with you any longer. Shame would kill me. Farewell! Hereafter, no one shall dare to call me a mistress."

With a last glowing farewell, she turned to the door, but the prince kept her back. "Marianne," he asked, tenderly, "do you not know that I love you, and that I cannot live without you?"

She looked at him with a fascinating smile. "And I?" she asked, "far from you, shall die of a broken heart; with you, I shall die of shame. I prefer the former. Farewell! No one shall ever dare again to call me by that name." And her hand touched already the door-knob.

The prince encircled her waist with his arms and drew her back.

"I shall not let you go," he said, ardently. "You are mine, and shall remain so! Oh, why are you so proud and so cold? Why will you not sacrifice your faith to our love? Why do you insist upon remaining a Jewess?"

"Your highness," she said, leaning her head on his shoulder, "why do you want me to become a Christian?"

"Why?" he exclaimed. "Because my religion and the laws of my country prevent me from marrying a Jewess."

"And if I should sacrifice to you the last that has remained to me?" she whispered—"my conscience and my religion."

"Marianne," he exclaimed, solemnly, "I repeat to you what I have told you so often already: 'Become a Christian in order to become my wife.'"

She encircled his neck impetuously with her arms and clung to him with a passionate outburst of tenderness. "I will become a Christian!" she whispered.

CHAPTER XVII.

LOVE AND POLITICS.

"At last! at last!" exclaimed Gentz, in a tone of fervid tenderness, approaching Marianne, who went to meet him with a winning smile. "Do you know, dearest, that you have driven me to despair for a whole week? Not a word, not a message from you! Whenever I came to see you, I was turned away. Always the same terrible reply, 'Madame is not at home,' while I felt your nearness in every nerve and vein of mine, and while my throbbing heart was under the magic influence of your presence. And then to be turned away! No reply whatever to my letters, to my ardent prayers to see you only for a quarter of an hour."

"Oh, you ungrateful man!" she said, smiling, "did I not send for you to-day? Did I not give you this rendezvous quite voluntarily?"

"You knew very well that I should have died if your heart had not softened at last. Oh, heavenly Marianne, what follies despair made me commit already! In order to forget you, I plunged into all sorts of pleasures, I commenced new works, I entered upon fresh love-affairs. But it was all in vain. Amidst those pleasures I was sad; during my working hours my mind was wandering, and in order to impart a semblance of truth and tenderness to my protestations of love, I had to close my eyes and imagine *you* were the lady whom I was addressing."

"And then you were successful?" asked Marianne, smiling.

"Yes, then I was successful," he said, gravely; "but my new lady-love, the beloved of my distraction and despair, did not suspect that I only embraced her so tenderly because I kissed in her the beloved of my heart and of my enthusiasm."

"And who was the lady whom you call the beloved of your distraction and despair?" asked Marianne.

"Ah, Marianne, you ask me to betray a woman?"

"No, no; I am glad to perceive that you are a discreet cavalier. You shall betray no woman. I will tell you her name. The beloved of your distraction and despair was the most beautiful and charming lady in Berlin—it was the actress Christel Enghaus. Let me compliment you, my friend, on having triumphed with that belle over all those sentimental, lovesick princes, counts, and barons. Indeed, you have improved your week of 'distraction and despair' in the most admirable manner."

"Still, Marianne, I repeat to you, she was merely my sweetheart for the time being, and I merely plunged into this adventure in order to forget you."

"Then you love me really?" asked Marianne.

"Marianne, I adore you! You know it. Oh, now I may tell you so. Heretofore you repelled me and would not listen to my protestations of love because I was a *married* man. Now, however, I have got rid of my ignominious fetters, Marianne; now I am no longer a married man. I am free, and all the women in the world are at liberty to love me. I am as free as a bird in the air!"

"And like a bird you want to flit from one heart to another?"

"No, most beautiful, most glorious Marianne; your heart shall be the cage in which I shall imprison myself."

"Beware, my friend. What would you say if there was no door in this cage through which you might escape?"

"Oh, if it had a door, I should curse it."

"Then you love me so boundlessly as to be ready to sacrifice to me the liberty you have scarcely regained?"

"Can you doubt it, Marianne?" asked Gentz, tenderly pressing her beautiful hands to his lips.

"Are you in earnest, my friend?" she said, smiling. "So you offer your hand to me? You want to marry me?"

Gentz started back, and looked at her with a surprised and frightened air. Marianne laughed merrily.

"Ah!" she said, "your face is the most wonderful illustration of Goethe's poem. You know it, don't you?" And she recited with ludicrous pathos the following two lines:

"'Heirathen, Kind, ist wunderlich Wort,
Hör' ich's, möcht' ich gleich wieder fort.'

"Good Heaven, what a profound knowledge of human nature our great Goethe has got, and how proud I am to be allowed to call him a friend of mine—*Heirathen, Kind, ist wunderlich Wort.*"

"Marianne, you are cruel and unjust, you—"

"And you know the next two lines of the poem?" she interrupted him. "The maiden replied to him:

"'Heirathen wir eben,
Das Ubrige wird sich geben.'"

"You mock me," exclaimed Gentz, smiling, "and yet you know the maiden's assurance would not prove true in our case, and that there is something rendering such a happiness, the prospect of calling you my wife, an utter impossibility. Unfortunately, you are no Christian, Marianne. Hence I cannot marry you."*

"And if I were a Christian?" she asked in a sweet, enchanting voice.

He fixed his eyes with a searching glance upon her smiling, charming face.

"What!" he asked, in evident embarrassment. "If you were a Christian? What do you mean, Marianne?"

"I mean, Frederick, that I have given the highest proof of my love to the man who loves me so ardently, constantly, and faithfully. For his sake I have become a Christian. Yesterday I was baptized. Now, my friend, I ask you once more, I ask you as a Christian woman: Gentz, will you marry me? Answer me honestly and frankly, my friend! Remember that it is 'the beloved of your heart and of your enthusiasm,' as you called me yourself a few moments ago, who now stands before you and asks for a reply. Remember that this moment will be decisive for our future—speedily, nay, immediately decisive. For you see I have removed all obstacles.

* Marriages between Christians and Jews were prohibited in the German states at that period.

I have become a Christian, and I tell you I am ready to become your wife in the course of the present hour. Once more, then, Gentz, will you marry me?"

He had risen and paced the room in great excitement. Marianne followed him with a lurking glance and a scornful smile, but when he now stepped back to her, she quickly assumed her serious air.

"Marianne," he said, firmly, "you want to know the truth, and I love you too tenderly to conceal it from you. I will not, must not, cannot marry you. I *will* not, because I am unable to bear once more the fetters of wedded life. I *must* not, because I should make you unhappy and wretched. I *cannot*, while, doing so, I should act perfidiously toward a friend of mine, for you know very well that the Prince von Reuss is my intimate friend."

"And *I* am his mistress. You wished to intimate that to me by your last words, I suppose?"

"I wished to intimate that he loves you boundlessly, and he is a generous, magnanimous man, whose heart would break if any one should take you from him."

"For the last time, then: you will not marry me?"

"Marianne, I love you too tenderly—I cannot marry you!"

Marianne burst into a fit of laughter. "A strange reason for rejecting my hand, indeed!" she said. "It is so original that in itself it might almost induce me to forgive your refusal. And yet I had counted so firmly and surely upon your love and consent that I had made already the necessary arrangements in order that our wedding might take place to-day. Just look at me, Gentz. Do you not see that I wear a bridal-dress?"

"Your beauty is always a splendid bridal-dress for you, Marianne."

"Well said! But do you not see a myrtle-wreath, my bridal-wreath, on the table there? *Honi soit qui mal y pense!* The priest is already waiting for the bride and bridegroom in the small chapel, the candles on the altar are lighted, every thing is ready for the ceremony. Well, we must not make the priest wait any longer. So you decline being the bridegroom at the ceremony? Well, attend it, then, as a witness. Will you do so? Will you assist me as a faithful friend, sign my marriage-contract, and keep my secret?"

"I am ready to give you any proof of my love and friendship," said Gentz, gravely.

"Well, I counted on you," exclaimed Marianne, smiling, "and, to tell you the truth, I counted on your refusal to marry me. Come, give me your arm. I will show you the same chapel which the Prince von Reuss has caused to be fitted up here in the building of the Austrian embassy. The servants will see nothing strange in our

going there, and I hope, moreover, that we shall meet with no one on our way thither. At the chapel we shall perhaps find Prince Henry—that will be a mere accident, which will surprise no one. Come, assist me in putting on this long black mantilla which will entirely conceal my white silk dress. The myrtle-wreath I shall take under my arm so that no one will see it. And now, come!"

"Yes, let us go," said Gentz, offering his arm to her. "I see very well that there is a mystification in store for me, but I shall follow you wherever you will take me, to the devil or—"

"Or to church," she said, smiling. "But hush now, so that no one may hear us."

They walked silently through the rooms, then down a long corridor, and after descending a narrow secret staircase, they entered a small apartment where three gentlemen were waiting for them. One of them was a Catholic priest in his vestments, the second the Prince von Reuss, Henry XIII., and the third the first *attaché* of the Austrian embassy.

The prince approached Marianne, and after taking her hand he saluted Gentz in the most cordial manner.

"Every thing is ready," he said; "come, Marianne, let me place the wreath on your head."

Marianne took off her mantilla, and, handing the myrtle-wreath to the prince, she bowed her head, and almost knelt down before him. He took the wreath and fastened it in her hair, whereupon he beckoned the *attaché* to hand to him the large casket standing on the table. This casket contained a small prince's coronet of exquisite workmanship and sparkling with the most precious diamonds.

The prince fastened this coronet over Marianne's wreath, and the diamonds glistened now like stars over the delicate myrtle-leaves.

"Arise, Marianne," he then said, loudly. "I have fastened the coronet of your new dignity in your hair; let us now go to the altar."

Marianne arose. A strange radiance of triumphant joy beamed in her face; a deep flush suffused her cheeks, generally so pale and transparent; a blissful smile played on her lips. With a proud and sublime glance at Gentz, who was staring at her, speechless and amazed, she took the prince's arm.

The priest led the way, and from the small room they now entered the chapel of the embassy. On the altar, over which one of Van Dyck's splendid paintings was hanging, large wax-tapers were burning in costly silver chandeliers. On the carpet in front of the altar two small *prie-dieus* for Marianne and the prince were placed, and two arm-chairs for the witnesses stood behind them. Opposite the altar, on the other side of the chapel, a sort of choir or balcony with an organ had been fitted up.

But no one was there to play on that organ. All the other chairs and benches were vacant; the ceremony was to be performed secretly and quietly.

Gentz saw and observed every thing as though it were a vision, he could not yet make up his mind that it was a reality; he was confused and almost dismayed, and did not know whether it was owing to his surprise at what was going on, or to his vexation at being so badly duped by Marianne. He believed he was dreaming when he saw Marianne and the prince kneeling on the *prie-dieus*, Marianne Meier, the Jewess, at the right hand of the high-born nobleman, at the place of honor, only to be occupied by legitimate brides of equal rank; and when he heard the priest, who stood in front of the altar, pronounce solemn words of exhortation and benediction, and finally ask the kneeling bride and bridegroom to vow eternal love and fidelity to each other. Both uttered the solemn "Yes" at the same time, the prince quietly and gravely, Marianne hastily and in a joyful voice. The priest thereupon gave them the benediction, and the ceremony was over. The whole party then returned to the anteroom serving as a sacristy. They silently received the congratulations of the priest and the witnesses. The *attaché* then took a paper from his memorandum-book; it contained the minutes of the ceremony, which he had drawn up already in advance. Marianne and the prince signed it; the witnesses and the priest did the same, the latter adding the church seal to his signature. It was now a perfectly valid certificate of their legitimate marriage, which the prince handed to Marianne, and for which she thanked him with a tender smile.

"You are now my legitimate wife," said the Prince von Reuss, gravely; "I wish to give you this proof of my love and esteem, and I return my thanks to these gentlemen for having witnessed the ceremony; you might some day stand in need of their testimony. For the time being, however, I have cogent reasons for keeping our marriage secret, and you have promised not to divulge it."

"And I renew my promise at this sacred place and in the presence of the priest and our witnesses, my dear husband," said Marianne. "No one shall hear from me a word or even an intimation of what has occurred here. Before the world I shall be obediently and patiently nothing but your mistress until you deem it prudent to acknowledge that I am your wife."

"I shall do so at no distant day," said the prince. "And you, gentlemen, will you promise also, will you pledge me your word of honor that you will faithfully keep our secret?"

"We promise it upon our honor!" exclaimed the two gentlemen.

The prince bowed his thanks. "Let us now leave the chapel sep-

arately, just as we have come," he said; "if we should withdraw together, it would excite the attention and curiosity of the servants, some of whom might meet us in the hall. Come, baron, you will accompany me." He took the *attaché's* arm, and left the small sacristry with him.

"And you will accompany me," said Marianne, kindly nodding to Gentz.

"And I shall stay here for the purpose of praying for the bride and bridegroom," muttered the priest, returning to the altar.

Marianne now hastily took the coronet and myrtle-wreath from her hair and concealed both under the black mantilla which Gentz gallantly laid around her shoulders.

They silently reascended the narrow staircase and returned through the corridor to Marianne's rooms. Upon reaching her boudoir, Marianne doffed her mantilla with an indescribable air of triumphant joy, and laid the coronet and myrtle-wreath on the table.

"Well," she asked in her sonorous, impressive voice, "what do you say now, my tender Gentz?"

He had taken his hat, and replied with a deep bow: "I have to say that I bow to your sagacity and talents. That was a masterstroke of yours, dearest."

"Was it not?" she asked, triumphantly. "The Jewess, hitherto despised and ostracized by society, has suddenly become a legitimate princess; she has now the power to avenge all sneers, all derision, all contempt she has had to undergo. Oh, how sweet this revenge will be—how I shall humble all those haughty ladies who dared to despise me, and who will be obliged henceforth to yield the place of honor to me!"

"And will you revenge yourself upon me too, Marianne?" asked Gentz, humbly—"upon me who dared reject your hand? But no, you must always be grateful to me for that refusal of mine. Just imagine I had compelled you to stick to your offer: instead of being a princess, you would now be the unhappy wife of the poor military counsellor, Frederick Gentz."

Marianne laughed. "You are right," she said, "I am grateful to you for it. But, my friend, you must not and shall not remain the poor military counsellor Gentz."

"God knows that that is not my intention either," exclaimed Gentz, laughing. "God has placed a capital in my head, and you may be sure that I shall know how to invest it at a good rate of interest."

"But here you will obtain no such interest," said Marianne, eagerly, "let us speak sensibly about that matter. We have paid our tribute to love and friendship; let us now talk about politics.

I am authorized—and she who addresess you now is no longer Marianne Meier, but the wife of the Austrian ambassador—I am authorized to make an important offer to you. Come, my friend, sit down in the arm-chair here, and let us hold a diplomatic conference."

"Yes, let us do so," said Gentz, smiling, and taking the seat she had indicated to him.

"Friend Gentz, what are your hopes for the future?"

"A ponderous question, but I shall try to answer it as briefly as possible. I am in hopes of earning fame, honor, rank, influence, and a brilliant position by my talents."

"And you believe you can obtain all that here in Prussia?"

"I hope so," said Gentz, hesitatingly.

"You have addressed a memorial to the young king; you have urged him to give to his subjects prosperity, happiness, honor, and freedom of the press. How long is it since you sent that memorial to him?"

"Four weeks to-day."

"Four weeks, and they have not yet rewarded you for your glorious memorial, although the whole Prussian nation hailed it with the most rapturous applause? They have not yet thought of appointing you to a position worthy of your talents? You have not yet been invited to court?"

"Yes, I was invited to court. The queen wished to become acquainted with me. Gualtieri presented me to her, and her majesty said very many kind and flattering things to me."*

"Words, empty words, my friend! Their actions are more eloquent. The king has not sent for you, the king has not thanked you. The king does not want your advice, and as if to show to yourself, and to all those who have received your letter so enthusiastically, that he intends to pursue his own path and not to listen to such advice, the king, within the last few days, has addressed a decree to the criminal court, peremptorily ordering the prosecuting attorneys to proceed rigorously against the publishers of writings not submitted to or rejected by the censors."†

"That cannot be true—that is impossible!" exclaimed Gentz, starting up.

"I pardon your impetuosity in consideration of your just indignation," said Marianne, smiling. "That I told you the truth, however, you will see in to-morrow's *Gazette*, which will contain the royal decree I alluded to. Oh, you know very well the Austrian ambassador has good friends everywhere, who furnish him the latest news, and keep him informed of all such things. You need

* Varnhagen, "Gallerie von Bildnissen," etc., vol. ii.
† F. Foerster, "Modern History of Prussia," vol. i., p. 498.

not hope, therefore, that the young king will make any use of your talents or grant you any favors. Your splendid memorial has offended him instead of winning him; he thought it was altogether too bold. Frederick William the Third is not partial to bold, eccentric acts; he instinctively shrinks back from all violent reforms. The present King of Prussia will not meddle with the great affairs of the world; the King of Prussia wishes to remain neutral amidst the struggle of contending parties. Instead of thinking of war and politics, he devotes his principal attention to the church service and examination of the applicants for holy orders, and yet he is not even courageous enough formally to abolish Wöllner's bigoted edict, and thus to make at least one decisive step forward. Believe me, lukewarmness and timidity will characterize every act of his administration. So you had better go to Austria."

"And what shall I do in Austria?" asked Gentz, thoughtfully.

"What shall you do there?" exclaimed Marianne, passionately. "You shall serve the fatherland—you shall serve Germany, for Germany is in Austria just as well as in Prussia. Oh, believe me, my friend, only in Austria will you find men strong and bold enough to brave the intolerable despotism of the French. And the leading men there will welcome you most cordially; an appropriate sphere will be allotted to your genius, and the position to which you will be appointed will amply satisfy the aspirations of your ambition. I am officially authorized to make this offer to you, for Austria is well aware that, in the future, she stands in need of men of first-class ability, and she therefore desires to secure your services, which she will reward in a princely manner. Come, my friend, I shall set out to-day with the prince on a journey to Austria. Accompany us—become one of ours!"

"Ours! Are you, then, no longer a daughter of Prussia?"

"I have become a thorough and enthusiastic Austrian, for I worship energy and determination, and these qualities I find only in Austria, in the distinguished man who is holding the helm of her ship of state, Baron Thugut. Come with us; Thugut is anxious to have you about his person; accompany us to him."

"And what are you going to do in Vienna?" asked Gentz, evasively. "Is it a mere pleasure-trip?"

"If another man should put that question to me, I should reply in the affirmative, but to you I am going to prove by my entire sincerity that I really believe you to be a devoted friend of mine. No, it is no pleasure-trip. I accompany the prince to Vienna because he wants to get there instructions from Baron Thugut and learn what is to be done at Rastadt."

"Ah, at Rastadt—at the peace congress," exclaimed Gentz. "The

emperor has requested the states of the empire to send plenipotentiaries to Rastadt to negotiate there with France a just and equitable peace. Prussia has already sent there her plenipotentiaries, Count Goertz and Baron Dohm. Oh, I should have liked to accompany them and participate in performing the glorious task to be accomplished there. That congress at Rastadt is the last hope of Germany; if it should fail, all prospects of a regeneration of the empire are gone. That congress will at last give to the nation all it needs: an efficient organization of the empire, a well-regulated administration of justice, protection of German manufactures against British arrogance, and last, but not least, freedom of the press, for which the Germans have been yearning for so many years."

Marianne burst into a loud fit of laughter. "Oh, you enthusiastic visionary!" she said, "but let us speak softly, for even the walls must not hear what I am now going to tell you."

She bent over the table, drawing nearer to Gentz, and fixing her large, flaming eyes upon him, she asked in a whsiper, "I suppose you love Germany? You would not like to see her devoured by France as Italy was devoured by her? You would not like either to see her go to decay and crumble to pieces from inherent weakness?"

"Oh, I love Germany!" said Gentz, enthusiastically. "All my wishes, all my hopes belong to her. Would to God I could say some day, all my talents, my energy, my perseverance are devoted to my fatherland—to Germany!"

"Well, if you really desire to be useful to Germany," whispered Marianne, "hasten to Rastadt. If Germany is to be saved at all, it must be done at once. You know the stipulations of the treaty of Campo Formio, I suppose?"

"I only know what every one knows about them."

"But you do not know the secret article. I will tell you all about it. Listen to me. The secret article accepted by the emperor reads as follows: 'The emperor pledges himself to withdraw his troops from Mentz, Ehrenbreitstein, Mannheim, Königstein, and from the German empire in general, twenty days after the ratification of the peace, which has to take place in the course of two months.'" *

"But he thereby delivers the empire to the tender mercies of the enemy," exclaimed Gentz, in dismay. "Oh, that cannot be! No German could grant and sign such terms without sinking into the earth from shame. That would be contrary to every impulse of patriotism—"

"Nevertheless, that article has been signed and will be carried out to the letter. Make haste, therefore, Germany is calling you; assist her, you have got the strength. Oh, give it to her! Become

* Schlosser's "History of the Eighteenth Century," vol. v., p. 43.

an Austrian just as Brutus became a servant of the kings; become an Austrian in order to save Germany!"

"Ah, you want to entice me, Delilah!" exclaimed Gentz. "You want to show me a beautiful goal in order to make me walk the tortuous paths which may lead thither! No, Delilah, it is in vain! I shall stay here; I shall not go to Austria, for Austria is the state that is going to betray Germany. Prussia may be able to save her; she stands perhaps in need of my arm, my pen, and my tongue for that purpose. I am a German, but first of all I am a Prussian, and every good patriot ought first to serve his immediate country, and wait until she calls him. I still hope that the king will prove the right man for his responsible position; I still expect that he will succeed in rendering Prussia great and Germany free. I must, therefore, remain a Prussian as yet and be ready to serve my country."

"Poor enthusiast! You will regret some day having lost your time by indulging in visionary hopes."

"Well, I will promise, whenever that day comes, whenever Prussia declares that she does not want my services, then I will come to you—then you shall enlist me for Austria, and perhaps I may then still be able to do something for Germany. But until then, leave me here. I swear to you, not a word of what you have just told me here shall be betrayed by my lips; but I cannot serve him who has betrayed Germany."

"You cannot be induced, then, to accept my offer? You want to stay here? You refuse to accompany me to Vienna, to Rastadt, in order to save what may yet be saved for Germany?"

"If I had an army under my command," exclaimed Gentz, with flaming eyes, "if I were the King of Prussia, then I should assuredly go to Rastadt, but I should go thither for the purpose of dispersing all those hypocrites, cowards, and scribblers who call themselves statesmen, and of driving those French republicans who put on such disgusting airs, and try to make us believe they had a perfect right to meddle with the domestic affairs of Germany—beyond the Rhine! I should go thither for the purpose of garrisoning the fortresses of the Rhine—which the Emperor of Germany is going to surrender to the tender mercies of the enemy—with my troops, and of defending them against all foes from without or from within. That would be my policy if I were King of Prussia. But being merely the poor military counsellor, Frederick Gentz, and having nothing but some ability and a sharp pen, I shall stay here and wait to see whether or not Prussia will make use of my ability and of my pen. God save Germany and protect her from her physicians who are concocting a fatal draught for her at Rastadt! God save Germany!"

FRANCE AND GERMANY.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CITOYENNE JOSEPHINE BONAPARTE.

A JOYFUL commotion reigned on the eighth of November, 1797, in the streets and public places of the German fortress of Rastadt. The whole population of the lower classes had gathered in the streets, while the more aristocratic inhabitants appeared at the open windows of their houses in eager expectation of the remarkable event for which not only the people of the whole city, but also the foreign ambassadors, a large number of whom had arrived at Rastadt, were looking with the liveliest symptoms of impatience.

And, indeed, a rare spectacle was in store for them. It was the arrival of General Bonaparte and his wife Josephine that all were waiting for this morning. They were not to arrive together, however, but both were to reach the city by a different route. Josephine, who was expected to arrive first, was coming from Milan by the shortest and most direct route; while Bonaparte had undertaken a more extended journey from Campo Formio through Italy and Switzerland. It was well known already that he had been received everywhere with the most unbounded enthusiasm, and that all nations had hailed him as the Messiah of liberty. There had not been a single city that had not received him with splendid festivities, and honors had been paid to him as though he were not only a triumphant victor, but an exalted ruler, to whom every one was willing to submit. Even free Switzerland had formed no exception. At Geneva the daughters of the first and most distinguished families, clad in the French colors, had presented to him in the name of the city a laurel-wreath. At Berne, his carriage had passed through two lines of handsomely decorated coaches, filled with beautiful and richly adorned ladies, who had hailed him with the jubilant shout of "Long live the pacificator!"

In the same manner the highest honors had been paid to his wife Josephine, who had been treated everywhere with the deference due to a sovereign princess. The news of these splendid receptions had reached Rastadt already; and it was but natural that the authorities

and citizens of the fortress did not wish to be outdone, and that they had made extensive arrangements for welcoming the conqueror of Italy in a becoming manner.

A magnificent triumphal arch had been erected in front of the gate through which General Bonaparte was to enter the city, and under it the city fathers, clad in their official robes, were waiting for the victorious hero, in order to conduct him to the house that had been selected for him. In front of this house, situated on the large market-place, a number of young and pretty girls, dressed in white, and carrying baskets with flowers and fruits which they were to lay at the feet of the general's beautiful wife, had assembled. At the gate through which Josephine was to arrive, a brilliant cavalcade of horsemen had gathered for the purpose of welcoming the lady of the great French chieftain, and of escorting her as a guard of honor.

Among these cavaliers there were most of the ambassadors from the different parts of Germany, who had met here at Rastadt in order to accomplish the great work of peace. Every sovereign German prince, every elector and independent count had sent his delegates to the southwestern fortress for the purpose of negotiating with the French plenipotentiaries concerning the future destinies of Germany. Even Sweden had sent a representative, who had not appeared so much, however, in order to take care of the interests of Swedish Pomerania, as to play the part of a mediator and reconciler.

All these ambassadors had been allowed to enter Rastadt quietly and entirely unnoticed. The *German* city had failed to pay any public honors to these distinguished *German* noblemen; but every one hastened to exhibit the greatest deference to the French general —and even the ambassadors deemed it prudent to participate in these demonstrations: only they tried to display, even on this occasion, their accustomed diplomacy, and instead of receiving the victorious chieftain in the capacity of humble vassals, they preferred to present their respects as gallant cavaliers to his beautiful wife and to escort her into the city.

The German ambassadors, therefore, were waiting for Mme. General Bonaparte on their magnificent prancing steeds in front of the gate through which she was to pass. Even old Count Metternich, the delegate of the Emperor of Austria and ruler of the empire, notwithstanding the stiffness of his limbs, had mounted his horse; by his side the other two ambassadors of Austria were halting—Count Lehrbach, the Austrian member of the imperial commission, and Count Louis Cobenzl, who was acting as a delegate for Bohemia and Hungary. Behind old Count Metternich, on a splendid and most fiery charger, a young cavalier of tall figure and rare manly beauty

might be seen; it was young Count Clemens Metternich, who was to represent the corporation of the Counts of Westphalia, and to begin his official diplomatic career here at Rastadt under the eye of his aged father. By his side the imposing and grave ambassadors of Prussia made their appearance—Count Goertz, who at the time of the war for the succession in Bavaria had played a part so important for Prussia and so hostile to Austria; and Baron Dohm, no less distinguished as a cavalier, than as a writer. Not far from them the representatives of Bavaria, Saxony, Wurtemberg, and of the whole host of the so-called "Immediates" * might be seen, whom the editors and correspondents had joined, that had repaired to Rastadt in the hope of finding there a perfect gold-mine for their greedy pens. But not merely the German diplomatists and the aristocratic young men of Rastadt were waiting here for the arrival of Mme. General Bonaparte; there was also the whole crowd of French singers, actors, and adventurers who had flocked to the Congress of Rastadt for the purpose of amusing the distinguished noblemen and delegates by their vaudevilles, comedies, and gay operas. Finally, there were also the French actresses and ballet-girls, who, dressed in the highest style of fashion, were occupying on one side of the road a long row of splendid carriages. Many of these carriages were decorated on their doors with large coats-of-arms, and a person well versed in heraldry might have easily seen therefrom that these escutcheons indicated some of the noble diplomatists on the other side of the road to be the owners of the carriages. In fact, a very cordial and friendly understanding seemed to prevail between the diplomatists and the ladies of the French theatre. This was not only evident from the German diplomatists having lent their carriages to the French ladies for the day's reception, but likewise from the ardent, tender, and amorous glances that were being exchanged between them, from their significant smiles, and from their stealthy nods and mute but eloquent greetings.

Suddenly, however, this mimical flirtation was interrupted by the rapid approach of a courier. This was the signal announcing the impending arrival of Josephine Bonaparte. In fact, the heads of four horses were seen already in the distance; they came nearer and nearer, and now the carriage drawn by these horses, and a lady occupying it, could be plainly discerned.

It was a wonderful warm day in November. Josephine, therefore, had caused the top of her carriage to be taken down, and the spectators were able, not merely to behold her face, but to scan most leisurely her whole figure and even her costume. The carriage had

* The noblemen owning territory in the states of secondary princes, but subject only to the authority of the emperor, were called "*Immediates.*"

approached at full gallop, but now, upon drawing near to the crowd assembled in front of the gate, it slackened its speed, and every one had time and leisure to contemplate the lady enthroned in the carriage. She was no longer in the first bloom of youth; more than thirty years had passed already over her head; they had deprived her complexion of its natural freshness, and left the first slight traces of age upon her pure and noble forehead. But her large dark eyes were beaming still in the imperishable fire of her inward youth, and a sweet and winning smile, illuminating her whole countenance as though a ray of the setting sun had fallen upon it, was playing around her charming lips. Her graceful and elegant figure was wrapped in a closely fitting gown of dark-green velvet, richly trimmed with costly furs, and a small bonnet, likewise trimmed with furs, covered her head, and under this bonnet luxuriant dark ringlets were flowing down, surrounding the beautiful and noble oval of her face with a most becoming frame.

Josephine Bonaparte was still a most attractive and lovely woman, and on beholding her it was easily understood why Bonaparte, although much younger, had been so fascinated by this charming lady and loved her with such passionate tenderness.

The French actors now gave vent to their delight by loud cheers, and rapturously waving their hats, they shouted: "*Vive la citoyenne Bonaparte! Vive l'auguste épouse de l'Italique!*"

Josephine nodded eagerly and with affable condescension to the enthusiastic crowd, and slowly passed on. On approaching the diplomatists, she assumed a graver and more erect attitude; she acknowledged the low, respectful obeisances of the cavaliers with the distinguished, careless, and yet polite bearing of a queen, and seemed to have for every one a grateful glance and a kind smile. Every one was satisfied that she had especially noticed and distinguished him, and every one, therefore, felt flattered and elated. From the diplomatists she turned her face for a moment to the other side, toward the ladies seated in the magnificent carriages. But her piercing eye, her delicate womanly instinct told her at a glance that these ladies, in spite of the splendor surrounding them, were no representatives of the aristocracy; she therefore greeted them with a rapid nod, a kind smile, and a graceful wave of her hand, and then averted her head again.

Her carriage now passed through the gate, the cavaliers surrounding it on both sides, and thereby separating the distinguished lady from her attendants, who were following her in four large coaches. These were joined by the carriages of the actresses, by whose sides the heroes of the stage were cantering and exhibiting their horsemanship to the laughing belles with painted cheeks.

It was a long and brilliant procession with which Mme. General Bonaparte made her entrance into Rastadt, and the last of the carriages had not yet reached the gate, when Josephine's carriage had already arrived on the market-place and halted in front of the house she was to occupy with her husband. Before the footman had had time to alight from the box, Josephine herself had already opened the coach door in order to meet the young ladies who were waiting for her at the door of her house, and to give them a flattering proof of her affability. In polite haste she descended from the carriage and stepped into their midst, tendering her hands to those immediately surrounding her, and whispering grateful words of thanks to them for the beautiful flowers and fruits, and thanking the more distant girls with winning nods and smiling glances. Her manners were aristocratic and withal simple; every gesture of hers, every nod, every wave of her hand was queenly and yet modest, unassuming and entirely devoid of haughtiness, just as it behooved a prominent daughter of the great Republic which had chosen for her motto "*Liberté, égalité, fraternité.*"

Laden with flowers, and laughing as merrily as a young girl, Josephine finally entered the house; in the hall of the latter the ladies of the French ambassadors, the wives and daughters of Bonnier Reberjot and Jean Debry, were waiting for her. Josephine, who among the young girls just now had been all hilarity, grace, and familiarity, now again assumed the bearing of a distinguished lady, of the consort of General Bonaparte, and received the salutations of the ladies with condescending reserve. She handed, however, to each of the ladies one of her splendid bouquets, and had a pleasant word for every one. On arriving at the door of the rooms destined for her private use, she dismissed the ladies and beckoned her maid to follow her.

"Now, Amelia," she said hurriedly, as soon as the door had closed behind them—"now let us immediately attend to my wardrobe. I know Bonaparte—he is always impetuous and impatient, and he regularly arrives sooner than he has stated himself. He was to be here at two o'clock, but he will arrive at one o'clock, and it is now almost noon. Have the trunks brought up at once, for it is high time for me to dress."

Amelia hastened to carry out her mistress's orders, and Josephine was alone. She hurriedly stepped to the large looking-glass in the bedroom and closely scanned in it her own features.

"Oh, oh! I am growing old," she muttered after a while. "Bonaparte must love me tenderly, very tenderly, not to notice it, or I must use great skill not to let him see it. *Eh bien, nous verrons!*"

And she glanced at herself with such a triumphant, charming

smile that her features at once seemed to grow younger by ten years. "Oh, he shall find me beautiful—he shall love me," she whispered, "for I love him so tenderly."

Just then Amelia entered loaded with bandboxes and *cartons*, and followed by the servants carrying the heavy trunks. Josephine personally superintended the lowering of the trunks for the purpose of preventing the men from injuring any of those delicate *cartons*; and when every thing was at last duly arranged, she looked around with the triumphant air of a great general mustering his troops and conceiving the plans for his battle.

"Now lock the door and admit no one, Amelia," she said, rapidly divesting herself of her travelling-dress. "Within an hour I must be ready to receive the general. But stop! We must first think of Zephyr, who is sick and exhausted. The dear little fellow cannot stand travelling in a coach. He frequently looked at me on the road most dolorously and imploringly, as if he wanted to beseech me to discontinue these eternal travels. Come, Zephyr; come, my dear little fellow."

On hearing her voice, a small, fat pug-dog, with a morose face and a black nose, arose from the trunk on which he had been lying, and waddled slowly and lazily to his mistress.

"I really believe Zephyr is angry with me," exclaimed Josephine, laughing heartily. "Just look at him, Amelia—just notice this reserved twinkling of his eyes, this snuffling pug-nose of his, this proudly-erect head that seems to smell roast meat and at the same time to utter invectives! He exactly resembles my friend Tallien when the latter is making love to the ladies. Come, my little Tallien, I will give you some sweetmeats, but in return you must be kind and amiable toward Bonaparte; you must not bark so furiously when he enters; you must not snap at his legs when he gives me a kiss; you must not snarl when he inadvertently steps on your toes. Oh, be gentle, kind, and amiable, my beautiful Zephyr, so as not to exasperate Bonaparte, for you know very well that he does not like dogs, and that he would throw you out of the window rather than suffer you at my feet."

Patting the dog tenderly, she lifted him upon an arm-chair, and then spread out biscuits and sweetmeats before him, which Zephyr commenced examining with a dignified snuffling of the nose.

"Now, Amelia, we will attend to my toilet," said Josephine, when she saw that Zephyr condescended to eat some of the biscuits.

Amelia had opened all the trunks and placed a large number of small jars and vials on the dressing-table. Josephine's beauty stood already in need of some assistance, and the amiable lady was by no means disinclined to resort to cosmetics for this purpose. It is true,

the republican customs of the times despised rouge, for the latter had been very fashionable during the reign of the "tyrant" Louis XVI., and Marie Antoinette had greatly patronized this fashion and always painted her cheeks. Nevertheless Josephine found rouge to be an indispensable complement to beauty, and, as public opinion was adverse to it, she kept her use of it profoundly secret. Amelia alone saw and knew it—Amelia alone was a witness to all the little secrets and artifices by which Josephine, the woman of thirty-three years, had to bolster up her beauty. But only the head stood in need of some artificial assistance. The body was as yet youthful, prepossessing, and remarkable for its attractiveness and luxuriant forms, and when Josephine now had finished her task, she was truly a woman of enchanting beauty and loveliness. Her eyes were so radiant and fiery, her smile so sweet and sure of her impending triumph, and the heavy white silk dress closely enveloped her figure, lending an additional charm to its graceful and classical outlines.

"Now, a few jewels," said Josephine; "give me some diamonds, Amelia; Bonaparte likes brilliant, sparkling trinkets. Come, I will select them myself."

She took from Amelia's hands the large case containing all of her caskets, and glanced at them with a smile of great satisfaction.

"Italy is very rich in precious trinkets and rare gems," she said, with a gentle shake of her head. "When, a few months ago, I came thither from Paris, I had only three caskets, and the jewelry they contained was not very valuable. Now, I count here twenty-four *étuis*, and they are filled with the choicest trinkets. Just look at these magnificent pearls which the Marquis de Lambertin has given to me. He is an old man, and I could not refuse his princely gift. This casket contains a bracelet which Mancini, the last Doge of Venice, presented to me, and which he assured me was wrought by Benvenuto Cellini for one of his great-great-grandmothers. This splendid set of corals and diamonds was given to me by the city of Genoa when she implored my protection and begged me to intercede with Bonaparte for her. And here—but do you not hear the shouts? What does it mean? Should Bonaparte—"

She did not finish the sentence, but hastened to the window. The market-place, which she was able to overlook from there, was now crowded with people, but the dense masses had not assembled for the purpose of seeing Josephine. All eyes were directed toward yonder street from which constantly fresh and jubilant crowds of people were hurrying toward the market-place, and where tremendous cheers, approaching closer and closer, resounded like the angry roar of the sea. Now some white dots might be discerned in the midst of the surging black mass. They came nearer and grew more

distinct; these dots were the heads of white horses. They advanced very slowly, but the cheers made the welkin ring more rapidly and were reëchoed by thousands and thousands of voices.

Amidst these jubilant cheers the procession drew near; now it turned from the street into the market-place. Josephine, uttering a joyful cry, opened the window and waved her hand, for it was Bonaparte whom the excited masses were cheering.

He sat all alone in an open barouche, drawn by six milk-white horses magnificently caparisoned in a silver harness.*

Leaning back into the cushions in a careless and fatigued manner, he scarcely seemed to notice the tremendous ovation that was tendered to him. His face looked pale and tired; a cloud had settled on his expansive marble forehead, and when he from time to time bowed his thanks, he did so with a weary and melancholy smile. But it was exactly this cold, tranquil demeanor, this humble reserve, this pale and gloomy countenance that seemed to strike the spectators and fill them with a feeling of strange delight and wondering awe. In this pale, cold, sombre, and imposing face there was scarcely a feature that seemed to belong to a mortal, earth-born being. It seemed as though the spectre of one of the old Roman imperators, as though the shadow of Julius Cæsar had taken a seat in that carriage, and allowed the milk-white horses to draw him into the surging bustle and turmoil of life. People were cheering half from astonishment, half from fear; they were shouting, "Long live Bonaparte!" as if they wanted to satisfy themselves that he was really alive, and not merely the image of an antique imperator.

The carriage now stopped in front of the house. Before rising from his seat, Bonaparte raised his eyes hastily to the windows. On seeing Josephine, who stood at the open window, his features became more animated, and a long, fiery flash from his eyes struck her face. But he did not salute her, and the cloud on his brow grew even gloomier than before.

"He is in bad humor and angry," whispered Josephine, closing the window, "and I am afraid he is angry with me. Good Heaven! what can it be again? What may be the cause of his anger? I am sure I have committed no imprudence—"

Just then the door was hastily opened, and Bonaparte entered.

* "These six horses with their magnificent harness were a gift from the Emperor of Austria, who had presented them to Bonaparte after the peace of Campo Formio. Bonaparte had rejected all other offers."—Bourrienne, vol. i., p. 389.

CHAPTER XIX.

BONAPARTE AND JOSEPHINE.

BONAPARTE had scacrely deigned to glance at the French ambassadors and their ladies, who had received him at the foot of the staircase. All his thoughts centred in Josephine. And bowing slightly to the ladies and gentlemen, he had impetuously rushed upstairs and opened the door, satisfied that she would be there and receive him with open arms. When he did not see her, he passed on, pale, with a gloomy face, and resembling an angry lion.

Thus he now rushed into the front room where he found Josephine. Without saluting her, and merely fixing his flashing eyes upon her, he asked in a subdued, angry voice: "Madame, you do not even deem it worth the trouble to salute me! You do not come to meet me!"

"But, Bonaparte, you have given me no time for it," said Josephine, with a charming smile. "While I thought you were just about to alight from your carriage, you burst already into this room like a thunder-bolt from heaven."

"Oh, and that has dazzled your eyes so much that you are even unable to salute me?" he asked angrily.

"And you, Bonaparte?" she asked, tenderly. "You do not open your arms to me! You do not welcome me! Instead of pressing me to your heart, you scold me! Oh, come, my friend, let us not pass this first hour in so unpleasant a manner! We have not seen each other for almost two months, and—"

"Ah, madame, then you know that at least," exclaimed Bonaparte; "then you have not entirely forgotten that you took leave of me two months ago, and that you swore to me at that time eternal love and fidelity, and promised most sacredly to write to me every day. You have not kept your oaths and pledges, madame!"

"But, my friend, I have written to you whenever I was told that a courier would set out for your headquarters."

"You ought to have sent every day a courier of your own for the purpose of transmitting your letters to me," exclaimed Bonaparte, wildly stamping his foot, so that the jars and vials on the table rattled violently, while Zephyr jumped down from his arm-chair and commenced snarling. Josephine looked anxiously at him and tried to calm him by her gestures.

Bonaparte continued: "Letters! But those scraps I received from time to time were not even letters. Official bulletins of your health they were, and as cold as ice. Madame, how could you write