

CHAPTER VII.

ANDREAS HOFER AT THE THEATRE.

COUNT STADION, the minister of foreign affairs, was pacing his cabinet with a quick step and an anxious expression of countenance. At times he stood still, and, bending his head toward the door, seemed to listen intently for some sound; all remaining silent outside, he commenced again striding up and down, and whenever he approached the clock on the mantel-piece he cast an anxious glance on it.

"I am afraid Hormayr was not at home," he murmured moodily to himself; "his servants did not know where he was, and therefore the mischief cannot be stopped."

He drew a golden snuff-box from his pocket and took a large pinch from it. "I said at the very outset," he murmured, "that we ought to keep aloof from these stupid peasants, who will only involve us in trouble and mischief. But those gentlemen would not listen to me, and— Really, I believe I hear footsteps in the anteroom. Yes, yes, somebody is coming!"

Count Stadion was not mistaken. The door opened, and a footman announced, in a loud voice, "Baron von Hormayr!"

"Let him come in, let him come in, quick!" said Count Stadion, waving his hand impatiently; and when Hormayr appeared on the threshold of the door, he hastily went to meet him.

"In truth, it took my servants a good while to find you!" exclaimed the minister, angrily. "I have been waiting for you half an hour."

"I was at the Archduke John's rooms, with whom I had business of importance, your excellency," said Hormayr, emphasizing his last words. "Moreover, I could not guess that your excellency would wish to grant me an audience at so unusual an hour, and without my asking for it."

"At so unusual an hour!" cried Count Stadion, putting one pinch of snuff after another into his nose. "Yes, yes, at so unusual an hour! It would have been more agreeable to

me, too, if it had been unnecessary for me to trouble you and myself. But it is your own fault. You do not keep your word."

"Your excellency!" cried Hormayr, indignantly.

"Bah! it is true. You do not keep your word. You promised me that your Tyrolese should not show themselves, lest we might be charged with fomenting an insurrection; and it was necessary, also, to prevent the Bavarians from learning prematurely our plans. Can you deny that you promised this to me?"

"No, your excellency, I do not deny it at all."

"Well, your Tyrolese are running around everywhere."

"Pardon me, your excellency, that cannot be true. You must have been misinformed."

"What! misinformed? How dare you say so to my face, sir? Your beardman, or bushman, or Sandwirth Hofer is at the Kärnthnerthor Theatre, and is the observed of all observers. I saw him with my own eyes; and that was the reason why I left the theatre and sent for you."*

"Your excellency saw him with your own eyes! Then, of course, it must be true, and I would beg leave of your excellency to go immediately to the theatre and take him to his hotel."

"That was just what I wished to ask you to do, Baron von Hormayr. Make haste and induce this bushman to leave Vienna immediately."

"He will leave the capital early in the morning. Your excellency will permit me now to withdraw."

Baron von Hormayr hastened down stairs, left the chancery of state, and crossed the Joseph's Place. On reaching the Kärnthnerthor Theatre, he bought a ticket at the office and entered the pit.

"The Marriage of Figaro," by Mozart, was performed at the Kärnthnerthor Theatre to-night, and this favorite opera of the Viennese had attracted so large an audience that not a seat was vacant, and the baron had to elbow his way with no little difficulty through the crowd filling the pit, in order to reach a

* Count Stadion's own words.—See Hormayr's "Andreas Hofer," vol. i., p. 209.

point where he might be able to see every part of the house, and discover him for whose sake he had come.

At length he had succeeded in advancing so far that, leaning against one of the pillars supporting the upper tiers of boxes, he was able to survey the lower part of the house. But all faces were averted from it, all eyes were fixed on the stage. The opera had just reached the scene where Count Almaviva lifts the carpet from the chair and finds Cherubino under it. A loud outburst of laughter resounded from the pit to the upper gallery. But in the midst of the din, a loud and angry voice exclaimed: "Ah, you young good-for-nothing, if I had you here I would show you how to behave!" And a threatening fist and vigorous arm was raised in the midst of the orchestra-stalls.

"Good heavens! that is really Andreas Hofer," murmured Baron von Hormayr, concealing himself anxiously behind the pillar. A renewed shout of laughter greeted Hofer's words, and all eyes turned toward the side where they had been uttered. And there sat the good Andreas Hofer, in his handsome national costume, with his long black beard, and his florid, kind-hearted face. There he sat, quite regardless of the gaze which the audience fixed upon him, utterly unaware of the fact that he was the observed of all observers, and quite engrossed in looking at the stage, where proceeded the well-known scene between Cherubino, the count, and Figaro. He followed the progress of the action with rapt attention, and when Cherubino tried to prove his innocence by all sorts of plausible and improbable falsehoods, Hofer's brow became clouded. He averted his eyes from the stage, and turned to his neighbor. "Why," he said, loudly and indignantly, "that boy is as great a liar as though he were Bonaparte himself!"

Now the merriment of the audience knew no longer any bounds. They applauded, they shouted, "Bravo! bravo!" They forgot the scene on the stage entirely, and devoted their exclusive attention to the queer, bearded stranger in the orchestra-stall, on whom all eyes and opera-glasses were fixed.

Baron von Hormayr behind his pillar wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and cast furious glances on Andreas

Hofer, who, however, was utterly unaware of his presence, and from whose breast, protected as it was by his beard and crucifix, rebounded all such glances like blunted arrows.

The actors, who, interrupted by the unexpected cheers and the incident in the audience, had paused a few minutes, and had themselves hardly been able to refrain from bursting into laughter, now continued their scene, and the charms of the music and the interesting character of the action soon succeeded again in riveting the attention of the audience.

Andreas Hofer, who had in the mean time relapsed into his silent astonishment, gazed fixedly upon the stage. Baron von Hormayr left his place quietly and walked to the entrance. He slipped a florin into the hand of the doorkeeper, who was leaning against the wall. "Say," he whispered to him hastily, "as soon as the curtain drops, go to the giant with the long beard, who sits in the orchestra-stall yonder, and whose words amused the audience just now. He is a cattle-dealer from Hungary, and I must see him at once. Just whisper in his ear that his countryman with the wine and horses has arrived, and it is necessary he should come and see him right away.—Thank God, the curtain falls! Now make haste. If you bring the cattle-dealer with you into the corridor, I will give you another florin."

The doorkeeper's face beamed with satisfaction; he elbowed himself courageously through the crowd, and succeeded in reaching the "cattle-dealer from Hungary," who sat absorbed in his reflections, with his head bent on his breast. He touched his shoulder softly and whispered his message into his ear.

Andreas Hofer gave a start and stared at the doorkeeper. "What countrymen?" he asked; "and how can he bring to me wine and horses here as—"

"I do not know anything about it," whispered the doorkeeper; "I know only that your countryman with the wine and the horses is waiting for you, and that he says he must see you right away."

"Well, then, come, conduct me to him," said Andreas, rising from his chair, and drawing up his colossal form to its

full height. "I should like to know who this countryman is. Lead the way, sir; I will follow you."

The doorkeeper retraced his steps through the crowd; Andreas Hofer followed him, greeting kindly and pleasantly in all directions, and pushing aside the men like flies whenever they stood in his way.

At length they reached the door, and stepped into the corridor. Baron von Hormayr, like a tiger pouncing upon his prey, rushed upon Andreas Hofer, seized his arm, and drew him down the corridor into the outer hall, which was so deserted and silent that there was no danger of their conversation being overheard by an eavesdropper.

Here at length Hormayr stood still and dropped the arm of Andreas Hofer, who had followed him, dumfounded with astonishment, and glancing around as if looking for somebody else.

"Andy," exclaimed Hormayr, vehemently, "what am I to think of you? The Tyrolese always keep their promises, and to think that our honest Sandwirth alone should not do so! You pledged me your word that you would conceal your presence here in Vienna as much as possible, and now you are running about the city in your national costume and with your bearded face to hear the opera-trills and see how the ballet-dancers stretch their legs!"*

"Andreas Hofer never breaks his word," said Hofer, gravely. "I promised not to appear in the streets in the daytime, and I have faithfully kept my word. I stayed at home all day, and it was only after nightfall that we three went together into the street. Speckbacher and Wallner went to the Archduke John's gunsmith, Anthony Steger, to take leave of him, and I intended to go to St. Stephen's Cathedral to attend vespers. But I am a stranger in the city, and happened to lose my way. All at once I got into a dense crowd, and thought I had arrived at St. Stephen's Cathedral, and that the crowd consisted of pious Christians going to vespers; hence, I allowed myself to be drawn along into the door, because I thought it was the church."

* Hormayr's own words.—See Hormayr's "Andreas Hofer," vol. i., p. 209.

"And on buying a ticket, Andy, you supposed you purchased indulgence, did you not?"

"No, I did not," said Andreas in a tone of embarrassment. "But, on seeing all those persons step to the office and get tickets, I thought there were Christian passion-plays performed there, as at Innsbruck in Lent; and on hearing the man standing before me shouting, 'Ticket for an orchestra-stall,' I shouted, also, 'Ticket for an orchestra-stall,' and threw a florin on the table. Thereupon they handed me a ticket, and I followed the others into the hall. The performance commenced almost at the same moment, the curtain rose, and the actors began to sing. It is true, it is not a passion-play, and there is nothing from the Bible in it; but then it is a nice play. I believe the curtain will rise again immediately, and it is time for me to return to my seat. But I should like to know where my countryman with the horses and wine is. He insisted on seeing me, sent for me, and does not come now."

"But, Andy, do you not yet know that it was I who sent for you?" asked Hormayr. "Why, it was only a stratagem of mine to get the Barbone out of the theatre and take him away from here."

"But why do you want to take me away from here? I tell you I like the play very well, and have never seen any thing like it. It is true, Cherubino, the boy, is an arrant liar, but he is a jolly fellow, and I do not want him to come to grief. And Figaro is a sly fox, and withal a brave man. I should like to make his acquaintance and ask him if he really promised old Marielle to marry her; for it would be wrong if he did not keep his word now, and refused to make her his wife because he likes the young woman better than her. If I knew where he lives, I would go to him this very night and tell him what he ought to do."

"Oh, you foolish old child of Nature! what you saw on the stage was nothing but a play. Figaro never existed; and even though he did, you would not go to him, but accompany me and take supper with me."

"I am sorry," said Andreas, gravely, "I cannot do so; for, in the first place, I must stay here and wait for the countryman who has arrived here with the horses and wine."

"Jesus Maria! what do you say? The countryman? Did I not tell you that it is I, Andy?"

"Oh, yes, I had already forgotten it. But, second, I cannot go because I must see the remainder of the play. Let me, therefore, return to my seat, for I paid for the whole performance; I believe I have already missed a great deal; but they will assuredly not return to me at the office a penny for what I did not hear."*

"They will not, and shall not either," cried Hormayr, angrily. "You will not return to your seat, Andy, but go and take supper with me. For you know, my dear fellow, that you have come to Vienna, not to go to the theatre, but to ask the dear Archduke John's assistance and succor for the beloved Tyrol, and inquire of the emperor if he will not aid his loyal Tyrolese in their attempt to become his subjects once more. And the emperor and the archduke will help you; they promise to send soldiers and guns in time to the Tyrol. But, in return, you must do what the archduke asked you to do; you must carefully conceal yourself, Andy, in order to prevent the Bavarians from learning of your trip to Vienna; otherwise they would arrest you and your friends after your return to the Tyrol. Hence you must not return to your seat, where so many persons would see you, and unfortunately have seen you already."

"Well, if it must be so, let us go, sir," sighed Andreas. "But just listen how they are singing, shouting, and cheering inside! Jesus Maria! Figaro, I believe, will have to marry old Marielle after all, and give up pretty little Susanne. Ah, my God! she will die heart-broken, for she loves him so dearly. Pray, sir, let me go in once more, that I may see whether or not he must marry old Marielle."

"No, Andy," said Hormayr, smiling, "you need not be uneasy; Figaro will not marry old Marielle, for she is his own mother."

"What!" cried Andreas, in dismay; "she his mother, and he has promised to marry her? That is most sinful and infamous! No good Christian should listen to such things. Come along, sir. I do not want to hear another word of it."

* Hofer's own words.—See Hormayr, "Andreas Hofer," vol. i., p. 310.

Good heavens! what will Anna Gertrude say when I tell her what I have seen here, and that there are here in Vienna men infamous enough to promise to marry their mothers?"

"But they never do so in reality, Andy, but only on the stage. Otherwise the police would be after them at once. For the emperor is a very pious and virtuous gentleman, and he does not permit any infractions of the sacred laws of God and the Church in his dominions."

"Yes, the emperor is a very pious and virtuous gentleman," exclaimed Andreas Hofer, enthusiastically, "and that is the reason why the Tyrolese love him and wish to be again his subjects and children. Come, I will go home with you. I do not want to hear any more of the theatrical nonsense. Let us speak of our emperor and our dear Archduke John. God grant that we may soon be able to say he is our emperor again, and the archduke is our John, and his Tyrolese are again his subjects, because they fought well for their liberty, and because God blessed their efforts and crowned them with victory. Come, we will go home, and to-morrow I shall return to the Tyrol, to my wife and children, and mountain and valley shall know that the time has come, and that we shall become Austrians again. May the Holy Virgin protect us and grant us a safe return; may she prevent the Bavarians from waylaying us and frustrating our great and noble purpose!"*

CHAPTER VIII.

CONSECRATION OF THE FLAGS, AND FAREWELL.

THE die was cast, then. The war with France was to break out again. There was to be no more procrastination and hesitation. The time for action was at hand.

* The delegates of the Tyrolese left Vienna on the following morning; their presence there, however, had been reported to the Bavarian officers, who, during their homeward journey, almost succeeded in arresting them. John von Graff, a banker of Botzen, was apprised of their arrival in Vienna by his correspondent in that city and informed the commissary-general at Brixen