



THE GERMAN EMPRESS.

THE GERMAN EMPRESS:
HER GIRL LIFE AND PRESENT WORK.

By COUNTESS A. VON BOTHMER.



PRESENT German Empress, Augusta Victoria, was born on the 22nd of October, 1858, at Schloss Dolzig, near Somerfeld, and was the eldest child of Duke Friedrich of Schleswig-Holstein, the

elder brother of the Prince Christian who is so well known in England.

Her mother, the Duchess Adelheid, was a princess of the house of Hohenlohe-Langenberg.

The Empress is the third princess of the family of Schleswig-Holstein who has married a Hohenzollern. The first was the Princess Nestor Elizabeth, a daughter of John Duke of Schleswig-Holstein and King of Denmark, who married the Kurfürst Joachim II. in the year 1502. Elizabeth was a good woman, and a true mother to her people. She lived in troublous times; and when the plague was raging in Berlin, she did much to alleviate the miseries caused by it. The second Schleswig-Holstein princess was Dorothea, the second wife of the great Kurfürst Friedrich Wilhelm, whom she married in 1667.

Princess Dorothea spent most of her time in planning improvements for the city of Berlin, and it was by her advice that the beautiful street, "Unter den Linden," was built, and she personally superintended the planting of the lime trees. We now come to the third Schleswig-Holstein princess, the present German Empress.

The childhood of the Princess Augusta Victoria was not very bright, for her parents were at that time in great adversity, and she often saw her mother in tears; still, the home life was peaceful in spite of worldly troubles, and the young Princess learnt many lessons in patience and unselfishness by seeing how well and bravely her parents bore their misfortunes.

The dukedom of Schleswig-Holstein passed away from the old possessors after the war of 1864, and was made a Prussian province, and the then reigning Duke and his family were left almost in poverty. Bismarck, by whose advice the war of '64 was undertaken, was hated by the ducal family; and when the Princess Augusta Victoria was naughty as a little child, her nurse had only to say, "Bismarck Kommt"—"Bismarck comes," to make her at once tractable; indeed, the Princess was once heard to say that she thought everything detestable was contained in that one word Bismarck.

After the war of 1866, Duke Friedrich returned with his family to Schloss Dolzig and remained there, living very quietly for three years, at which time his father, Duke Christian August, died, and left him Schloss Primkenau and an estate in Silesia, whither he almost immediately removed, having previously sold the estate of Dolzig.

Primkenau had not long been in the possession of the Schleswig-Holstein family, for Duke Christian had only bought it in 1853, and had since added land gradually, so that at his death the estate consisted of 54,000 acres and two small manufactories at Lauterbach.

The Princess Victoria was just eleven years old when her parents moved to Primkenau,

and before leaving Dolzig she went with her Swiss *donne* to take leave of her foster-mother, Frau Kinschwitz.

They found the good woman in a great state of excitement, partly because she must say good-bye to her nursling, but more on account of a wonderful dream she had had.

The previous night she said she had had a vision, in which she had seen the Princess Victoria on a throne as the Empress of Germany. The young Princess was highly amused, and made great fun of her old nurse, and said, "Fancy a poor princess like I am being Empress of Germany! No, I shall never be more than Empress of Primkenau."

The Duke and Duchess were also very much amused; but later, the nurse's prophecy was remembered, and at the time of her foster-child's marriage she was invited to Berlin, and was made very much of.

The life at Primkenau was very happy, but very uneventful; the Princess Victoria developed a most lovable, unselfish disposition, and had all the tastes of a girl brought up in the country. She rode a great deal, and was, and is still, a most finished horsewoman; her garden also gave her great delight, and she was a welcome guest wherever she went.

She also became a good musician, and shows very great taste in everything relating to art; and especially has a wonderful talent in the artistic arrangement of rooms and furniture. Her love of everything beautiful was shown when she was quite a little child, and nothing gives her more delight than seeing good paintings or beautiful scenery.

When the Princess was just twenty-one, in the autumn of 1879, Prince Wilhelm of Prussia (as he then was) was invited to Primkenau for some shooting, and it was then that the present Emperor and Empress met for the first time.

Prince Wilhelm was at once very much drawn to her, but Duke Friedrich resolutely discouraged the idea of an engagement, for he could not bear to think of a child of his marrying a Hohenzollern, and the grandson of the man who had deprived him of his dukedom, so nothing was then said to the Princess Victoria. However, poor Duke Friedrich died suddenly a few months later, at Wiesbaden, from heart disease, on the 14th of January, 1880, and only four weeks afterwards his daughter became engaged to Prince Wilhelm.

The engagement took place at Gotha, where the widowed Duchess Adelheid and her daughter were staying with the Duke of Coburg, but it was arranged that the marriage should not be for some time to come.

This engagement gave very general satisfaction in Germany. On one hand, it was felt to be a sort of reparation given by Prussia to the Schleswig-Holstein family; and on the other, it was known to be a marriage of affection on both sides.

The Empress Frederick, at that time the Crown Princess, had done all in her power to promote the marriage, as she was anxious that her son, like herself, might make a marriage of pure affection. The English Court were also in favour of it; and as Prince Bismarck thought it politic, everything was speedily arranged.

On the 2nd of June, 1880, the public betrothal was officially announced at Babelsberg, near Potsdam, and Prince Bismarck was present at the festivities which took place at the time, although he was very unwell just then, and it was not his custom to go out.

The Princess Victoria was received with great ceremony by the Prussian royal family

when she arrived in Berlin for her marriage. The Crown Prince and Princess met her at the station, and drove with her through the gaily decorated streets to the Imperial palace.

The only member of the Imperial family who was missing was the bridegroom, Prince Wilhelm, and he, in order to show a good example to his soldiers, had spent the afternoon with his company on the drill ground at Potsdam, and did not leave them until the day's duty was done.

One of his sergeants was heard to remark that when he had been married he had taken a few days' leave.

The Emperor Wilhelm was, and is, above everything a soldier, and he thinks with justice that "Example is better than precept."

The marriage took place on a Sunday, the 22nd of February, 1881, in the chapel of the Imperial palace, and was attended by all the members of the Imperial family.

Among the guests were the bride's mother, the Duchess Adelheid, Prince Christian, who was guardian to his brother's children; Duke Ernst Günther of Schleswig-Holstein, and the Princesses Amalie and Henrietta, the aunts of the bride. The marriage ceremony was conducted with great magnificence, and all the usual formalities customary at the marriage of a member of the Prussian royal house were performed.

The newly-married pair took up their residence in the Stadt Schloss at Potsdam, and lived there very quietly in an unpretending way.

On the 7th of May, 1882, the cannon sounded in Berlin to announce the birth of a son to the Prince and Princess Wilhelm.

The news was received with great satisfaction everywhere, and the saying went about Berlin, "Now we have four Kaisers." How little they thought that in six years they were fated to lose two beloved Emperors in the short space of three months; but at that time the sky was unclouded, and there were public rejoicings all over Prussia.

The christening took place on the 11th of June, and at Prince Wilhelm's wish all the guests who were present at his marriage were invited, but not all were able to come.

The baby received the names of Friedrich Wilhelm Victor August Ernst, and the Emperor William I. held his great-grandson in his arms during the whole time the clergyman, Dr. Kögel, was speaking, and afterwards he was taken from the Emperor by the Princess Victoria of Prussia.

Since the birth of the Crown Prince, five other sons have gladdened their parents' hearts, all of whom are strong, sturdy boys, and worthy shoots from the house of Hohenzollern.

The Prince and Princess Wilhelm lived a very simple, happy life at Potsdam, and were often seen walking together quite unattended in the town or surrounded by their children in the park.

The Princess proved herself a perfect wife and mother, ever patient, cheerful, and unselfish, and also on account of her intellectual qualities capable of being a true companion to her husband.

The Schloss of Potsdam was a most happy home, and the Princess found all her happiness in the simple pleasures of her home life with her husband and children.

So passed seven uneventful years, during which time very little was heard of the Princess Wilhelm in the outside world; but all who knew her, knew how well fitted she was for the

great position which she would one day be called upon to fill.

When the death of the Emperor William I., followed so quickly by that of the Emperor Frederick, called the young Kaiser Wilhelm from comparative obscurity to the most prominent position in Europe, it was with a sigh that the Empress relinquished the simple pleasures which had made her life so happy.

Since then she has been unable, as heretofore, to be always with her children, and this has been a great trial to her; but her other duties are paramount, and when the Emperor

is in Berlin, she spends nearly every morning with him, helping him with his correspondence.

The few weeks which she has lately spent with her sons at Felixstowe have been an unmixed pleasure to her Majesty, for nothing delights her more than simple pleasures shared with her children. The Empress is extremely charitable, and is always ready to help any deserving person. She is the patroness of several charitable institutions, and encourages the fine arts wherever she may be.

She has won all German hearts by her marvellous tact, which comes from true good-

ness of heart, her thoughtfulness for others, and by her unselfish consideration for all those about her. From north and south only praise is heard of the German Empress, for her pure, deep love for her husband and children; her strong religious feeling appeals to the sympathies and hearts of all German women; and her vocation in life is certainly to show her people what a wife and mother ought to be. The Emperor, in a speech which he made last year, fully described the Empress Augusta Victoria when he said, "She is a pearl among women."

DEAR LADY DISDAIN;

OR,

VIA AMORIS.

SONNET.



E seldom know how love—true love—begins;
To some is given the power of loving much
At outset of acquaintance; though to such
Ignitic suitors bliss of wooing spins
But all too quick. 'Tis he who waits and wins,
Beginning slow with Cupid's bow as crutch,
And honeyed dalliance, will at dual touch
Like dove ascend above! O Heaven-born twins!

But there are those begin as enemies,
With length of tongue, show fight or proud disdain;
But when at last the *débris* of the pain
Is swept away—a heart all brilliant is
Discovered in true light; and O! I wis
That many worse there are than such campaign!

C. P.

A VISIT TO A PEACEFUL TOWN.

BY THE COUNTESS OF MEATH.

WE had anchored early in the morning at Molde. Does anyone mentally ejaculate, "I never heard of such a place?" Nor, to my knowledge, had I, dear readers, to tell the honest truth, a short while since; and yet on a large map of Norway, hanging up before me, the name of Molde is written in big letters. In this country of glorious wilds, with rugged mountains, thundering waterfalls, and vast glaciers, with but a thinly-scattered population, Molde is a place of no little importance. Does it not boast of several hotels, of many shops, and of a few villas where wealthy Norwegians spend the summer season? And do not large steamers sometimes put in at its peaceful port? On the previous day to that on which we arrived at the little town we had been witnesses of scenery which in its magnificence defies description. At one spot, the so-called "Seven Sisters' Fall," that number of rivulets are to be seen discharging their waters over a sheer precipice, and forming a beautiful snowy veil of foaming water over the face of the sombre rock. Close to the waterfalls, and perched, as we should think, in a most dangerous position, is a little farmhouse, for the Norwegians are a brave, hardy race, very industrious, and they are content to live in unpromising and almost inaccessible places, some of them so precipitous that it is said they have to tether their children as well as their animals for fear of some dreadful accident befalling them. It is curious to note how, amongst the brown rocks, the eye is sometimes caught by a patch of brightest green. This means that the hard-working

peasants have contrived to fertilise some spot a little more available for cultivation than that around it, and that by dint of patience and perseverance they have managed, with the help of the fish which are to be caught in the fjords, to get just sufficient land into cultivation to live upon—not, it is true, luxuriously, but very little seems to content these frugal people. The character of the scenery about Molde was completely different from that which we had just witnessed. Nature, as we saw her on the previous day, was indeed beautiful, but grandeur and solemnity were the characteristics; whilst when we woke up next morning and looked out on the scene, it was one of beauty too—of a smiling, peaceful kind. Grassy meadows were to be seen richly gemmed with flowers, shady trees, well-clothed hills. The passengers on board our vessel, *The Chimborazo*, once breakfast was over, were all impatient to go on shore, and we ourselves followed some of the more eager sight-seers. Having been travelling



A NORWEGIAN GIRL.