

THE
QUARTERLY REVIEW.

- ART. I.—1. *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand, Roi de Prusse.*
Nouvelle Edition. Berlin : chez Rodolphe Decker, Imprimeur
du Roi, vols. i., ii., et iii. 1846.
2. *Friedrich der Grosse: eine Lebens-Geschichte.* Von J. D. E.
Preuss, Berlin, 4 vols. 1832.
3. *Urkunden-buch zur Lebens-Geschichte.* Von J. D. E. Preuss,
Berlin, 5 vols. 1834.

IN a Convocation held at Oxford on the 1st of July, 1847,
'it was proposed and agreed that the University Seal should
be affixed to a Letter of Thanks to His Majesty the King of
Prussia for his Majesty's gracious present of the three first
volumes of a magnificent edition of the Works of King Frederick
the Great.' We have no doubt that the good taste of the Royal
Donor will limit his gift to the earlier volumes, which comprise
such writings as the *Mémoires de Brandebourg* and *L'Histoire
de Mon Temps*. Were his Majesty to send the complete collec-
tion, with what feelings could the Reverend Heads of houses
be expected to read—or with what expressions to acknowledge
—the *Commentaire Théologique sur Barbe Bleue*, or the Ode, in
the style of Petronius, on the French fugitives after Rosbach!*

This new edition comes forth with a splendour well besee-
ming, if not the value of the works, yet certainly the rank of the author.
No expense has been spared on the paper or the types; and the
editor, Dr. Preuss, is eminently qualified for the task from his
most full and valuable, and on the whole impartial and discrim-
inating, Life of King Frederick which appeared in 1832.

We shall not be tempted, however, by this opportunity to enter
into any minute discussion of the writings of the Prussian monarch.
On his general demerits as an author, the department of letter-
writing alone excepted, his imperfect mastery of the French in
which he chose to write, and his peculiar tediousness both in his
prose and verse, or rather in his two kinds of prose, the rhymed
and unrhymed—we imagine that all critics of all countries (unless
possibly his own) are entirely agreed. Nor do we propose to
descant either upon the freaks of his youth or the glories of his

* Congé de l'Armée des Cercles et des Tonnelliers, *Œuvres Posthumes* vol. xv.
p. 217.

wars. Both are sufficiently well known—the former through his own sister, the Margravine de Bareith, and his favourite, Voltaire ; —the latter from the pages of more than one historian. But it seems to us that his system of administration in peace has by no means received the same degree of attention as his military exploits. Nor are the habits of his declining age so familiar to us as those of his early manhood. It is therefore to these—the life of Frederick public and private since the Peace of Hubertsburg—that we now desire to apply ourselves. For this investigation the biography of Dr. Preuss, with his five volumes of appended documents, will supply our best, though by no means our only, materials.

From the Peace of Hubertsburg in 1763 until his death in 1786, Frederick may be said to have enjoyed uninterrupted peace. For although a declaration of war was called forth by the Bavarian Succession in 1778, it was merely, as he might have termed it in his adopted language, *une levée de boucliers* ; it led scarcely even to a skirmish, far less to a battle or a siege. But these twenty-three years of public peace were to the King himself very far from years of repose. A slight sketch of his daily life at Potsdam or Sans Souci will best portray his unremitting activity.

The value of early hours had been felt by Frederick in his campaigns, especially when opposed to indolent and luxurious courtiers like the Prince de Soubise. 'Je pense bien,' says Voltaire, 30th March, 1759—(he is addressing Frederick and alluding to Soubise)—'que celui qui met ses bottes à quatre heures du matin a un grand avantage au jeu contre celui qui monte en carrosse à midi.' These early habits of Frederick were continued in his years of peace. In summer he usually rose at three, seldom ever after four; in winter he was scarcely an hour later. During the prime of his manhood five or six hours of sleep sufficed him ; but in his old age the term was extended to seven or eight. His ablutions, when performed at all, were slight and few. While still in the hands of his hair-dresser he opened his first packet of letters from Berlin; this packet contained only such letters as, either by their seals or by Post-office notices, were known to come from Prussian nobles. All other letters of subjects not of noble birth were opened by some one of the four Cabinet-Secretaries. How would his Prussian Majesty, thus nice in matters of epistolary etiquette, have stared at Sir Robert Walpole, of whom it is recorded that, whenever a batch of letters reached him from the country, that from his gamekeeper was always the first which he perused !

The King next proceeded to dress himself, and put on his hat, which

which he wore almost constantly within doors, and took off only during interviews with persons of high birth and at dinner time. His strict economy was manifest in his dress, for his uniforms were usually patched and threadbare, while his boots from age and want of blacking appeared of a tawny red. Two of the Cabinet-Secretaries now laid before him extracts of the letters which they had opened, together with various petitions and memorials. The Adjutant of the Royal Guard brought a Report of all strangers who had either arrived at or departed from Potsdam the day before. A similar report as to Berlin had already reached the King, inclosed in the first packet of letters. Next came the Adjutant-General, with whom Frederick was wont day by day to discuss and decide all the affairs of the army.

Having despatched these affairs, Frederick passed into his writing-room, where he began by drinking off several glasses of cold water flavoured with fennel-leaves, and employed himself with replies to his letters and notes on his memorials. At intervals he used to sip several cups of coffee, which, in the last twenty years of his life, were always mingled with mustard. Not unfrequently, also, he indulged in a little fruit which stood ready on the side-table; of stone-fruit, above all, he was passionately fond. Parsimonious as he seemed on most occasions, he would buy the earliest forced cherries in the months of December and January for his private eating at the rate of two dollars each.

It was the object of Frederick in this, as in other matters, to bring forward hidden merit. In a remote district an avenue of cherry-trees led, and still leads, from the village of Helmsdorf to the village of Heiligenthal. It excited little notice until Frederick, on one of his journeys, having tasted the fruit, was struck with its peculiar richness of flavour; and gave orders that some basketfuls of it should be sent every summer to Potsdam.

While still in his writing-room Frederick allowed himself daily half an hour's relaxation with his flute. But even this short relaxation was by no means lost time so far as business was concerned. He once said to d'Alembert that during his musical exercises he was accustomed to turn over in his mind his affairs of state, and that several of his happiest thoughts for their administration had occurred to him at those times.

Between eight and ten o'clock the King received the Cabinet-Secretaries separately, and gave them his instructions. These men, though inferior both in rank and salary, were the chief instruments of his sovereign will: for it is not the least among the singularities of his government, that only by exception, and on special occasions, did Frederick ever see his own Ministers. It

was in writing that they sent him their reports,—it was in writing that he sent them his commands.

After the Cabinet-Secretaries had been despatched, the occupations of Frederick until dinner were not so uniformly fixed as the preceding. Sometimes he attended the review of his guards at eleven; sometimes took a ride, sometimes a walk, sometimes read aloud to himself, and sometimes granted audiences. In these—at least with respect to his own subjects who were not of noble birth, nor admitted to his familiar intercourse—no Eastern Sultan ever maintained more haughty state. We have now lying before us two reports of interviews, as printed in the appendix to one of Dr. Preuss's volumes; the one from a President of the *Chambre des Domaines* at Cleves, the other from his colleague, a second President at Aurich; and it appears incidentally that although both of them parted from the King with full assurances of his approbation and favour, they were not admitted to kiss his hand, but only his coat!

But whatever might be the previous occupations, as the clock struck noon Frederick sat down to dinner. In his youth twelve had been the dinner-hour for all classes at Berlin; nay, his ancestor the Great Elector had always dined at eleven. But before the close of Frederick's reign the people of fashion gradually extended the hour till two; and ever since at Berlin, as elsewhere, it has become later and later. Well may a French novelist of our own time exclaim, 'Tous les jours on dîne plus tard; incessamment on ne dînera plus du tout!'

Since the close of the Seven Years' War Frederick had renounced suppers, and dinner became with him, as with Prince Talleyrand, his single daily meal. The King was a *gourmand* of the first water; and had he survived till 1802, would no doubt have received the honorary presidency of the *Jury Dégustateur*; or the dedication of Grimod de la Reynière's 'Almanach,' preferably even to the Second Consul Cambacérés. The bill of fare was daily laid before his Majesty, comprising not merely a list of the dishes, but the name of the cook by whom each dish was to be dressed; and these bills of fare were always well considered, and often corrected and amended by the Royal hand. Sometimes, when they gave promise of some novel experiment or favourite dainty—as *polentas* and eel-pies—the King, in his eagerness, would order the dinner to be brought in ten or twelve minutes earlier than the appointed hour. After dinner he used to mark with a cross the names of those dishes which had afforded him particular pleasure. Of wine he drank sparingly; his favourite vintage being from the banks of the Dordogne, and in general diluted with water.

The King's meals, however, were highly social as well as gastronomic. He frequently invited guests in numbers varying from seven to ten, and entertained them with a varied and never-failing flow of conversation. There was no limitation as to rank in those whom he invited, nor any arrogance of Royalty in his behaviour towards them; but they suffered unmercifully from his wit, or as his butts, for he especially delighted in such jests as were most likely to give pain. Thus, then, came his guests, half pleased and half afraid :—

' In quorum facie miseræ magnæque sedebat
Pallor amicitiaë.'

Politics, religion, and history, with anecdotes of Court and war, jocular and serious, were his favourite topics, and were always treated with entire freedom and unreserve. When the guests amused him, or when the conversation took a more than usually interesting turn, the sitting was sometimes protracted from noon till past four o'clock; in general, however, it ended much sooner.

On rising from table Frederick allowed himself another half hour with his flute; after which the Cabinet-Secretaries brought in the letters which he had directed or dictated, and which now came before him again transcribed and ready for his signature. It was not unusual for the King when signing to enforce the object of the letter by adding to it a few clear sharp words. Many of these post-scripts are still preserved. Thus, when he replied to an application for money, there are sometimes found appended in the Royal handwriting such phrases as 'I cannot give a single *groschen*,' or 'I am now as poor as Job.' Thus, when the celebrated singer Madame Mara sent him a long memorial against some intended arrangements at the Opera, the King's postscript is—'Elle est payée pour chanter et non pas écrire.'* Thus, again, when a veteran General had asked permission to retire, the official answer bids him reconsider his request, and there follows, *manu propria*, the significant remark—'The hens that will not lay I will not feed! †

But, perhaps, the most curious of all is the following in five words to Baron Arnim, in which five words it will be seen that three languages are blended, and each of the three incorrectly:—'Scriptus est scriptus; nicht raisoniren.'‡

In some, though not numerous, cases the postscript seems to us utterly at variance with the letter. Thus when Colonel Philip

* June 30, 1776.

† To General Von Lax-Debnen, January 8, 1773. Two days after the King (according to his hint) granted the General his retirement, but refused him his pension.

‡ Oct. 26, 1776—*Urkunden-buch*, vol. iii. p. 196.

Von Borcke wished to retire from the army and to live on his estates in Pomerania, the King (May 30, 1785) desired a letter to be drawn out for his Royal signature, stating 'that the said Colonel has been always found faithful, brave, and irreproachable in times of war, and that his Majesty has been constantly satisfied with him;' but in signing this document the King added with his own hand some German words to the following effect:— '*Abschied* for a Prussian who will not serve, and one ought therefore to thank God that one gets rid of him.' Surely, whatever satisfaction or advantage the letter might be intended to confer must have been turned into the very opposite by such an addition.

When this correspondence was completed, the King sometimes took a walk—out of doors if the weather was fine, or through his saloons if it rained. Sometimes he conversed with his friend Colonel Guichard, whom he had by patent new-named Quintus Icilius, or some other staff-officer; sometimes he received the artists who had executed his commissions, or who brought him their works to view. But whenever his leisure served, the hours between four and six, or what remained of them, were devoted to his literary labours. It was during this interval that he composed nearly all the volumes in prose and verse which are now to be reprinted. Numerous, indeed, they are. As Voltaire says of him and to him (March 24, 1772), 'Il a fait plus de livres qu'aucun des princes contemporains n'a fait de bâtards!'

It is very remarkable, however, and not easily explained, that though Frederick practised authorship for almost half a century—though every day he was reading and writing German for business and French for pleasure—yet he never in any degree mastered the spelling of either language. To the last we find the strangest errors even in the most common words. Thus he writes winter HIVERD, old VIEU, flesh CHER, actress ACCTRISSE, and the word which in private life he most disliked, PEYER.

It is also singular that up to the close of May, 1737, his Majesty always signed his name in French according to the usual manner, FREDERIC, but ever afterwards FEDERIC.

From six till seven o'clock the King had usually a small concert, in which only musicians or a few amateurs of the highest rank were admitted, and in which he himself played the flute. By long practice he had acquired excellent skill with that instrument. In his very last years, however, the decay of his front teeth deprived him of this daily recreation. Thus losing the power to execute, he lost also the wish to hear, music; and from that time forward he seldom appeared at any concert.

During Frederick's earlier years his suppers had become
justly

justly renowned from the wit of the guests whom he there gathered round him and from his own. Voltaire thus alludes to them in a sketch at that period of his Royal Patron's daily life:—

' Il est grand Roi tout le matin,
Après dîner grand écrivain,
Tout le jour philosophe humain,
Et le soir convive divin;
C'est un assez joli destin :—
Puisse-t-il n'avoir point de fin !'

But when, after 1763, the King discontinued his suppers, the void thus left in his evenings was supplied by still frequently receiving a circle of distinguished men, as some of his generals, the Marquis d'Argens, Lord Marischal, and Lucchesini. His usual plan was to begin by reading aloud to them a passage from some book, which served as a kind of text for the lively conversation which ensued. During the rest of the evening, or for the whole of it when no visitors came, the King was read to by one or more *lecteurs*, selecting either original French works or translations into French of the Greek and Latin classics. At about nine o'clock he went to bed.

Such was the daily life of Frederick; a life not at all varied on Sundays or other holydays, but diversified by annual reviews of his troops and journeys to his provinces. From his alternate toils in the field and labours in the administration, it might be supposed that he had in truth an iron frame; on the contrary, however, his health from his childhood was delicate and variable. But the want of bodily strength was well supplied by his ardent and indomitable soul. The following are his own expressions in a letter to Voltaire of the 7th September, 1776 :—

' Quant à ma méthode de ne me point ménager, elle est toujours la même. Plus on se soigne et plus le corps devient délicat et faible. Mon métier veut du travail et de l'action: il faut que mon corps et mon esprit se plient à leur devoir. Il n'est pas nécessaire que je vive, mais bien que j'agisse. Je m'en suis toujours bien trouvé. Cependant je ne prescrais cette méthode à personne, et me contente de la suivre.'

It may be observed that the sketch of the King's daily life makes no reference whatever to a Queen Consort; yet in 1733, under his father's dictation, Frederick had espoused the Princess Elizabeth of Brunswick-Bevern, who survived not only through his whole reign of almost half a century, but even for eleven years afterwards, namely, till 1797. This Princess was of exemplary character, filled with admiration for the great deeds of her husband, and grateful for the slightest token of his notice; and so benevolent, that of the 41,000 dollars assigned her yearly she devoted

devoted no less than 24,000 to purposes of charity. Like Frederick she had a taste for literature; but, unlike him, loved to encourage the German rather than the French; and, unlike him also, she was imbued with a deep and fervent, though unostentatious, feeling of religion. For some years Frederick, dreading the resentment of his imperious and brutal father, had lived with her on apparently good terms; but on his own accession to the throne he allotted to her the château of Schönhausen for her separate residence. To the end of her life she never even saw the new palaces at Potsdam. At Berlin, however, during winter, she had apartments in the Royal Palace: the King used to dine with her in state three or four times every year, and on all occasions showed her, as her character deserved, marks of his high respect and esteem. But the union had been, from the first, a constrained one; and he had little taste for hers, or indeed for any female, society; men were, on all occasions, his chosen and favourite companions.

There are some points however, real or alleged, in Frederick's private life, which we do not wish to discuss at large. We shall waive any further testimony, and merely insert without comment the following extract from a despatch of our own distinguished countryman, Lord Malmesbury, when Envoy at Berlin:—

'At these moments when he (Frederick) lays aside the Monarch and indulges himself in every kind of debauchery, he never suffers the instruments or partakers of these excesses to have the smallest influence over him. Some few he has rewarded; discarded several; but left most of them in the same situation he found them.'*

The conduct of Frederick, as a master and in his household, cannot be held deserving of praise. Some of his warmest admirers, as Dr. Preuss, acknowledge that he was extremely harsh towards his servants, chary in wages or rewards to them; but, on the other hand, liberal of sharp reproofs and of blows both with his fist and with his cane. These, however, were their lighter punishments: when their offences seemed more serious they were at once discarded, or sent to prison, or enlisted as common soldiers. Thus, for instance, one valet de chambre named Deesen or Deiss was thought to have embezzled some money, and had been ordered to enter the army as a drummer, when, on the 23rd of July, 1775, the unhappy man put a pistol to his head, and fell a corpse in Frederick's own ante-chamber. The King was startled at the noise, and asked what had happened; on being told, he only remarked, 'I did not think that the fellow had so much courage.†'

* Despatch to the Earl of Suffolk, Berlin, March 18, 1776.

† Compare Preuss, *Lebens-Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 424, note, with the despatch of Lord Malmesbury of July 29, 1775, giving a milder version of the King's reply.

Frederick used to show especial anger and displeasure whenever any man-servant contracted either matrimony or a less legitimate connexion with the other sex. The same prejudice subsisted against the marriages of his familiar friends and associates, as D'Argens, Quintus Icilius, and Le Catt. It is said, however, that in the last few years of Frederick's life, and when himself probably conscious of decay, he had become in all respects—less ungracious and exacting to his household.

But although gusts and sallies of passion were by no means uncommon with Frederick, we scarcely ever find them impel him in the transaction of state-business. A few cases to the contrary might be gathered from Dr. Preuss's volumes, but should be considered as only exceptions. Thus, on one occasion, a young man, a *Land-Rath*, in Brandenburg, wrote to the King to state that a flight of locusts had appeared in his district. The King, in his answer, expressed his disbelief that any of the plagues of Egypt could have strayed so far north. Upon this the young *Land-Rath* sent to Court some of the locusts in a box with air-holes, which box was no sooner opened by Frederick than the locusts emerged and flew about the room, to his Majesty's great annoyance and ire. He immediately despatched a Cabinet order, which still exists, under the date of September 27, 1779, directing that in future no man shall be admitted a *Land-Rath* without being at least thirty-five years of age—his Majesty, it adds, being determined to have henceforth no 'children nor pert young fellows' in office—[*Kinder und junge nase-weise*].

Another curious point in Frederick's private life was his passion for snuff and for lap-dogs. Of the former, Lord Malmesbury (*Diaries*, vol. i. p. 6) speaks as follows:—

'The King is a great taker of snuff. I could not even get a sight of his snuff-boxes, of which he has a most magnificent collection. That he carries is of an enormous size; and he takes it not by pinches, but by handfuls. It is difficult to approach him without sneezing. They pretend that the perquisite that comes to the *valets de chambre* from the snuff they get by drying his handkerchiefs is very considerable.'

With respect to his four-footed favourites, the King had always about him several small English greyhounds; but of these only one was in favour at a time, the others being taken merely as companions and playmates to the fondling. Thus the others were carried out at night and brought in again in the morning, while the chosen one slept in his Majesty's own bed, and by day was allowed a special chair, well cushioned, and close at his side. All of them, however, had licence as they pleased to jump over or to sprawl upon the most costly articles of furniture; and stuffed leather balls,

balls, as playthings for them, were provided in the several apartments. Even during his campaigns Frederick went attended by these canine companions. Thus, on the 8th of December, 1760, when the Marquis d'Argens entered the King's quarters at Leipzig, he found Frederick seated on the floor with the dogs around, and a dish of fricasseed chicken before him, out of which his Majesty with a stick was pushing the most dainty morsels to his favourite. As these greyhounds died they were buried on the terrace of Sans Souci, with the name of each on a gravestone; and Frederick in his will expressed his desire that his own remains might be interred by their side—a parting token of his attachment to them and of his contempt for mankind! On this point, however, his wishes have not been complied with.

Of fine horses, also, Frederick, like most eminent commanders, was fond. Several chargers which he rode were killed or wounded under him during his wars. Many of them bore the names of celebrated and contemporary ministers, as Choiseul, Brühl, Kaunitz, Pitt, and Bute, not as being gifts from these statesmen, but as a compliment to them. But poor Bute's was a hard fate. When his namesake, the Scottish peer, forsook the alliance with Prussia, and concluded a separate peace with France, Bute, the thorough-bred steed, was in requital condemned to be yoked with a mule, and employed in drawing to and fro the orange-trees on the terraces at Potsdam.

During the last ten years of his life, Frederick's favourite horse for his own riding was called Condé. Almost every day he was brought before his Royal Master, and fed with his own hand with sugar, figs, and melons.

The strict economy of Frederick had been at first enforced from the straits in which his father left him : it was afterwards recommended by the poverty of his provinces. From such provinces it was no light matter to raise the sinews of war against Austria, Russia, and France combined. From such provinces, even during the later years of peace, it was no easy task to maintain the largest standing army in Europe, and to accumulate as treasure in reserve several millions of dollars in the vaults of Magdeburg. Yet still this great virtue of economy, to which, next to his military genius, Frederick owed his triumphs, when it came to be extended to trifles, or applied to points where splendour is one element of usefulness, seems to belong to the domain of Molière, and grow into the part of Harpagon. Thus, at the King's own table, not a bottle of champagne was to be opened without his own special command. Thus again, as we are told by Müller, the historian of Switzerland, Frederick on one occasion, when examining the
budget

budget of his principality of Neuchatel, detected and exposed an error of only three *sous*. Thus, also, to the very close of his reign, he never enabled the Prussian Envoys at foreign Courts to assume a state at all commensurate to the importance which their country had acquired, but condemned them to languish in obscurity on most inadequate stipends, as during his father's reign. The tragic fate of Luicius, who had been the Prussian Envoy at the Hague in the time of Frederick William I., is told by Voltaire with much humour, and no doubt some exaggeration. During a severe winter this poor man had no money to buy fuel, and ventured to cut down for fire-wood some trees in the garden of his official residence; but the fact came to the ears of his Royal Master, who by return of post sent him a reprimand, and told him that he should be mulcted on that account a whole year's pay! Upon this, says Voltaire—'Luicius désespéré, se coupa la gorge avec le seul rasoir qu'il eut. Un vieux valet vint à son secours, et lui sauva malheureusement la vie.'

There were only two of the King's tastes in which he ever allowed himself to step beyond the bounds of the most exact economy—in eating and in building. As to the former, we have shown already that he belonged to the Apician school. But even there he closely weighed the cost. He might sometimes, though rarely, be extravagant beforehand, but when once the dainties were devoured, he would often murmur at the bill. Here is an instance. On the 9th of November, 1784, there were several additional dishes at his table, and an account of the extra expenses then incurred was next day presented to him. It amounted to 25 *thaler* 10 *groschen* and 1½ *pfennigs*. But his Majesty, with his own hand, wrote upon the margin: 'A robbery; for there were at table about an hundred oysters, which would cost 4 *thalers*; the cakes 2 *thalers*; the quab's liver 1 *thaler*; the cakes of Russian fashion 2 *thalers*: altogether it might be, perhaps, 11 *thalers*; the rest a robbery. To-day there was one extra dish; herrings with pease; it may cost 1 *thaler*; therefore everything above 12 *thalers* is an impertinent robbery. (Signed) FREDERICK.'

As to building—if we observe the passion for it, whenever it is once engaged in, it may perhaps deserve to be ranked among the highest and most engrossing of human pleasures. The case of Frederick was no exception to this rule. He took an ever fresh delight in the construction of new palaces and in the adornment of the old. In this department, as in most others, he had by his indomitable application acquired both knowledge and skill, and was able, though not always quite successfully, to direct his architects. There commonly lay at his side the volumes of Palladio and Piranesi, from which he would give designs, or suggest ideas, for any

of the new constructions in progress. He never issued any order for a building without a previous estimate of its expense. Yet, notwithstanding this wise precaution, when his palace of Sans Souci came to be completed, he was himself startled at the cost, and ordered that the accounts should be burned, so that no exact knowledge of them might reach posterity.

The correspondence of Frederick was most multifarious, extending not only to ministers and statesmen but to many eminent authors and familiar friends. On business his letters were always clear, brief, and to the point, and frequently deserve the praise of an humane and benevolent spirit greatly in advance of his age. Thus, when one of his subjects, in 1782, applied for the use of the Prussian flag in carrying on the slave trade, the King replies as follows :—

' La traite des nègres m'a toujours paru flétrissante pour l'humanité, et jamais je ne l'autoriserai ni la favoriserai par mes actions. D'ailleurs vous prétendez acheter et équiper vos vaisseaux en France et décharger vos marchandises de retour dans tel port de l'Europe que vous jugerez à propos, et c'est encore un motif de plus pour vous refuser mon pavilion. Toutefois si ce négoce a tant d'appas pour vous, vous n'avez qu'à retourner en France pour satisfaire votre goût! Sur ce je prie Dieu qu'il vous ait en sa sainte et digne garde. FEDERIC.*

To estimate the full merit of this letter, let it be remembered how far in the rear was still the feeling of England on this subject at this date of 1782. How large a majority amongst ourselves were still firmly determined to maintain that infamous traffic! How many years of unrewarded toil were still in store for Wilberforce and Clarkson!

The letters of Frederick to his friends, personal and literary, seem to us greatly superior in merit and interest to any of his other writings. Though sometimes to our misfortune studded with his own mawkish verses, they are often instructive and almost always entertaining. The following may serve as a short but agreeable specimen of his lighter style. It is addressed to one of his Chamberlains, the veteran Baron Pöllnitz, who had just presented him with an unusual dainty—a turkey fattened upon walnuts.

' MONSIEUR LE BARON—Le dindon que votre Sérénité a eu la bonté de m'envoyer a été servi ce midi sur ma table. On l'a pris pour une autruche, tant il était grand et pompeux; le goût s'en est trouvé admirable ; et tous les convives ont convenu avec moi que vous étiez fait pour vous acquitter bien de tout ce que vous entrepreniez. Il me serait douloureux, Monsieur le Baron, de rester en arrière vis à vis de vous, et de

* Potsdam, ce 18 Avril, 1782. *Urkunden-buch*, vol. iv. p. 296.

ne pas songer à votre cuisine comme vous avez eu la bonté de penser à la mienne ; mais comme je n'ai pas trouvé parmi les volatiles d'animal assez grand, et digne de vous être offert, je me suis rejeté sur les quadrupèdes. Je vous avoue que si j'avais pu trouver un éléphant blanc du Chah de Perse, que je me serais fait un plaisir de vous l'envoyer. Faute de cela, j'ai eu recours à un bœuf bien engraisé. Je me suis dit à moi-même; un bœuf est un animal utile, laborieux et pesant; c'est mon emblème; l'âge qui me mine m'apesantit tous les jours; je voudrais être laborieux et utile, et pour vous l'être en quelque façon vous voudrez bien accepter, Monsieur le Baron, le petit meuble de basse-cour que je prends la liberté de vous offrir; et comme je ne me suis pas fié sur ma propre habileté, je l'ai fait choisir chez le plus expert de tous les engraisseurs. Sur ce, je prie Dieu, &c. FEDERIC.*

' à Potsdam, ce 6 Février, 1765.'

We will subjoin the Baron's reply : —

' SIRE — Je supplie très-humblement votre Majesté d'agréer mes très-humbles remerciemens pour le bœuf qu'elle a bien voulu m'envoyer. Si je ne l'ai pas adoré comme le Dieu Apis, je l'ai du moins reçu avec toute la vénération que mérite son air respectable. Une foule de peuple l'a admiré à ma porte, et a cru que je l'en régèlerais, et l'a vu conduire avec envie dans mon écurie, dont il ne sortira que pour être sacrifié au plus grand des Monarques; cérémonie qui sera accompagnée de cris sincères de Vive le Roi! Votre Majesté me permettra de finir ma lettre par ce cri, que je réunirai toute ma vie au profond respect avec lequel je suis, Sire, &c. PÖLLNITZ.*

' Berlin, ce 7 Février, 1765.'

But the favourite correspondence of Frederick at the time, as the most interesting to us now, was with Voltaire. Considering the violent and public breach between them in 1753—the contumelious arrest on one side, and the biting pleasantries on the other—it might have been supposed that these two eminent men would have ever thenceforth stood asunder; but the King's admiration for his late prisoner at Frankfort was most ardent and sincere. He thoroughly believed, as he says in more than one passage of his writings, that Voltaire, as an epic poet surpassed Homer, as a tragic poet Sophocles, and as a philosopher Plato. He never doubted that the author of the 'Henriade,' and of the 'Annales de l'Empire,' would be the main dispenser of fame for his own day. On the other hand, Voltaire was by no means insensible to the honour of numbering a monarch amongst the imitators of his versification and the pupils of his philosophy. Nor can any man who writes history be insensible to the higher merits of him who makes it—who, instead of merely commemorating, performs great deeds. Thus, even in the midst of their

* *Urkunden-buch*, vol. iii. pp. 134, 135.

quarrel, the seeds of reconciliation remained; and within a very brief period there again arose between them a regular correspondence, and an exchange of graceful compliments. In 1775, for example, the King sent to Ferney a bust of Voltaire in Berlin porcelain, with the motto IMMORTALI; and Voltaire replied in the following lines:—

' Je dis à ce héros, dont la main Souveraine
Me donne l'immortalité,
Vous m'accordez, grand homme, avec trop de bonté,
Des terres dans votre domaine !'

' Avoir vécu dans le siècle de Voltaire; cela me suffit! '* exclaims the King. ' Je mourrai,' cries the philosopher, ' avec le regret de n'avoir pas achevé ma vie auprès du plus grand homme de l'Europe, que j'ose aimer autant qu'admirer !' † The two friends, however, while thus exchanging laurel crowns, knew each other well; and whenever they wrote or spoke to third parties were far from gentle in their epithets. Sir Andrew Mitchell, for many years our Envoy at Berlin, informs us: ' What surprises me is, that whenever Voltaire's name is mentioned, his Prussian Majesty never fails to give him the epithets he may deserve, which are the worst heart and greatest rascal now living; and yet with all this he continues to correspond with him !' ‡ Voltaire, on his part, handled the character of Frederick with more wit, but equal rancour. In his secret correspondence with D'Alembert and others he often—besides other bitter jests—gives the King a covert nickname intended to convey a most foul reproach. And whenever during the Seven Years' War any disaster befell the Prussian arms, there went forth two sets of letters from Ferney—the one to Frederick expressing his sympathy and sorrow—the other to some Minister or General on the opposite side, urging the Allies to pursue their victory and to complete the ruin of his friend.

The rich flow of Frederick's conversation is acknowledged and praised by all who had approached him, and chiefly by those who had themselves a similar skill. In that respect there can be no higher testimony than the following from the Prince de Ligne :

' Il avait un son de voix fort doux, assez bas, et aussi agréable que le mouvement de ses lèvres, qui avait une grâce inexprimable; c'est ce qui faisait je crois qu'on ne s'apercevait pas qu'il fût, ainsi que les héros d'Homère, un peu babillard mais sublime. On ne pouvait certainement pas trouver un plus grand parleur que le Roi, mais on était charmé qu'il le fut!'

It is plain, however, that the King, who was, as we shall presently

* A Voltaire, le 24 Juillet, 1775.

† Au Roi de Prusse, le 11 Février, 1775.

‡ See the Chatham Papers, vol. ii. p. 30.

see, a warm partisan of monopolies in commerce, used to extend the same system to his conversation. The Prince de Ligne, in the same account of his interview, adds with much *naïveté* : 'Encore, me disais-je à moi-même, il faudra bien que je dise un mot !'*

With his own dependents Frederick loved to season his conversation with practical jests. Thus, finding that the Marquis d'Argens was a hypochondriac as to health, he was wont sometimes in their interviews to interrupt himself with an exclamation on the ill-looks of his friend, upon which the poor Marquis used to hurry home in affright and keep his bed for the twenty-four hours following ! Thus again, one day with the Baron de Pöllnitz, who was always in want of money, and who had already changed his religion, the King slyly threw out some hints as to a rich canonry in Silesia then vacant and ready for a friend, upon which Pöllnitz, as Frederick had foreseen, swallowed the bait, and that very evening publicly abjured the Protestant for the Roman Catholic faith. But when next day he hastened back to Court to announce his conversion and to claim the benefice, he was told by Frederick to his great dismay, that the prize had just before been granted to another candidate. His Majesty added with a bitter taunt, though with affected sympathy, 'Que puis-je faire pour vous maintenant ? Ah ! je me rappelle qu'il me reste encore à nommer à une place de Rabbïn ; faites-vous Juif, et je vous la promets !†

With strangers, on the contrary, or with those whom he wished to please, Frederick knew how to pay a compliment with inimitable taste and skill. How graceful, for example, his exclamation to General Laudohn, the most able of all his adversaries, during the interviews with the Emperor's Court in 1770, when he saw the General seated on the other side of the table : 'Pray, Sir, take a place at my side ; I do not like to have you opposite !'

In his correspondence, as in his conversation, the King seldom referred to the Christian faith without a scoff or a sneer. Having entirely made up his mind against its truth, he seems to have considered it unworthy of serious argument or even of reverent mention. He alludes with peculiar contempt to the piety of the poorer classes : 'Ce paysan,' says he in one passage, 'qui parlait du Seigneur Dieu avec une vénération idiote !' ‡ But there were several points of philosophy or natural religion which Frederick loved to discuss and to hear discussed in his presence. Foremost among these was the immortality of the soul. It is not easy to say to which side of that great question his own belief inclined.

* Lettres du Maréchal Prince de Ligne, vol. i. p. 46, ed. 1809.

† Thiebault, Souvenirs de Berlin, vol. iii. p. 84, ed. 1804.

‡ A Voltaire, le 3 Février, 1742.

Passages on both sides might be cited from his writings. Nay, there is one letter to Voltaire which, as it seems to us, assumes each opinion by turns in the course of the same sentence :—

' Ma santé baisse à vue d'œil, et je pourrais bien aller entretenir Virgile de la *Henriade*, et descendre dans ce pays où nos chagrins, nos plaisirs, et nos espérances ne nous suivent plus, où votre beau génie et celui d'un goujat sont réduits à la même valeur, où enfin on se trouve dans l'état qui précède la naissance.' (31 Oct. 1760.)

Now, if, as the latter part of the sentence intimates, Frederick really held the gloomy faith of the ancient Roman :

' Quæris, quo jaceas post obitum loco ?
Quo non nata jacent!—

—it is plain that there could be no prospect, as in the first part of the sentence, of communing with the spirit of Virgil or with any other. So inconsistent with itself is infidelity!

The private life of Frederick in his later years as we have now portrayed it, without, as we believe, either exaggeration or concealment, contains beyond all question much that is harsh and strange, many things which may be laughed at, and many which must be lamented. With such a life it seems at first sight incredible how even the interested adulation of the French philosophists could award him the epithet of ' Great.' Perhaps, too, our satisfaction at this epithet will hardly increase when we are told how freely it was adopted by himself,—how frequently the words ' FRIDERICVS MAGNVS' appear on his own inscriptions. But how changed the scene when we come to view the same character from another aspect—as a statesman or a warrior ! The injustice of all his wars—since all arose in fact from his robbery of Silesia in the first year of his reign, with no other right than the right of the stronger, and no better plea than the wolf in the fable gives the lamb—this injustice, great and grievous though it be, can scarcely dim the lustre of his victories. Who could forget that immortal strife of Seven Years, when, with no other ally than England, Frederick stood firm against all the chief powers of the Continent combined? Who could fail to admire that self-taught skill with which he overthrew his enemies, or that lofty spirit with which he bore, and at last retrieved, reverses ? How heroic he appears at Rosbach when scattering far and wide the threefold numbers of France! How heroic when, after that battle, which as he said himself had merely gained him leisure to fight another battle elsewhere (so closely was he then beset with foes), he marched against the Austrians in Silesia, disregarded their strong position, contemned the winter season, and declared that he was resolved to assail them even though they had intrenched themselves on the

church-

church-steeple of Breslau ! How glorious the day of Leuthen which followed, and which Napoleon has pronounced a masterpiece in war ! How not less glorious in the succeeding summer the day of Zorndorf, when Frederick looked down on the heaps of Russian slain, and beheld the Czarina's army destroyed rather than defeated by his arms !

Nor, again, is the honour slight of having maintained in perfect discipline, and with unimpaired renown, during twenty-three years of peace, an army of an hundred and fifty thousand men. To the last, while Frederick lived, the well-earned military fame of Prussia was worthily upheld. Twenty years after his death on the field of Jena it was clearly proved how much the high merit of that army depended on his own. When at St. Helena Napoleon was asked which were the best troops that the world had ever seen, he answered—(not perhaps without some injustice both to himself and to his adversary at Waterloo)—' The Carthaginians under Hannibal, the Romans under the Scipios, the Macedonians under Alexander, and the Prussians under Frederick !'*

Yet even this discipline had its dark side. In our own times experience has proved that the due obedience of soldiers does not depend on their ill-treatment. But far different maxims prevailed in Frederick's age, and the good order of his troops was maintained by a large amount of individual suffering. In the first place, the non-commissioned officers plied the cane without stint or mercy on the common men. If we were required to draw an emblematic picture of a Prussian soldier of those days, we should portray him covered with scars in front from his enemy, and covered with scars behind from his corporal ! A veteran of Frederick's army, who was still alive in 1833, recently described the dreadful effect of those cruelties which he witnessed in Silesia—how many poor soldiers were flogged to desertion, how many to suicide, how many to madness!† Amongst the Prussian peasants such was the horror of entering the army that it became necessary to promulgate an edict against those who had cut off their own thumbs, hoping by such mutilation to disqualify themselves for the service ! We may observe in passing, that according to Saumaise and Horne Tooke a similar practice gave rise to the French word *Poltron* (quasi *pollice truncatus*).

Among the officers the grievances were different, but scarcely less. Noble birth was in nearly all cases held indispensable for promotion. On any vacancy occurring in a regiment, the Colonel was required by the rules to recommend to his Majesty for appointment the most deserving subaltern, provided only that he

* Mémorial de St. Hélène, par le Comte de Las Cases, vol. vi. p. 6.

† Schlesische Provinzial-blätter, ix. p. 241, as quoted by Preuss.

was noble. In several instances, even foreign noblemen were, avowedly on the ground of their birth, preferred for officers' places to native plebeians. In like manner, none but youths of good family were allowed admission into the College of Cadets. So late as 1784 we find Frederick directing the expulsion of three brothers named Stephani as being deficient in this essential qualification—'not of true and right nobility,'* says the King himself. Celibacy, though recommended in most services, has never yet been so rigidly enforced in any other; as an instance, it is mentioned that when in 1778 the Baireuth regiment of dragoons was reviewed by the King, it contained seventy-four officers, and of these not one—from the commander, General Bülow, down to the youngest Ensign—was a married man! In other respects the duties were very severe, and the least departures from them punished by long arrests, while the pay was extremely small, and leave of absence seldom granted.

Scanty, however, as were the allowances of the Prussian army, they absorbed the larger share of the revenues of the state. In 1740, just before the accession of Frederick, it is stated that from a total income of 7,137,000 dollars, not less than 5,977,000 were devoted to the military department. At Frederick's decease in 1786, when the provinces had more than doubled in extent and population, and much more than doubled in productive industry, the income was twenty-two millions, and the expenses of the army thirteen. Yet notwithstanding this constant and enormous drain on his resources, such was the wise economy of Frederick, that he never seemed to want money whenever any object of public utility seemed to need assistance. We have already noticed his taste for building as shown in his costly palaces, but it would be doing him great injustice to suppose that it was confined to them; not only his capital, but his principal cities, such as Breslau, owed him the construction of libraries, theatres, and other stately public edifices, besides new streets and squares for private houses. In one of his letters of 1773, he is able to boast with just pride that he had that very year begun to rebuild some towns in Prussian Poland, which had lain in ruins ever since the pestilence of 1709.† In the same year he made arrangement for founding sixty new villages among the waste lands of Upper Silesia, and for rebuilding two towns in the same district, which had been destroyed by conflagration; 'they were of wood,' says he, 'but they shall now be of brick or of stone from the neighbouring quarries which we have opened.' In 1775 we find him establish and endow at once an hundred and

* Von wahren und rechten Adel. † To Voltaire, Oct. 24, 1773.

eighty schools in his new Polish province—some, of the Protestant, and others of the Roman Catholic communion.* Were there any veins of metal discovered in the mountains—did any district suffer either from drought or inundation in the plains—did any new manufacture call for bounties—was there any attempt of producing at home instead of importing from abroad—in all these, and many other such cases, and without distinction of province or of creed, the succouring hand of Frederick was extended. His subjects found that he would not give alms to compassion, but only aids to restoration or improvement; he would help them whenever they would bestir themselves. On his yearly journeys through his states he was always on the watch for old abuses to correct, or new works of public benefit to commence. His questions were ever: Why not drain yonder marshes? why should that range of hills remain bare? might not this sheltered hollow bear fruit-trees? should not a new bridge span that river, or a new road pierce that forest? Nor were these mere vague recommendations: they became the first germ of speedy plans and estimates, and when the King passed by in the ensuing year, or summoned his provincial officers to Potsdam, he insisted on ascertaining what real progress had been made. Activity of any kind is rare, when great wealth and power of indolence exist; but how much rarer still to find it thus well-directed and steady in its aim! We had once the high honour of being for a short time in the company of a Prince, whose mind struck us as a curious contrast to Frederick's; he asked nearly the same questions, but seldom paused to hear the answer, or cried, 'Right—quite right—exactly so'—whatever the answer might be!

To show more clearly how close and minute was Frederick's superintendence of his provincial affairs, we will give an account of one of his 'Ministers' Reviews,' as they were termed—that is a conference which he held every summer with the principal holders of office. Of the one which took place at Sans Souci on the 1st of June, 1770, a summary was drawn up by the Minister of State Von Derschau, for the information of an absent colleague:—

'His Majesty received us with a most gracious countenance, and said, "Gentlemen, I have caused you to come that we might examine our household affairs together." We replied that we had duly prepared ourselves for this investigation: upon which he proceeded to say that he had himself inspected in the Oder-bruch the district which had suffered this year by the inundations of the Oder, and had found the damage by no means so great as it had been represented to him. "One ought not,"

* Letter to D'Alembert, June 19, 1775.

he added, " to be too much dismayed by such calamities of Nature, however frightful they seem at first; since Nature is apt herself to repair, and at no long interval, the havoc she has made." At Freienwalde there were only two small breaches in the dam, and only about twenty-five houses slightly damaged, so that the whole real loss of the inhabitants would be scarcely more than a few cartloads of hay and the growing crops on the ground. His Majesty then proceeded: " I do not therefore see the necessity of such large sums as you have proposed to me to grant in remission of taxes and compensations for losses. However I will allow 60,000 dollars. When the water shall have flowed off again the Minister of State Von Hagen shall go to the spot and examine everything more exactly. But I cannot conceal from you how much I was dissatisfied at finding the new church in the Oder-bruch not yet completed. I desire that you will again send a sharp order to Lieut.-Colonel Petri to take measures for having the church ready soon, or it shall be the worse for him! "

' Upon this his Majesty took up the account of the sums proposed to be allotted, and said, " 1. That as to the funds for repairing the Oderdam they were already assigned. 2. That in addition he would gladly grant the 13,000 dollars proposed for the new sluice at Plauen. 3. That he would undertake the cost of the stables for the Cuirassiers' horses at Kyritz, and of the hospital and orphan-asylum at Belgard, since these expenses were both needful and useful. 4. That he would refer to the Board of General Direction the charges required for the harbours of Rügenwald and Colberg.

' When this was over, the King looked through with a keen eye the accounts of the *Chambre des Domaines* and of the *Caisse Militaire*, and signed them respectively. He then opened his desk, drew out a paper, and read to us a statement of the considerable sums which he intends this year, as far as he finds it possible, to devote to the benefit of his dominions. Among these sums we especially noticed 300,000 dollars for the nobility of Pomerania, 20,000 for the province of Hohnstein, and 30,000 on account to restore the towns in the March of Brandenburg. On the first item the King observed:—" Gentlemen, I recommend to you especially the upholding and supporting my nobility. I lay great stress upon that order, for I require it both for my army and my civil administration. You know how many valuable men I have already drawn from it, and what I have been able to do by its means."

' Before dinner the King spoke to us on sundry other matters, and said, amongst the rest, that it gave him pleasure whenever any of his subjects travelled into foreign states with views of improvement, and brought back useful knowledge to their native country. He added, that during his last journey through Pomerania he had seen at Colbatz the *Ober-Amtman* Sydow, who, together with his son, had been lately in England, and had studied the English system of husbandry. They understand how to grow lucerne, and what are termed TURNIPS (a white root for fodder, of which nine or ten often reach an hundredweight); and experiments in the culture of both have been made in Pomerania

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with excellent success. His Majesty wishes that the same may be done in Brandenburg. We are, therefore, to put ourselves in correspondence with these gentlemen, and receive from them the necessary instructions ; and we are, also, to send some sensible *Wirthschafts-Schreiber* from various *Amter* in Brandenburg to Colbatz, to observe and afterwards adopt at home the cultivation not only of these turnips and lucerne, but also of the hops, which last his Majesty has recommended to us in the most pressing terms. The King observes that the country-people in Brandenburg are still too stubborn and prejudiced against any new discovery, however good and useful it may be. Therefore, says his Majesty, the men in office should always make a beginning with whatever promises well; and if it answers, then the lower classes will be sure to follow. " You would not think," added his Majesty with much animation, " how eager I feel to make the people advance in knowledge and welfare; but you must have often experienced, as I have, how much contradiction and thwarting one meets with, even where one has the best intentions." '

Our limits warn us to carry no further the report of this remarkable interview. We will therefore omit, though reluctantly, the King's remarks and directions as to the better manuring of pasture-lands—the reclaiming of several sandy spots near Löwenberg, Strausberg, Alt-Landsberg, and Werneuchen which he had noticed on his last journey—the draining of the great marshes at Stendal, and with the profits bringing over to the spot a colony of Dutchmen—the encouragement of bee-hives and silk-worms, for which last large plantations of mulberry-trees had been made several years before—the establishment of extensive nursery-gardens near Berlin to be manured from the sweepings of the streets and drains in that city—the planting of fruit-trees in other places likewise, so as to check the importation of dried fruit every year from Saxony, and ' to keep,' the King added, ' our money at home'—the working of the cobalt and coal-mines in Silesia, and how the coals should be transported, and how applied in bleaching-grounds, tile-kilns, and lime-kilns. After so many and such manifold orders this ' Ministers' Review ' ended, we may observe, in a manner more agreeable than most Cabinet-Councils in England—by a general invitation to the Royal table that same day. ' During the repast,' adds our reporter, ' his Majesty was especially condescending and gay, made a great number of jests, and then bade us go—highly delighted at his gracious reception.'

In thus considering the administration of Frederick we must always bear in mind that his authority over his people was entirely and in all respects uncontrolled. Not only the treaties with foreign powers and the systems of foreign policy, the army, the ordnance, the shipping, the questions of trade and protecting duties, the imposition or remission of new taxes, and the application of the revenue received, were subject to his despotic sway,

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but even the decisions of the courts of law, which most other tyrannies hold sacred. Nay more, even beyond the frontiers of the state, personal freedom was so far controlled that no Prussian subject could travel without special permission from the King, and even when that permission was granted there was a Royal Ordinance of October 29, 1766, fixing the amount of pocket-money which he might take with him: if a nobleman or an officer, 400 dollars; if neither, 250. The government was, in fact, one of those which, when well administered, as was Frederick's, are called by friends Patriarchal or Paternal, which leave little to individual choice or enterprise, but direct every man to the path in which he should go.

It is remarkable that Frederick, who not only possessed but actively wielded this uncontrolled authority, and who never to his dying day manifested the slightest idea of relaxing it, yet in many of his writings expresses the most ardent aspirations for freedom. Thus in his epistle to the Marquis d'Argens:—

' Vous de la liberté héros que je révère,
O Mânes de Caton, o Mânes de Brutus!'

Or when he thus upbraids *Hermothème*:—

' Votre esprit est imbu des préjugés vulgaires,
Vos parchemins usés ne sont que des chimères.'

We remember that in 'Emile' Rousseau points an eloquent invective against those mock-philanthropists who profess unbounded zeal for the Tartars, but who will never help a poor neighbour at the door. In like manner we confess that we feel small reverence for those Kings who never part with one iota of their inherited despotism, who give a subject the hem of their garment to kiss, who bound their promotions to nobles, and who leave their peasantry serfs, and yet with all this love to prate of republicans and regicides—provided only that these lived many hundred years ago!

It is certainly true that Frederick, upon the whole, administered his despotic power with enlightened views and with public spirit for the good of his subjects, and it may perhaps be argued, as Montesquieu has done, that despotic power while thus administered, is the best of all forms of government. Take any Prussian town or district during the peaceful years of Frederick, and it will, we believe, appear that amidst very many cases of individual grievance and hardship the general progress of prosperity was rapid and unceasing. No instance can be stronger than that of Silesia. Here was a province won without a shadow of real right from Maria Theresa—a sovereign who, besides her legitimate title, had all the claims to her subjects' sympathy which womanhood,

hood, youth, and beauty can bestow. Here were nobles of high lineage and loyalty compelled to acknowledge an usurping conqueror; here was a people of bigoted Catholicism ruled over for the first time by a Protestant prince. Under such circumstances what else could be expected than that Silesia should become to Prussia what Ireland has been to England—a perennial fountain of bitterness—an object to all statesmen of anxious solicitude, and to nearly all of afflicting disappointment—a battle-field of ever recurring political and religious animosities, and, like other battle-fields, laid waste by the contention! Yet so prompt and so prudent were the measures of Frederick in behalf of his new conquest—neither neglecting the interests of his subjects, as, for instance, Joseph the First, nor yet wounding their prejudices, like Joseph the Second—that within a few years' space Silesia became as firmly bound to him as Brandenburg, and that Maria Theresa, in her later attempts to recover the province, found no effective or general assistance from the Silesians themselves.

We must confess, however, that this praise of the general result of Frederick's government is not easily borne out on examining the particular steps of the process. Wide as are the differences amongst ourselves on questions of trade and taxation, we do not suppose that one man could now be found to vindicate the former system in Prussia. Severe Government monopolies laid on main articles of consumption, and farmed out to speculators from a foreign country, form perhaps the very worst system of finance which human ingenuity has yet devised. And such was Frederick's—as a short review of the items will show.

On meat there was established an excise-duty of one *pfennig* per pound; and moreover varying but always considerable *Droits d'Octroi* at the gates of towns on cattle and sheep. Thus at Berlin there was demanded for each ox one *thaler* thirteen *groschen* of *entrance-excise*, and ten *groschen* more of *market-excise*; besides which there was another duty on the hide and another on the tallow. Bread was not excised; but the *Octroi* on wheat and on flour amounted to four and six *pfennigs* the bushel respectively: the effect being, of course, to make bread dearer in the towns than in the villages or open country. On brandy there was an excise of one *groschen* the quart; on beer of eighteen *groschen* the barrel. Coffee, tobacco, and salt were not merely excised, but administered by and for the state as monopolies. For the most part the coffee was only sold ready roasted for use—the right of roasting it being reserved as a special favour for certain privileged classes, as the nobles, the officers of the army, and the clergy in towns. The duty retained by the Government

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was at first four *groschen* the pound : but, in 1772, was increased to six *groschen* and two *pfennigs*. It was calculated, that, deducting the duty, a pound of coffee could not possibly be sold by the fair trader at less than four *groschen* and three-quarters; yet the price of the pound of coffee at Berlin in the retail trade never exceeded ten *groschen*; a clear proof of the prevalence and success of smuggling. Redoubled vigilance and severity on the part of the French revenue-officers in this department—the 'coffee-smellers' (*Kaffee-Riecher*), as the mob called them—were wholly unavailing, except to increase the animosity against themselves. Thus, in 1784, the King found it necessary to reduce the amount of the duty by one half, and it is remarkable that the revenue derived from it almost immediately doubled. In the preceding year this revenue had been only 300,000 dollars; in the subsequent year it rose to 574,000.* It must however be observed that the King's object in the higher rate was perhaps not so much financial as prohibitory. When the *Land-Stände* of Pomerania ventured to remonstrate against the increased duties on coffee and wines, his Majesty's views were explained in his own Royal Rescript of August 27, 1779 :—

'The great point,' says that Rescript (which is written in the style of familiar conversation), 'is to put some limits to the dreadful amount of consumption. It is quite horrible how far the consumption of coffee goes—to say nothing of other articles ! The reason is, that every peasant and common fellow is accustoming himself to the use of coffee, as being now so easily procured in the open country. If this be a little bit checked the people must take again to beer, and that is surely for the good of their own breweries, as more beer would then be sold. Here then is the object—that so much money may not go to foreign parts for coffee; and if but 60,000 dollars went yearly, that is quite enough. As to the right of search, which the *Land-Stände* object to, it is needful to keep order, especially among their own domestics, and, as good subjects to the King, they should not even say a word against it. Besides, his Majesty's own Royal Person was reared in childhood upon beer-soups (ale-berry), and why not then just as well the people down yonder? It is much wholesomer than coffee. The *Land-Stände* may therefore set their minds at rest on the matter, especially since all noblemen residing on their own estates shall continue to have free of duty as much coffee and wine as they require for their own and their families' consumption ; only care must be taken that this their privilege be guarded from abuse, and that no contraband traffic be carried on under their names. That cannot possibly be winked at for the future.'

Bad as was this system of impost, with the like monopoly of tobacco and salt, Frederick may be reproached for introducing

* De Launay, *Justification du Système*, p. 30.

another still worse. In 1763 there were first established in Prussia Government lotteries. At first the annual profits from this source were small, only 60,000 dollars, but they gradually increased, both during Frederick's reign and after it. The net proceeds in 1829 are stated at 684,000 dollars.

No mode of administration, as we conceive, could have made the main Government monopolies welcome to the people. But certainly they were much aggravated in practice by the system which the King selected. Three years after the peace of Hubertsburg, Frederick summoned over from Paris several French farmers-general, the chief of whom was La Haye de Launay, and by them exclusively he administered his principal monopolies, as tobacco and coffee. This system, under the name of *La Régie*, was steadily maintained for twenty years, that is, during the remainder of Frederick's reign, but was immediately afterwards cancelled by his successor.

Nor was the French importation limited to the principal contractors ; they drew over in their train several hundred of their countrymen, who were forthwith distributed over the Prussian states as men in office, with various grades and denominations: *Directeurs, Inspecteurs, Vérificateurs, Contrôleurs, Visiteurs, Commis, Plombiers, Contrôleurs ambulants, Jaugeurs, Commis rats de cave*, and, above all, *Anti-contrebandiers à pied et à cheval!* To these were adjoined also a great number of Germans, but always in a subaltern situation to the French. The whole establishment was far too numerous and costly, Frederick himself being the judge : for when, in 1783, he came to revise its details, he found himself able to suppress no less than 834 *employés*, and to effect a saving of 150,000 dollars yearly. Nor was the general financial result satisfactory. It has been ably shown by Dr. Preuss that the average annual receipts since the French financiers came in exceeded the former ones by only 857,000 dollars; a result not at all commensurate to the additional taxes imposed, nor to the growing population and prosperity of the Prussian states.

Undoubtedly, however, the main fault of the system was the deep humiliation of the Prussians at finding themselves thus excluded from the administration of their own finances, and declared incapable of filling the best employments in their native country. It may likewise be imagined that ignorant or careless as were many of the French excisemen of any foreign language, the collisions between them and the native population were both frequent and angry. We are far from disputing the financial merits of our nearest neighbours whenever employed at home. But we really doubt whether even the Egyptian locusts, whose appearance so greatly irritated Frederick, could have proved a

worse

worse plague to his subjects than these French excisemen. It will be observed that they (although the excise itself was of long standing) were not appointed until some years after the Seven Years' War. Had they been at work previously, we are strongly of opinion that the King would have felt their ill effect from the anger and alienation of at least his Silesian subjects.

Passing to another branch we may observe, that in many parts of the Prussian monarchy the peasants continued to be feudal serfs—*ascripti glebæ*. Such Frederick found them at his accession—such he left them at his death. It is due to him, however, to observe that he issued several edicts to secure them as far as possible from any wanton ill-usage of their masters. With regard to these, the proprietors of the soil, there was a wide distinction maintained between those who were and those who were not of noble birth. None of the former class were allowed to alienate their lands to the latter without a special Royal licence; and this licence, for which we find many applications in Frederick's correspondence, was almost invariably refused; the object being, that if even some noblemen should be ruined, the estates of the nobles as a class should undergo no diminution.

This system, however irreconcilable with the French philosophy of Frederick, was no doubt in accordance with the temper and feelings at that time of his principal subjects. But it is difficult to understand what prejudice was gratified, or what advantage beyond facility of taxation it was expected to secure, by another system not less rigidly adhered to—the confinement of all manufacturing industry within town walls. By an Edict of June 4, 1718, which was not repealed till 1810, no kind of handicraftsmen were allowed to ply in the villages or open country, except these six: smiths, wheelwrights, carpenters, masons, weavers, and tailors. There were certain exemptions for breweries and distilleries, especially in the provinces between the Oder and the Vistula, but the general rule stood as we have just described it. Thus the many new manufactories and branches of industry which Frederick loved to found or foster had to struggle against both the confined space and the larger expenses of the towns.

All such new manufactories, however, during Frederick's reign, were not only guarded by protective duties against their foreign rivals, but propped and encouraged by bounties. Large sums were often and readily devoted to this end. Some points, however, in Frederick's commercial policy, as in his financial, would be in the present day universally condemned. Thus, wishing to secure to the woollen manufactures of Prussia a cheap and constant supply of their raw material, he absolutely prohibited the export of wool from his dominions; nay, more, by an Edict of

April 3, 1774, he decreed that the export of wool or fleece should thenceforward be a capital offence!

The Corn-Laws of Frederick were also, to say the least of them, rather stringent. There was a general order issued at the very outset of his reign, that whenever in any district or at any season the land-owners were unwilling to dispose of their stocks of grain, it might be seized by the Government officers and forcibly sold by auction. He also insisted that in common years his granaries and garrisons should be supplied at a low fixed price as named by himself. On the other hand, however, these granaries were always opened in a year of scarcity, and their contents being sold at moderate prices tended in so small degree to counteract the prevailing dearth.

'For Universities and schools,' says Dr. Preuss, 'Frederick did much less than might have been expected from so warm a friend of civilisation and knowledge.' On one occasion indeed, as we have elsewhere mentioned, he founded nearly 200 schools for his new province of West Prussia; but in general he supplied for the schools in his dominions only his advice, and not his money, of which they stood in urgent need. The office of village school-masters was so wretchedly paid that of course it was wretchedly filled; most of them, as the King informs us, being tailors! Still far worse, however, grew the state of things when Frederick, in 1779, hit upon this expedient for providing without expense to himself for his invalided soldiers. The veterans thus turned into pedagogues were found for the most part wholly unequal to the task, as many of them frankly owned; nay, we are even assured that in the better-conducted schools the new master appeared to know much less than his pupils. Wretched, however, as must have been such attempts at teaching, the subjects of Frederick had no choice or option in resorting to them. It was enjoined on every Prussian of the lower class to send his sons to these, and no other, schools. In like manner Frederick attempted to prop up his defective Universities by his favourite expedient—monopoly. He had issued a Decree that any Prussian subject educated abroad or passing less than two years at a Prussian University should be held disqualified for any civil or ecclesiastical appointment in his service.

But though in the Prussian states one form of education was thus made imperative, every form of religion was left perfectly free. Viewing as did Frederick all sects of Christianity with most impartial contempt, it cost him of course no effort to treat them all alike. Every zealot in exile or under persecution—from the Jesuit down to the materialist, like La Metrie, to whom indeed

deed he granted a pension—found in his states a cordial welcome and a quiet refuge. With equal readiness did he apply himself to provide churches for the Lutherans at Breslau, and a Cathedral for the Roman Catholics at Berlin. It may, however, be observed that he made no attempt to conciliate the good will of the latter by increasing their endowments or remitting their taxation. From all the convents and religious houses of Silesia he claimed the payment of 50 per cent, from their net incomes, and on the partition of Poland we find him establish the same scale in his new province of West Prussia.

We may likewise remark that, in corresponding with clergymen of whatever persuasion, Frederick was not led by any views of policy to refrain from his customary scoffs and sneers. He loved especially to taunt them with texts of Scripture misapplied. Once, he was building arcades around the windows of the town-church at Potsdam, and received a remonstrance from its clergy, entreating his Majesty to suspend the work, for that otherwise they would not be able to see. The King answered, 'Blessed are they which have not seen and yet have believed!' On another occasion the Pastor Pels of Bernau, finding that he could not subsist on his yearly stipend of less than 40*l.* English, applied for some augmentation—a request which in England at least would not be thought unreasonable; but he received the following as the Royal reply:—'The Apostles did not thirst after lucre. They have preached in vain, for Herr Pels has no Apostolic soul!'—It is surprising that such mockeries do not seem at that time to have stirred up any of the religious resentment and indignation, which would undoubtedly be found to result from them at present.

The tolerant maxims of Frederick scarcely extended to the Jews. He appears to have felt a prepossession against that race; founded, perhaps, on their real or supposed unaptness for war. Alone among his subjects they were liable to an ignominious poll-tax, like so many heads of cattle—a tax not abolished until 1787, the year after Frederick's death. Many branches of trade were prohibited to them, as breweries and distilleries, or the sale of any article of food, except amongst themselves. Several towns, as Ruppın, were confirmed in the privilege, as they deemed it, that no Jew should ever sleep within their walls. In all other towns the number of Jewish families, as once settled, was on no account to be exceeded—(a rule, however, relaxed in practice); and these families were held liable collectively for the imposts due by any one of them. And such were the shackles in Prussia even on the more privileged, or, as called by courtesy, the 'protected Jews' (*Schutz-Juden*); and, heavy as they seem, yet lighter than

than those they bore in many other parts of Germany! Even down to 1833, as we learn from Dr. Preuss, and as we believe even to the present year, no Jew, though of the highest character, was considered in the Prussian courts of law as what they term *testis omni exceptione major*; nor can his testimony ever be held fully equivalent to a Christian's! * Surely the resisting any further political concessions to that race is by no means incompatible with the denouncing such civil restraints upon them as most oppressive and unjust.

Nor can it be said that these restraints and hardships in the Prussian states under Frederick's reign were lightened by any peculiar gentleness of manner in his Majesty. Thus in November, 1764, we find him issue an angry order against the presumption of certain Jews who had taken cows on hire. And when Benjamin Meyer, of Magdeburg, in 1765, applied for equal rights with the Christian tradesmen of that town, the Royal reply was as follows:—'Let the Jew immediately take himself away from Magdeburg, or the Commandant shall kick him out!'

In Prussia, as in other German states at that period, the press was far from free; there was both a censorship before publication, and after it at any time a power of seizure. Frederick was not a man to bear any attacks upon his policy, if by such attacks that policy could be thwarted or endangered; but when his own person and character only were concerned, he displayed the most magnanimous forbearance. During his whole reign libels against him might be circulated, and libellers go free. Thus, in 1761, a little pasquinade, whose venom may be discovered even in its title, *La Laïs Philosophe*, was sold without obstruction in the Prussian capital. Frederick himself with a lofty spirit declared, 'C'est à moi à faire mon devoir, et laisser dire les méchants.' In the same tone he writes to Voltaire on March 2, 1775:—

'Je pense sur ces satires comme Epictète: " Si l'on dit du mal de toi, et qu'il soit véritable, corrige-toi; si ce sont des mensonges, ris-en!" J'ai appris avec l'âge à devenir un bon cheval de poste; je fais ma station, et ne m'embarrasse pas des roquets qui aboient en chemin.'

In 1784 a severer trial awaited the King's magnanimity from Voltaire himself, when there came forth the witty and scandalous *Fie Privée*—that Parthian arrow which Voltaire had drawn on his flight from Berlin in 1753, but had concealed until his own death. Yet of this *Vie Privée*, teeming as it does with every topic of invective and ridicule upon the King, a whole edition

* We find, however, from the *Allgemeine Preussische Zeitung* of August 7, 1847, that a *Projet de Loi*, to remedy most of the remaining grievances of the Jews, has been recently submitted by the Government to the States, and in part adopted.

was leisurely disposed of by Pitra, the King's own bookseller, at Berlin!

Caricatures upon Frederick were treated by him with the same lofty unconcern. One day, as he was riding along the *Jäger-Strasse* at Berlin, he observed a crowd pressing forward and staring at a paper stuck high upon the wall. As he drew near, he perceived that it was a satirical representation of himself, as engaged in the coffee-monopoly, with one of his hands turning a coffee-mill and with the other greedily picking up a single bean which had fallen to the ground. Frederick turned coolly round to the Heyduke who attended him and said, 'Take down that paper and hang it lower, so that the people may not strain their necks in looking at it.' And this the Heyduke was proceeding to do, when the people, struck at their King's magnanimity, broke into loud huzzas, and tore the injurious portrait into a thousand pieces.

It was once observed by Dr. Johnson, with his usual admirable sense, that 'no man was ever written down, except by himself;' and certainly it was not from the publications of others, but from his own, that King Frederick suffered both in fame and fortunes. To this day his leaden volumes of poetry, of that kind of mediocrity, not, as Horace says, to be borne by Gods or men, form a counterpoise to his military glories and administrative skill. And during his lifetime it was truly surprising to find a prince so provident and wary on any other affair, beyond all measure rash and reckless in his satirical attacks on Madame de Pompadour at the height of her favour, and on the Empress Elizabeth of Russia. There is no doubt that the biting verses, imprudently written, and still more imprudently promulgated, on the private life of both these ladies, were among the main causes of the greatest danger which he ever ran—of that all but irresistible confederacy formed against him in the Seven Years' War.

At other times, however, Frederick, versed as he was in the secrets of the press, made use of them for his own objects in a manner seldom tried by princes. Thus, in 1767, the King found the public at Berlin inclined to tattle on the chance of another war. To turn their attention he immediately composed and sent to the newspapers a full account of a wonderful hail-storm stated to have taken place at Potsdam on the 27th of February in that year. Not only did this imaginary narrative engross for some time, as he desired, the public conversation, but it gave rise to some grave philosophical treatises on the supposed phenomenon!

Over the administration of Justice, Frederick, as we have already said, held despotic sway. Whenever he found fault with the decision of a Court of Law, he thought himself entitled

not only to reverse the sentence but to punish the judges. But it is due to him to add that he never exercised this authority on any grounds of powerful influence or personal regard. His state-papers and correspondence teem with applications from persons of the first rank in the Prussian monarchy, entreating him to suspend some decree of the courts which they found inconvenient, but the King invariably refuses, 'since,' as he often adds, 'the laws must govern all alike.' It was his maxim, that before a judicial court a prince and a peasant should be entirely equal; and this was not, like some of his others, a mere holiday maxim, to be paraded in a French poem or a French pamphlet, and never thought of afterwards; but again and again did he press it on his Chancellor and judges, both urging it in words, and enforcing it in action.

In explanation of this last point it is to be observed, that although Frederick would never consent to reverse a judgment from motives of friendship or favour, he was prompt to do so whenever he thought that the poor had been injured or despoiled by the rich. Nor was it merely such a case of oppression, real or supposed, which roused him: his keen eye discerned how frequently a delay is equivalent to a denial of justice. Sometimes, therefore, he would interfere to simplify and shorten the wearisome forms of jurisprudence, and cut through, as it were, with his sword those Gordian knots which lawyers love to weave. Of the technicalities in other countries he spoke with caustic disdain. Thus he writes to Voltaire, January 27, 1775, on the case of a French officer preparing to enter his service and perplexed by a law-suit at home:—

'A vue de pays son procès pourra bien traîner au moins une année. On me mande que des formalités importantes exigent ces délais, et que ce n'est qu'à force de patience qu'on parvient à perdre un procès au Parlement de Paris. J'apprends ces belles choses avec étonnement et sans y comprendre le moindre mot.'

It must be owned, however, that Frederick did not join to his horror of injustice sufficient thought and care, and that he sometimes caused the very evil which he dreaded. The story of the miller Arnold has been often told. The King, believing that here a poor man had been wronged through the undue influence of a nobleman his neighbour, took up the affair most warmly, discarded his Chancellor, sent three of his Judges to Spandau, and forcibly reinstated Arnold in possession of the mill. It was afterwards proved by incontrovertible documents, and is now universally acknowledged, that the miller was a knave; that the Chancellor had taken no part in the business; and, above all, that the Judges had decided according to right, and were there-
fore

fore punished without reason. Nay more, we are assured that the King himself admitted his error to one of his familiar attendants, but added, that the mistake being already made, could not, without loss of dignity, be recalled. Such painful cases imply (for really the arguments here lie upon the surface) great want of care and attention in the Royal arbitrator. They also prove that no prince should ever in any country be invested with a despotic power above the laws. But while we deprecate despotic power, and while we demand vigilant care, we must, even in the teeth of such cases, express our sympathy in any endeavours to clear from rubbish and to open wider the portals of the Temple of Justice. In our own Court of Chancery we may perceive how, by never swerving from established forms, a most faulty system may consist with the most upright intentions, and with the most learned men. Our Lord Chancellors for the last century and upwards have been above all suspicion and reproach. We had lately Lord Lyndhurst, eminent as a judge, orator, and statesman. We have now Lord Cottenham, eminent as a judge. Every legal decision of either would command implicit and deserved respect. Yet in the courts over which they presided or preside, how often are old technicalities more powerful than they ; how often are large fortunes lavished to secure the clearest right; how often is the clearest right relinquished or forborne rather than be asserted at such cost and time! Surely, even a 'killing Decree,' as poor Aubrey called it in Lord Bacon's time, would weigh more lightly on the suitors than the prospect of no Decree at all—the prospect that by the time the suit has grown to years, and the solicitor's bill to thousands, they should still be met by some fresh *Demurrer* or some renewed *Reference to the Master!*

We ask pardon of our readers for this digression, and are warned by it to forbear from entering upon other topics—as of Frederick's foreign policy—which might lead us too far. The partition of Poland especially is so momentous an episode that it cannot be disposed of in a single paragraph. Yet, perhaps, not merely that transaction, but the whole foreign policy of Frederick was once aptly described by some Polish borderers in a single word. When they saw displayed on the flagstaff of the newly gained frontier the Prussian Eagle, with the motto SUUM CUIQUE, they slyly wrote beneath RAPUIT! These questions, however, we shall for the present pass by, and proceed to relate the circumstances of Frederick's last illness and death.

During many years he had sustained periodical fits of gout, and also frequent stomach disorders, the result of his errors or excesses at table. Still, however, by early hours and regular exercise, his constitution had since his early youth gained much

in vital strength, and enabled him to recover promptly and completely from such attacks. When sick, he invariably became far more gentle and forbearing to all around him; and thus also, as we are told by his chief valet-de-chambre, Schöning, the surest sign of his convalescence was his ill treatment of those with whom he had seemed well satisfied during his sickness. In August, 1785, when the King was directing the annual review in Silesia, in the presence of many foreign generals and princes, the weather became cold and stormy, and he was earnestly entreated to forbear from appearing on the ground. But Frederick was determined never until the last necessity to relax from a single one of his Kingly duties; accordingly he sat on horseback to see the troops defile during six hours of heavy rain, and on his return home was seized with fever and ague. These for the time he shook off; but, through the whole of the ensuing winter, his health grew subject to daily variation; many slight attacks soon recovered from, but ever again recurring.

It is probable, however, that his life might have been prolonged during several years, had he been only willing to use some degree of prudence and restraint in his diet; but on this most tender subject he would hearken to no counsel. Thus, for instance, while at Breslau after his short campaign of 1778, he was suffering severely from colic and indigestion; and his physician, Dr. Möhsen, ventured to intimate, with the utmost deference and humility, that it might be better for his Majesty to abstain from Parmesan cheese in his favourite *polentas* until after his Majesty's stomach had by proper remedies recovered its tone. '*Alle Teufel!*' cried the King, with a loud and angry voice, 'are you reprimanding me? Get you gone, I have no further occasion for you!' Poor Dr. Möhsen hastened back to Berlin with all precipitation, and greatly discomfited. Nearly in the same way it fared with his successor, Dr. Selle, at the commencement of the King's last illness. In other respects likewise he was a far from tractable patient. As in state-affairs he would take nothing on trust, but required to have everything made clear to his own perception; and he expected from any medicine some decisive and speedy effects—otherwise, the medicine itself was soon discarded.

Under these circumstances the King grew worse and worse in the first months of 1786. He was often sleepless at nights, but, on the other hand, would fall into short and uneasy slumbers by day. His strength was so far reduced that he could only ride occasionally, and when lifted on his horse. A short dry cough set in, and his breathing became so difficult that he could not lie down in bed, but only sit through the twenty-four hours bending

forwards on the same arm-chair. Symptoms of dropsy also began to show themselves both in his body and his limbs.

With all this, however, the King's activity and zeal in transacting business never for one moment abated. He continued to read every despatch and memorial, to dictate and sign his answers, and to carry on all the current business for the public good with the same punctuality and clearness as ever. Such was the intention which he had long ago expressed in his ' *Épître au Maréchal Keith* :—

' *Oui, finissons sans trouble, et mourons sans regrets,
En laissant l'univers comblé de nos bienfaits;
Ainsi l'astre du jour au bout de sa carrière
Répand sur l'horison une douce lumière,
Et ses derniers rayons qu'il darde dans les airs,
Sont ses derniers soupirs qu'il donne à l'univers.*

This is the only piece of poetry by Frederick with which we intend to trouble our readers, and we think that they will be inclined to forgive its poverty of versification and confusion of metaphor (sunbeams turned into sighs!) for the sake of its noble and lofty sentiment—a sentiment, be it observed, not merely put forth in high health thirty years before, but courageously fulfilled and carried through when there came the hour of trial.

Nor yet, amidst all his suffering, did his gaiety and love of jest forsake him. When the Duke of Courland came to see him at this period, the King asked him whether he stood in need of a good watchman, ' for if so,' added his Majesty, ' allow me to offer myself, being well qualified for such a post by my sleeplessness at nights.'

Finding little benefit from medicine, and unwilling to try abstinence, Frederick placed his own hopes on the return of fine weather, and as the spring advanced often caused himself to be set in a chair on the sunny side of the palace to inhale the balmy air. But no real improvement having ensued, the King, in the course of June, wrote to summon from Hanover the celebrated Swiss physician, Dr. Zimmermann. Accordingly, Zimmermann came, and on a careful consideration of the symptoms, prescribed as a stomachic the daily use of the Extract of *Taraxicum*—the common meadow Dandelion. But he heard with dismay, from the valet-de-chambre Schöning, how great continued to be the King's errors of diet. 'The most indigestible dishes,' said Schöning, 'are the favourites with his Majesty; and whenever he is prevailed upon by a physician to try any medicine, he does not on that account put any restraint on his immoderate eating.' The truth

truth of such accounts was soon apparent to Dr. Zimmermann from his own observation. We will give in his very words his report of the King's dinner on the 30th of June :— .

' This day the King took a very large quantity of soup, and this consisted, as usual with him, of the very strongest and most highly spiced ingredients ; yet, spiced as it was already, he added to each plate of it a large spoonful of pounded ginger and mace. His Majesty then ate a good piece of *bœuf à la Russe*—beef which had been steeped in half a quart of brandy. Next he took a great quantity of an Italian dish, which is made half of Indian corn and half of Parmesan cheese; to this the juice of garlic is added, and the whole is baked in butter until there arises a hard rind as thick as a finger. This, one of the King's most darling dishes, is named *Polenta*. At last,' continues Zimmermann, 'the King, having expressed his satisfaction at the excellent appetite which the Dandelion gave him, closed the scene with a whole plateful of eel-pie, which was so hot and fiery that it seemed as though it had been baked in Hell! Even before leaving the table on this occasion he fell into a doze, and was seized with convulsions. At other times again,' adds the Doctor, 'the King would eat a large quantity of chilling and unwholesome fruits, especially melons, and then again a vast number of sweetmeats.'

With such irregularities on the part of a septuagenary invalid—still persevered in, notwithstanding all Dr. Zimmermann's warnings—our readers will not be surprised to learn that his ailments during the month of July became greatly aggravated, and that every hope of amendment, or even alleviation to them, disappeared. The last time that he mounted Condé was on the 4th of July, when he was with great difficulty placed in his saddle, and after a short gallop manifested extreme exhaustion.

Through the whole of his long illness there was no word or deed of the King which referred to religious feelings, or betokened any idea of a future state. All his thoughts apparently were of this earth—to fulfil his Royal duties and also enjoy his personal pleasures to the last. On one occasion, when he received a letter from some zealous persons urging his conversion, he handed the letter to one of his Secretaries for reply, merely saying with unusual gentleness, 'They should be answered kindly, for they mean well!'

Frederick does not appear, during his last illness, to have seen or wished to see any member of his family; but almost every evening he received as usual his circle of literary friends. He never wearied them with complaints of his painful state, nor even mentioned it, but conversed cheerfully on the events of the day, and on various points of history and horticulture, literature and philosophy. He also continued both to read himself and be read to. The last works which he perused were a 'History of Henry

IV. of France;' the 'Siècle de Louis XV.' by Voltaire; and the 'Twelve Caesars' of Suetonius as translated by La Harpe.

Conscious as was Frederick of his daily declining health, and hopeless as his state had now become, it is not clear how far he was himself aware of his near approaching dissolution. On the 10th of August he wrote as follows to his sister, the Duchess of Brunswick :—

' MON ADORABLE SŒUR—Le Médecin de Hanovre [Zimmermann] a voulu se faire valoir chez vous, ma bonne sœur; mais la vérité est qu'il m'a été inutile. Les vieux doivent faire place aux jeunes gens pour que chaque génération trouve sa place; et à bien examiner ce que c'est que la vie, c'est voir mourir et naître ses compatriotes. En attendant, je me trouve un peu soulagé depuis quelques jours. Mon cœur vous reste inviolablement attaché, ma bonne sœur. Avec la plus haute considération, je suis, etc.,
FEDERIC.'

Next day, however, we find the King, as if in expectation of a longer life, dictate a letter to the bookseller Pitra, for a supply of new publications to his library in the ensuing year.

To the last, Frederick displayed the same unconquerable application, the same ardent zeal for the improvement of his states. Thus, on the 1st of August, we may observe that he dictated both instructions and inquiries as the first step towards the reclaiming of a large morass near Tilsit. To the last, also, there continued the same care and thought for the gratification of his palate. Some of the daily bills of fare laid before him within a fortnight of his death, and corrected by his own hand, are still preserved. Thus on the 4th of August, one of the dishes proposed to him was *Des gateaux à la Rothenbourg*, to be executed by one of his culinary artists with the classic name of *Dionysius*; but on reflection his Majesty deemed it better to substitute another dish and another cook to dress it. Accordingly he effaced the names which we have just quoted, and wrote upon the margin: '*Gosset—Filet de Poulets au Basilic*; mais que la sauce ne soit pas trop épaisse.'

On the morning of the 15th, Frederick, far contrary to his usual habit, dosed till eleven o'clock; then, however, he received his Cabinet-Secretaries, and gave them directions with a feeble voice, but with his customary clearness. He also drew out for General von Rohdich, the Commandant of Potsdam, a plan of some manoeuvres which he wished the garrison to execute on the morrow—a plan perfectly accurate, and well adapted to the ground. At dinner he ate half a lobster, the last food which passed his lips. In the afternoon he fell into a kind of stupor, which continued more or less through the night. Early on the 16th a rattle was heard in his throat, and he seemed at the very point

point of death. When it was announced to him, as usual, that the Cabinet-Secretaries had come, and were ready in the ante-chamber, he could scarcely gasp out words to desire that they should wait, and that he would see them presently. They remained outside, but in the course of the morning General Von Rohdich entered his room. As that officer appeared before him, it was painful to observe how the dying Monarch strove to collect his failing energy and fulfil his daily task; how he laboured, but all in vain, to raise his drooping head from the corner of his chair, to fix his glassy eye, and to move his speechless tongue. The General put up his papers, and withdrew in silence, with a handkerchief before his face. When, in the afternoon, at the desire of the Prince of Prussia, Dr. Selle came from Berlin, he found that his Royal Patient had slightly rallied, being able to stir a few steps, and articulate a few words;—but for the first time during his long reign, he never mentioned, and seemed to have forgotten, the current business, not yet despatched, of the day—a surer symptom than any other, observed Dr. Selle, of his close approaching dissolution. About seven o'clock the King had a short but quiet and refreshing interval of sleep. As the clock placed above his head struck eleven, he inquired the hour, and on being told, he added, 'At four o'clock I will rise.' About midnight his Majesty observed that his favourite dog had sprung from the allotted cushion by his side, upon which he inquired where he was, and desired that he might be put back again. These were the last words he spoke. Soon after the rattle in his throat returned, his breathing grew fainter and fainter, and at twenty minutes past two on the morning of the 17th of August he expired. He was seventy-four years and six months of age.

It is remarkable that during all this time—so strict was the discipline in the Royal Household—the King's imminent danger remained a secret not only to most of the Foreign Ministers at Berlin, but also to most members of the Royal Family. Even on the 16th, when the King was at the last extremity, the Queen gave an afternoon party at Schönhausen. Mirabeau, who had just returned from a visit to Prince Henry at Rheinsberg, was present, and states that the Envoy of France was by no means aware of the crisis being so near at hand, and that the Queen herself was equally unconscious. In Mirabeau's own words, '*La Reine ne s'en doutait pas ; elle ne me parla que de mon habit, de Rheinsberg, et du bonheur qu'elle y avait goûté étant Princesse Royale.*'* Thus was her Majesty talking of her honeymoon in the last hours of her married life !

* *Histoire Secrète de Berlin*, vol. i. p. 84, ed. 1789.

In the portrait which we have now endeavoured to draw of Frederick's private character in old age and his system of administration in peace, we are conscious that many of the features may appear scarcely consistent with each other, or as appertaining to one and the same mind. As in the giant figure of Dante's vision :—

' Dentro dal monte sta dritto un gran veglio :

La sua testa è di fin' oro formata,
E puro argento son le braccia e 'l petto;
Poi è di rame infino alla forcata ;
Da inch in giuso è tutto ferro eletto,
Salvo che 'l destro piede è terra cotta,
E sta 'n su quel, più che 'n nell' altro eretto :
Ciascuna parte, fuor che l'oro, è rotta !

Thus also in King Frederick the clay was strangely blended with the gold; it is impossible to deny with truth the presence of either, and it remains only to assign precisely the different proportions.

Mr. Macaulay, in a most able sketch of Frederick's early life and campaigns—a sketch which first appeared in the pages of a contemporary journal, but since among his own collected Essays—calls his Prussian Majesty ' the greatest King that has in modern times succeeded by right of birth to a throne.' With very sincere respect for Mr. Macaulay's critical authority, we must here however dissent from his conclusion. Several Royal and legitimate names occur to us as deserving to stand higher on the rolls of fame. Thus, upon the whole, and not without a consciousness of many blemishes and errors in our hero, we should prefer to Frederick, the Fourth Henry of France. But without any doubt or hesitation we should assign the palm over both to Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden. As with Frederick, his grandfather was the first King of his race ; to that King, like Frederick, he was lineal and peaceful heir. Succeeding to the throne at a far earlier age than the Prussian monarch, he fell in the field of glory when only thirty-seven—that age so often fatal to genius—yet within that narrow space, during those few and youthful years, how much had he already achieved for immortality ! As a statesman he may be held to have surpassed ; as a warrior to have equalled, Frederick. And if lofty principles and a thought of things beyond this earth be admitted as an element of greatness (as undoubtedly they should be), how much will the balance then incline to the side of Gustavus ! The victory gained by the Prussian King at Rosbach was, we allow, fully equal to the victory gained by the Swedish King at Leipsick on nearly the same ground

ground one hundred and twenty-seven years before. The two Monarchs were alike in the action; but how striking the contrast between them in the evening of the well-fought day ! Gustavus kneeling down at the head of all his troops to give God the glory! Frederick seated alone in his tent, and composing his loathsome Ode!

The character of Frederick is now, we rejoice to think, viewed by his own countrymen in a fair and discriminating spirit. On the one hand there is, and there ought to be, the greatest admiration for his military genius and renown ; on the other hand there is no leaning to his infidel philosophy, or to his iron despotism, or to his fantastic notions of finance. The French language is not now preferred to the German by the Germans themselves, nor is the literature of Berlin any longer the pale reflex of that of Paris. On the contrary, there appears to grow on the banks of the Elbe and the Rhine the inclination to a careful study of the kindred tongue—to a generous emulation with the kindred race, of England. Even now such names as Humboldt and Hallam, as Eastlake and Cornelius, may worthily stand side by side. Nor, we hope, is the day far distant when the progress of Prussia in her constitutional rights shall enable her statesmen to vie with ours in the principles of free institutions, and in that manly and unpremeditated eloquence which free institutions alone can produce or preserve.