

"Johann, the duke's keeper. He has seen the king."

"Ah, yes! The king, sir, is now at the duke's shooting lodge in the forest here; from here he goes to Strelsau to be crowned on Wednesday morning."

I was interested to hear this, and made up my mind to walk next day in the direction of the lodge on the chance of coming across the king. The old lady ran on garrulously:

"Ah! and I wish he would stay at his shooting—that and wine (and one thing more) are all he loves, they say—and suffer our duke to be crowned on Wednesday. That I wish, and I don't care who knows it."

"Hush, mother!" urged the daughters.

"Oh, there's many to think as I do!" cried the old woman stubbornly.

I threw myself back in my deep armchair and laughed at her zeal.

"For my part," said the younger and prettier of the two daughters, a fair, buxom, smiling wench, "I hate Black Michael! A red Elphberg for me,