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**The Princess Aline**

She Had Remarkable Diplomatic Talent

By MILLARD MALTBIE

The Princess Aline of Crakovia was an object of great concern to her father, King Ludwig. His majesty had five sons and one daughter. The succession being therefore established beyond a reasonable doubt by her brothers, the princess was of no importance whatever on that account. But she was of great value in another direction. A province, Guadix, had been wrested in war from Crakovia by King Philip of Ancovia, an adjoining power. A proposition had come from Philip for the hand of the Princess Aline for Ferdinand, crown prince of Ancovia. It had been declined. A deputation was then sent by King Philip offering



"I WILL NOT MARRY PRINCE FERDINAND." If the matrimonial proposition were accepted, to restore to Crakovia the province that had been ceded.

King Ludwig was not only astonished at this remarkable offer; he was delighted. Without consulting his daughter in the matter he replied at once that the proposition was accepted. The deputation was about to return with this reply when the princess was informed that she was to take a husband she had never seen without having been consulted. She at once notified her father that she did not intend to marry any one and she certainly would not marry Prince Ferdinand.

King Ludwig sent for his daughter and informed her that she must marry the prince because on her doing so depended the restoration of the lost province, whereupon Aline replied that if a hundred provinces could be gained by her marriage still would she remain maid. At this her father was so dumfounded that he could voice no reply.

When the deputation returned to Ancovia and reported the failure of this second proposition King Philip was both astonished and perplexed. The laws of Ancovia with regard to the marriages of members of the royal family were very closely drawn. So many provisions had been incorporated into them that there was not a single princess of the blood in Europe except Aline who was eligible. The king called his son into his cabinet and told him what had taken place, concluding with the words:

"I propose to declare war against Crakovia and compel the princess to marry you."  
"Father," said the prince thoughtfully, "there is an old saying that you can take a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. You may conquer Crakovia and annex it to your kingdom, you may make the princess a prisoner and force her to the altar, but you can't make her say that she will take me for her wedded husband."  
"My son," replied the king after weighing the prince's words, "you are right. Such a course might succeed with a man, but not with a woman."  
The Princess Aline being the only daughter in the royal family, besides being very attractive—though it was known that she had a will of her own—had been very popular till it leaked out that she had refused in marriage the crown prince of Ancovia, with the lost province in the palm. The cessation of this territory had been as soon

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a point with the Crakovians as the surrender of Alsace and Lorraine with the French. A century and a half before the cession of Guadix, Crakovia had been obliged to cede one-half its territory to Ancovia, and when Guadix was lost to them they were broken hearted. For these reasons, when it became known that Aline had refused to give herself in exchange for Guadix, popular favor turned against her, and she became as much hated as she had before been beloved. She appeared as usual in public places till her treatment by the people became markedly disrespectful; then she retired to one of her father's country palaces, where it was understood she lived a secluded life.

One day Prince Ferdinand happened to go through the room where his sisters were studying their lessons under their governess. His attention was attracted by the young woman, and under pretence of inquiring what the children were studying he fell into conversation with their teacher. So pleased was he with her intelligence that he made frequent visits to the school-room and asked his mother, the queen, if the governess might not be admitted to the social functions of the court. The queen assented, and the prince announced the fact to the recipient of the royal favor. To his surprise, the latter declined the honor, saying that her mind was concentrated on the education of her pupils and she would not like to have it diverted.

There was in her something so superior to other women with whom the prince came in daily contact that his admiration for the governess grew rapidly. Whenever he found it possible to get away from the governing associates who surrounded him he would seek his untitled friend and refresh himself with her engaging though independent personality.

One day the prince awoke to the fact that he loved one whom as a prince of the blood he could not marry. He kept his secret from her for some time, but at last yielded to the pressure within him and avowed his love. She did not reproach him for so doing, but the next day handed in her resignation as teacher for the royal children, and when the prince sought her again he found that she had left the palace. He endeavored to learn where she had gone, but failed to gain any trace of her.

From this time a marked change was noticed in Prince Ferdinand. In public he had caught the popular heart by a happy manner that was natural to him, but now he seldom appeared to the people and when he did looked gloomy and morose. It became known that there was no woman living whom the laws of his country would permit him to marry, and those who attributed the change in him to this cause sympathized with him instead of blaming him. Nevertheless, in the main the prince was an example of the adage, "Laugh and the world laughs with you; weep and you weep alone." He fulfilled this almost literally, for princesses are dependent on friends the same as other persons, and Ferdinand's intimate friends ceased to find pleasure in his society. He was therefore left much to himself. However, he was very indifferent to all associates.

One day a messenger arrived at the court of Ancovia announcing that King Philip desired King Ludwig would be pleased to reopen negotiations for the hand of the Princess Aline. King Philip at once sent for his son and announced the glad tidings. "Something must have occurred to change the conditions," he said to the prince. "I shall withdraw the offer to restore the province of Guadix. We may get the princess without losing this valuable territory."  
"Do what you like in the matter," replied Ferdinand. "I shall be obedient to your wishes."  
In truth, the prince secretly hoped that the withdrawal of the previous offer would break off the negotiations. The idea of marriage except with the girl he loved was repulsive to him.

So King Philip replied to King Ludwig that he would be pleased to renew his request for the hand of the princess, but he could not now consent to give up Guadix. King Ludwig replied that the matter was in the hands of his daughter and if the crown prince wished for her hand he would have to make the request in person. Philip was delighted.

"I told you so," he said to his son. "Something has occurred to change the situation. Go to the princess, but not as a beggar. We'll get her and keep Guadix."

The prince departed at the head of a splendid retinue and with handsome presents to seek a wife simply that he might give an heir to the throne. There was no method of traveling in those days except on or behind horses and not much communication between the different countries. King Philip waited impatiently to hear of the prince's success, hoping that no cessation of territory would be necessary. Finally a message came from his son stating that the Princess Aline would marry him, demanding not only the restoration of Guadix, but that much larger territory which had been ceded to Ancovia a century and a half before. What was more astonishing than this was that the prince urged that the conditions be accepted.

The shock was more than King Philip could bear. He was an old man and in poor health. He fell on the floor in a faint, was carried to his bed and died the next day. Immediately after the king's demise the chancellor of the realm made haste to Crakovia to announce to the crown prince his accession to the throne. He found Ferdinand basking in the princess' smiles, but just as the chancellor was about to kneel with the words, "The king is dead—long live the king!" he stopped, paralyzed. In the Princess Aline he recognized the governess of the royal children of Ancovia. But, recovering himself, he found voice to make the announcement.

Before King Ferdinand left Crakovia he had a consultation with King Ludwig wherein a new distribution of all the territory that had been ceded to Crakovia was made, Crakovia getting the larger share. After the documents had been signed the wedding took place amid such rejoicings as had never before occurred in Crakovia. The lost popularity of the princess was not only restored to her, but she could not appear in public without receiving a storm of acclamation.

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