

treatment you had to suffer at the hands of the French. You shall speak as a good patriot ought to speak."

"Yes, I shall speak like a good patriot," said Wenzel, ardently.

"To-morrow you will be with all your friends on the street in order to attend the festival of the volunteers, and to look at the procession. Do you know where the French ambassador lives?"

"Yes, on the *Kohlmarkt*."

"You shall do your best to draw the people thither. The French ambassador will display the banner of the French Republic on his balcony to-morrow. Can the people of Vienna tolerate that?"

"No, the people of Vienna cannot tolerate that!" shouted Wenzel.

"You will repeat that to every one—you will exasperate the people against the banner and against the ambassador—you and the crowd will demand loudly and impetuously that the banner be removed."

"But suppose the ambassador should refuse to remove it?"

"Then you will forcibly enter the house and remove the banner yourselves."

"But if they shut the doors?"

"Then you will break them open, just as you did here a year ago. And besides, are there no windows—are there no stones, by means of which you may open the windows so nicely?"

"You give us permission to do all that?"

"I order you to do all that. Now listen to your special commission. A few of my agents will always accompany you. As soon as you are in the ambassador's house, repair at once to his excellency's study. Pick up all the papers you will find there, and bring them to me. As soon as I see you enter my room with these papers, you will be free forever!"

"I shall bring you the papers," exclaimed Wenzel, with a radiant face.

"But listen. Betray to a living soul but one single word of what I have said to you, and not only yourself, but your wife and your children will also be lost! My arm is strong enough to catch all of you, and my ear is large enough to hear every thing."

"I shall be as silent as the grave," protested Wenzel, eagerly. "I shall only raise my voice in order to speak to the people about our beloved and wise Minister Thugut, and about the miserable, overbearing French, who dare to hang out publicly the banner of their bloody republic here in our imperial city, in our magnificent Vienna!"

"That is the right talk, my man! Now go and reflect about every thing I have told you, and to-morrow morning call on me again; I shall then give you further instructions. Now go—go to your wife, and keep the whole matter secret."

"Hurrah! long live our noble prime minister!" shouted Wenzel, jubilantly. "Hurrah, hurrah, I am free!" And he reeled away like a drunken man.

Thugut looked after him with a smile of profound contempt. "That is the best way to educate the people," he said. "Truly, if we could only send every Austrian for one year to the penitentiary, we would have none but good and obedient subjects!"

## CHAPTER XXV.

## THE RIOT.

THE streets of Vienna were densely crowded on the following day. Every house was beautifully decorated with fresh verdure and festoons of flowers; business was entirely suspended, and the people in their holiday dresses were moving through the streets, jubilant, singing patriotic hymns, and waiting in joyous impatience for the moment when the procession of the volunteers would leave the city hall in order to repair to the *Burg*, where they were to cheer the emperor. Then they would march through the city, and finally conclude the festival with a banquet and ball, to be held in a public hall that had been handsomely decorated for the occasion.

Not only the people, however, but also the educated and aristocratic classes of Vienna wanted to participate in the patriotic festival. In the open windows there were seen high-born ladies, beautifully dressed, and holding splendid bouquets in their hands, which were to be showered down upon the procession of the volunteers; an endless number of the most splendid carriages, surrounded by dense crowds of pedestrians, were slowly moving through the streets, and in these carriages there were seated the ladies and gentlemen of the aristocracy and of the wealthiest financial circles; they witnessed the popular enthusiasm with smiles of satisfaction and delight.

Only the carriages of the ministers were missing in this gorgeous procession, and it was reported everywhere that two of these gentlemen, Prime Minister Baron von Thugut and Police Minister Count Saurau, had been taken sick, and were confined to their beds, while the other ministers were with the emperor at Laxenburg.

Baron Thugut's prediction had been verified, therefore; the police minister had really been taken so sick that he had to keep his bed, and that he had requested Baron Thugut by letter to take charge of his department for a few days.

But the prime minister himself had suddenly become quite unwell, and was unable to leave his room! Hence he had not accom-

panied the other ministers to Laxenburg in order to dine at the emperor's table. Nay—an unheard-of occurrence—he had taken his meals all alone in his study. His footman had received stringent orders to admit no one, and to reply to every applicant for an interview with him, "His excellency was confined to his bed by a raging fever, and all business matters had to be deferred until to-morrow."

The minister's condition, however, was not near as bad as that. It was true he had the fever, but it was merely the fever of expectation, impatience, and long suspense. The whole day had passed, and not a single dissonance had disturbed the pure joy of the celebration; not a single violent scene had interrupted the patriotic jubilee. The crowds on the streets and public places constantly increased in numbers, but peace and hilarity reigned everywhere, and the people were singing and laughing everywhere.

This was the reason why the minister's blood was so feverish, why he could find no rest, and why his cold heart for once pulsed so rapidly. He was pacing his study with long steps, murmuring now and then some incoherent words, and then uneasily stepping to the window in order to survey the street cautiously from behind the curtain, and to observe the surging crowd below.

Just then the large clock on the marble mantelpiece commenced striking. Thugut hastily turned toward it. "Six o'clock, and nothing yet," he murmured. "I shall put that fellow Wenzel into a subterranean dungeon for life, and dismiss every agent of mine, if nothing—"

He paused and listened. It had seemed to him as though he had heard a soft rap at the hidden door leading to the secret staircase. Yes, it was no mistake; somebody was rapping at it, and seemed to be in great haste.

"At last!" exclaimed Thugut, drawing a deep breath, and he approached with hurried steps the large painting, covering the whole wall and reaching down to the floor. He quickly touched one of the artificial roses on the gilt frame. The painting turned round, and the door became visible behind it in the wall.

The rapping was now plainly heard. Thugut pushed the bolt back and unlocked the door. His confidential secretary, Hübschle, immediately rushed in with a glowing face and in breathless haste.

"Your excellency," he gasped—"your excellency, the fun has just commenced! They are now pursuing the deer like a pack of infuriated blood-hounds. Oh, oh! they will chase him thoroughly, I should think!"

Thugut cast a glance of gloomy indignation on the versatile little man with the bloated face. "You have been drinking again, Hübschle," he said; "and I have ordered you to remain sober to-day!"

"Your excellency, I am quite sober," protested Hübschle. "I assure you I have not drunk any more than what was required by my thirst."

"Ah, yes; your thirst always requires large quantities," exclaimed Thugut, laughing. "But speak now rapidly, briefly, and plainly. No circumlocution, no tirades! Tell me the naked truth. What fun has just commenced?"

"The inauguration of the banner, your excellency."

"Then Bernadotte has hung out his banner, after all?"

"Yes, he has done so. We were just going down the street—quite a jolly crowd it was, by the by. Master Wenzel, a splendid fellow, had just loudly intoned the hymn of 'God save the Emperor Francis,' and all the thousands and thousands of voices were joining the choir, as if they intended to serenade the French ambassador, when, suddenly, a balcony door opened, and General Bernadotte, in full uniform came out. He was attended by his whole suite; and several footmen brought out an immense banner, which they attached to the balcony. We had paused right in the middle of our beautiful hymn, and the people were looking up to the balcony, from which the gentlemen had disappeared again, with glances full of surprise and curiosity. But the banner remained there! Suddenly a violent gust touched the banner, which, up to this time, had loosely hung down, and unfolded it entirely. Now we saw the French tri-color proudly floating over our German heads, and on it we read, in large letters of gold—*Liberté! Egalité! Fraternité!*"\*

"What impudence!" muttered Thugut.

"You are right, that was the word," exclaimed Hübschle. "'What impudence!' roared Master Wenzel; and the whole crowd immediately repeated, 'What impudence! Down with the foreign banner! We are not so stupid as the people of Milan, Venice, and Rome; we do not jubilantly hail the French color; on the contrary, this banner makes us angry. Down with it! It is an insult offered to the emperor, that a foreign flag with such an abominable inscription is floating here. Down with the banner!'"

"Very good, very good, indeed," said Thugut, smiling. "This man Wenzel is really a practical fellow. Go on, sir."

"The crowd constantly assumed larger proportions, and the shouts of 'Down with the banner!' became every moment more impetuous and threatening. Suddenly a small detachment of soldiers emerged from the adjoining street. The officer in command kindly urged the people to disperse. But it was in vain; the tumult was constantly on the increase. The crowd commenced

\* "Mémoires d'un Homme d'État," vol. v., p. 494.

tearing up the pavement and throwing stones at the windows and at the banner."

"And the soldiers?"

"They quietly stood aside. But—somebody is rapping at the opposite door! Shall I open it, your excellency?"

"One moment! I first want to turn back the painting. So! Now open the door, Hübschle!"

The private secretary hastened with tottering steps to the door and unlocked it. Thugut's second private secretary entered. He held a sealed letter in his hand.

"Well, Heinle, what's the matter?" asked Thugut, quietly.

"Your excellency, the French ambassador, General Bernadotte, has sent this letter to your excellency."

"And what did you reply to the messenger?"

"That your excellency had a raging fever; that the doctor had forbidden us to disturb you, but that I would deliver it to the minister as soon as he felt a little better."

"That was right. Now go back to your post and guard the door well in order that no one may penetrate into my room. And you, Hübschle, hasten back to the *Kohlmarkt* and see what is going on there, and what is occurring at the French embassy. But do not drink any more liquor! As soon as this affair is over, I shall give you three days' leave of absence, when you may drink as much as you please. Go, now, and return soon to tell me all about it."

"And now," said Thugut, when he was alone, "I will see what the French ambassador has written to me."

He opened the letter, and, as if the mere perusal with the eyes were not sufficient for him, he read in a half-loud voice as follows: "The ambassador of the French Republic informs Baron Thugut that at the moment he is penning these lines, a fanatical crowd has been so impudent as to commit a riot in front of his dwelling. The motives that have produced this violent scene cannot be doubtful, inasmuch as several stones already were thrown at the windows of the house occupied by the ambassador. Profoundly offended at so much impudence, he requests Baron Thugut immediately to order an investigation, so that the instigators of the riot may be punished, and that their punishment may teach the others a much-needed lesson. The ambassador of the French Republic has no doubt that his reclamations will meet with the attention which they ought to excite, and that the police, moreover, will be vigilant enough to prevent similar scenes, which could not be renewed without producing the most serious consequences, the ambassador being firmly determined to repel with the utmost energy even the slightest insults, and accordingly much more so, such scandalous attacks. Baron Thugut is

further informed that he has reason to complain of the conduct of several agents of the police. Some of them were requested to disperse the rioters, but, instead of fulfilling the ambassador's orders, they remained cold and idle spectators of the revolting scene."\*

"What overbearing and insulting language this fellow dares to use!" exclaimed Thugut, when he had finished the letter. "One might almost believe he was our lord and master here, and—ah, somebody raps again at the door! Perhaps Hübschle is back already."

He quickly touched the frame of the painting again, and the door opened. It was really Hübschle, who entered as hastily as before.

"Your excellency, I have just reascended the staircase as rapidly as though I were a cat," he gasped. "At the street door I learned some fresh news from one of our men, and I returned at once to tell you all about it."

"Quick, you idle gossip, no unnecessary preface!"

"Your excellency, things are assuming formidable proportions. The riot is constantly on the increase, and grows every minute more threatening. Count Dietrichstein, and Count Fersen, the director of the police, have repaired to General Bernadotte and implored him to remove the banner."

"The soft-hearted fools!" muttered Thugut.

"But their prayers were fruitless. They preferred them repeatedly, and always were refused. They even went so far as to assure the ambassador, in case he should yield to their request and give them time to calm the people and induce them to leave the place, that the Austrian government would assuredly give him whatever satisfaction he should demand. But General Bernadotte persisted in his refusal—and replied peremptorily, 'No, the banner remains!'"

"Proceed, proceed!" exclaimed Thugut, impatiently.

"That is all I know, but I shall hasten to collect further news, and then return to your excellency."

Hübschle disappeared through the secret door, and Thugut replaced the painting before it. "The banner remains!" he exclaimed, laughing scornfully. "We will see how long it will remain! Ah, Heinle is rapping again at the other door. What is it, Heinle?"

"Another dispatch from the French ambassador," said Heinle, merely pushing his arm with the letter through the door.

"And you have made the same reply?"

"The same reply."

"Good! Return to your post."

The arm disappeared again. Thugut opened the second dispatch,

\* "Mémoires d'un Homme d'État," vol. v., p. 495.

and read as before in a half-loud voice: "The ambassador of the French Republic informs Baron Thugut that the fury of the mob is constantly on the increase; already all the window-panes of the dwelling have been shattered by the stones the rioters are incessantly throwing at them; he informs you that the crowd at the present moment numbers no less than three or four thousand men, and that the soldiers whose assistance was invoked, so far from protecting the house of the French embassy, remain impassive spectators of the doings and fury of the rabble, their inactivity encouraging the latter instead of deterring them. The ambassador cannot but believe that this scandalous scene is not merely tolerated, but fostered by the authorities, for nothing whatever is done to put a stop to it. He sees with as much regret as pain that the dignity of the French people is being violated by the insults heaped on the ambassador, who vainly implored the populace to disperse and go home. At the moment the ambassador is writing these lines, the rage of the crowd is strained to such a pitch that the doors have been broken open by means of stones, while the soldiers were quietly looking on. The furious rabble tore the French colors from the balcony with hooks and long poles. The ambassador, who cannot remain any longer in a country where the most sacred laws are disregarded and solemn treaties trampled under foot, therefore asks Baron Thugut to send him his passports in order that he may repair to France with all the *attachés* of the embassy, unless Baron Thugut should announce at once that the Austrian government has taken no part whatever in the insults heaped upon the French Republic; that it disavows them, on the contrary, in the most formal manner, and that it orders the ringleaders and their accomplices to be arrested and punished in the most summary manner. On this condition alone, and if the Austrian government agrees to restore the French banner and to cause it to be displayed on the balcony of the French embassy by a staff-officer, the ambassador consents to remain in Vienna. Let Baron Thugut remember that these are precious moments, and that he owes the ambassador an immediate and categorical reply to his inquiries."\*

"Well, I believe the good people of Vienna will take it upon themselves to make a categorical reply to General Bernadotte, and to silence the overbearing babbler, no matter how it is done," exclaimed Thugut, laughing scornfully. "I am really anxious to know how this affair is going to end, and how my brave rioters will chastise the ambassador for his insolence. What, another rap already? Why, you are a genuine *postillon d'amour!* Do you bring me another letter?"

\* "Mémoires d'un Homme d'État," vol. v., p. 501.

"A third dispatch from General Bernadotte," exclaimed Heinle, outside, pushing his arm with the dispatch again through the door.

Thugut took it and rapidly opened it. "It seems matters are growing more pressing," he said, smilingly. "Let us read it!" And he read with an air of great satisfaction:

"The ambassador of the French Republic informs Baron Thugut that the riotous proceedings have lasted five hours already; that no agent of the police has come to his assistance; that the furious rioters have taken possession of a portion of the house and are destroying every thing they can lay their hands on."

"Aha, my friend Wenzel is looking for the papers in the rooms of the French embassy!" exclaimed Thugut, triumphantly. He then read on.

"The ambassador, the secretaries of legation, the French citizens and officers who are with him, were compelled to retire to a room where they are waiting further developments with the undaunted courage characteristic of the republicans. The ambassador repeats his demand that the necessary passports be sent for him and for all the French who desire to accompany him. The transmission of these passports is the more urgent, as the rioters, who were about to rush into the room where the French were awaiting them, only shrank back when some servants of the French embassy discharged the fire-arms with which they had been provided."

"Ah, a regular battle, then, has taken place!" shouted Thugut, in great glee. "A siege in grand style! Wonder why Hübschle has not come back yet? But stop! I hear him already. He raps! I am coming, sir! I am opening the door already!"

And Thugut hastened to touch the frame of the painting and to open the door.

It was true, Hübschle, the private secretary, was there, but he did not come alone. Wenzel, soiled with blood, his clothes torn and in the wildest disorder, entered with him, supporting himself on Hübschle's arm.

"Ah, you bring me there a wounded boar!" said Thugut, morosely.

"A boar who splendidly goaded on the hounds and performed the most astonishing exploits," said Hübschle, enthusiastically. "He received a gunshot wound in the right arm and fainted. I carried him with the assistance of a few friends to a well, and we poured water on him until he recovered his senses and was able again to participate in the general jubilee."

"Then it was a jubilee? Mr. Wenzel, tell me all about it."

"It was a very fine affair," said Wenzel, gasping. "We had penetrated into the house and were working to the best of our power in the magnificent rooms. The furniture, the looking-glasses, the

chandeliers, the carriages in the courtyard, every thing was destroyed, while we were singing and shouting, 'Long live the emperor! God save the Emperor Francis!'

"What a splendid *Marseillaise* that dear, kind-hearted Haydn has composed for us in that hymn," said Thugut, in a low voice, gleefully rubbing his hands. "And the banner? What has become of the banner?"

"The banner we had previously torn to pieces, and with the shreds we had gone to the *Schottenplatz* and publicly burned them there amidst the jubilant shouts of the people."

"Very good. And what else was done in the embassy building?"

"We rushed from room to room. Nothing withstood our fury, and finally we arrived at the room in which the ambassador and his suite had barricaded themselves as in a fortress. It was the ambassador's study," said Wenzel, slowly and significantly—"the cabinet in which he kept his papers."

Thugut nodded gently, and said nothing but "Proceed!"

"I rushed toward the door and encouraged the others to follow me. We succeeded in bursting the door open. At the same moment the besieged fired at us. Three of us dropped wounded; the others ran away."

"Yes, the miserable rascals always run away as soon as they smell gunpowder," said Thugut, indignantly. "And you, Mr. Wenzel?"

"I was wounded and had fainted. My comrades carried me out of the house."

"And the papers?" asked Thugut. "You did not take them?"

"Your excellency, General Bernadotte and the whole retinue of the embassy were in the room in which the ambassador keeps his papers. I would have penetrated into it with my friends if the bullet had not shattered my arm and stretched me down senseless."

"Yes, indeed, you became entirely senseless," said Thugut, harshly, "for you even forgot that I only promised to release you provided you should bring the papers of the French ambassador."

"Your excellency," shouted Wenzel, in dismay, "I—"

"Silence!" commanded Thugut, in a stern tone; "who has allowed you to speak without being asked?"

At this moment another hasty rap at the door was heard, and Heinle's arm appeared again in the door.

"Another dispatch from the French ambassador?" asked Thugut.

"No, your excellency, a dispatch from his majesty the emperor."

Thugut hastily seized the small sealed note and opened it. It contained nothing but the following words:

"The ambassador has received a salutary lesson, and his banner

has been destroyed. Let us stop the riot now, and avoid extreme measures. Several regiments must be called out to restore order."

The minister slowly folded the paper and put it into his pocket. He then rang the bell so violently and loudly, that Heinle and the other servants rushed immediately into the room.

"Open every door—call every footman!" commanded Thugut. "Admit every one who wants to see me. Two mounted messengers shall hold themselves in readiness to forward dispatches. Every one may learn that, in spite of my sickness, I have risen from my couch in order to reestablish tranquillity in the capital."

He stepped to his desk and rapidly wrote a few words, whereupon he handed the paper to Germain, his *valet de chambre*.

"Here, Germain, hasten with this note to Count Fersen, the director of police, and take this fellow along. Two footmen may accompany you. You will deliver him to the director of the police and tell him that he is one of the rioters whom my agents have arrested. Request the director to have him placed in a safe prison and to admit none to him but the officers of the criminal court. He is a very dangerous criminal; this is the second time that he has been arrested as a rioter. Well, what is the matter with the fellow? He reels like a drunken man! He has probably drunk too much brandy for the purpose of stimulating his courage."

"Pardon me, your excellency," said Hübschle, "the man has fainted."

"Then carry him away, and take him in a carriage to the director of the police," said Thugut, indifferently, and he looked on coldly and unfeelingly, while the footman hastily seized the pale, unconscious man and dragged him away.

He returned to his desk and rapidly wrote a few words on a sheet of large, gilt-edged paper, which he then enclosed in an envelope, sealed, and directed.

"A dispatch to the emperor!" he said, handing it to Heinle. "Let a mounted messenger take it immediately to his majesty."

This dispatch contained the reply to the emperor's laconic note, and it was almost more laconic than the latter, for it contained only the following words:

"Sire, within an hour order will be reestablished."

"Now, Hübschle, sit down," said Thugut, all the others having left the room by his orders. "Collect your five senses, and write what I am going to dictate to you."

Hübschle sat already at the desk, and waited, pen in hand. Baron Thugut, folding his hands behind his back, slowly paced the room and dictated:

"The minister of foreign affairs has heard with regret of the

riotous proceedings referred to in the notes which the ambassador of the French Republic has addressed to him this evening. The minister will report the whole affair to his imperial majesty, and entertains no doubt that the emperor will be very indignant at the occurrence. The ambassador may rest assured that nothing will be left undone in order to ferret out the perpetrators of this outrage, and to punish them with the whole severity of the laws, and with the sincere desire which the Austrian government has always entertained to maintain the friendship so happily established between the two countries."\*

"Well, why do you dare to laugh, Hübschle?" asked Thugut, when he took the pen in order to sign the note.

"Your excellency, I am laughing at the many fine words in which this dispatch says: 'Mr. Ambassador, ask for your passports; you may depart.'"

Thugut smiled. "When you are drunk, Hübschle, you are exceedingly shrewd, and for that reason, I pardon your impertinence. Your rubicund nose has scented the matter correctly. The ambassador has demanded his passports already. But go now. Take this dispatch to the second courier and tell him to carry it immediately to the French embassy. As for yourself, you must hasten to the commander of Vienna, and take this paper to him. You may say to him, 'The gates are to be closed in order to prevent the populace of the suburbs from reaching the city. The Preiss regiment shall occupy the house of the ambassador and the adjoining streets, and fire at whosoever offers resistance or wants to raise a disturbance.' Vienna must be perfectly quiet in the course of an hour. Begone!"

Hübschle rushed out, and Thugut remained alone. He slowly and deliberately sat down in an arm-chair, and pondered serenely over the events of the night.

"It is true I have not wholly accomplished my purpose," he muttered, "but M. Bernadotte will try no longer to injure me. He shall have his passports to-morrow morning."

\*The French ambassador really left Vienna in consequence of this riot. The emperor vainly tried to pacify him. Bernadotte persisted in his demands. He wanted the Austrian Government to restore the banner and to have it displayed on his balcony by a staff officer. In reply to these repeated demands, Thugut sent him his passports, and the legation left Vienna.—Vide Hauser, "German History," vol. ii., p. 180. "Mémoires d'un Homme d'État," vol. v.

## LAST DAYS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

### CHAPTER XXVI.

VICTORIA DE POUTET.

NEARLY a year had elapsed since the departure of the French ambassador from Vienna, but the rupture of the peace with France, so ardently desired by Minister Thugut, had not yet taken place. A strong party in the emperor's cabinet had declared against Thugut, and this time obtained a victory over the minister who had been believed to be all-powerful. This party was headed by the empress and Archduke Charles. Thugut, therefore, was compelled to suppress his wrath, and defer his revenge to some later time.

But although the dark clouds of the political thunderstorm had been removed for the time being, they were constantly threatening, like a gloomy spectre on the horizon, casting sinister shadows on every day and on every hour.

The merry people of Vienna, owing to the incessant duration of these gloomy shadows, had become very grave, and loudly and softly denounced Minister Thugut as the author and instigator of all the evils that were menacing Austria. In fact, Baron Thugut was still the all-powerful minister; and as the emperor loved and feared him, the whole court, the whole capital, and the whole empire bowed to him. But while bowing, every one hated him; while obeying, every one cursed him.

Thugut knew it and laughed at it. What did he care for the love and hatred of men? Let them curse him, if they only obeyed him.

And they obeyed him. The machine of state willingly followed the pressure of his hand, and he conducted the helm with a vigorous arm. He directed from his cabinet the destinies of Austria; he skilfully and ingeniously wove there the nets with which, according to his purposes, he wanted to surround friend or foe.

To-day, too, he had worked in his cabinet until evening, and he had only just now dismissed his two private secretaries, Heinle and