

ANDREAS HOFER.

CHAPTER I.

1809.

THE year 1809 had come; but the war against France, so intensely longed for by all Austria, had not yet broken out, and the people and the army were vainly waiting for the war-cry of their sovereign, the Emperor Francis. It is true, not a few great things had been accomplished in the course of the past year: Austria had armed, organized the militia, strengthened her fortresses, and filled her magazines; but the emperor still hesitated to take the last and most decisive step by crowning his military preparations with a formal declaration of war.

No one looked for this declaration of war more intensely than the emperor's second brother, the Archduke John, a young man of scarcely twenty-seven. He had been the soul of all the preparations which, since the summer of 1808, had been made throughout Austria; he had conceived the plan of organizing the militia and the reserves; and had drawn up the proclamation of the 12th of May, 1808, by which all able-bodied Austrians were called upon to take up arms. But this exhausted his powers; he could organize the army, but could not say to it, "Take the field against the enemy!" The emperor alone could utter this word, and he was silent.

"And he will be silent until the favorable moment has passed," sighed the Archduke John, when, on returning from a very long interview with the emperor, he was alone with his friend, General Nugent, in his cabinet.

He had communicated to this confidant the full details of his interview with the emperor, and concluded his report by

saying, with a deep sigh, "The emperor will be silent until the favorable moment has passed!"

Count Nugent gazed with a look of heart-felt sympathy into the archduke's mournful face; he saw the tears filling John's large blue eyes; he saw that he firmly compressed his lips as if to stifle a cry of pain or rage, and that he clinched his hands in the agony of his despair. Animated by tender compassion, the general approached the archduke, who had sunk into a chair, and laid his hand gently on his shoulder. "Courage, courage!" he whispered; "nothing is lost as yet, and your imperial highness—"

"Ah, why do you address me with 'imperial highness'?" cried the archduke, almost indignantly. "Do you not see, then, that this is a miserable title by which Fate seems to mock me, and which it thunders constantly, and, as it were, sneeringly into my ears, in order to remind me again and again of my deplorable powerlessness? There is nothing 'imperial' about me but the yoke under which I am groaning; and my 'highness' is to be compared only with the crumbs of Lazarus which fell from the rich man's table. And yet there are persons, Nugent, who envy me these crumbs—men who think it a brilliant and glorious lot to be an 'imperial highness,' the brother of a sovereign emperor! Ah, they do not know that this title means only that I am doomed to everlasting dependence and silence, and that the emperor's valet de chambre and his private secretary are more influential men than the Archduke John, who cannot do anything but submit, be silent, and look on in idleness."

"Now your imperial highness slanders yourself," exclaimed Count Nugent. "You have not been silent, you have not looked on in idleness, but have worked incessantly and courageously for the salvation of your people and your country. Who drew up the original plan for the organization of the militia and the reserves? Who elaborated its most minute details with admirable sagacity? It was the Archduke John—the archduke in whom all Austria hopes, and who is the last refuge and comfort of all patriots!"

"Ah, how much all of you are to be pitied, my friend, if you hope in me!" sighed John. "What am I, then? A poor

atom which is allowed to move in the glare of the imperial sun, but which would be annihilated so soon as it should presume to be an independent luminary. Pray, Nugent, do not speak of such hopes; for, if the emperor should hear of it, not only would my liberty be endangered, but also yours and that of all who are of your opinion. The emperor does not like to see the eyes of his subjects fixed upon me; every kind word uttered about me sours him and increases the ill-will with which he regards me."

"That is impossible, your highness," exclaimed the count. "How can our excellent emperor help loving his brother, who is so gifted, so high-minded and learned, and withal so modest and kind-hearted? How can he help being happy to see that others love and appreciate him too?"

"Does the emperor love my brother Charles, who is much more gifted and high-minded than I am?" asked John, shrugging his shoulders. "Did he not arrest his victorious career, and recall him from the army, although, or rather *because*, he knew that the army idolized him, and that all Austria loved him and hoped in him? Ah, believe me, the emperor is distrustful of all his brothers, and all our protestations of love and devotedness do not touch him, but rebound powerlessly from the armor of jealousy with which he has steeled his heart against us. You see, I tell you all this with perfect composure, but I confess it cost me once many tears and inward struggles, and it was long before my heart became calm and resigned. My heart long yearned for love, confidence, and friendship. I have got over these yearnings now, and resigned myself to be lonely, and remain so all my life long. That is to say," added the archduke, with a gentle smile, holding out his hand to the count, "lonely, without a sister, without a brother—lonely in my family. However, I have found a most delightful compensation for this loneliness, for I call you and Hormayr friends; I have my books, which always comfort, divert, and amuse me; and last, I have my great and glorious hopes regarding the future of the fatherland. Ah, how could I say that I was poor and lonely when I am so rich in hopes, and have two noble and faithful friends? I am sure, Nugent, you will never desert me, but stand by me to the end

—to the great day of victory, or to the end of our humiliation and disgrace?"

"Your imperial highness knows full well that my heart will never turn from you; that I love and revere you; that you are to me the embodiment of all that is noble, great, and beautiful; that I would be joyfully ready at any hour to suffer death for you; and that neither prosperity nor adversity could induce me to forsake you. You are the hope of my heart, you are the hope of my country—nay, the hope of all Germany. We all need your assistance, your heart, your arm; for we expect that you will place yourself at the head of Germany, and lead us to glorious victories!"

"God grant that the hour when we shall take the field may soon come! Then, my friend, I shall prove that I am ready, like all of you, to shed my heart's blood for the fatherland, and conquer or die for the liberty of Austria, the liberty of Germany. For in the present state of affairs the fate of Germany, too, depends on the success of our arms. If we succumb and have to submit to the same humiliations as Prussia, the whole of Germany will be but a French province, and the freedom and independence of our fatherland will be destroyed for long years to come. I am too weak to survive such a disgrace. If Austria falls, I shall fall too; if German liberty dies, I shall die too."*

"German liberty will not die!" exclaimed Count Nugent, enthusiastically; "it will take the field one day against all the powerful and petty tyrants of the fatherland. Then it will choose the Archduke John its general-in-chief, and he will lead it to victory!"

"No, no, my friend," said John, mournfully; "Fate refuses to let me play a decisive part in the history of the world. My role will always be but a secondary one; my will will always be impeded, my arm will be paralyzed forever. You know it. You know that I am constantly surrounded by secret spies and eavesdroppers, who watch me with lynx-eyed vigilance, and misrepresent every step I take. It was always so, and will remain so until I die or become a decrepit old

* The Archduke John's own words.—See "Forty-eight Letters from Archduke John of Austria to Johannes von Müller," p. 90.

man, whose arm is no longer able to wield the sword or even the pen. That I am young, that I have a heart for the sufferings of my country, a heart not only for the honor of Austria, but for that of Germany—that is what gives umbrage to them, what renders me suspicious in their eyes, and causes them to regard me as a revolutionist. I had to suffer a good deal for my convictions; a great many obstacles were raised against all my plans; and yet I desired only to contribute to the welfare of the whole; I demanded nothing for myself, but every thing for the fatherland. To the fatherland I wished to devote my blood and my life; for the fatherland I wished to conquer in the disastrous campaign of 1805. However, such were not the plans of my adversaries; they did not wish to carry on the war with sufficient energy and perseverance; they would not give my brother Charles and me an opportunity to distinguish ourselves and gain a popular name. Whenever I planned a vigorous attack, I was not permitted to carry it into effect. Whenever, with my corps, I might have exerted a decisive influence upon the fortunes of the war, I was ordered to retreat with my troops to some distant position of no importance whatever; and when I remonstrated, they charged me with rebelling against the emperor's authority. Ah, I suffered a great deal in those days, and the wounds which my heart received at that juncture are bleeding yet. I had to succumb, when the men who had commenced the war at a highly unfavorable time, conducted it at an equally unfavorable moment, and made peace. And by that peace Austria lost her most loyal province, the beautiful Tyrol, one of the oldest states of the Hapsburgs; and her most fertile province, the territory of Venetia and Dalmatia, for which I did not grieve so much, because it always was a source of political dissensions and quarrels for the hereditary provinces of Austria. What afflicted me most sorely was the loss of the Tyrol, and even now I cannot think of it without the most profound emotion. It seemed as though Fate were bent on blotting out from our memory all that might remind us of our ancestors, their virtues, their patriotism, and their perseverance in the days of universal adversity; and as though, in consequence of this, the spirit of the Hapsburgs had almost become extinct,

and we were to lose all that they had gained in the days of their greatness.* But now Fate is willing to give us another opportunity to repair our faults and show that we are worthy of our ancestors. If we allow this to pass too, all is lost, not only the throne of the Hapsburgs, but also their honor!"

"This opportunity will not pass!" exclaimed the count. "The throne of the Hapsburgs will be preserved, for it is protected by the Archdukes John and Charles, a brave army that is eager for a war with France, and a faithful, intrepid people, which is sincerely devoted to its imperial dynasty, which never will acknowledge another ruler, and which never will desert its Hapsburgs."

"Yes, the people will not desert us," said John, "but worse things may happen; we may desert ourselves. Just look around, Nugent, and see how lame we have suddenly become again; how we have all at once stopped half way, unable to decide whether it might not be better for us to lay down our arms again and surrender at discretion to the Emperor of the French."

"Fortunately, it is too late now to take such a resolution; for Austria has already gone so far that a hesitating policy at this juncture will no longer succeed in pacifying the Emperor of the French. And it is owing to the efforts of your imperial highness that it is so; we are indebted for it to your zeal, your energy, and your enthusiasm for the good cause, which is now no longer the cause of Austria, but that of Germany. And this cause will not succumb; God will not allow a great and noble people to be trampled under foot by a foreign tyrant, who bids defiance to the most sacred treaties and the law of nations, and who would like to overthrow all thrones to convert the foreign kingdoms and empires into provinces of *his* empire, blot out the history of the nations and dynasties, and have all engulfed by his universal monarchy."

"God may not decree this, but He may perhaps allow it if the will of the nations and the princes should not be strong enough to set bounds to such mischief. When the feeling of liberty and independence does not incite the nations to rise

* John's own words.—See "Forty-eight Letters from Archduke John to Johannes von Müller," p. 103.

enthusiastically and defend their rights, God sends them a tyrant as a scourge to chastise them. And such, I am afraid, is our case. Germany has lost faith in herself, in her honor; she lies exhausted at the feet of the tyrant, and is ready to be trampled in the dust by him. Just look around in our German fatherland. What do you see there? All the sovereign princes have renounced their independence, and become Napoleon's vassals; they obey his will, they submit to his orders, and send their armies not against the enemy of Germany, but against the enemies of France, no matter whether those enemies are their German brethren or not. The German princes have formed the Confederation of the Rhine, and the object of this confederation is not to preserve the frontier of the Rhine to Germany, but to secure the Rhine to France. The German princes are begging for honors and territories at the court of Napoleon; they do not shrink from manifesting their fealty to their master, the Emperor of the French, by betraying the interests of Germany; they are playing here at Vienna the part of the meanest spies; they are watching all our steps, and are shameless enough to have the Emperor Napoleon reward their infamy by conferring royal titles on them, and to accept at his hands German territories which he took from German princes. Bavaria did not disdain to aggrandize her territories at our expense; Wurtemberg accepts without blushing the territories of other German princes at the hands of Napoleon, who thus rewards her for the incessant warnings by which the King of Wurtemberg urges the Emperor of the French to be on his guard against Austria, and always distrust the intentions of the Emperor Francis.* In the middle of the German empire we see a new French kingdom, Westphalia, established by Napoleon's orders; it is formed of the spoils taken from Prussia and Hanover; and the German princes suffer it, and the German people bow their heads, silently to the disgraceful foreign yoke! Ah, Nugent, my heart is full of grief and anger, full of the bitterness of despair; for I have lost faith in Germany, and see shudderingly that she will decay and die, as Poland died, of her own weakness. Ah, it would be dreadful, dreadful, if we too, had to fall, as the unfortunate

* Schlosser, "History of the Eighteenth Century," vol. vii., p. 488.

Kosciusko did, with the despairing cry of '*Finis Germanie!*'"

"No, that will never happen!" cried Nugent. "No, Germany will never endure the disgrace and debasement of Poland; she will never sink to ruin and perish like Poland. It is true, a majority of the German princes bow to Napoleon's power, and we may charge them with infidelity and treason against Germany; but we can not prefer the same charge against the German people and the subjects of the traitorous German princes. They have remained faithful, and have not yet lost faith in their fatherland. They are indignantly champing the bit with which their despots have shut their mouth; and, in silence, harmony, and confidence in God, they are preparing for the great hour when they will rise, for the sacred day when they will break their shackles with the divine strength of a united and high-minded people. Everywhere the embers are smouldering under the ashes; everywhere secret societies and leagues have been formed; everywhere there are conspirators, depots of arms, and passwords; everywhere the people of Germany are waiting only for the moment when they are to strike the first blow, and for the signal to rise. And they are in hopes now that Austria will give the signal. Our preparations for war have been hailed with exultation throughout Germany: everywhere the people are ready to take up arms so soon as Austria draws the sword. The example of Spain and Portugal has taught the Germans how the arrogant conqueror must be met; the example of Austria will fill them with boundless enthusiasm, and lead them to the most glorious victories!"

"And we are still temporizing and hesitating," exclaimed John, mournfully; "we are not courageous enough to strike the first blow! All is ready; the emperor has only to utter the decisive word, but he refuses to do so!"

"The enthusiasm of his people will soon compel him and his advisers to utter that word," said Nugent. "Austria can no longer retrace her steps; she must advance. Austria must lead Germany in the sacred struggle for liberty; she can no longer retrace her steps."

"God grant that your words may be verified!" cried John, lifting his tearful eyes to heaven; "God grant that—"

A low rapping at the door leading to the small secret corridor caused the archduke to pause and turn his eyes with a searching expression to this door.

The rapping was repeated, more rapidly than before.

"It is Hormayr," exclaimed the archduke, joyfully; and he hastened to the secret door and opened it quickly.

A tall young man, in the uniform of an Austrian superior officer, appeared in the open door. The archduke grasped both his hands and drew him hastily into the cabinet.

"Hormayr, my friend," he said, breathlessly, "you have returned from the Tyrol? You have succeeded in fulfilling the mission with which I intrusted you? You have carried my greetings to the Tyrolese? Oh, speak, speak, my friend! What do my poor, deserted Tyrolese say?"

Baron von Hormayr fixed his flashing dark eyes with an expression of joyful tenderness on the excited face of the archduke.

"The Tyrolese send greeting to the Archduke John," he said; "the Tyrolese hope that the Archduke John will deliver them from the hateful yoke of the Bavarians; the Tyrolese believe that the hour has arrived, when they may recover their liberty; and to prove this—"

"To prove this?" asked the archduke, breathlessly, when Hormayr paused a moment.

"To prove this," said Hormayr, in a lower voice, stepping up closer to the prince, "some of the most influential and respectable citizens of the Tyrol have accompanied me to Vienna; they desire to assure your imperial highness of their loyal devotedness, and receive instructions from you."

"Is Andreas Hofer, the landwirth, among them?" asked the archduke, eagerly.

"He is, and so are Wallner and Speckbacher. I bring to your imperial highness the leading men of the Tyrolese peasants, and would like to know when I may introduce them to you, and at what hour you will grant a private audience to my Tyrolese friends?"

"Oh, I will see them at once!" exclaimed John, impatiently. "My heart longs to gaze into the faithful, beautiful eyes of the Tyrolese, and read in their honest faces if they

really are still devoted and attached to me. Bring them to me, Hormayr ; make haste—but no, I forgot that it is broad daylight, and that the spies watching me have eyes to see, ears to hear, and tongues to report to the emperor as dreadful crimes all that they have seen and heard here. We must wait, therefore, until the spies have closed their eyes, until dark and reticent night has descended on earth, and— Well, Conrad, what is it ?” the archduke interrupted himself, looking at his valet de chambre, who had just entered hastily by the door of the anteroom.

“Pardon me, your imperial highness,” said Conrad ; “a messenger of her majesty the empress is in the anteroom. Her majesty has ordered him to deliver his message only to the archduke himself.”

“Let him come in,” said the archduke.

Conrad opened the door, and the imperial messenger appeared on the threshold.

“Her majesty the Empress Ludovica sends her respects to the archduke,” said the messenger, approaching the archduke respectfully. “Her majesty thanks your imperial highness for the book which you lent her ; and she returns it with sincere thanks.”

An expression of astonishment overspread John’s face, but it soon disappeared, and the archduke received with a calm smile the small sealed package which the messenger handed to him.

“All right,” he said ; “tell her majesty to accept my thanks.”

The messenger returned to the anteroom, and Conrad closed the door behind him.

“Place yourself before the door, Nugent, that nobody may be able to look through the key-hole,” whispered John, “for you know that I do not trust Conrad. And you, Hormayr, watch the secret door.”

The two gentlemen hastened noiselessly to obey. The archduke cast a searching glance around the walls, as if afraid that even the silken hangings might contain somewhere an opening for the eyes of a spy, or serve as a cover to an ear of Dionysius.

“Something of importance must have occurred,” whispered John ; “otherwise the empress would not have ventured to send me a direct message. I did not lend her a book, and you know we agreed with the ladies of our party to communicate direct news to each other only in cases of pressing necessity. Let us see now what it is.”

He hastily tore open the sealed package and drew from it a small prayer-book bound in black velvet. While he was turning over the leaves with a smile, a small piece of paper fluttered from between the gilt-edged leaves and dropped to the floor.

“That is it,” said John, smiling, picking up the paper, and fixing his eyes on it. “There is nothing on it,” he then exclaimed, contemplating both sides of the paper. “There is not a word on it. It is only a book-mark, that is all. But, perhaps, something is written in the book, or there may be another paper.”

“No, your imperial highness,” whispered Nugent, stepping back a few paces from the door. “The Princess Lichtenstein whispered to me yesterday, at the court concert, that she had obtained an excellent way of sending a written message to her friends and allies, and that, if we received a piece of white paper from the ladies of our party, we had better preserve it and read it afterward near the fireplace.”

“Ah, sympathetic ink,” exclaimed John ; “well, we will see.”

He hastily approached the fireplace, where a bright fire was burning, and held the piece of paper close to the flames. Immediately a number of black dots and lines appeared on the paper ; these dots and lines assumed gradually the shape of finely-written words.

The archduke followed with rapt attention every line, every letter that appeared on the white paper, and now he read as follows :

“The French ambassador has requested the emperor to grant him an audience at eleven o’clock this morning. A courier from Metternich in Paris has arrived, and, I believe, brought important news. The decisive hour is at hand. Hasten to the emperor ; leave nothing undone to prevail on

him to take a bold stand. Send somebody to the Archduke Charles; request him to repair likewise to the emperor and influence him in the same direction. I have paved the way for you. I hope the French ambassador will, in spite of himself, be our ally, and by his defiant and arrogant bearing, attain for us the object which we have hitherto been unable to accomplish by our persuasion and our arguments. Make haste! Burn this paper."

The archduke signed to his two confidants to come to him, and pointed to the paper. When they had hastily read the lines, he threw the paper into the flames, and turned to the two gentlemen who stood behind him.

"Well, what do you think of it?" he inquired. "Shall I do what these mysterious lines ask of me? Shall I go to the emperor without being summoned to him?"

"The empress requests you to do so, and she is as prudent as she is energetic," said Count Nugent.

"I say, like the empress, the decisive hour is at hand," exclaimed Baron von Hormayr. "Hasten to the emperor; try once more to force the sword into his hand, and to wrest at length the much-wished-for words, 'War against France!' from his lips. The Tyrolese are only waiting for these words, to rise for their emperor and become again his loving and devoted subjects. All Austria, nay, all Germany, is longing for these words, which will be the signal of the deliverance of the fatherland from the French yoke. Oh, my lord and prince, hasten to the emperor; speak to him with the impassioned eloquence of the cherubim, break the fatal charm that holds Austria and the Tyrol enthralled!"

At this moment the large clock standing on the mantel-piece commenced striking.

"Eleven o'clock," said the archduke—"the hour when the emperor is to give an audience to the French ambassador. It is high time, therefore. Nugent, hasten to my brother; implore him to repair forthwith to the emperor, and to act this time at least in unison with me. Tell him that everything is at stake, and that we must risk all to win all. But you, Hormayr, go to my dear Tyrolese; tell them that I will receive them here at twelve o'clock to-night, and conduct them

to me at that hour, my friend. We will hold a council of war at midnight."

"And your imperial highness does not forget that you promised to go to the concert to-night?" asked Nugent. "Your highness is aware that our friends not only intend to-night to give an ovation to the veteran master of German art, Joseph Haydn, but wish also to profit by the German music to make a political demonstration; and they long for the presence of the imperial court, that the emperor and his brothers may witness the patriotic enthusiasm of Vienna."

"I shall certainly be present," said the archduke, earnestly, "and I hope the empress will succeed in prevailing on the emperor to go to the concert.—Well, then, my friends, let us go to work, and may God grant success to our efforts!"

CHAPTER II.

THE EMPEROR FRANCIS.

THE Emperor Francis had to-day entered his study at an earlier hour than usual, and was industriously engaged there in finishing a miniature cup which he had commenced cutting from a peach-stone yesterday. On the table before him lay the drawing of the model after which he was shaping the cup; and Francis lifted his eyes only from time to time to fix them on the drawing, and compare it with his own work. These comparisons, however, apparently did not lead to a cheering result, for the emperor frowned and put the cup rather impetuously close to the drawing on the table.

"I believe, forsooth, the cup is not straight," murmured the emperor to himself, contemplating from all sides the diminutive object which had cost him so much labor. "Sure enough, it is not straight, it has a hump on one side. Yes, yes, nothing is straight, nowadays; and even God in heaven creates His things no longer straight, and does not shrink from letting the peach-stones grow crooked. But no matter—what God does is well done," added the emperor, crossing