

**MEMOIRS OF FREDERICA SOPHIA  
WILHELMINA, PRINCESS ROYAL  
OF PRUSSIA, MARGRAVINE OF  
BAREITH, SISTER OF FREDERIC THE  
GREAT. IN TWO VOLUMES. VOL. II**

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MEMOIRS

OF

FREDERICA SOPHIA WILHELMINA,

PRINCESS ROYAL OF PRUSSIA,

MARGRAVINE OF BAREITH,

SISTER OF FREDERIC THE GREAT.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH.

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MEMOIRS  
OF THE  
MARGRAVINE OF BAREITH.

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THE year 1732 introduced a new epoch. I had for some time past suffered much indisposition, the cause of which I attributed to the continual agitation of a mind oppressed by adversities. I wished to attend to my devotions, and went to church, but fainted during the service and remained insensible for some hours. On my recovery, I found myself in bed surrounded by a crowd of persons who had run to my assistance, and among the rest, the queen. The physician decided that I was breeding, on which subject the company amused themselves greatly; but I paid no attention to anything that they said to me, I suffered too much; I had several faintings during that day, which prevented my rising. The queen sent me word the next morning that she would pay me a visit in the evening to celebrate Twelfth Night. It was but a sad festival, and all present seemed to have fears for my life. Tears were in every eye; I took a tender farewell of the margrave Philip. My marriage had not altered our friendship, and I felt sensibly affected in separating from those I loved.

The next day, the 7th of January, we removed to Potsdam. The king received me with open arms. The hope of seeing himself shortly a grandfather gave him inconceivable pleasure; he loaded me with at-

tentions and caresses, and I made use of the good temper which he was in to ask a favour. Madame de Sonsfeld had three nieces, daughters of the general Marwitz, and heiresses to considerable wealth; her sister being dead she had brought them up. The eldest was fourteen years of age, and the aunt had a wish to take her to Bareith to finish her education; she did not dare, however, to accomplish her design without the express permission of the king, that prince having made a decree, by which heiresses were forbidden to leave the country under the penalty of a confiscation of their estates. The king granted my request, on condition that I would give him my word of honour not to marry her out of his realm, on which point\* I satisfied him.

The day of my departure being at length fixed for the 11th of January, I determined to make a last attempt to move the compassion of the king. I found means of speaking to him in private, and of opening to him my heart. I apologized for my past conduct, without committing the queen. I painted to him in the most forcible colours the grief which his misfortune had occasioned me, to which I added a lively portrait of my then situation, entreating him by all that he held most sacred not to abandon me, but to grant me his countenance and protection. My discourse had its effect; he was drowned in tears, and was unable to reply to me for some time. Sobbing violently at intervals, he explained the state of his mind sufficiently by his endearments; at length, by an effort to restrain his emotions, he said; "I am grieved that I had not known you. I had received such a horrible description of you, that I have hated as much as I now love you. If I had written to you we might both have been spared much chagrin, but

\* As this circumstance will be found of consequence in a future part of these memoirs, the reader is requested to favour it with attention.



they prevented my speaking to you by representing that you were worse than a fiend, and that you would lead me to extremities that I would wish to avoid. Your mother, by her intrigues, is in part the cause of the misfortunes of the family. I have been deceived and imposed upon on every side; but my hands are tied, and although my heart is grieved, I must leave these iniquities unpunished." I took the part of the queen, by representing to his majesty that her intentions had been good; and that the friendship alone which she had had for my brother and myself had induced her to act as she had done; and that hence he could not take it ill. "Do not enter into that detail," said he; "what is past is past, and I would wish to bury it in oblivion. For yourself, my beloved girl, rest assured that you are the dearest to me of my family, and that I will religiously perform the promises that I have made, to give you a preference to my other children. Continue to have confidence in me, and depend always on having my countenance and protection. I am too afflicted to take my leave of you. Embrace your husband for me, for I am too much overcome to see him." He withdrew, dissolved in tears. I retired equally affected, and went to the queen. My separation from her was not so affecting as that from the king. Notwithstanding my submission and endearments, she remained cold as ice, without the least emotion, and without shewing me the least kindness. The duke de Holstein conducted me to the coach, into which I entered with the prince and madame de Sonsfeld.

I arrived safe the same evening at Closterzin, which is the first stage. The second was not so fortunate as the first. The coach broke down on my side; two pair of loaded pistols, and two heavy trunks which they had fastened there, I don't know why, fell on me without doing me the least harm. Madame de Sonsfeld concluded that I was killed, and her fear

blinded her so much that she cried out unceasingly, like a maniac, "My God! Lord Jesus! have pity on us." I thought that she was hurt, which alarmed me more than the fall, and I inquired if she had sustained any injury, when she replied, "Oh, my God! no, madam; I have only been alarmed for you." The hereditary prince, who had leaped from the coach door, I found more dead than alive. He had not presence of mind enough even to ask if I was hurt. The scene appeared highly comic to me. I was loaded like a mule, with all the baggage of the carriage, from which they did not disengage me without some difficulty. The margrave carried me over a field covered with snow; he froze as he walked; and my shoes were frozen to my feet. I appeared to be something in the situation of Lot's wife, with the chance of becoming at least a pillar of ice, if my attendants had not come to my assistance. My women were crying and lamenting sadly, taking it into their heads that I should have a miscarriage; they sprinkled me with all manner of volatile spirits, and presented me with nauseous drugs, which I would not touch. After some time the coach was repaired, and we proceeded on our journey.

M. de Burstell, the king's privy counsellor, accompanied me to take upon him, at Bareith, the situation of minister at that court; he called on my *gouvernante* immediately on our arrival at Torgau, and begged her to represent to me, that although I did not feel the effects of the shock that I had met with, prudence required that I should remain some days on the road to prevent the dangerous consequences that might ensue. Madame de Sonsfeld and M. de Voit gave the same advice, and they expressed their fears to the prince, so that I could only obtain leave to go as far as Lelpsic the next day. I, however, anticipated some diversion; the fair, one of the most celebrated in Germany, being then held. There are

always at that time a number of strangers in the city, whither likewise the court of Dresden commonly repairs.

We arrived at Leipsic the following day. For the sake of decorum I was first put to bed; I then made enquiries if there were a great many people there; but oh! what a disappointment; the fair was over, and the court, as well as the strangers, had left the place the evening before; and instead of amusement, I was cruelly fatigued the two days that I was obliged to stay there. Distressed with ceremonies and fine compliments, I set out at length to pursue my journey, which passed well enough, with the exception of the fears which I entertained at times from our approaches to rocks and precipices. The roads were abominable, and although the cold was excessive, I preferred walking to the chance of being overturned.

At length I arrived at Hoff, the chief city of the territory of Bareith. They received me in state, and the guns were fired. The citizens under arms lined the streets to the castle. The marshal de Reitzenstein, with some of the court, and all the nobility in the neighbourhood of Voigtland, waited my arrival at the bottom of the stairs (if a sort of wooden ladder deserved that name), and conducted me to my apartment. M. de Reitzenstein complimented me on the part of the margrave on my arrival in his territory; I was afterwards obliged to accept the tedious compliments of the nobility. M. de Voit had entreated me to receive these people with attention. It is known that the house of Austria has given certain privileges to the nobles at the expense of the princes, which are altogether unjust, and serve only to debase the sovereigns of the empire, who would never willingly acknowledge them. Every gentleman pretends to be as much a sovereign at home as the prince to whom he is a vassal, which has occasioned numerous disputes and litigations. The nobility of Voigtland were separated from the rest, having quarrelled with the