiers, and what is good enough for me should be good enough for my son and for my soldiers."

"I shall be very glad to wear the uniform, your Majesty," returned Henry.

The new Captain was told that he would not take charge of a company until a few more recruits were added to the regiment, though he might frequently be called on to drill the troops. King August of