

THE PRINCE OF INDIA

CHAPTER XI

THE PRINCESS HEARS FROM THE WORLD

THE sun shone clear and hot, and the guests in the garden were glad to rest in the shaded places of promenade along the brooksides and under the beeches and soaring pines of the avenues. Far up the extended hollow there was a basin first to receive the water from the conduit supposed to tap the aqueduct leading down from the forest of Belgrade. The noise of the little cataract there was strong enough to draw a quota of visitors. From the front gate to the basin, from the basin to the summit of the promontory, the company in lingering groups amused each other detailing what of fortune good and bad the year had brought them. The main features of such meetings are always alike. There were games by the children, lovers in retired places, and old people plying each other with reminiscences. The faculty of enjoyment changes but never expires.

An array of men chosen for the purpose sallied from the basement of the palace carrying baskets of bread, fruits in season, and wine of the country in water-skins. Dispersing themselves through the garden, they waited on the guests, and made distribution without stint or discrimination. The hearti-