

a strange custom in Zealand, and may be elsewhere, of interring a living horse in every churchyard before any human being could be buried there. This horse reappears, and is known under the name of the "Hell-horse." It has but three legs; but ill luck to the man who sees it, for it foretells his own death. Hence it is said of one who has recovered from a dangerous illness, "He has given a bushel of oats to the Hell-horse." Further on stands the rustic fishing-house of His Majesty, with a rude stone kitchen range outside, sufficient to fry your perch—or boil them, if you like it better. Solyst is a small house on the lake side, where strangers breakfast or drink their coffee on the terraces.

And now we approach Easom. There stands the old black jail, and the antique farmhouse, whitewashed, once her kloster. Our horses stop to water; so we walk down to the farmyard gates, and enter the court. Easom was mother church to Sorø and also to others in the Island of Rugen. Few and slight are the remains of her former glory. A convent of Cistercians of Clairvaux, founded by Archbishop Eskild in the twelfth century, stood high in rank among the klosters of Zealand. Here Queen Hedvig found her last resting-place, and two of the ill-fated offspring (Magnus and Erik) of Erik Menved and Queen Ingeborg.

After the Reformation the lands fell to the crown; the materials of the church were used by that ruthless destroyer King Frederic for the construction of Frederiksborg. I observed a stone inserted in the wall bearing his cipher, "F.," encircled by the serpentine "S" (Frederic and Sophia), surmounted by a crown, the date 1569, a sort of Protestant seal he placed upon all ecclesiastical buildings which came into his possession. Another, later, of Christian V., 1697; he repaired the outhouses, and wished the world to be aware of the fact. Some ancient iron cramps in the wall, *fleur-de-lis* in honour of Mary, were all that remained of Roman Catholic times; the curved chairs of its abbots are preserved in the museum at Copenhagen. We saw the underground crypt, vaulted and supported on columns, which undermines the whole building and keeps it dry in this watery neighbourhood, and the worthy fathers from rheumatic pains and ague.

XII.

THE PALACE OF FREDERIKSBORG.—THE MERMAID, ISBRAND, FORTTELLS THE BIRTH OF CHRISTIAN IV.—HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY OF CHRISTIAN IV.—PUNISHMENT OF HIS PECULATING MINT-MASTER—ROYAL BATTLES—THE RIDDERSEAL—DESTRUCTION OF THE PALACE OF FREDERIKSBORG BY FIRE.

It was high time to leave Marienlyst: the season had commenced—an army of waiters arrived from Hamburg. The restaurant was now open; visitors poured in by the steamers—called for bottled-beer and beefsteaks, and, what was more, smoked on the staircase; to add to our annoyance, a brass band commenced to play from six to eight every morning.

All this movement and bustle would have been well enough had we not looked on Marienlyst as our own property for the last six weeks; so, though I was sorry to leave the glorious bathings in the Sound, we packed up and started for Fredensborg, where we passed one night, and the following evening made for Frederiksborg, a drive of three quarters of an hour.

No palace existed on this spot previous to the reign

of King Frederic II., who exchanged the lands of the suppressed convent of Skov Kloster with the celebrated Admiral Herluf Trolle for the manor of Hillerød, on which he caused the earlier castle of Frederiksborg to be constructed. Of this building little now remains; its site is occupied by the royal stables and outhouses; stout stumpy towers, one at each corner of the moat, it has, wreathed round with iron cramps bearing the date 1562, and the motto in German of the pious Queen Sophia.

Frederic II. was, when we consider the age he lived in, a right-minded, honourable man. In early life he was much attached to a young and beautiful girl, Dagmar Hardenberg by name, who, though of noble birth, belonged to no princely house; make her his queen he could not, and he was too high principled to take advantage of her youth, so he remained a bachelor until he was thirty-eight years of age, when, yielding to the entreaties of his advisers, he, much against his will, contracted an alliance with the Princess Sophia of Mecklenburg. Tradition relates how Dagmar was present at the coronation of the queen, which took place in the Frue Kirke of Copenhagen, but, overcome by her feelings, fainted away, was carried out of the church, and died shortly after broken-hearted. Two daughters were the produce of Frederic's marriage, and, in despair at the non-arrival of an heir to the crown, he began to regret he had yielded to the desire of his nobles.

During the celebration of the Whitsuntide festivities, in the spring of the year 1576, there appeared at court an aged peasant from the Island of Samso, who informed the king that, when ploughing his field by the sea-shore, he was accosted by a mermaid, who ordered him to go direct to court, and announce to the king that the queen should bear him a son within the succeeding year, adding, "Tell his Majesty my name is Isbrand, and I am granddaughter of the mermaid who protected the birth of his ancestress, Queen Margaret." When the king and queen heard this good news they were greatly rejoiced, and all the court with them, and the aged peasant returned to his home laden with presents. And now time rolled on, the hopes of the nation were verified, and great was the joy thereat.

It was the 12th of April, 1577, that Queen Sophia, when walking with her ladies of honour somewhere on the Roeskilde road, was suddenly taken ill, and before aid and assistance could be procured, the youthful Pagan, later Christian, heir to the crown of Denmark, made his appearance, not under the blue canopy of heaven, but under a hawthorn-tree, which of course happened to come into full flower just one month before its usual period of blooming—a very graceful compliment on the part of Dame Nature to the newborn princeling.

Well, great was the joy of the whole nation at the birth of the wished-for heir, but the hilarity of the court was somewhat disturbed by a second visit from the agent peasant of Samso, with a message from the mermaid to the king, telling him that, if he did not at once cease from his habits of inebriety, he would never live to see his son a grown man; at which Frederic became exceedingly wroth, and dismissed the messenger this time with no presents, but with threats and menaces.

The prophecy of the mermaid came to pass after all, for Frederic quitted this world a victim to his inebriety