

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. 339.

CHAPTER XIX.

BONAPARTE AND JOSEPHINE.

BONAPARTE had scarcely 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

such letters to me, and moreover only every fourth day? If you really loved me, you would have written every day. But you do not love me any longer; I know it. Your love was but a passing whim. You feel now how ridiculous it would be for you to love a poor man who is nothing but a soldier, and who has to offer nothing to you but a little glory and his love. But I shall banish this love from my heart, should I have to tear my heart with my own teeth."*

"Bonaparte," exclaimed Josephine, half tenderly, half anxiously, "what have I done that you should be angry with me? Why do you accuse me of indifference, while you know very well that I love you?"

"Ah, it is a very cold love, at all events," he said, sarcastically. "It is true, I am only your husband, and it is not in accordance with aristocratic manners to love one's husband; that is mean, vulgar, republican! But I am a republican, and I do not want any wife with the manners and habits of the *ancien régime*. I am your husband, but woe to him who seeks to become my wife's lover! I would not even need my sword in order to kill him. My eyes alone would crush him!† And I shall know how to find him; and if he should escape to the most remote regions, my arm is a far-reaching one, and I will extend it over the whole world in order to grasp him."

"But whom do you allude to?" asked Josephine, in dismay.

"Whom?" he exclaimed in a thundering voice. "Ah, madame, you believe I do not know what has occurred? You believe I see and hear nothing when I am no longer with you? Let me compliment you, madame! The handsome aide-de-camp of Leclerc is a conquest which the ladies of Milan must have been jealous of; and Botot, the spy, whom Barras sent after me, passes even at Paris for an Adonis. What do you mean by your familiarities with these two men, madame? You received Adjutant Charles at eleven o'clock in the morning, while you never leave your bed before one o'clock. Oh, that handsome young fellow wanted to tell you how he was yearning for his home in Paris, and what his mother and sister had written to him, I suppose? For that reason so convenient an hour had to be chosen? For that reason he came at eleven o'clock while you were in bed yet. His ardor was so intense, and if he had been compelled to wait until one o'clock, impatience would have burned his soul to ashes!"‡

"He wanted to set out for Paris precisely at twelve o'clock. That

* Bonaparte's own words.—Vide "Lettres à Joséphine. Mémoires d'une Contemporaine," vol. i., p. 353.

† Bonaparte's own words.—Ibid.

‡ Bonaparte's own words.—Vide "Mémoires d'un Contemporaine," vol. ii., p. 380.

was the only reason why I received him so early, my friend," said Josephine, gently.

"Oh, then, you do not deny that you have actually received him?" shouted Bonaparte, and his face turned livid. With flaming eyes and uplifted hand, he stepped up close to Josephine. "Madame," he exclaimed, in a thundering voice, "then you dare to acknowledge that Charles is your lover?"

Before Josephine had time to reply to him Zephyr, who saw him threaten his mistress, furiously pounced upon Bonaparte, barking and howling, showing his teeth, and quite ready to lacerate whom he supposed to be Josephine's enemy.

"Ah, this accursed dog is here, too, to torment me!" exclaimed Bonaparte, and raising his foot, he stamped with crushing force on the body of the little dog. A single piercing yell was heard; then the blood gushed from Zephyr's mouth, and the poor beast lay writhing convulsively on the floor.*

"Bonaparte, you have killed my dog," exclaimed Josephine, reproachfully, and bent over the dying animal.

"Yes," he said, with an air of savage joy, "I have killed your dog, and in the same manner I shall crush every living being that dares to step between you and myself!"

Josephine had taken no notice of his words. She had knelt down by the side of the dog, and tenderly patted his head and writhing limbs till they ceased moving.

"Zephyr is dead," she said rising. "Poor little fellow, he died because he loved me. Pardon me, general, if I weep for him. But Zephyr was a cherished souvenir from a friend who died only a short while ago. General Hoche had given the dog to me."

"Hoche?" asked Bonaparte, in some confusion.

"Yes, Lazarus Hoche, who died a few weeks ago. A few days before his death he sent the dog to me while at Milan—Lazarus Hoche who, you know it very well, loved me, and whose hand I rejected because I loved you," said Josephine, with a noble dignity and calmness, which made a deeper impression upon Bonaparte than the most poignant rebuke would have done.

"And now, general," she proceeded, "I will reply to your reproaches. I do not say that I shall *justify* myself, because I thereby would acknowledge the justice of your charges, but I will merely answer them. I told you already why I admitted Charles at so early an hour. He was about to set out for Paris, and I wished to intrust to him important and secret letters and other commissions."

"Why did not you send them by a special courier?" asked Bonaparte, but in a much gentler voice than before.

* Vide "Rheinischer-Antiquar.," vol. ii., p. 574.

"Because it would have been dangerous to send my letters to Botot by a courier," said Josephine, calmly.

"To Botot? Then you admit your familiarities with Botot, too? People did not deceive me, then, when they told me that you received this spy Botot, whom Barras had sent after me, in order to watch me, every morning in your boudoir—that you always sent your maid away as soon as he came, and that your interviews with him frequently lasted for hours?"

"That is quite true; I do not deny it," said Josephine, proudly.

Bonaparte uttered an oath, and was about to rush at her. But she receded a step, and pointing at the dead dog with a rapid gesture, she said: "General, take care! There is no other dog here for you to kill, and I am only a weak, defenceless woman; it would assuredly not behoove the victor of Arcole to attack me!"

Bonaparte dropped his arm, and, evidently ashamed of himself, stepped back several paces.

"Then you do not deny your intimate intercourse with Botot and Charles?"

"I do not deny that both of them love me, that I know it, and that I have taken advantage of their love. Listen to me, general: I have taken *advantage* of their love. That is mean and abominable; it is playing in an execrable manner with the most exalted feelings of others, I know it very well, but I did so for your sake, general—I did so in your interest."

"In my interest?" asked Bonaparte, in surprise.

"Yes, in your interest," she said. "Now I can tell and confess every thing to you. But as long as Charles and Botot were present, I could not do so, for if you had ceased being jealous—if, warned by myself, you had treated these two men kindly instead of showing your jealous distrust of them by a hostile and surly demeanor, they might have suspected my game and divined my intrigue, and I would have been unable to avail myself any longer of their services."

"But, for God's sake, tell me what did you need their services for?"

"Ah, sir, I perceive that you know better how to wield the sword than unravel intrigues," said Josephine, with a charming smile. "Well, I made use of my two lovers in order to draw their secrets from them. And secrets they had, general, for you know Botot is the most intimate and influential friend of Barras, and Madame Tallien adores Charles, the handsome aide-de-camp. She has no secrets that he is not fully aware of, and she does whatever he wants her to do; and again, whatever she wants to be done, her husband will do—her husband, that excellent Tallien, who with Barras is one of the five directors of our republic."

"Oh, women, women!" muttered Bonaparte.

Josephine continued: "In this manner, general, I learned every scheme and almost every idea of the Directory; in this manner, through my devoted friends, Botot and Charles, I have succeeded in averting many a foul blow from your own head. For you were menaced, general, and you are menaced still. And what is menacing you? That is your glory and your greatness—it is the jealousy of the five kings of France, who, under the name of directors, are now reigning at the Luxemburg. The Quintumvirate beheld your growing power and glory with terror and wrath, and all endeavors of theirs only aimed at lessening your influence. A favorite way of theirs for carrying out their designs against you was the circulation of false news concerning you. Botot told me that Barras had even hired editors to write against you, and to question your integrity. These editors now published letters purporting to come from Verona, and announcing that Bonaparte was about to proclaim himself dictator. Then, again, they stated in some letter from the frontier, or from a foreign country, that the whole of Lombardy was again on the eve of an insurrection; that the Italians detested the tyranny imposed upon them by the conqueror, and that they were anxious to recall their former sovereigns."

"Ah, the miserable villains!" exclaimed Bonaparte, gnashing his teeth, "I—"

"Hush, general! listen to my whole reply to your reproaches," said Josephine, with imperious calmness. "At some other time these hirelings of the press announced in a letter from Turin that an extensive conspiracy was about to break out at Paris; that the Directory was to be overthrown by this conspiracy, and that a dictatorship, at the head of which Bonaparte would be, was to take place. They further circulated the news all over the departments, that the ringleaders of the plot had been arrested and sent to the military commissions for trial; but that the conqueror of Italy had deemed it prudent to avoid arrest by running away."*

"That is a truly infernal web of lies and infamies!" ejaculated Bonaparte, furiously. "But I shall justify myself, I will go to Paris and hurl the calumnies of these miserable Directors back into their teeth!"

"General, there is no necessity for you to descend into the arena in order to defend yourself," said Josephine, smiling. "Your actions speak for you, and your friends are watching over you. Whenever such an article appeared in the newspapers, Botot forwarded it to me; whenever the Directory sprang a new mine, Botot sent me word of it. And then I enlisted the assistance of my friend

* Le Normand, Mémoires, vol. i., p. 267.

Charles, and he had to refute those articles through a journalist who was in my pay, and to foil the mine by means of a counter mine."

"Oh, Josephine, how can I thank you for what you have done for me!" exclaimed Bonaparte, enthusiastically. "How—"

"I am not through yet, general," she interrupted him, coldly. "Those refutations and the true accounts of your glorious deeds found an enthusiastic echo throughout the whole of France, and every one was anxious to see you in the full splendor of your glory, and to do homage to you at Paris. But the jealous Directory calculated in advance how dangerous the splendor of your glory would be to the statesmen of the Republic, and how greatly your return would eclipse the five kings. For that reason they resolved to keep you away from Paris; for that reason exclusively they appointed you first plenipotentiary at the congress about to be opened at Rastadt, and intrusted the task to you to exert yourself here for the conclusion of peace. They wanted to chain the lion and make him feel that he has got a master whom he must obey."

"But the lion will break the chain, and he will not obey," exclaimed Bonaparte, angrily. "I shall leave Rastadt on this very day and hasten to Paris."

"Wait a few days, general," said Josephine, smiling. "It will be unnecessary for you to take violent steps, my friends Botot and Charles having worked with me for you. Botot alone not being sufficiently powerful, inasmuch as he could influence none but Barras, I sent Charles to his assistance in order to act upon Madame Tallien. And the stratagem was successful. Take this letter which I received only yesterday through a special messenger from Botot—you know Botot's handwriting, I suppose?"

"Yes, I know it."

"Well, then, satisfy yourself that he has really written it," said Josephine, drawing a sheet of paper from her memorandum-book and handing it to Bonaparte.

He glanced at it without touching the paper. "Yes, it is Botot's handwriting," he murmured.

"Read it, general," said Josephine.

"I do not want to read it; I believe all you tell me!" he exclaimed, impetuously.

"I shall read it to you," she said, "for the contents will interest you. Listen therefore: 'Adored Citoyenne Josephine.—We have reached the goal—we have conquered! The Directory have at length listened to wise remonstrances. They have perceived that they stand in need of a strong and powerful arm to support them, and of a pillar to lean against. They will recall Bonaparte in order that he may become their pillar and arm. In a few days a courier will

reach Bonaparte at Rastadt and recall him to Paris.—BOTOT.' That is all there is in the letter, General; it contains nothing about love, but only speaks of you."

"I see that I am the happiest of mortals," exclaimed Bonaparte, joyfully; "for I shall return to Paris, and my beautiful, noble, and adored Josephine will accompany me."

"No, general," she said, solemnly, "I shall return to Italy; I shall bury myself in some convent in order to weep there over the short dream of my happiness, and to pray for you. Now I have told you every thing I had to say to you. I have replied to your reproaches. You see that I have meanly profited by the love of these poor men, that I have made a disgraceful use of the most sacred feeling in order to promote your interests. I did so *secretly*, for I told you already, general, your valorous hand knows better how to wield the sword than to carry on intrigues. A strong grasp of this hand might have easily destroyed the whole artificial web of my plans, and for this reason I was silent. But I counted on your confidence, on your esteem. I perceive now, however, that I do not possess them, and this separates us forever. Unreserved confidence is not only the nourishment that imparts life to friendship, but without it love also pines away and dies.* Farewell, then, general; I forgive your distrust, but I cannot expose myself any longer to your anger. Farewell!"

She bowed and turned to the door. But Bonaparte followed her, and keeping her back with both hands, he said, in a voice trembling with emotion: "Where are you going, Josephine?"

"I told you already," she sighed, painfully; "I am going to a convent to weep and pray for you."

"That means that you want to kill me!" he exclaimed, with flaming eyes. "For you know I cannot live without you. If I had to lose you, your love, your charming person, I would lose every thing rendering life pleasant and desirable for me. Josephine, you are to me a world that is incomprehensible to me, and every day I love you more passionately. Even when I do not see you, my love for you is constantly growing; for absence only destroys small passions; it increases great passions.† My heart never felt any of the former. It proudly refused to fall in love, but you have filled it with a boundless passion, with an intoxication that seems to be almost degrading. You were always the predominant idea of my soul; your whims even were sacred laws for me. To see you is my highest bliss; you are beautiful and enchanting; your gentle, angelic soul is depicted in your features. Oh, I adore you just as

* Josephine's own words.—Vide *Le Normand*, vol. i., p. 248.

† Bonaparte's words.—Vide "*Mémoires d'une Contemporaine*," vol. ii., p. 363.

you are; if you had been younger, I should have loved you less intensely. Every thing you do seems virtuous to me; every thing you like seems honorable to me. Glory is only valuable to me inasmuch as it is agreeable to you and flatters your vanity. Your portrait always rests on my heart, and whenever I am far from you, not an hour passes without my looking at it and covering it with kisses.* The glass broke the other day when I pressed it too violently against my breast. My despair knew no bounds, for love is superstitious, and every thing seems ominous to it. I took it for an announcement of your death, and my eyes knew no sleep, my heart knew no rest, till the courier whom I immediately dispatched to you, had brought me the news that you were well, and that no accident had befallen you.† See, woman, woman, such is my love! Will you now tell me again that you wish to leave me?"

"I must, general," she said, firmly. "Love cannot be lasting without esteem, and you do not esteem me. Your suspicion has dishonored me, and a dishonored and insulted woman cannot be your wife any longer. Farewell!"

She wanted to disengage herself from his hands, but he held her only the more firmly. "Josephine," he said, in a hollow voice, "listen to me, do not drive me to despair, for it would kill me to lose you. No duty, no title would attach me any longer to earth. Men are so contemptible, life is so wretched—you alone extinguish the ignominy of mankind in my eyes.‡ Without you there is no hope, no happiness. I love you boundlessly."

"No, general, you despise me; you do not love me!"

"No, no!" he shouted, wildly stamping his foot. "If you go on in this manner, I shall drop dead at your feet. Do not torment me so dreadfully. Remember what I have often told you: Nature has given to me a strong, decided soul, but it has made you of gauze and lace. You say I do not love. Hear it, then, for the last time. Since you have been away from me, I have not passed a single day without loving you, not a single night without mentally pressing you to my heart. I have not taken a single cup of tea without cursing the glory and ambition separating me from the soul of my life.§ Amidst my absorbing occupations—at the head of my troops, on the march and in the field—my heavenly Josephine ever was foremost in my heart. She occupied my mind; she absorbed my thoughts. If I left you with the impetuosity of the Rhone, I only did so in order to return the sooner to your side. If I ran from my

* Vide "Correspondance inédite avec Joséphine," Lettre v.

† "Mémoires sur Napoléon, par Constant," vol. i., p. 809.

‡ "Correspondance inédite avec Joséphine," p. 375.

§ "Correspondance," etc., p. 552.

bed at night and continued working, I did so for the purpose of accelerating the moment of our reunion. The most beautiful women surrounded me, smiled upon me, gave me hopes of their favor, and tried to please me, but none of them resembled you; none had the gentle and melodious features so deeply imprinted on my heart. I only saw *you*, only thought of you, and that rendered all of them intolerable to me. I left the most beautiful women in order to throw myself on my couch and sigh, 'When will my adored wife be again with me?'"* And if I just now gave way to an ebullition of anger, I only did so because I love you so boundlessly as to be jealous of every glance, of every smile. Forgive me, therefore, Josephine, forgive me for the sake of my infinite love! Tell me that you will think no more of it, and that you will forget and forgive every thing."

He looked at her anxiously and inquiringly, but Josephine did not reply to his glances. She averted her eyes and remained silent.

"Josephine," he exclaimed, perfectly beside himself, "make an end of it. Just touch my forehead; it is covered with cold perspiration, and my heart is trembling as it never trembled in battle. Make an end of it; I am utterly exhausted. Oh, Josephine, my dear Josephine, open your arms to me."

"Well, come then, you dear, cruel husband," she said, bursting into tears and extending her arms to him.

Bonaparte uttered a joyful cry, pressed her to his heart, and covered her with kisses.

"Now I am sure you have forgiven every thing," he said, encircling her all the time with his arms. "You forgive my madness, my abominable jealousy?"

"I forgive every thing, Bonaparte, if you will promise not to be jealous again," she said, with a charming smile.

"I promise never to be jealous again, but to think, whenever you give a rendezvous to another man, that you only do so for my sake, and for the purpose of conspiring for me. Ah, my excellent wife, you have worked bravely for me, and henceforth I know that I can intrust to your keeping my glory and my honor with implicit confidence. Yea, even the helm of the state I would fearlessly intrust to your hands. Pray, therefore, Josephine, pray that your husband may reach the pinnacle of distinction, for in that case I should give you a seat in my council of state and make you mistress of every thing except one point—"†

"And what is that?" asked Josephine, eagerly.

"The only thing I should not intrust to you, Josephine," he said, laughing, "would be the keys of my treasury; you never would get

* Ibid., p. 349.

† Le Normand, vol. i., p. 241.

them, my beautiful prodigal little wife of gauze, lace, diamonds, and pearls!"*

"Ah, then you would deprive me of the right to distribute charities in your name?" she asked, sadly. "Is not that the most precious and sublime duty of the wife of a great man, to conquer Heaven for him by charities while he is conquering earth by his deeds? And you would take from me the means for doing so? Yours is a wild and passionate nature, and I shall often have to heal the wounds that you have inflicted in your outbursts of anger. Happy for me if I should always be able to heal them, and if your anger should be less fatal to men than to my poor little dog, who merely wanted to defend me against your violence."

"Poor little dog!" said Bonaparte, casting a glance of confusion upon Zephyr. "I greatly regret the occurrence, particularly as the dog was a gift from Hoche. But no lamentations of mine being able to recall Zephyr to life, Josephine, I will immortalize him at all events. He shall not find an unknown grave, like many a hero; no, we will erect to this valiant and intrepid defender of the charming fortress Josephine, a monument which shall relate his exploits to the most remote posterity. Have Zephyr packed up in a box; couriers and convoys of troops will set out to-day for Milan. They shall take the corpse along, and I will issue orders that a monument be erected to your Zephyr in the garden of our villa.† But now, Josephine, I must leave you; life, with its stern realities, is calling me. I must go and receive the Austrian ambassadors."

CHAPTER XX.

THE RECEPTION OF THE AMBASSADORS.

A MOTLEY crowd of gentlemen in uniforms and glittering gauds had filled the anterooms of the French embassy ever since the arrival of General Bonaparte and Josephine. All these high-born representatives of German sovereigns and states hastened to do homage to the French lady and to commend themselves to the benevolence and favor of the victorious general of the republic. But the doors of the general and of his wife were as difficult to open as those of the French ambassadors, Bonnier, Jean Debry, and Roberjot. General Bonaparte had received the Austrian ambassadors, and

*Ibid., vol. i., p. 242.

†Bonaparte kept his word. The little victim of his jealousy, Zephyr, the dog, was buried in the gardens of Mondeza, near Milan, and a marble monument was erected on his grave.—Le Normand, vol. i., p. 498.

returned their visit. But nobody else had been admitted to him during the first day. The ambassadors, therefore, flocked the more eagerly on this second day after his arrival to the anterooms of the French ambassadors, for every one wanted to be the first to win for his sovereign and for his state the good-will of the French conqueror. Every one wished to obtain advantages, to avert mischief, and to beg for favors.

Happy were they already who had only succeeded in penetrating into the anterooms of the French embassy, for a good deal of money had to be spent in order to open those doors. In front of them stood the footmen of the ambassadors with grave, stern countenances, refusing to admit any but those who had been previously recommended to them, or who knew now how to gain their favor by substantial rewards.* And when they finally, by means of such persuasive gifts, had succeeded in crossing the threshold of the anteroom, they found there the clerks and secretaries of the French gentlemen, and these men again barred the door of the cabinet occupied by the ambassadors themselves. These clerks and secretaries had to be bribed likewise by solicitations, flatteries, and money; only, instead of satisfying them with silver, as in the case of the doorkeepers, they had to give them heavy gold pieces.

Having finally overcome all these obstacles—having now penetrated into the presence of the French diplomatists—the ambassadors of the German powers met with a haughty reserve instead of the kindness they had hoped for, and with sarcastic sneers in lieu of a warm reception. It was in vain for Germany thus to humble herself and to crouch in the dust. France was too well aware of her victories and superiority, and the servility of the German aristocracy only excited contempt and scorn, which the French gentlemen did not refrain from hurling into the faces of the humble solicitors. The greater the abjectness of the latter, the more overbearing the haughty demeanor of the former, and both gained the firm conviction that France held the happiness and quiet of Germany in her hands, and that France alone had the power to secure to the German princes the possession of their states, to enlarge their dominions, or to deprive them thereof, just as she pleased, and without paying any deference to the wishes of the Germans themselves.

To-day, however, all these distinguished men—the counts and barons of the empire, the bishops and other ecclesiastical dignitaries

*The employés of the French embassy, from the first secretary down to the lowest footman and cook, received handsome gifts at the hands of the German delegates, for every one was anxious to secure the good-will of the French representatives; and in obedience to the old trick of diplomatists, they tried to gain the favor of the masters by means of that of their servants. The latter made a very handsome thing out of it.—Vide Häfisser, vol. ii., p. 163.

—had not appeared for the purpose of conquering the favor of the three French stars—to-day a new constellation had arisen on the sky of Rastadt, and they wanted to stare at it—they wanted to admire Bonaparte and Josephine.

But Bonaparte took hardly any notice of the crowd assembled in the anteroom. His hands folded on his back, he was pacing his room, and listening with rapt attention to the accounts the three French ambassadors were giving him concerning the policy they had pursued up to the present time.

"We have done every thing in our power to spread republican notions hereabouts," said Jean Debry, at the conclusion of his lengthy remarks. "We have sent agents to all of these small German states for the purpose of enlightening the people about their dignity, their rights, and the disgrace of submitting to miserable princes, instead of being free and great under the wholesome influence of republican institutions."

"We have, moreover, even here, excellent spies among the ambassadors," said Roberjot, "and through them we have skilfully fanned the flames of that discord which seems to be the bane of Germany. It is true, they hold secret meetings every day in order to agree on a harmonious line of policy, but discord, jealousy, and covetousness always accompany them to those meetings, and they are therefore never able to agree about any thing. Besides, these German noblemen are very talkative, hence we find out all their secrets, and it is an easy task for us to foil every scheme of theirs. Every one of them is anxious to enlarge his possessions; we therefore give them hopes of acquiring new territory at the expense of their neighbors, and thereby greatly increase the discord and confusion prevailing among them. We fill the ambassadors of the secondary princes, and especially those of the ecclesiastical sovereigns, with distrust against the more powerful German states, and intimate to them that the latter are trying to aggrandize themselves at their expense, and that they have asked the consent of France to do so. We inform the first-class governments of the desire of the smaller princes to enlarge their dominions, and caution them against placing implicit trust in their representations. Thus we sow the seeds of discord among these princely hirelings, and endeavor to undermine the thrones of Germany."

"Germany must throw off all her princes like ripe ulcers," exclaimed Bonnier, scornfully. "These numerous thrones beyond the Rhine are dangerous and fatal to our sublime and indivisible French Republic—bad examples spoiling good manners. Every throne must disappear from the face of the earth, and freedom and equality must shine throughout the whole world like the sun."

"You are right," said Bonaparte, gravely. "It is our duty to disseminate our principles among these Germans, who are living in slavery as yet, and to assist the poor serfs in obtaining their liberty. Germany must become a confederate republic, and discord is the best sword wherewith to attack these princely hirelings. But what does the Swedish ambassador—whose name I noticed on the list of applicants for interviews with myself—here among the representatives of the German princes?"

"He pretends to participate in the congress of peace because Sweden warranted the execution of the treaty of Westphalia," exclaimed Jean Debry, shrugging his shoulders.

"Bah! that is a most ridiculous pretext," said Bonnier, gloomily. "This M. Fersen is a royalist. The political part played by this diplomatist at the court of Louis Capet, and afterward continued by him, is only too well known. He now tries to dazzle us by his kindness merely for the purpose of laying a trap for the French Republic."

"Ah, we shall show to the gentleman that the Republic has got an open eye and a firm hand, and that it discovers and tears all such meshes and traps," said Bonaparte, impetuously. "But we have done business enough for to-day, and I will go and receive the ambassadors who have been waiting here for a long while in the anteroom."

He saluted the three gentlemen with a familiar nod, and then repaired to the reception-room, the doors of which were opened at last to admit the German ambassadors.

It was a brilliant crowd now entering in a solemn procession through the opened folding-doors. The ambassadors of every German sovereign were in attendance; only the representatives of Austria and Prussia, whom Bonaparte had received already in a special audience, were absent.

This German peace delegation, which now entered the room to do homage to the French general, was a very large one. There were first the ambassadors of Bavaria and Saxony, of Baden and Wurtemberg, of Hanover and Mecklenburg; then followed the host of the small princes and noblemen, by whose side the ecclesiastical dignitaries, the representatives of the electors and bishops, were walking in.*

Bonaparte stood proudly erect in the middle of the room, his gloomy glances inspecting the gentlemen, who now commenced stationing themselves on both sides of the apartment. A master of

*The whole German peace delegation consisted of seventy-nine persons, and all these seventy-nine distinguished men, the ambassadors of emperor, kings, and princes, tried to gain the favor of the ambassadors of France; and the three gentlemen, representing the great Republic, seemed more powerful and influential than all the representatives of Germany.

ceremonies, who had been previously selected for the meetings of the peace congress, now walked solemnly through the ranks and announced in a ringing voice the name, rank, and position of every ambassador.

"His excellency Count Fersen," he shouted just now, in a solemn manner, "ambassador of his majesty the King of Sweden and Duke of Pomerania."

Count Fersen had not yet finished his ceremonious obeisance, when Bonaparte rapidly approached him.

"Just tell me, sir," he exclaimed, bluntly; "what is the name of the minister whom Sweden has now in Paris?"

Count Fersen looked in evident surprise and confusion at the pale face of the general, whose flaming eyes were fixed upon him with an angry expression.

"I do not know," he faltered, "I am not quite sure—"

"Ah, sir, you know only too well that Sweden has not yet given a successor to M. de Haïll," Bonaparte interrupted him violently, "and that the only ambassador whom she was willing to send had to be rejected by the Directory. You were this ambassador whom the Directory would not tolerate in Paris. Friendly ties have united France and Sweden for a long series of years, and I believe Sweden ought to appreciate and recognize their importance at the present time more than ever. How, then, is the conduct of the court of Stockholm to be explained, that tries to make it its special business to send everywhere, either to Paris or wherever the plenipotentiaries of France may be seen, ministers and ambassadors who must be peculiarly distasteful to every citizen of France?"

"That is certainly not the intention of my court," exclaimed Count Fersen, hastily.

"That may be," said Bonaparte, proudly, "but I should like to know if the King of Sweden would remain indifferent in case a French ambassador should try to instigate an insurrection of the people of Stockholm against him! The French Republic cannot permit men, whose connection with the old court of France is a matter of notoriety, to appear in official capacities, and thus to irritate and humble the republican ambassadors, the representatives of the first nation on earth, who, before consulting her policy, knows how to maintain her dignity."

"I shall immediately set out for Stockholm in order to communicate these views of the conqueror of Italy to my court," said Count Fersen, pale with shame and mortification.

"Do so, set out at once," exclaimed Bonaparte, impetuously, "and tell your master, unless he should conclude to pursue a different policy, I will send him some day a skilful diplomatic Gascon who

knows how to simplify the machine and make it go less rapidly. King Gustavus will perhaps find out, when it is too late, and at his own expense, that the reins of government must be firmly held in one hand, and the other skilfully wield the sword, while it is yet time. Go, sir, and inform your king of what I have told you!"

Count Fersen made no reply; he merely bowed hastily and silently, and, beckoning his *attachés* who were standing behind him, he left the room with his suite.*

Bonaparte's flashing eyes followed him until he had disappeared, and then the general turned once more to the ambassadors.

"I could not suffer a traitor and enemy in our assembly," he said, in a loud and firm voice. "We are here in order to make peace, while he was secretly anxious for a renewal of war, and was bent upon sowing the evil seeds of discord among us. Let us all endeavor to make peace, gentlemen, to the best of our power. Do not compel me to enter the lists against you, too, for the struggle could not be doubtful between a nation that has just conquered her liberty, and princes who tried to deprive her of it again. If you reject to-day the pacific overtures I shall make to you, I shall impose other conditions to-morrow; but woe unto him among you, who should refuse my mediation; for in that case I should overthrow the whole framework of a false policy, and the thrones standing on a weak foundation would soon break down. I speak to you with the frankness of a soldier and the noble pride of a victorious general; I caution you because I have the welfare of the nations at heart, who more than ever need the blessings of peace. It is now for you to say whether we shall have war or peace, and it will solely depend upon your submissiveness whether France will be able to conclude an honorable peace with her German neighbors, or whether you will compel us to take up arms once more. But in that case woe unto you, for we should retaliate in the most terrible manner on those who would dare to oppose us!"†

He paused and rapidly glanced at the assembled gentlemen. They stood before him with grave and gloomy faces, but none of them were courageous enough to make a dignified reply to the proud and humiliating words of the French general. The ambassadors of Germany received the severe lecture of the representative of France with silent submissiveness.

An imperceptible smile played on Bonaparte's lips. He saluted the gentlemen with a slight nod and rapidly returned to his own rooms.

*This whole scene actually took place, and contains only such words as really were exchanged between Bonaparte and Fersen.—Vide "Mémoires d'un Homme d'État," vol. v., p. 64. Le Normand, Mémoires, vol. I., p. 263.

†Bonaparte's own words.—Vide Le Normand, vol. I., p. 964.