

"If the emperor had done as much for my father as he does for me, my father would not have died," said Eliza, gravely, accepting the paper. "Now he has no longer need of an emperor. He is with God, and I would I were with him above! But I must not leave my mother. I must console her and stay with her as long as it pleases God."*

CHAPTER XLIV.

ANDREAS HOFER'S DEATH.

THE court-martial at Mantua had passed sentence of death upon Andreas Hofer for fighting against the French after the last proclamation of Eugene Beauharnais offering a general amnesty. But the court-martial had not adopted this decision unanimously; several members had voted for long confinement, and two had had the courage to vote for his entire deliverance. By a singular revolution of fortune, the same General Bisson, who had been taken prisoner at Innsbruck at the outbreak of the insurrection, and with whom Major Teimer had made his triumphal entry into Innsbruck, was now governor of Mantua, and president of the court-martial which tried the commander-in-chief of the Tyrolese. The general, in consideration of his captivity among the Tyrolese, wished to act mildly and impartially, and sent a telegraphic dispatch to the viceroy at Milan to inquire what was to be done with Andreas Hofer, inasmuch as the sentence of the court-martial had not been passed unanimously. An answer was returned very soon. It contained the categorical order that Andreas Hofer should be shot within twenty-four hours.

* Eliza Wallner returned to Windisch-Matrey, and lived there in quiet retirement. She never married. After the death of her mother she yielded to Joachim Haspinger's entreaties and went to live at his house. The Capuchin was ordained and appointed pastor of Jetelsee, and afterward of Traunfeld. Eliza lived with him as his adopted daughter, and was still with him at the time of his death, which took place in 1856, at Salzburg.—See Schallhammer's "Joachim Haspinger," p. 134.

Commissioners of the military authorities, therefore, entered Andreas Hofer's cell on the 21st of February, and informed him that he would suffer death within two hours.

He listened to them standing, and with unshaken firmness. "I shall die, then, at least as a soldier, and not as a criminal," he said, nodding his head gently. "I am not afraid of bullets, nor of the good God either; He was always kind to me, and it is even now kind in Him to relieve me from my sufferings here. I am ready to appear before the judgment-seat of God."

"If you have any special wishes to prefer, communicate them to us now; and if it is possible, they shall be granted," said one of the officers, profoundly moved.

"There are some wishes which I should like to prefer," replied Hofer, musingly. "In the first place, I wish to see once more my dear Cajetan Döninger, who was separated from me and confined in another cell; and then I wish to dictate a letter and my last will, and would request that both be sent to my dear brother-in-law."

"These wishes shall be complied with; I promise it to you in the name of General Bisson. Do you desire to prefer any additional requests?"

"I wish further that a priest be sent to me, that he may receive my confession, and grant me absolution; and finally, I should like to see once more my dear countrymen, who are imprisoned in the casemates here, and take leave of them in a few words."

"A confessor will be sent to you, but your last request can not be complied with," was the reply. "An exciting and perhaps disorderly scene would ensue, and such things must be avoided."

"Well, then," said Andreas, sighing, "send me my dear secretary, and afterward the priest."

A few minutes after the officers had withdrawn, the door opened, and Cajetan Döninger came in. He burst into tears, rushed toward Andreas Hofer, and folding him to his heart, exclaimed mournfully: "Is it true, then, that they intend to kill you? Is it true that they are going to assassinate the noblest and best man like a criminal?"

"Hush, hush, Cajetan," said Andreas, gently, pressing Döninger tenderly to his heart; "do not scold, but submit as I do. I die gladly, for it is better that I should sacrifice myself for my native country than that others should die for my sake, or for the fatherland."*

"Oh, would that I could die for you!" sobbed Döninger; "my life is worthless without you. Is it possible that you must suffer now so ignominious a punishment for all your noble deeds and aspirations?"

"God alone knows what is good," said Andreas, mildly, "and I have doubtless committed many errors, for which I have to suffer now. But, Cajetan, will you fulfil my last request?"

"Name it, and I will comply with it."

"Then weep no more, my dear friend, for your tears give me pain. Be, as formerly, manful and firm."

"I will," said Döninger; and he dried his tears and forced himself to be calm and composed.

"And now, Cajetan, be my secretary for the last time," said Andreas, gently. "I will dictate to you a letter to my brother-in-law Pöhler, at Neustadt. The jailer has already laid paper, pen, and ink on the table. Sit down, therefore, and write."

Cajetan went to the table and seated himself. "I am ready, commander-in-chief," he said; "dictate to me now."

Andreas walked up and down several times musingly; he then stood still near the table; a wondrous expression of serene calmness and peace beamed from his face, and he dictated in a clear, quiet voice, which did not once tremble with emotion.

"Dearest brother-in-law: It was God's will that I should exchange here at Mantua my earthly life for a better one. But—God be praised for his divine mercy!—it seems to me as little painful as if I were to be led out for another purpose. God in His mercy will doubtless be with me to the last moment, when I shall ascend to that eternal dwelling-place where my soul will rejoice for evermore with all the chosen spirits,

* Hofer's own words.—See "Gallery of Heroes: Andreas Hofer," p. 195.

and where I shall pray for all, and particularly for those to whom I owe my intercession; above all, for you, too, and your dear wife, on account of the book which you presented to me, and of other kind acts. Let all my dear friends and acquaintances pray for me too, and help me to rise from the devouring flames, when I have to expiate my sins in purgatory. My beloved wife, Anna Gertrude, is to have masses read for me at *St. Martin's Zum rosenfarbnen Blut*. She shall have prayers read in both of the parish-churches, and treat my friends at the lower inn to soup and meat, and give every one half a bottle of wine. The money I had about me will be distributed among the poor of this city; for the rest, settle with my debtors and creditors as honestly as you can, lest I should have to atone for it also. Farewell, all of you, for this world, until we shall meet in heaven and praise God for evermore. Dearest brother-in-law, repair to the Passeyr valley, and inform the landlord of the lower inn of my instructions. He will make all necessary dispositions. Let all the inhabitants of Passeyr, and all my acquaintances remember me in their prayers. Dearest brother-in-law, tell my wife, Anna Gertrude, not to grieve for me. I shall pray to God for her and for all. Adieu, beautiful world! Dying seems to me so easy that there are not even tears in my eyes.

"Written at nine o'clock; at ten I shall ascend to God with the aid of all the saints.

"Your —."

"Mantua, February 20, 1810."*

"I will write the signature as I always did," said Andreas Hofer; and, taking up the pen quickly, he wrote:

"Your Andreas Hofer, from Sand in Passeyr, whom you loved in this life. I will set out on my last journey in the Lord's name."†

"I thank you, Cajetan, for rendering me this last service," said Andreas, kindly. "And now, my dear friend, let us take

* "Gallery of heroes: Andreas Hofer," p. 197.

† "Gallery of Heroes."

leave of each other. The confessor will be here soon, and then I must no longer speak to any one but God."

Cajetan came to him with a tottering step, and leaned his head silently on Hofer's shoulder. He did not speak, he wanted to be firm, but he was unable to restrain the sobs and sighs which issued from his breast.

"My dear Cajetan, why do you weep?" asked Hofer, pressing Döninger's head gently to his heart. "Did you weep when I went into battle, where the enemy's bullets might have hit me at any second? You did not weep then. Think, therefore, that I am going into battle to-day too, and that it is better for me to be hit by the bullets than suffer any longer in this manner."

At this moment the door opened, and the priest, Giovanni Giacomo Manifesti, dressed in full vestments, came in. The guards who followed him led away Döninger, who obeyed them in silence, as if stunned by his terrible grief.*

Andreas Hofer remained alone with his confessor.

At eleven o'clock the doors of the prison were thrown open, and Andreas Hofer was led out to execution. His face was serene, and in his hands he held the small crucifix which he had always worn on his breast. His confessor, Manifesti, walked by his side, and a battalion of grenadiers followed him.

Andreas Hofer walked along the ramparts of the fortress with a firm step. As he passed by the barracks of the Porta Molina, where the Tyrolese prisoners were confined, they fell on their knees and wept aloud. Andreas turned quickly to Manifesti, the priest. "Your reverence," he said, "you will distribute among my poor countrymen the five hundred florins, my last property, which I gave to you, will you not?"

"I will, my son."

"And take my greetings to all," said Andreas Hofer, in a grave, loud voice, "and tell them not to be disheartened, nor to think that all is lost, and that we have fought and bled in

* Cajetan Döninger was taken immediately after Hofer's execution, from his prison, and sent to the Island of Corsica, as a private in a regiment of light infantry. He succeeded, some time afterward, in escaping from thence, and returning to his native country.

vain. Better times will dawn upon my beloved Tyrol, and one day it will be again a free German country. Tell them to hope and believe in this prediction."

On the broad bastion, a little distance from the Porta Ceresa, the grenadiers formed a square, open in the rear. Andreas Hofer entered this open space with the priest, bowed kindly to all sides, and prayed aloud with the priest.

"Now, farewell, dear reverend father," he then said, "and accept this crucifix as a souvenir from me. I have worn it on my breast for twenty years past, and it will remind you of Andreas Hofer. Inform my wife that I suffered death joyously, and that I know we shall meet again above. You promised me to do so, and you will redeem your promise, reverend father, will you not?"

"Certainly I will, my beloved, pious son," said Manifesti; and with tears in his eyes he embraced and blessed Andreas Hofer for the last time.*

The priest thereupon left the square, while twelve men and

* Manifesti redeemed his promise. He sent to the Tyrol the following letter regarding Hofer's death:

MANTOVA, li 21, Febrajo, 1810.

"Ieri poco primo del mezzo giorno è stato fucillato il Signore Andrea Hofer, già comandante del Tirolo. Dalla commissione militare, che l'ha sentenziato, fu invitato ad assisterlo, e sebbene fossi convalescente per una malattia pochi giorni avanti sofferta, ho volentieri assento l'impegno, e con somma consolazione ed edificazione ho ammirato un uomo, che è andato alla morte d'un eroe Cristiano e l'ha sostenuto di martire intrepido. Egli con tutta segretezza mi ha consegnata una carta di somma importanza per l'onore della sua famiglia, incaricando mi dirigerla a V. Sig. Rio M.—Sono con perfetta stima,

"Di V. S. Rio M.

"Divotissimo,

"GIOV. BATT. (ARCIPRETE) MANIFESTI."

"MANTUA, Feb. 21, 1810.—Yesterday, a few minutes before twelve, Mr. Andreas Hofer, late commander of the Tyrol, was shot here. The military commission which tried him requested me to attend him, and although I had recovered but a few days since from sickness, I gladly complied with the request, and admired, to my consolation and edification, a man who went to death as a Christian hero, and suffered it as an intrepid martyr. Under the seal of profound silence he intrusted to me a paper of the highest importance to his family," &c.—See Hormayr's "Lebensbilder," vol. i. p. 224.

a corporal stood forth with loaded muskets. The corporal offered Hofer a white handkerchief to bandage his eyes.

"No," said Hofer. "I have often already faced death ; it is a dear friend of mine, and I want to see it, therefore, when it comes to me."

"Kneel down, then," said the corporal.

"I shall not," replied Hofer, gravely and almost imperiously. "I am used to stand upright before my Creator, and in that posture I will deliver up my spirit to Him. But pray," he added in a milder voice, "aim well. Come, corporal, I will give you yet a souvenir ; it is my whole remaining property. Look at this Zwanziger ; I had it coined when I was commander-in-chief of the Tyrol ; and it reminds me now of my beloved country, and it seems to me as though its snow-clad mountains were looking down on me and greeting me. There, keep it as a remembrancer, and aim well !"

The corporal stepped back and commanded in a voice tremulous with emotion, "Fire !"

"Fire !" shouted Hofer. "Long live the Tyrol !"

Six shots rang out, but Andreas Hofer was not dead ; he had sunk only on one knee and leaned on his right hand.

Six shots crashed again. They struck him to the ground, but did not yet kill him. He raised his bleeding head once more.

The corporal, filled with pity, stepped now close up to him, put his musket to Hofer's forehead, and fired.

This thirteenth shot dispatched him at length !

The grenadiers raised the corpse and carried it on a black bier to St. Michael's church, where it lay in state during the requiem, that the people might convince themselves of the death of the beloved and feared commander-in-chief of the Tyrol, *Le Général Sanvird*, Andreas Hofer, the Barbone, and of the final subjugation of the Tyrol.*

* Hofer's remains were buried in Manifesti's garden. A simple slab on his grave bore the following inscription : " Qui giace la spoglia del fu Andrea Hofer, detto il Generale Barbone, commandante supremo delle milizie del Tirolo, fuellato in questa fortezza nel giorno 20 Febrajo 1810, sepolto in questo luogo." ("Here rest the remains of the late Andreas Hofer, called General Barbone, commander-in-chief of the Tyrolese militia, shot in this for-

This occurred on the 20th of February, 1810 ; and on the same day on which Andreas Hofer was shot at Mantua, because he had loved his country and his Emperor Francis too faithfully, almost at the very hour of his death, the booming of artillery was to be heard on the ramparts of Vienna.

It proclaimed to the Viennese the joyful news that the Archduchess Maria Louisa, the emperor's daughter, was the affianced bride of the Emperor Napoleon !

ress on the 20th of February, 1810, and buried in this place.") Fourteen years afterward Hofer's remains were disinterred by three Austrian officers, who had obtained Manifesti's consent, and conveyed to Botzen. The Emperor Francis gave orders to transfer them to Innspruck, where they were buried in the church of the Franciscans by the side of the monument of the Archduke Ferdinand and his beloved Philippina Welsch.—See Hormayr's "Andreas Hofer," vol. ii., p. 539.

(3)

THE END.

