

for, inheriting her mother's pride rather than her father's meekness, she could not but regard with complacency the family aggrandisement likely to ensue from a union with one of the three great Monarchs of the day. Besides, was not Henry VIII. a Protestant, and would not "the great cause," the Reformation, be promoted by the accession to the English throne of one so truly religious as Anne? Then, too, although the noble Katharine of Spain had been divorced, and her brilliant usurper murdered, yet to the last Queen, Jane Seymour, the monarch had proved a faithful husband; nay, such was his grief, that even now nothing but "*the wishes of his Parliament!*" could have induced the sorrowing widower to seek another wife.

"Moreover," were the words of the Electress to her mother, "such is the winning gentleness of our White Swan* that she cannot be ill-used by any one. Who ever knew of aught but love felt towards her? Even since the small-pox has so marred her once lovely face, all forget its ravages in that sweet smile which plays on her injured features, like sunshine on the rock. Therefore, madam, although my good Duke expected me to plead as he would have done himself, were he here, I cannot quite blind myself to the advantages to be gained by this grand alliance, and begin to think the sagacious Elector has for once in his life exaggerated evil."

"It may be so, daughter," said the peaceful Duke; "yet methinks after the excellent Catalina of Arragon has been publicly insulted, and the witty and beautiful Anne Boleyn beheaded, any parent might ponder well ere he place in the hands of such a man his dearest treasure. My Anne is too precious a child to be lightly cast away. I care not to part with her yet, and one reason alone weighs in favor of these nuptials. Our Smalkaldic League—the bulwark of the true faith, so far as earthly means are concerned—requires the aid of Henry of England, and my daughter's earnest piety cannot fail to strengthen, in the right way, the heart of him who loves her. For the Protestant cause we have all made sacrifices, and we shall not shrink from laying upon the Altar of our God even this richer offering."

While John of Cleves was proceeding with his argument, there had been added to his auditors, she of whom he spoke, and as he concluded, gliding from her position behind her father's chair, and falling at his feet, she exclaimed:

"If, Sir, the weal of Germany require my marriage, I will go to England. I will leave you, my parents—my beloved home—my beautiful

Rhine—brothers and sisters—and go. Doubt not I shall be happy. There will be a rich heart-gladness in feeling that I have done something for religious freedom. But oh! if it be not essential, let your Anne still stay with you. Why should Henry want me? I have no beauty to attract, no accomplishments to fascinate—were it either of my sisters the case would be different. Sybilla was born for a Queen, and even little Emilie has more of royalty about her than have I. Let me, I pray you, stay to comfort you. Let me still be *your* Swan."

The father stroked caressingly the long black hair which like a veil encompassed his child, and wondered how that placid beaming countenance could strike any one as otherwise than beautiful. "We will finish this discussion to-morrow, daughter mine," he said. "Pity but thou could'st change fortunes with Sybilla."

"To-morrow!" words thoughtlessly spoken, but oh! how full of meaning. When the paternal blessing was that night bestowed, could any one have dreamed that the morning light would find the terror-stricken family surrounding the death-bed of him who spoke it? Unable to articulate, he cast around upon the weeping circle a look of ineffable tenderness—pointed upwards—raised his confiding gaze to Heaven, and the spirit fled to its home in the skies.

Deep and intense was the grief that hung over that household. Any death causes a sad vacancy in the domestic circle, that is severely felt; but when the head—the guide—the counsellor—is taken, all seems drear and desolate. The mother is more lamented as time advances—the father is more missed at once. You find yourself listening for the sound of his horse's feet—you place his chair—arrange his books—adjust his papers,—and bitter is the pang that rends the heart as tho' impression is forced upon you that all is in vain.

Anne's grief was peculiarly poignant, and sorely was she aroused by the arrival of the Ambassador of the English King, stating that his master, having been satisfied with Holbein's portrait of the daughter of Cleves, he prayed her at once to become his.

William, her brother, who had succeeded to his father's title, urged the suit, and the lady, unaccustomed to assert her own will in anything, yielded, and preparations for the journey were immediately made. Proud of the splendor which awaited her plainest daughter, Marie of Cleves sorely allowed one doubt of that child's future happiness to cross her mind. Why did it not occur to her sagacity, that the face must be eminently beautiful which is not flattered by an exquisite miniature, like that which Holbein executed for his Sovereign? How much misery

*The pet name of Anne in her family, alluding to their well known cognizance of Three Swans.