

THE KING'S MIRROR.*

BY ANTHONY HOPE.

MR. HOPE, WHO IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS HAS WON SO REMARKABLE A REPUTATION AS AN AUTHOR OF DASHING TALES OF ADVENTURE AND AS A MASTER OF CLEVER DIALOGUE, STRIKES A NEW VEIN OF FICTION IN THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOUNG KING. THE WORLD ENVIES THE MEN WHO SIT ON THRONES; THOSE WHO FOLLOW THE STORY OF KING AUGUSTIN WILL HAVE SYMPATHY RATHER THAN ENVY FOR HIM IN HIS LOFTY AND LONELY STATION.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS ALREADY PUBLISHED.

THIS is the story of the life of a young king, Augustin, as told by himself, and the opening chapters deal with his early childhood until he reaches his twelfth year, when he bids farewell to his hated governess, the Baroness von Krakenstein, and is promoted to the dignity of male masters and tutors. Besides his mother, the Princess Heinrich, and his sister, the Princess Victoria, who is Augustin's elder by two years, the principal figure in his little drama is the Prince von Hammerfeldt, an old statesman and diplomatist, who is really the dominating force in the young king's domains. It is Hammerfeldt who appoints Geoffrey Owen, a young Englishman, as the king's tutor, and the latter makes a deep impression on Augustin's mind and heart.

IV (*Continued*).

A BOY that would not have worshiped such a man as Geoffrey Owen must have wanted heart and fire. I watched him first to see if he could ride; he rode well. When he came he could not fence; in six months he was a good hand at the foils. Physical fatigue seemed as unknown to him as mental inertia. There was no strain and no cant about him; he smoked hard, drank well after exertion, with pleasure always. He delighted to talk to my mother, chaffing her Styrian ideas with a graceful deference that made her smile; Victoria adored him openly, and Krak did not understand why he was not odious. Thus he conquered the court, and I was the first of his slaves. It would be tedious to anybody except myself to trace the gradual progress of our four years' intimacy and friendship, of my four years' training and enlightenment. Shall I summarize it and say that Owen taught me that there were folks outside palaces, and that the

greatness of a station, even as of a man, stood not in the multitude of the things that it possessed? The summary is cold and colorless; it smacks of duty, of unwillingly remembered obligations, of selfish pleasures reluctantly foregone.

As I became old enough to do more than listen entranced to his stories, it seemed to me that to be such a man as he was, and admired without knowing that he himself was, could be no duty, but a happy dream. There has been in my family, here and there, a vein of fancy or of mysticism, turning sometimes to religious fervor, again sometimes to soldierly enthusiasm and a knight errantry in arms, the ruin and despair of cool statesmanship. On this tendency Owen's teaching laid hold and bent it to a more modern shape. I would not be a monk or a Bayard, but would serve humanity; holding my throne a naked trust; whence all but I might reap benefit, whereon I must sit burdened with the sorrows of all; and thus to be burdened was my joy. With

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many boys no example could have made such ideas acceptable, or won anything but scornful wonder for them; in me they struck answering chords, and as I rambled in the woods at Artenberg, already in my mind I was the perfect king.

Where would such a mood have led, where would it have ended, what at the last would have been my state and fame?

On my fifteenth birthday, Prince von Hammerfeldt, now in his seventy fifth year, came from Forstadt to Artenberg to offer me congratulations. Though a boy may have such thoughts as I have tried to describe, for the most part he would be flogged to death sooner than utter them; to the prince, above all men, an instinct bade me be silent. But Owen rose readily to the old man's skilful fly; he did not lecture the minister or preach to him, but answered his questions simply and from the heart, without show and without disguise. Old Hammerfeldt's face grew into a network of amused and tolerant wrinkles.

"My dear Mr. Owen," said he, "I heard all this forty six years ago. Is it not that Jean Jacques has crossed the channel, turning more sickly on the way?"

Owen smiled; mine was the face that grew red in resentment, mine the tongue that burned to answer him.

"I know what you mean, sir," laughed Owen. "Still, doesn't the world go forward?"

"I see no signs of it," replied Hammerfeldt, with a pinch of snuff, "unless it be progress to teach rogues who are not worth a snap to prate of their worth. Well, it is pretty enough in you to think as you think. What says the king to it?" He turned to me with a courteous smile, but with an uncereimoniously intent gaze in his eyes.

I had no answer ready; I was still excited.

"I have tried to interest the king in these lines of thought," said Owen.

"Ah, yes; very proper," assented Hammerfeldt, his eyes still set on my face. "We must have more talk about the matter. Princess Heinrich awaits me now."

Owen and I were left together. He was smiling, but rather sadly; yet he laughed outright when I, carried beyond boyish shame by my indignation, broke into a tirade and threw back at him something of what he had taught me. Suddenly he interrupted me.

"Let's go for a row on the river and have one pleasant afternoon," he said, laying his hand on my shoulder. "The prince does not want us any more to-day."

The afternoon dwells in my memory. In my belief Owen's quick mind had read something of the prince's purpose; for he was more demonstrative of affection than was his wont; he seemed to eye me with a pitiful love that puzzled me; and he began to talk (this also was rare with him) of my special position, how I must be apart from other men, and to speculate in seeming idleness on what a place such as mine would be to him and make of him. All this came between our spurts of rowing or between our talk of sport or of flowers as we lay at rest under the bank.

"If there were two kings here, as there were in Sparta!" I cried longingly.

"There were Ephors, too," he reminded me, and we laughed. Hammerfeldt was our Ephor.

There was a banquet that night. I sat at the head of the table, with my mother opposite and Hammerfeldt at her right hand. The prince gave my health after dinner and passed on to a warm and eloquent eulogy on those who had trained me; in the course of it he dwelt pointedly on the obligation under which Geoffrey Owen had laid me and of the debt all the nation owed to one who had inspired its king with a liberal culture and a zeal for humanity. I could have clapped my hands in delight; I looked at Owen, who sat far

down the table. His gaze was on Hammerfeldt, and his lips were parted in a smile. I did not understand his smile, but it persisted all through the prince's graceful testimony to his services. It was not like him to smile with that touch of satire when he was praised. But I saw him only for an instant before I went to bed, and others were with us, so I could ask no explanation.

The next morning I rose early and in glee, for I was to go hunting. Owen did not accompany me; he was, I understood, to confer with Hammerfeldt; my jovial governor Vohrenlorf had charge of me. A merry day we had and good sport; it was late when we came home, and my anxious mother awaited me in the hall with dry slippers. She had a meal spread for me, and herself came to share it. Never had I seen her so tender or so gentle. I had a splendid hunger and fell to, babbling of my skill with the gun between hearty mouthfuls.

"I wish Owen had been there," I said.

My mother nodded but made no answer.

"Is the prince gone?" I asked.

"No, he is here still. He stayed in case you should want to see him, Augustin."

"I don't want to see him," said I with a laugh, as I pushed my chair back. "But I was glad he talked like that about Owen last night. I think I'll go and see if Owen's in his room." I rose and started towards the door.

"Augustin, Mr. Owen is not in his room," said my mother in a strangely timid voice.

I turned with a start, for I was sensitive to every change of tone in her voice.

"Do you know where he is?" I asked.

"He is gone," said she.

I did not ask where, nor whether he would return. I sat down and looked at her; she came, smoothed my hair back from my forehead, and kissed me.

"I have not sent him away," she said. "I could not help it. The prince was resolved, and he has power."

"But why?" burst from my lips.

"It is the prince's doing, not mine," she reminded me. "The prince is here, Augustin."

Why, yes, at least old Hammerfeldt would not run away.

My lips were quivering; I was nearer tears than pride had let me be for three years past, grief and anger uniting to make me sore and desolate. There seemed a great gap made in my life; my dearest companion was gone, the source of all that most held my fancy and filled my mind dried up. But before I could speak again a tall, lean figure stood in the doorway, helmet in hand. Hammerfeldt was there; he was asking if the king would receive him. My mother turned an inquiring glance on me. I bowed my head and choked down a sob that was in my throat. The old man came near to me and stood before me; there was a little smile on his lips, but his old eyes were soft.

"Sire," said he, addressing me with ceremonial deference and formality, "her royal highness has told you what I have done in your majesty's service. I should be happy in your majesty's approval."

I made him no answer.

"A king, sire," he went on, "should sip at all cups and drain none, know all theories and embrace none, learn from all men and be bound to none. He may be a pupil but not a disciple, a hearer but always a critic, a friend, never a devotee."

I felt my mother's hand resting on my shoulder; I sat still, looking in the prince's eyes.

"Mr. Owen has done his work well," he went on, "but his work is done. Do you ask, sire, why he is gone? I will give you an answer. I, Prince von Hammerfeldt, would have Augustin and not Geoffrey for my master and my country's."

"Enough for tonight, prince. Leave

him now," my mother urged in a whisper.

The prince bent his head slightly, but remained where he stood for a moment longer. Then he bowed very low to me and drew back a step, still facing me. My mother prompted me with what I suppose was the proper formula.

"You are convinced of the prince's wisdom and devotion in everything, aren't you, Augustin?" she said.

"Yes," said I. "Will Mr. Owen write to me?"

"When your majesty is older, your majesty will, of course, use your own pleasure as to your correspondence," returned Hammerfeldt.

He waited a moment longer and then drew back further to the door.

"Speak to the prince, Augustin," said my mother.

"I am very grateful to the prince for his care of me," said I.

Hammerfeldt came quickly up to me and kissed my hand.

"I would make you a true king, sire," said he, and with that he left us.

So they took my friend from me, and not all the kindness with which I was loaded in the time following his loss lightened the grief of it. Presently I came to understand better the meaning of these things and to see that the king might have no friend; for his friend must be an enemy to others, perhaps even to the king himself. Shall I now blame Hammerfeldt? I do not know. I was coming to the age when impressions sink deep into the mind; and Geoffrey Owen was a man whose mark struck very deep. Besides, he had those theories! It was not strange in Hammerfeldt to fear those theories! Perhaps he was right; with his statecraft it may well be that he could have done no other than what he did.

But to my fifteen year old thoughts these reflections were not present. They had taken my friend from me. In my bed that night I wept for him, and my days seemed empty for the want of him. It was to me as though he had died,

and worse than that; there are things as final as death, yet lacking death's gentleness. Such is to be cut off, living friend from living friend, and living heart from living heart not grown cold in the grave. I have told this story of my tutor and myself, first for the influence Owen had on me, more for the effect wrought in me by the manner in which I lost him. There must be none very near me; it seemed as though that stern verdict had been passed. There must be a vacant space about the throne. Such was Hammerfeldt's gospel. He knew that he himself soon must leave me; he would have no successor in power, and none to take a place in love that he had neither filled nor suffered to be filled.

As I wandered, alone now, about the woods at Artenberg, I mused on these things, and came to a conclusion rather bitter for one of my years. I would tie no more bonds, to have them cut with the sword; if love must be slain, love should be born no more; to begin was but to prepare a sad ending. I drew myself back into a shell of reticence; I set my face towards the world, clothed in a mask of courteous indifference. I would not be drawn on to confidence or friendship. I chose not to have rather than to lose, not to taste rather than leave undrained the cup of sweet intimacy. Thus I armed my boyhood at once against grief and love. In all that I did in after days, this determination was always with me, often overborne for the time by emotions and passions, but always ready to reassert itself in the first calm hour and relentlessly to fetter me in a prison of my own making. My God, how I have longed for friends sometimes!

Geoffrey Owen I saw but once again. I had written twice to him and received respectful, friendly, brief answers. But the sword had passed through his heart also; he did not respond to my invitation nor show a desire to renew our intimacy. Perhaps he was afraid to run the risk; in truth, even while I urged

him, I was half afraid myself. What has been can seldom be again; by seeking to repeat our joys, most often we do but rob them of their bloom. Had he come again, it would not have been as it had been between us. Very likely we both in our hearts preferred to rest in memories, not to spoil our thoughts by disappointment, to be always to each other just what we had been as we rowed together that last afternoon at Artenberg, where the dim shadow of parting did no more than deepen our affection and touch it to a profounder tenderness.

And that time when I saw him again? I was driving through the gates of an English palace, encircled by a brilliant troop of soldiers, cheered by an interested, good humored throng.

Far back in their ranks, I saw his face, paler and thinner, more gentle even and kindly. He wore a soft hat crushed over his forehead; as I passed he lifted and waved it, smiling his old smile at me. I waved my hands, leaning forward eagerly; but I could not stop the procession. As soon as I was within, I sent an equerry to seek him, armed with a description that he could not mistake. But Geoffrey Owen was nowhere to be found; he had not awaited my messenger. Having signaled a friend's greeting across the gulf between us, he was gone. I could have found him, for I knew that he dwelt in London, working, writing, awaking hope in many, fear in some, thought in all. But I would not seek him out nor compel him to come to me, since he would not of his own accord. Perhaps we should not now have been at ease together; the voices in which our hearts cried to each other might have been muffled or lost altogether in the depths of the gulf that had opened between us. So he went his way, I mine, and I have seen him no more. Yet ever on my birthday I drain a cup to him, and none knows to whom the king drinks a full glass silently. It is my libation on a friendship's grave.

Perhaps it would support an interpretation more subtle. For when I stood between Owen and Hammerfeldt, torn this way and that, uncertain whom I should follow through life, was not I the humble transitory theater of a great and secular struggle? It seems to me that then the ideal and the actual joined in battle over me; Hector and Achilles, and I the body of Patroclus! Alas, poor body! Greatly the combatants desire it, little they reck of the roughness it suffers in their struggle! The spirit and the world—am I over fanciful if I seem to see them incarnated in Geoffrey and old Hammerfeldt? And victory was with the world! Yet the conquered also have before now left their mark on lands which they could not hold.

V.

I FEEL that I give, involuntarily, a darker color to my life than the truth warrants. When we sit down and reflect, we are apt to become the prey of a curious delusion; pain seems to us the only reality, pleasure a phantasm or a dream. Yet such reality as pain has pleasure shares, and we are in no closer touch with eternal truth when we have headaches, or heartaches, than when we are free from these afflictions. I wonder sometimes whether a false idea of dignity does not mislead us. Would we all pose as martyrs? It is nonsense; for most of us life is a tolerable enough business—if we would not think too much about it. We need not pride ourselves on our griefs; it seems as though joy were the higher state because it is the less self conscious, and rests in fuller harmony with the great order that encircles us.

As I grew older I gained a new and abiding source of pleasure in the contemplation and study of my sister Victoria. I have anticipated matters a little in telling of my tutor's departure; I must hark back and pick up the thread of Victoria's history from the time that

I was hard on thirteen and she nearer fifteen—the time when she had implored me to rid her of Krak. I had hated Krak with that healthy, full blooded antipathy whose faculty one seems to lose in later years. It is a tiresome thing to be driven by experience to the discovery of some good in everybody; your fine black fades to neutral gray; often I regret the delightfully partial views of earlier days. And so many people succeed in preserving them to a green and untutored old age! They are popes always to their heretics! Such was and is Victoria; she never changed in her views of other people. *En revanche* she was, as regards herself, of a temperament so elastic that impressions endured hardly a moment beyond the blow, and pleasures passed without deposing any residuum which might form a store against evil days. If Krak had cut her arm off, its perpetual absence might have made Victoria remember the fault which was paid for by amputation; the moral effect of rapped knuckles disappeared with the comfort that came from sucking them. Perhaps her disposition was a happy chance for her; since the Styrian discipline—although not, of course, in this blankly physical form later on—persisted for her long after it had been softened for me.

I touch again perhaps on a point which has caught my attention before; undoubtedly my mother kept the status of childhood imposed on Victoria fully as long as nature countenanced the measure. Krak did not go; a laugh greeted my hint. Krak stayed till Victoria was sixteen. For my part, since it was inevitable that Krak should discipline somebody, I think Heaven was mild in setting her on Victoria. Had I stayed under her sway, I should have run mad. Victoria laughed, cried, joked, dared, submitted, offended, defied, suffered, wept, and laughed again all in a winter's afternoon. She was by way of putting on the dignity of an elder with me and shutting off from my

gaze her trials and reverses. But there was nobody else to tell the joke to, and I had it all each night before I slept.

But now Victoria was sixteen; and Krak, elderly, pensioned, but unbroken, was gone. She went back to Styria to chasten and ultimately to enrich (I would not for the world have been privy to their prayers) some nephews and nieces. It seemed strange, but Krak was homesick for Styria. She went; Victoria gave her the tribute of a tear surprised out of her before she remembered her causes for exultation. Then came their memory, and she was outrageously triumphant. A new era began; the buffer was gone; my mother and Victoria were face to face. And in a year, as Victoria said—in two or three, as my mother allowed—Victoria would be grown up.

I was myself, most unwillingly, a cause of annoyance to Victoria, and a pretext for her repression. Importance flowed in on me, unasked, unearned. To speak in homely fashion, she was always “a bad second,” and none save herself attributed to her the normal status or privileges of an elder sister. Her wrath was not visited on me, but on those who exalted me so unduly; even while she resented my position, she was not, as I have shown, above using it for her own ends; this adaptability was not due to guile; she forgot one mood when another came, and compromised her pretensions in the effort to compass her desires. Princess Henrich seized on the inconsistency, and pointed it out to her daughter with an exasperating lucidity.

“You are ready enough to remember that Augustin is king when you want anything from him,” she would observe. “You forget it only when you are asked to give way to him.”

Victoria would make no reply—the Krak traditions endured to prevent an answer to rebukes—but when we were alone, she used to remark, “I should think an iceberg's rather like mother. Only one needn't live with icebergs.”

Quite suddenly, as it seemed, it occurred to Victoria that she was pretty. She lost no time in advertising the discovery through the medium of a thousand new tricks and graces; a determined assault upon the affections of all the men about us, from the lords in waiting down to the stablemen, an assault that ignored existing domestic ties or preëngaged affections, was the next move in her campaign; when she was extremely angry with her mother, she would say, "How odious it must be not to be young any more!" I thought that there was sometimes a wistful look in my mother's eyes; was she thinking of Krak, Krak in far off Styria? Perhaps, for once when Victoria was hitting covertly at Krak, my mother remarked in a very cold voice:

"You remember your punishments, you don't remember your offenses, Victoria."

I could linger long on these small matters, for I find more interest and more incitement to analysis in the attitude of women towards women than in their more obvious relations with men; but I must pass over a year of veiled conflict and come to that incident which is the salient point in Victoria's girlish history. It coincided almost exactly in time with the dismissal of Geoffrey Owen, and my preoccupation with that event prevented attention to the earlier stages of Victoria's affair. She was just seventeen—grown up in her own esteem (and she adduced many precedents to fortify her contention), but in my mother's eyes still wanting a year of quiet home life before she should be launched into society. Victoria acquiesced perforce, but turned the flank of the decree by insuring that the home life should be by no means quiet. She set to work to prepare for a play; comedy or tragedy I knew not then and am not now quite clear.

Our nearest neighbor at Artenberg dwelt across the river in the picturesque old castle of Waldenweiter; he was a young man of twenty two at this time,

handsome, pleasant, and ready for amusement. His father being dead, Frederick was his own master; that is to say, he had no master. Victoria fell in love with him. The baron, it seemed, was not disinclined for a romance with a pretty princess; perhaps he thought that nothing serious would come of it, and that it was a pleasant way enough of passing a summer; or perhaps, being but twenty two, he did not think at all, unless to muse on the depths of the blue in Victoria's eyes and the comely lines of her figure as she rowed on the river. To say truth, Victoria gave him small time for reflection. As I am convinced, before he had well considered the situation, he had fallen into the habit of attending a rendezvous in a backwater of the stream about a mile above Artenberg. Victoria never went out unaccompanied, and never came back unaccompanied; it was discovered afterwards that the trusted old boatman could be bought off with the price of beer, and used to disembark and seek an alehouse so soon as the backwater was reached. The meeting over, Victoria would return, in high spirits and displaying an unusual affection towards my mother, either as a blind, or through remorse, or (as I incline to think) through an amiability born of triumph; there was at times even a touch of commiseration in her manner, and more than once she spoke to me, in a tone of philosophical speculation, on the uselessness of endeavoring to repress natural feelings, and the futility of treating as children persons who were already grown up. This mood lasted some time, so long, I suppose, as the stolen delight of doing the thing was more prominent than the delight in the thing itself.

A month passed and brought a change. Now she was silent, absent, pensive, very kind to me, more genuinely submissive and dutiful to her mother. The first force of my blow had left me, for Owen had been gone now some months; I began to observe my

sister carefully. To my amazement, she, formerly the most heedless of creatures, knew in an instant that she was watched. She drew off from me, setting a distance between us; my answer was to withdraw my companionship; since only thus could I convince her that I had no desire to spy. I had not guessed the truth, and my mother had no inkling of it. Princess Heinrich's ignorance may seem strange, but I have often observed that persons of a masterful temper are rather easy to delude; they have such difficulty in conceiving that they can be disobeyed as to become ready subjects for hoodwinking; I recollect old Hammerfeldt saying to me, "In public affairs, sire, always expect disobedience, but be chary of rewarding obedience." My mother adopted the second half of the maxim, but disregarded the first. She always expected obedience; Victoria knew it and built on her knowledge a confident hope of impunity in deceit.

Now on what harsh word have I stumbled? For deceit savors of meanness. Let me amend and seek the charity, the neutral tolerance, of some such word as concealment! For things good and things bad may be concealed, things that people should know and things that concern them not, great secrets of state and the flutterings of hearts. Victoria practised concealment.

I found her crying once, crying alone in a corner of the terrace under a ludicrous old statue of Mercury. I was amazed; I had not seen her cry since Krak had last ill treated her. I put it to her that some such affliction must be responsible for her condition.

"I wish it was only that," she answered. "Do go away, Augustin."

"I don't want to stay," said I. "Only, if you want anything——"

"I wonder if you could!" she said, with a sudden flush. "No, it's no use," she went on. "And it's nothing. Augustin, if you tell mother you found me crying, I'll never——"

"You know quite well that I never

tell anybody anything," said I, rather offended.

"Then go away, dear," urged Victoria.

I went away. I had been feeling very lonely myself and had sought out Victoria for company's sake. However, I went and walked alone down to the edge of the river. It was clear that Victoria did not want me, and apparently I could do nothing for her. I have never found myself able to do very much for people, except those who did not deserve to have anything done for them. Perhaps poor Victoria didn't, but I was not aware of her demerits then. I repeated to the river my old reflection. "I don't see that it's much use being king, you know," said I as I flung a pebble and looked across at the towers of Waldenweiter. "That fellow's better off than I am," said I; and I wished again that Victoria had not sent me away. There is a period of life during which one is always being sent away, and it was not quite over for me yet in spite of my dignity.

At last came the crash. A little carelessness, born of habit and impunity, the treachery of the old boatman under the temptation of a gold piece, the girl's lack of *savoir faire* when charged with the offense—here was enough and more than enough. I recollect being summoned to my mother's room late one evening, just about my bedtime. I went and found her alone with Victoria. The princess sat in her great armchair; Victoria was leaning against the wall when I entered; her handkerchief was crushed in one hand, the other hand clenched by her side.

"Augustin," said the princess, "Victoria and I go to Biarritz tomorrow."

Victoria's quick breathing was her only comment. My mother told me in brief, curt, offensive phrases that Victoria had been carrying on a flirtation with our opposite neighbor. I have no doubt that I looked surprised.

"You may well wonder!" cried my mother. "If she could not remember

what she was herself, she might have remembered that the king was her brother."

"I've done nothing——" Victoria began.

"Hold your tongue," said my mother. "If you were in Styria instead of here, you'd be locked up in your own room for a month on bread and water; yes, you may think yourself lucky that I only take you to Biarritz."

"Styria!" said Victoria, with a very bitter smile. "If I were in Styria I should be beheaded, I dare say, or—or knouted or something. Oh, I know what Styria means! Krak taught me that."

"I wish the baroness was here," observed the princess.

"You'd tell her to beat me, I suppose?" flashed out my sister.

"If you were three years younger——" began my mother with perfect outward composure. Victoria interrupted her passionately.

"Oh, never mind my age! I'm a child still. Come and beat me!" she cried, assuming the air of an *Iphigenia*.

To this day I am of the opinion that she ran a risk in giving this invitation; it was well on the cards that the princess might have accepted it. Indeed had it been Styria—but it was not Styria. My mother turned to me with a cold smile.

"You perceive," said she, "the spirit in which your sister meets me because I object to her compromising herself with this wretched baron. She accuses me of persecution, and talks as though I were an executioner."

I had been looking very curiously at Victoria. She was in a dressing gown, having been called, apparently, from her bedroom; her hair was over her shoulders; she looked most prettily woe-begone—like *Juliet* before her angry father, or, as I say, *Iphigenia* before the knife. In a moment she broke out again.

"Nobody feels for me," she complained. "What can Augustin know of it?"

"I know," observed my mother. "But although I know——"

"Oh, you've forgotten," cried Victoria scornfully.

For a moment my mother flushed. I was glad on all accounts that Victoria did not repeat her previous invitation now. On the contrary, when she had looked at Princess Heinrich she gave a sudden frightened sob, rushed across the room, and flung herself on her knees at my feet.

"You're the king!" she cried. "Protect me, protect me!"

Throughout all this very painful interview, I seemed to hear, as it were, echoes of the romances which I had read on Victoria's recommendation; the reminiscence was particularly strong in this last exclamation. However, it is not safe to conclude that feelings are not sincere because they are expressed in conventional phrases. These formulas are molds into which our words run easily; though the molds be hollow, the stuff that fills them may be solid enough.

"Why, you don't want to marry him?" I exclaimed, much embarrassed at being thus prematurely forced into the functions of a *père de famille*.

"I'll never marry anybody else," moaned Victoria. My mother's face was the picture of disgust and scorn.

"That's another thing," said she. "At least the king would not hear of such a marriage as this."

"Do you want to marry him?" I asked Victoria, chiefly, I confess, in curiosity. I had risen—or fallen—in some degree to my position, and it seemed strange to me that my sister should wish to marry this Baron Fritz.

"I—I love him, Augustin," groaned Victoria.

"She knows it's impossible as well as you do," said my mother. "She doesn't really want to do it."

Victoria cried quietly, but made no reply or protest. I was bewildered; I did not understand then how we may passionately desire a thing which we

• would not do, and may snatch at the opposition of others as an excuse alike for refusal and for tears. Looking back, I do not think, had we set Victoria free in the boat and put the sculls in her hands, that she would have rowed over to Waldenweiler. But did she, then, deserve no pity? Perhaps she deserved more, for not two weak creatures like the princess (I crave her pardon) and myself stood between her and her wishes, but she herself, the being that she had been fashioned into, her whole life, her nature, and her heart, as our state had made them. If our soul be our prison and our self the jailer, in vain shall we plan to escape or offer bribes for freedom; wheresoever we go, we carry the walls with us, and if death, then death alone, can unlock the gates.

The scene grew quieter. Victoria arose and threw herself into a chair in a weary, puzzled desolation; my mother sat quite still with eyes intent on the floor and lips close shut. A sense of awkwardness grew strong on me; I wanted to get out of the room. They would not fight any more now; they would be very distant to each other; and, moreover, it seemed clear that Victoria did not propose to marry Baron Fritz. But what about poor Baron Fritz? I approached my mother and whispered a question. She answered me aloud.

"I have written to Prince von Hammerfeldt. A letter from him will, I have no doubt, be enough to insure us against further impertinence."

Victoria dabbed her eyes, but no protest came from her.

"We shall start midday tomorrow," the princess pursued. "Unless, of course, Victoria refuses to accompany me." Her voice took a tinge of irony. "Possibly your wishes may persuade her, Augustin, if mine cannot."

Victoria raised her head suddenly and said very distinctly:

"I will do what Augustin tells me;" the emphatic word in that sentence was "Augustin."

My mother smiled bitterly; she understood well enough the implicit declaration of war, the appeal from her to me, the shifting of allegiance. I dare say that she saw the absurdity of putting a boy not yet sixteen into such a position; but I know that I felt it much more strongly.

"Oh, you'd better go, hadn't you?" I asked uncomfortably. "You wouldn't be very jolly here, you know."

"I'll do as you tell me, Augustin."

"Yes, we are both at your orders," said my mother.

It crossed my mind that their journey would not be a very pleasant one, but I did not feel able to enter into that side of the question. I resented this reference to me and desired to be rid of the affair.

"I should like you to do as mother suggests," said I.

"Very well, Augustin," said Victoria, and she rose to her feet. She was a tall, graceful girl and looked very stately as she walked by her mother. The princess made no movement or sign; the grim smile persisted on her lips. After a moment or two of wavering, I followed my sister from the room. She was just ahead of me in the passage, moving towards her bedroom with a slow, listless tread. An impulse of sympathy came upon me; I ran after her, caught her by the arm, and kissed her.

"Cheer up," I said.

"Oh, it's all right, Augustin," said she. "I've only been a fool."

There seemed nothing else to do, so I kissed her again.

"Fancy Biarritz with mother!" she moaned. Then she turned on me suddenly, almost fiercely. "But what's the good of asking anything of you? You're afraid of mother still."

I drew back as though she had struck me. A moment later her arms were round my neck.

"Oh, never mind, my dear," she sobbed. "Don't you see I'm miserable? Of course I must go with her."

I had never supposed that any other course was practicable. The introduction of myself into the business had been but a move in the game. Nevertheless, it marked the beginning of a new position for me, as rich in discomfort as, according to my experience are most extensions of power.

VI.

THE departure to Biarritz was carried through without further overt hostilities. It chanced to be holidays with me; all my tutors were on their vacation, my governor Vohrenlorf on a visit at Berlin. Hearing of my solitude he insisted on making arrangements to return speedily, but for a few days I was left quite alone, saving for the presence of my French body servant Baptiste.

I liked Baptiste; he was by conviction an anarchist; by prejudice a free-thinker; one shrug of his shoulders disposed of the institutions of this world, another relegated the next to the limbo of delusions. He was always respectful, but possessed an unconquerably intimate manner; he could not forget that man spoke to man, although one might be putting on the other's boots for him. He regarded me with mingled affection and pity. I had overheard him speaking of *le pauvre petit roi*. The point of view was so much my own that from the instant my heart went out to Baptiste. Since he attributed to me no sacrosanctity he was not officious or persistent in his attendance while he was on duty; in fact, he left me very much to my own devices.

To my mother he was polite but cold. He adored Victoria, declaring that she was worthy of being French. His great hatred was for Hammerfeldt, whom he accused of embodying the devil of Teutonism. Hammerfeldt was aware of his feelings and played with them, while he trusted Baptiste more than anybody about me. He did not know how attached I was to the Frenchman,

and I did not intend that he should learn. I had received a sharp lesson with regard to parading my preferences.

It was through Baptiste that I heard of Baron Fritz' side of the case; for Baptiste was friendly with Fritz' servants. The baron, it appeared, was in despair. "They watch him when he walks by the river," declared Baptiste, with a gesture in which dismay and satisfaction were curiously blended.

"Poor fellow!" said I, leaning back in the stern of the boat. To be in such a state on Victoria's account was odd and deplorable.

Baptiste laid down the sculls and leaned forward smiling.

"It is nothing, sire," said he. "It must happen now and again to all of us. *M. le baron* will soon be well. Meanwhile he is—oh, miserable!"

"Is he all alone there?" I asked.

"Absolutely, sire. He will see nobody."

I looked up at Waldenweiter.

"He has not even his mother with him," said Baptiste; the remark, as Baptiste delivered it, was impertinent, and yet so intangibly impertinent as to afford no handle for reproof. He meant that the baron was free from an aggravation; he said that he lacked a consolation.

"Shall I go and see him?" I asked. In truth I was rather curious about him; it was a pleasure to me to break out of my own circle of surroundings.

"What would *M. le prince* say?" said Baptiste.

"He need not know. Row ashore there."

"You must not go, sire. It would be known, and they would say——!" Baptiste's shrug was eloquent.

"Do they always talk about everything one does?"

"Certainly, sire, it is your privilege," smiled my servant. "But I think he might come to you. That could be managed; not in the *Schloss*, but in the wood, quite privately. I can contrive it."

Baptiste did contrive it, and Baron Fritz came. I was now just too old to scorn love, just too young to sympathize fully with it. There is that age in a boy's life, but since he holds his tongue about it, it is apt to escape notice, and people jest on the sudden change in his attitude towards women. Nothing in nature is sudden; no more, then, is this transition.

I looked curiously at Fritz; he was timid with me. I perceived that he was not an ordinary young nobleman, devoted only to sport and wine; he had something of Owen's romance, but in him it was self centered, not open wide to embrace the universe of things, beautiful and ugly. He thanked me for receiving him in a rather elaborate and artificial fashion. I wondered at once that he had caught Victoria's fancy; her temperament seemed too robust for him. He began to speak of her in some very poetical phrases; he quoted a line of poetry about Diana and Endymion. I had been made to turn it into Latin verses, and its sentiment fell cold on my soul. He spoke of his passion with desperation and, I thought, with pride. He said that, happen what might, his whole life was the princess'; but he did not mention Victoria's name, he said "her" with an air of mystery, as if spies lurked in the woods. There was nobody save Baptiste, standing sentry to guard this secret meeting. I gave the baron a cigarette, and lit one myself; I had begun the habit, though still surreptitiously.

"You must have known there'd be a row," I suggested.

"Tell me of her!" he cried. "Is she in great grief?"

I did not want to tell him about Victoria; I wanted him to tell me about himself. As soon as he understood this, I am bound to say that he gratified me at once. I sat looking at him while he described his feelings; all at once he turned and discovered my gaze on him.

"Go on," said I.

The baron appeared uncomfortable.

His eyes fell to the ground, and he tried to puff at his cigarette, which he had allowed to go out. I dare say he thought me a strange boy; but he could not very well say so.

"You don't understand it?" he asked.

"Partly," I answered.

"We never had any hope," said he, almost luxuriously.

"But you enjoyed it very much?" I suggested; I was quite grave about it in my mind as well as in my face.

"Ah!" sighed he softly.

"And now it's all over!"

"I see her no more. I think of her. She thinks of me."

"Perhaps," said I meditatively. I was wondering whether they did not think more about themselves. "Didn't you think you might manage it?"

"Alas, no. Sorrow was always in our joy."

"What are you going to do now?"

"What is there for me to do?" he asked despairingly. "Sometimes I think that I cannot endure to live."

"Baptiste told me that they watched you when you walked by the river."

He turned to me with a very interested expression of face.

"Do they really?" he asked.

"So Baptiste said."

"I promised her that, whatever happened, I would do nothing rash," said he. "What would her feelings be?"

"We should all be very much distressed," said I in my best court manner.

"Ah, the world, the world!" sighed Baron Fritz. Then with an air of great courage he went on: "Yet how am I so different from her?"

"I think you are very much alike," said I.

"But she is—a princess!"

I felt that he was laying a sort of responsibility on me. I could not help Victoria being a princess. He laughed bitterly; I seemed to be put on my defense.

"I think it just as absurd as you do," I hastened to say.

"Absurd!" he echoed. "I didn't say that I thought it absurd. Would not your majesty rather say tragic? There must be kings, princes, princesses; our hearts pay the price."

I was growing rather weary of this baron, and wondering more and more what Victoria had discovered in him. But my lack of knowledge led me into an error; I attributed what wearied me in no degree to the baron himself, but altogether to his condition. "This, then, is what it is to be in love," I was saying to myself. The baron perhaps detected the beginnings of *ennui*.

"Forgive me, if I say that your majesty will understand my feelings better in two or three years," he observed, rising to his feet.

"I suppose I shall," I answered, rather uneasily.

"Meanwhile I must live it down; I must master it."

"It's the only thing to do."

"And she——"

"Oh, she'll get over it," I assured him, nodding my head.

I am inclined sometimes to count it among my misfortunes that the first love affair with which I was brought into intimate connection, at an age still so impressionable, should have been of the shallow and somewhat artificial character betrayed by the romance of my sister and Baron Fritz. She was a headstrong girl, longing to exercise power over men, surprised when a temporary gust of feeling carried her into an emotion unexpectedly strong; he was a self-conscious fellow, hugging his woes and delighting in the picturesque of his misfortune. The notion left on my mind was that there was a great deal of nonsense about the matter. Baptiste strengthened my opinion.

"I ask your pardon, sire," with a shrug, "but we know the sentimentality of the Germans. What is it? Sighs and then beer, more sighs and more beer, a deluge of sighs and a deluge of beer. A Frenchman is not like that in his little affair."

"What does a Frenchman do, Baptiste?" I had the curiosity to ask.

"Ah," laughed Baptiste, "if I told your majesty now, you would not care to visit Paris; and I long to go to Paris with your majesty."

I did not pursue the subject. I was conscious of a disenchantment, begun by Victoria, continued by the baron. The reaction made in favor of my mother. I acknowledged the wisdom of her firmness, and an excuse for her anger. I realized her causes for annoyance and shame, and saw the hollowness of the lovers' pleas. I had thought the princess very hard; I was now inclined to think that she had shown as much self control as could be expected from her. Rather to my own surprise, I found myself extending this more favorable judgment of her to other matters, entering with a new sympathy into her disposition, and even forgiving some harsh things which I had never pardoned. The idea suggested itself to my mind that the rigors of the Styrian discipline had a rational relation to the position which the victims of it were destined to fill. She might be right in supposing that we could not be allowed the indulgence accorded to the common run of children. We were destined for a special purpose, and if we were not made of a special clay, yet we must be fashioned into a special shape.

It is hard to disentangle the influence of one event from that exerted by another. Perhaps the loss of Owen, and the consequently increased influence of Hammerfeldt over my life and thoughts, had as much to do with my new feelings as had Victoria's love affair; but in any case I date from this time a fresh development of myself. I was growing into my kingship, beginning to realize the conception of it, and to fill up that conception in my own mind. This moment was of importance to me; for it marked the beginning of a period during which this idea of my position was very dominant and colored all I did

or thought. I did not change my opinion as to the discomfort of the post; but its importance, its sacredness, and its paramount claims grew larger and larger in my eyes. It seems curious, but had Baron Fritz been a different sort of lover, I think that I should have been in some respects a different sort of king. It needs a constant intellectual effort to believe that there is anything except accident in the course of the world.

Hammerfeldt's persistent pressure drove the love lorn baron, still undrowned (had the watchers been too vigilant?) on a long foreign tour, and in three months the princess and Victoria returned. I saw at once that the new relations were permanently established between them. My mother displayed an almost ostentatious abdication of authority; her whole air declared that since Victoria chose to walk alone, alone in good truth she should walk. It was the attitude of a proud and domineering nature that answers any objection to its sway by a wholesale disclaimer of power and responsibility.

Victoria accepted her mother's resolution, but rather with resentment than with gratitude. They had managed the affair badly; my mother had lost influence without gaining affection; my sister had forfeited guidance, but not achieved a true liberty. She was hardly more her own mistress than before. Hammerfeldt, screened behind me, now trammelled her, and she had a statesman to deal with instead of a mother. Only once she spoke to me concerning the baron and his affair;

the three months had wrought some change here also.

"I was very silly," she said impatiently. "I know that well enough."

"Then, why don't you make it up with mother?" I ventured to suggest.

"Mother behaved odiously," she declared. "I can never forgive her."

The grievance, then, had shifted its ground; not what the princess had done, but the manner in which she had done it, was now the head and front of her offense. It needed little acquaintance with the world to recognize that matters were not improved by this change; one may come to admit that common sense was with the enemy; vanity at once takes refuge in the conviction that his awkwardness, rudeness, or cruelty in advancing his case was responsible for all the trouble.

"If she had been kind, I should have seen it all directly," said Victoria. And in this it may very well be that Victoria was not altogether wrong.

The position was, however, inconsistent with even tolerable comfort. There was a way of ending it, obvious, I suppose, to everybody save myself, but rather startling to my youthful mind. In six months now Victoria would be eighteen, and eighteen is a marriageable age. Victoria must be married; my mother and Hammerfeldt went husband hunting.

As soon as I heard of the scheme I was ready with brotherly sympathy, and even cherished the idea of interposing an hitherto untried royal veto on such premature haste and cruel forcing of a girl's inclination.

(To be continued.)

CONTENTMENT.

Who builds his castles in the air
And never seeks them on the earth,
Shall have contentment for his share.

Nor wear the way with dragging feet.
Only a dream unrealized
Remains complete and whole and sweet.

Theodosia Pickering Garrison.