

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

MY OWN STORY.*

This remarkable autobiography, written by the ex-Crown Princess of Saxony, is extremely interesting from many points of view, but chiefly for the many intimate pictures of modern Court life. The royal writer gives as her reason for publishing this volume—

"That as my sons are now approaching an age when the mendacious assertions in question may be communicated to them, it is my duty, as their mother, to make public the actual reasons which led to my leaving Dresden and to my ultimate banishment from Saxony." Also, "that I am desirous that future historians of the Houses of Saxony and Habsburg should not perpetuate errors through lack of contradiction on my part."

The events to which she refers were too thoroughly discussed in the Press to need any comment here.

By her own showing she was a troublesome child. On one occasion for a punishment she was deprived of her swimming lesson. She dived, fully dressed, from a boat on the lake. "When I reached my bedroom I had an excessively unpleasant interview with mamma. She looked at me in astonishment, and when she found words she said: 'Only one thing is possible, Louisa, and that is to send for the doctors at once, for you must certainly be mad.'"

Her betrothal to Prince Frederick-August is described in the following words:

"Mamma insisted on my donning a very becoming gown to celebrate my formal betrothal, so I awaited the Prince's arrival in a pale blue silk dress. I felt nervous and excited as I realised that I had now crossed the Rubicon, and I kept on repeating to myself, 'I wonder, I wonder if I shall be happy.'"

"When Prince Frederick-August was shown into the salon where we were assembled, I forgot my own heart-searching in pity for his nervousness. He was too distraught to give my parents the kiss which etiquette demanded, but advanced towards me, blushing furiously, and bestowed a very, very shy kiss on my forehead."

After her marriage she relates that: "I often went into the kitchen to see for myself how certain 'plats' were prepared, and as I was always over-anxious when we gave a State dinner, I sometimes even used to go down in my dinner-gown, directly my toilette was completed, to assure myself that all was going on well."

From first to last she was at issue with her Royal father-in-law, and apparently there were faults on both sides. In her own words:

"We were always bickering about something."

The following scene gives some idea of the state of things existing between them:—

* By Louisa of Tuscany, ex-Crown Princess of Saxony. (Eveleigh Nash, London.)

"We faced each other outwardly calm, and he said, coming straight to the point:

"It has become annoying and wearisome for me to possess you as a daughter-in-law, Louisa. . . . You have now fulfilled your destiny, which was to provide princes to continue our line, and so I have no further use for you.' (This was at least candid.) 'But, Louisa, I now tell you what I have always thought, and that is that you are mad.'"

She would seem herself to acquiesce in that theory, as she is at some pains to show that she sprang from a mentally unstable stock.

Of the Habsburgs she says:—

"They are extraordinary people, brilliant, gifted, fascinating, and reckless, but their sins and indiscretions are not the result of a love of either; they are generally brought about by environment and the dire influence of suggestion, and, in my opinion, are only to be looked upon as the unhappy and (in their calmer moments) the unwilling victims of heredity." H. H.

READ.

"Hannah More: a Biographical Study." By Annette M. B. Meakin.

"Peter and Jane." By S. Macnaughton.

"Ladies Whose Bright Eyes." By Ford Madox Hueffer.

COMING EVENTS.

November 2nd.—Nurses' Protection Committee. Meeting to consider further amendments to the National Insurance Bill, 431, Oxford Street, W., 5 p.m.

November 3rd.—Nurses' Missionary League Lecture. By the Rev. Dugald Macfadyen, M.A., on "Christian Missions and the Modern Mind." University Hall, Gordon Square, W.C., 7.45 p.m.

November 7th.—The Infants' Hospital, Vincent Square, S.W. A Course of Lectures on Babies, "The Bacteriology of Milk," by Dr. Ralph Vincent. 3.30 p.m.

November 7th.—St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses' League. Lecture II.: The Cathedrals of England. Canterbury, Rochester, Chichester. Mr. Allen Walker. 8 p.m.

November 7th.—Guy's Hospital Nurses' League. Lecture: "New Methods of Treatment in the Gynaecological Wards." Mr. R. Davies-Colley. 8 p.m.

November 8th.—Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh. Lecture: "Dietetic Customs and Personal Idiosyncrasy." By Dr. W. Russell. Extra Mural Medical Theatre. 4.30 p.m. All trained nurses cordially invited.

November 11th.—General Hospital, Birmingham. Nurses' League Annual Meeting. State Registration of Nurses. Mrs. Bedford Fenwick.

November 16th.—Princess Louise (Duchess of Argyll) opens the new Out-patients' Department, Paddington Green Children's Hospital.

November 22nd.—Irish Nurses' Association, 34, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin. Lecture: "Rheumatism," by Dr. C. Preston Ball.

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