head. At last the emperor is inclined to listen to his chancellor's advice and marry, and you, as a Protestant princess"

"A Protestant princess, indeed!" cried Virginia. "I protest against being approached by him on such terms."

The face of the grand duchess was darkened by the gloom of her thoughts. "My daughter," she exclaimed mildly, yet despairingly, "it's not possible that when this wonderful chance, this unheard of chance, this chance that you were praying for, actually falls into your hands you will throw it away for—for a sentimental schoolgirl scruple."

"I was not praying for it," said Virginia. "I'm sure, mother, you would have considered it most bad in me to pray for it. And I didn't. I was only refusing other chances."

"Well, at all events, you have this one now. It is unique."

"Not in the one way I should have loved to see it come. Oh, mother, why does the emperor want to marry me? Isn't there some other reason than just because I'm a proper Protestant princess?"

"Of course," insisted the grand duchess fairly encouraged. "Dal gives several most excellent reasons in his letter, if you would only take them sensibly."

"I should like to hear them, at all events," answered Virginia.

"Well, you see, the empress of Rhineria must be a Protestant, and there aren't many eligible Protestant girls who would be acceptable to the Rhineria—girls who would be popular with the people. Oh, I have finished about that! You need not look so desperate. Besides, Dal explains that Leopold is a young man who dominates all around him. He wishes to take for his bride a girl who could not by any possibility lift herself by her throne to a throne. Dal knows that his chief aim is to marry his wife and the throne so as to take a girl who can be many important and important matters. Joy he is not one who would dream of adding to his greatness by raising the wealth or position of a woman. He has all he needs in lands of that sort—and more. Dal reminds me Leopold is very partial to England, which he and Rhineria passed by in the time of his grandfather, eighty years ago. The Star that you heard in England and had an English education, would be favorably regarded both by Leopold and his advisers. And, though I've never allowed you to have a photograph taken since you were a child (I hate seeing pictures of people in newspapers and hate them even though they are about their betters), and in public properties and you have never been in such specimen that you've been little seen. Still the point has seemed effective that you are—and I quote it—I cannot increase beauty as we. Dal's advisers also the Rhineria engagement of Rhineria pays to be worth a great deal to me. Dal's friends to be very rich. And so on and so forth.

"And so there, Ginny, you have it. Dal's letter is long and very well written. Virginia, dear, this is a great chance. Dal says that there is no woman in Rhineria who would be so popular as you. Dal says that the people are tired of the old fogy widows and that they had asked me to be Leopold's wife, only I should have been considered enough to think it was because he loved me—you know, dear, because of other things. Then I should have been happy, too, dear. I'm confess it to you now, almost that I thought of all the great joy and the people of it. But now I'm not happy. I'm sorry, Leopold and I'll marry so more for Leopold to ask I wouldn't be married to Leopold to Count von Blumenstein's fearful cat, cold, cut and dried wife.

"It's the emperor's way as well as Von Blumenstein's."

"Then he may in his big, grand, old romantic life, he'd have to learn that there is one independent girl who would prefer death even for the sake of being his empress."

The girl proclaimed this resolve rising to her feet, with her head high and a look in her gray eyes which told the grand duchess that it would be useless for her to argue down the resolution. At first it was a proud look and a sad look, but suddenly a flash of light flashed into it and began to sparkle and twinkle. Virginia smiled and shook her ringlets. Her color came and went. In a moment she was a different girl, and her mother, bewildered, regretful still, dared to hope something from the change.

"How odd you look!" she exclaimed. "You've thought of something. You are happy. You have the air of one having found some plan."

"It found me, I think," the girl answered, laughing, "all suddenly, just in a flash. That's the way it must be with inspirations. This is one. I know it. It's all in the air, floating round me. But I shall grasp it soon."

She came close to her mother, still smiling, and knelt down in the grass at her feet, looking up with radiance in her eyes.

Luckily there was no one save the Dresden china lady and the birds and flowers to see how a young princess threw her mantle of dignity away, for the two did not keep royal state and a royal retinue in the quaint old house at Hampton Court, and the big elm which Virginia loved kindly hid the mother and daughter from intrusive eyes.

"You do love me, don't you, dearest?" cooed the princess softly as a dove.

"You know I do, my child, though I don't pretend to understand you," sighed the grand duchess, well aware that she was about to be coaxed into some scheme, feeling that she would yield and praying Providence that the yielding might not lead her into tribulation.

"People grow dull if we understand them too well," said Virginia. "It's like solving a puzzle—there's no more fun in it when it's finished. But you wish me to be happy, darling?"

"More than I wish for anything else, excepting, of course, dear Dal's."

"Dal is a man and can take care of himself. I must do the best I can poor me! And there's something I want so much, so much it would be heaven on earth, all my own, if I could win it. Leopold's love, quite for myself, as a girl not as a suitable Protestant princess. For a few horrid minutes I thought it was too late to hope for that and I must give him up because I never could be sure if I accepted him without his love and he said it had come afterward that it was really, really true. Anyway, it could never be the same, and I was miserable over what might have been. Then suddenly I saw how it might be. I almost think I may be able to win his love if you'll promise to help me, dear."

"Of course I will," said the grand duchess, carried out of her prosy conventionality, yet unconsciously patronizing to the strength of the soft and vague as the hour and girlish fancies.

"That is, I will if I can. But I don't at all see what I can do."

"I can—and must I confess it is in power—please stop telling me."

"There is very little time," sighed her mother.

Princess Virginia sloped the grand duchess from the waist so finally that it hurt. Then she laughed, a loud, unfashionable, excited laugh. "I can do something particularly wonderful in a day or two—if you and my—the most wonderful thing that ever has happened. We are going to have a surprise in politics. And what the end of it will be I don't know."

(To be Continued.)

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Democratic Mass Meeting.

A mass meeting of the democrats of Precinct No 1 is hereby called to meet at the city hall in Carlsbad Saturday March 28th at 7:30 p. m. to elect four delegates to attend the county convention to be held in Carlsbad, April 11th, and a precinct chairman for the coming two years and such other business as may come before the meeting.

D. G. GRANTHAM,
Precinct Chairman.

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