

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE EIGHTEENTH OF BRUMAIRE.

"NEWS from France!" exclaimed Counsellor Gentz, entering Marianne's boudoir in breathless haste. "Do you already know what has occurred? Did you hear, Marianne, how France has closed the eighteenth century?"

Marianne looked up into the face of her friend, with a gentle and peculiar smile. "That must have been exciting intelligence," she said, "inasmuch as it was even able to arouse the dreamer, Frederick Gentz, from his political sleep, and to cause him to take interest again in the affairs of the world. Well, let us hear the news; what has occurred in France?"

"General Bonaparte has overthrown the Directory, and dispersed the Council of Five Hundred."

"And you call that news?" asked Marianne, shrugging her shoulders. "You tell me there the history of the ninth and tenth of November, or, as the French republicans say, of the eighteenth and nineteenth of Brumaire. And you believe that I have not yet heard of it to-day, on the twenty-sixth of December? My friend Gentz, Bonaparte's deeds need not more than a month in order to penetrate through the world; they soar aloft with eagle-wings, and the whole world beholds them, because they darken the horizon of the whole world."

"But you have only heard the preamble of my news," ejaculated Gentz, impatiently. "I have no doubt that you know the history of the eighteenth of Brumaire, and that you are aware that France, on that day, placed herself under the rule of three consuls, one of whom was General Bonaparte."

"The other two consuls are Sieyes and Ducos," interrupted Marianne. "I know that, and I know, too, that Lucien, Bonaparte's brother, president of the Legislative Assembly, upon receiving the oath of office of the three consuls, said to them. 'The greatest nation on earth intrusts you with its destinies; the welfare of thirty millions of men, the preservation of order at home, and the reestablishment of peace abroad, are your task. Three months from to-day public opinion will expect to hear from you how you have accomplished it.'"

"Well, M. Bonaparte did not make public opinion wait so long," said Gentz; "or rather, he asserts public opinion had not given him

* "Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire," par A. Thiers, vol. i., p. 16.

time to wait so long, and that it was public opinion itself that called upon him to proclaim himself sovereign of France."

"Sovereign of France?" asked Marianne, in surprise. "Bonaparte has made himself king?"

"Yes, king, but under another name; he has caused himself to be elected consul for ten years! Ah, he will know how to shorten these ten years, just as he knew how to shorten those three months!"

"And this report is reliable?" asked Marianne, musingly.

"Perfectly so. Bonaparte was elected first consul on the twenty-fifth of December, and on the same day the new constitution was promulgated throughout France. That is a very fine Christmas present which France has made to the world! A box filled with dragon's teeth, from which armed hosts will spring up. It is true the first consul now pretends to be very anxious to restore peace to Europe. He has sent special ambassadors to all courts, with profuse assurances of his friendship and pacific intentions, and he sent them off even previous to his election, in order to announce the news of the latter to the foreign courts on the same day on which he was proclaimed first consul at Paris. Such a peace-messenger of the general has arrived at Berlin; he has brought us the strange and startling news."

"What is the name of this peace-messenger of the modern god of war?" asked Marianne.

"He sent his adjutant, General Duroc; the latter reached Berlin yesterday, and appeared even to-day as the petted guest of our court, at the great *soirée* of the queen. Oh, my friend, my stupid German heart trembled with anger when I saw the kind and flattering attentions that were paid to this Frenchman, while German gentlemen of genius, merit, and ability were kept in the background, neither the king nor the queen seeming to take any notice of their presence! There were Count Hardenberg, and the noble President of Westphalia, Baron Stein; they stood neglected in a bay window, and looked sadly at the royal couple, who treated the Frenchman in the midst of the court in the most distinguished manner; there were Blucher and Gneisenau, overlooked by everybody, although their uniforms were no less brilliant than that of the French envoy; and there was finally Frederick Gentz, myself, who had only appeared at this court festival owing to the special desire and order of the queen, and whose presence she had entirely forgotten, although Gualtieri reminded her of it at least three times, and told her that I was there, and had only come because the queen had expressly ordered it so. But what did her beautiful majesty care that a German writer was vainly waiting for a smile of her affability, and a gracious nod of her lovely head? The French envoy was by far more

important than all of us. For the sake of the Frenchman, even 'Madame Etiquette,' the Countess von Voss, mistress of ceremonies, had been silenced, and the plain adjutant of the first consul was received with as much distinction as if he were a minister plenipotentiary, while he only came as the simple agent for a private individual. They asked him to tell them about the battle of the Pyramids, about the battles of Mount Tabor and Aboukir, and the whole court listened to him with a suspense as though Bonaparte's adjutant were preaching a new gospel. Whenever he paused in his narrative, the queen, with her fascinating smile, constantly addressed new questions to him, and praised the achievements of General Bonaparte as though he were the Messiah sent into the world to deliver it from the evils of war! In short, he had a perfect success; and at last, by means of an adroit trick, he managed to render it as magnificent as possible. The queen told General Duroc of our German customs, and informed him that this was the day on which the Germans everywhere made presents to each other, and that gifts were laid under Christmas-trees, adorned with burning tapers. At that moment Duroc turned to the king, and said, with his intolerable French amiability: 'Sire, if this is the day of universal presents in Germany, I believe I will be courageous enough to-day to ask your majesty for a present in the name of the first consul, General Bonaparte, if your majesty will permit me to do so.' The king, of course, gave him the desired permission, and Duroc continued: 'Sire, the present for which I am to ask your majesty, in the name of the first consul, is a bust of your great ancestor, Frederick the Second. The first consul recently examined the statues in the Diana Gallery at the Tuileries; there were the statues of Cæsar and Brutus, of Coriolanus and Cicero, of Louis XIV. and Charles V., but the first consul did not see the statue of Frederick the Great, and he deems the collection of the heroes of ancient and modern times incomplete as long as it does not embrace the name of Frederick the Great. Sire, I take the liberty, therefore, to ask you, in the name of France, for a bust of Frederick the Great!'"*

"Very adroit, indeed," said Marianne, smiling; "these republicans seem to be excellent courtiers."

"Yes, very adroit!" exclaimed Gentz; "the whole court was in ecstasy at this tremendous flattery, at this compliment paid by the great republic to little Prussia; but I could not stand it any longer in those halls, and in the presence of these fawning Germans, and I hastened away in order to unbosom to you my rage, my indignation, and my grief. Oh, my fair friend, what is to become of Germany, and what will be the end of all these troubles? Ruin is

* Historical.

staring us in the face, and we do not see it; we are rushing toward the precipice, and must fall a prey to France, to this wolf in sheep's clothing, which will caress and pet us until it will be able to devour us!"

"I like to hear you talk in this strain," said Marianne, joyfully. "That is again the friend of my heart, who is now talking to me. Listen to me. I have to communicate news to you, too, and you must not be surprised if I reply to your important political intelligence by a reference to my petty personal interests. But there is a connection between them, and you will see it by and by. Listen, then, to the news concerning myself."

"Yes, Marianne," said Gentz, kneeling down before her, and leaning his head upon her knees, "yes, tell me about yourself, my beautiful fairy queen; lull my political pains a little by the magic song which is flowing from your red lips like a fresh source of love. Oh, my charming princess, now that I am looking up into your radiant face, I feel a burning shame that I should have desecrated the delightful moments I passed by your side by such trivial complaints about the misery of German politics. What have we to do with politics? What do we care if Germany is going to be ruined? *Après nous le déluge!* Let us enjoy the bliss of the fleeting hour!"

Marianne played smilingly with her slender fingers, covered with sparkling diamond rings, in his hair, and looked upon him with a wondrous air.

"Enthusiast!" she said; "now an ardent politician, then an impassioned lover, and ready at all hours to exchange one rôle for the other! Will you not listen to my news? My quarrel with my dear brother-in-law, Henry XV., is ended; we have come to an agreement."

"And I hope my sagacious and prudent Marianne has subdued her proud and bold heart this time, and had a little regard for her advantage," replied Gentz. "A woman as beautiful and radiant as Marianne Meier needs no empty aristocratic title, for your beauty makes you the queen of the world; but you need wealth in order to add power to your beauty, and to adorn it with a cloak glittering with gold and purple. Well, my queen, are you again Marianne Meier and a millionaire besides?"

"What a fool!" she exclaimed, proudly, "what a fool you are to believe I would crawl back into the Jews' quarter and expose myself to the sneers of my enviable friends! No, my friend, money and beauty are insufficient for those who desire to play a rôle in the world; they stand in need of rank and titles, too, for these are the magic words opening to us the doors of royal palaces, and placing

us on a par with the privileged and inaccessible. I, for one, want to play my rôle in the world; hence I must have a distinguished title. It is true I also stand in need of wealth, and by means of a skilful arrangement I have secured both. The mote in my Jewish eye appearing to my aristocratic relatives like a very large beam, I have yielded and renounced the title of a Princess von Reuss; but, in spite of that, I remain a princess and retain the title of highness. The prince, my brother-in-law, has given me a splendid estate in fee-simple, the annual revenues of which amount to no less than twenty thousand dollars; in return, however, I surrender to him the family diamonds, this palace, the carriages with the coat-of-arms of the Reuss family, the horses and liveries, and last, the name and title of a Princess Dowager von Reuss."

"And now, like all the fairies in the children's books, you are a wondrous child without name and rank, but showering with your snowy hands golden suns and glittering stars upon mankind?"

"No, I am no nameless woman now, but I adopt the name of my estate of Eibenberg, and from this day forward I shall be the Princess Marianne of Eibenberg, the Emperor of Germany himself having recognized my new title. The documents, signed by the emperor himself, are on the table there. The prince brought them to me to-day as a Christmas-present. Now, my friend, my real life is to commence; I have acquired wealth and a distinguished name. The poor Jewess, the daughter of the Ghetto, has moved into the palace of the aristocracy and become a princess."

"And I will be the first to do you homage as though you were my princess and queen!" exclaimed Gentz, "the first who will call himself your vassal. Come, my princess, let me place the sweet yoke upon my neck; let my forehead touch the ground on which you are walking; place your foot upon my neck, so that I may feel the sweet burden of your rule."

And bending down his head until his brow touched the floor, he placed her tiny foot, encased in a beautiful silken shoe, upon his neck. Marianne did not interfere with him, but looked down on him with a proud, triumphant smile.

"You lie at my feet, Frederick Gentz," she said, "nevertheless I will lift you up to me; you shall stand by my side, my equal, famous and great as you ought to be, owing to your genius! But a truce to tender trifling, my friend; both of us have to accomplish great purposes, and our thoughts and actions should be grave and stern. Come, rise from your knees, my vassal; you shall be a prince by my side, and we will rule the world together."

She withdrew her foot from his neck, but Gentz seized it with both hands and kissed it. He then quickly rose from his knees,

and drew himself up to his full height, looking at her sternly and almost angrily.

"You have often told me that you loved me," he said, "but it was a lie; you do not understand love, your heart is cold and your senses are silent, only your pride speaks."

"It is possible that you are right," she replied, "but, in that case, I love you with my pride and with my mind, and that is worth something, at all events. I want to see you honored, famous, and influential; is not that also love?"

"No, it is a mockery!" ejaculated Gentz, mournfully. "It is malice, for you see I am a poor, despised man, without money, without fame, without rank; a miserable military counsellor, outranked by every private counsellor, and persecuted day by day by my creditors, as if they were vultures following a poor dove whose wings have been clipped."

"But your wings shall grow again, so that you may escape from the vultures!" exclaimed Marianne, "and that you may soar, eagle-like, above the miseries of the world, and exercise a commanding influence over it. The time of dreams and expectations is over, the time for action has come for all energetic and able minds. Two years ago I asked you, as I do to-day, if you would not devote your services to Austria, and if you would not seek for fame and happiness in that country, in which your genius would be appreciated and rewarded. Do you remember what you replied to me at that time?"

"Yes, I remember," said Gentz, with a sarcastic smile; "I was foolish enough to reject your offers, and to declare that I would stay here at Berlin, and see if my native country would not need my abilities and my services, and if our rulers here would not avail themselves of my talents and of my pen. And thus I have lost, again, two years of my life, and only my debts have increased, but not my fame."

"Because you were an enthusiast, and expected to be appreciated in Prussia; believing this good king (who would like to make his people happy and prosperous, but who timidly shrinks back from all energetic resolutions) would be very grateful to you for exhorting him to grant freedom of the press to his subjects, and, in general, to introduce liberty and equality in his states. Do you still believe that Frederick William the Third will do so?"

"No, he will not," replied Gentz, mournfully; "no, this king does not understand the present age, and instead of being a step in advance of it, he will always remain a step behind it, and thus involve Prussia in untold misery and suffering. I have hoped and waited long enough; the time of patience and idleness is now over, and I therefore renounce, to-day, at the end of the eighteenth cen-

tury, my native state, in order to become a citizen and son of a larger fatherland. I cease to be a Prussian, in order to become a German; and Prussia having no desire to avail herself of my abilities, I am going to see whether or not Germany has any use for them. My beautiful Marianne, you shall be the priestess who receives the oath which I make on the altar of the fatherland: 'I swear to devote all my powers and talents to Germany; I swear to be a faithful and untiring son to my great fatherland!'

"I have heard your oath, Frederick Gentz, and I accept it in the name of Germany," said Marianne, solemnly. "You shall be the champion of the honor and rights of Germany; your weapon, however, shall not be the sword, but the pen."

"But where will the lists be opened to my tournament?" asked Gentz, musingly.

"In Austria," replied Marianne, quickly; "the Emperor of Germany is expecting you, the son of Germany; the Emperor of Germany is calling you to serve and promote the interests of your fatherland. I am authorized to tell you that. The new Austrian envoy, Count Stadion, has requested me to do so; he has asked me to win you for Austria, that is, for Germany. For, believe me, the welfare of Germany is nowadays consulted in Austria, and not in Prussia!"

"No, not in Prussia!" exclaimed Gentz, mournfully. "Our government shuts its eyes in order not to behold the terrors which are rushing toward us with irresistible force, and will soon, like an avalanche, roll over Germany and annihilate us all, unless we skilfully calculate the danger, and raise sufficient bulwarks against it. They admire Bonaparte here, and only behold a hero, while I scent a tyrant—a tyrant who wants to subjugate us by his revolutionary liberty and his Jacobin's cap, which is but a crown in another shape. I hate Bonaparte, for I hate the revolution which, notwithstanding its phrases of liberty and equality, is but a bloody despotism that does not even grant freedom of opinion to the citizen, and drags such ideas as are distasteful to it upon the scaffold. I hate the revolution, I hate Bonaparte, and I hate every form of tyranny, and shall oppose it as long as I live!"

"And I shall be a faithful squire by your side, and sharpen the bolts which you are going to hurl at the enemy," said Marianne, with fervent enthusiasm. "We are both going to Vienna, in order to serve Germany. In Vienna a new century and a new country will open their arms to us. Thanks to my title, to my rank, and to my connections, every door will be open to us there, and the Jewess, Marianne Meier, princess of Eibenberg, will not even find the apartments of the emperor and empress closed; on the contrary, their imperial majesties will receive me as an honored and welcome guest,

for I am a princess by the act of the emperor, and the friend of the empress; Victoria de Poutet Colloredo is also my friend. And whithersoever I go, you shall go, too, my friend, and the doors that will open to me shall not be closed to you. My rank opens them to me, and your genius opens them to you. Come, let us be faithful allies; let us swear to support each other firmly and immovably, and to walk together step by step."

"Oh, my noble and generous friend," exclaimed Gentz, sadly, "how delicately you try to veil your protection! In such an alliance, I am unable to offer you any compensation, for I should find all doors closed if you should not open them to me. I have neither rank, money, nor friends at court!"

"Well, let me protect you now, and at some later period you will protect me," said Marianne. "Let us swear to pursue our path together."

"I swear it by all that is sacred to me!" exclaimed Gentz. "I swear that I will remain faithful to you and to Germany for my whole life. I swear that I will follow you everywhere; that I will serve you wherever and whenever I can, and to love you to my last breath."

"The alliance is closed," said Marianne, solemnly. "Henceforth, we will fight jointly, and pursue our goal together. It is our own greatness, and the greatness of Germany. The country is in danger—let us see if we cannot contribute something to its preservation, and if it does not need our hands and our heads in order to weather the storm. If we should be able, while assisting the country, to pick up a few laurels, titles, decorations, and treasures for ourselves, we would be fools not to avail ourselves of the opportunity."

"Yes, you are right," said Gentz, smiling, "we would be fools not to do so; and you are right, too, as to the perils of the country. Germany is in danger. The new century will dawn upon her with a bloody morning sun, and it will arouse us from our sleep by a terrific cannonade. But as for ourselves, we will not wait until the roar of the strife awakens us; we will be up and doing now and work on the lightning-rod with which we will meet the approaching thunderstorm, in order that its bolts may glance off harmlessly and not destroy Germany. I will be an untiring warrior in the great struggle against the revolution, and my pen, which is my sword, shall never be idle in the strife. From this hour I cease to be the insignificant Prussian counsellor, Frederick Gentz; from this hour I will strive to become the great political writer of Germany. May the genius of Germany be with me in my endeavors!"

"Amen!" said Marianne, fervently. "May the genius of Germany bless us and the new century. Amen!"

THE PEACE OF LUNEVILLE.

CHAPTER XXXV.

JOHANNES MÜLLER.

THE minister, Baron Thugut, was pacing his cabinet in an excited manner. His face, usually so cold and immovable, was painfully agitated to-day; his shaggy white eyebrows were closely contracted, and his eyes were casting angry glances on the dispatch which he had just thrown on his desk, and which a courier from General Melas, in Lombardy, had brought to him a few minutes ago.

"Another battle lost!" he muttered; "another laurel-wreath placed on the defiant head of General Bonaparte! This man will make me mad yet by his impudent good luck. It is dreadful only to think that he was already defeated at Marengo*—so surely defeated that General Melas issued orders for the pursuit of the enemy, and rode to Alessandria to take his supper in the most comfortable manner. That fellow Melas is a jackass, who only scented the roast meat which he was going to have for supper, but not General Desaix, who arrived with his troops in time to snatch victory from our grasp, and to inflict a most terrible defeat upon our triumphant army. All of our generals are short-sighted fools, from that ridiculously over-rated Archduke Charles down to General Schwarzenberg, and whatever the names of these gentlemen may be—these gentlemen with the golden epaulets, and decorated breasts, and empty heads—I have no confidence in a single one of them. At the moment of danger as well as of victory they regularly lose their senses, and thereby turn our victories into defeats; while they render our checks in the same way only more disastrous and decisive. I am entirely opposed to placing any more archdukes at the head of our armies. Fortunately, I have succeeded in getting rid of Archduke Charles, and I hope that Archduke John, too, will be badly beaten at no distant period, so that we may remove him, like his brother, from his position at the head of his troops. It will never do. Well—" he interrupted himself in his soliloquy, casting an angry glance on his private

*The battle of Marengo was fought on the 14th of June, 1800.

JOHANNES MÜLLER.

271

secretary, Hudlitz, who was just entering the room—"well, why do you disturb me without being called for?"

"Pardon me, your excellency," said Hudlitz, humbly, "but your excellency had instructed me to inform you immediately of the arrival of the custodian of the imperial library, whom your excellency had sent for."

"And he is there now?" asked Thugut.

"Yes, your excellency, Mr. Müller, the aulic councillor and custodian of the imperial library is waiting in the anteroom."

"Admit him, then," said Thugut, waving his hand toward the door.

Hudlitz limped out, and a few minutes later the announced visitor appeared on the threshold of the door. He was a little, slender man, with a stooping form, which had not been bent, however, by the burden of years, but by the burden of learning, of night-watches and untiring studies. His head, covered with a pig-tail wig, according to the fashion of that period, was slightly bent forward. His expansive forehead was indicative of the philosophical turn of his mind; his large eyes were beaming with deep feeling; his pleasing, yet not handsome features, were expressive to an almost touching degree, of infinite gentleness and benevolence, and a winning smile was playing constantly on his thin lips.

This smile, however, disappeared now that he felt the small, piercing eyes of the minister resting upon his countenance. Hat in hand, and without uttering a word, he remained standing at the door; he only raised his head a little, and his eyes were fixed on the minister with a calm and proud expression.

"You are the aulic councillor, Johannes Müller?" asked Thugut, after a short pause, in a somewhat harsh voice.

"Yes, I am Johannes Müller," said the latter, and the smile had already returned to his lips. "I thank your excellency for this salutary question."

"What do you mean by that, sir?" asked Thugut, wonderingly. "Why do you call my question salutary?"

"Because it involves a good lesson, your excellency, and because it informs me that they are wrong who, from motives of mistaken benevolence, would persuade me that I was a well-known person, and that everybody in Vienna was familiar with my name. It is always wholesome for an author to be reminded from time to time of his insignificance and littleness, for it preserves him from giving way to pride, and pride is always the first symptom of mental retrogradation."

Thugut fixed his eyes with a sullen air on the countenance of the *savant*.

"Do you want to give me a lesson?" he asked, angrily.

"By no means, your excellency," said Johannes Müller, calmly; "I only wished to mention the reason why I was grateful to you for your question. And now I trust your excellency will permit me the question—to what am I indebted for the honor of being called to your excellency?"

"Well, I wished to make your acquaintance, Mr. Aulic Councillor," said Thugut. "I wished no longer to remain the only inhabitant of Vienna who had not seen the illustrious historian of Switzerland and the author of the 'Fürstenbund.'* You see, sir, I know your works at least, even though I did not know your person."

"And your excellency did not lose any thing by not knowing the latter, for it is a person that is not worth the trouble to become acquainted with. We men of learning are less able to speak with our tongues than with our pens, and our desk alone is our rostrum."

"And there you are a powerful and most impressive orator, Mr. Aulic Councillor!" exclaimed Thugut, in a tone of unaffected and cordial praise.

An air of joyful surprise overspread the gentle face of Johannes Müller, and he cast a glance of heart-felt gratitude on the minister.

Thugut noticed this glance. "You are surprised that I am able to appreciate your merits so correctly and yet suffered years to elapse without inviting you to call on me? I am a poor man, overburdened with business and harassed with the dry details of my administration, and the direction of political affairs leaves me no leisure to be devoted to literature."

"At least not to German literature," said Müller, quickly; "but every one knows your excellency to be a profound connoisseur of oriental languages; and it is well known, too, that you devote a great deal of attention to them, notwithstanding the immense burden of business constantly weighing you down."

Thugut smiled, and his harsh features assumed a milder expression. Johannes Müller, without intending it perhaps, had touched the chord that sounded most sweetly to Thugut's ears; he had flattered him by referring to his profound oriental studies.

"Well," he said, "you see I am taking likewise a lively interest in German literature, for I invited you to come and see me; and you are a German author, and one of the most illustrious at that. Now, sir, let us speak frankly and without circumlocution, as two men of science ought to do. Let us mutually forget our titles and official positions, and chat confidentially with each other. Come, my dear sir, let us sit down in these two arm-chairs and talk like

*"The League of the Princes," one of the celebrated works of Johannes von Müller.

two German gentlemen; that is, frankly and sincerely. Nobody is here to hear us, and I give you my word of honor nobody shall learn a word of what we are going to say to each other. Perfect irresponsibility and impunity for every thing that will be spoken during this interview. Are you content with this, and will you promise me to open your mind freely to me?"

"I promise it, your excellency, and shall reply truthfully and fearlessly to whatever questions you may address to me, provided I am able to tell you the truth."

"Yes, sir," replied Thugut, shrugging his shoulders. "Every thing has two sides, and both are true according to the stand-point from which one is looking at them. You have two sides yourself, sir, and they are contrasting very strangely with each other. You are a native of Switzerland, and yet you depict the Hapsburg princes in your works with more genuine enthusiasm than any of our Austrian historians. You are a republican, and yet you are serving a monarchy, the forms of which seem to agree with you exceedingly well. You belong to the orthodox reformed church, and yet you have written 'The Voyages of the Popes,' and 'The Letters of Two Catholic Prelates.' You are a friend of justice, and yet you have even discovered good and praiseworthy qualities in that tyrannous King of France, Louis XI. Now tell me, sir, which is your true side, and what you really are?"

"I am a man," said Johannes Müller, gently; "I commit errors and have my failings like all men, my heart is vacillating, but not my head. With my head I am standing above all parties, and above all individual feelings; hence I am able to write 'The Voyages of the Popes,' and 'The Letters of Two Catholic Prelates,' although, as your excellency stated, I am a member of the orthodox reformed church; and hence I am able to praise the Hapsburgs and serve a monarchy, although I am a republican. But my heart does not stand above the contending parties; my heart loves mankind, and takes pity on their failings; hence it is able to discover praiseworthy qualities even in Louis XI. of France, for in the *bad* king, it constantly follows the vestiges of the man whom nature created *good* and *humane*."

"Those are the views of Jean Jacques Rousseau!" exclaimed Thugut, contemptuously; "but these views are inapplicable to the world and to practical life; he who desires to derive advantages from men, first, of all things, must avail himself of their bad qualities and flatter them. To hold intercourse with perfectly virtuous men is tedious and unprofitable; fortunately, however, there are very few of them. I should have no use whatever for such patterns of virtue, and, instead of admiring them, I should try to annihilate

them. He who is to be a welcome tool for me, must either have a stain by which I may catch him at the slightest symptom of disobedience, like an insect tied to a string, and draw him back to me, or he must be so narrow-minded and ignorant as not to understand me fully, and to be unable to divine and penetrate my hidden thoughts and intentions."*

"In that case I must hope never to be a welcome tool of your excellency," said Müller, gravely.

"Are you so sure of your virtue? Are you unconscious of any stain on your character?"

"If principles be virtue, yes; in that case I am sure of my virtue," said Müller, calmly. "I shall never be unfaithful to my principles, and I hope never to have a stain on my conscience."

"Who is able to say that?" exclaimed Thugut, laughing; "many a one has become a murderer, who was unwilling to tread on a worm, and many a one has become a perjurer, who protested solemnly that he would never utter a lie. But a truce to philosophical discussions. I like to go directly at my aim, and to utter my thoughts clearly and precisely. Listen, then, to me, and learn what I want you to do. You are a great mind, an illustrious historian, a very learned man, and you are pining away among the shelves of your imperial library. The greatest historian of the century is nothing but the custodian of a library, and is subordinate to a chief whom he must obey, although the latter is mentally a pigmy compared with him. Such a position is unworthy of your eminent abilities, or tell me, do you feel contented with it?"

Johannes Müller smiled sadly. "Who is able to say that he feels contented?" he asked. "I am, perhaps, a bad custodian, and that may be the reason why the prefect of the Imperial Library, Baron Fenish, is not on good terms with me, and profits by every opportunity to mortify me. A German *savant* never was an independent man, for he generally lacks the most indispensable requisite for an independent position: he generally lacks wealth."

"Then you are poor?" asked Thugut, with flashing eyes.

"I have no other means than my salary. The Muses will adorn a man, but they will not feed him."

"I will deliver you from your subordinate position," said Thugut, hastily; "you shall be independent, free, and rich. You are a fool to bury yourself, with your glory and with your pen, in the dust of old books. Life and history are calling, and offering you their metal tablets to write thereon. Write, then; write the history of our times: render yourself an organ of the age; assist us, by your

*Thugut's own words.—*Vide* Hormayer, "Lebensbilder aus dem Befreiungskrieg," voi. i., p. 322.

writings, in preserving the government and law and order. Defend, with your ringing voice, the actions of the government against the aspersions of this would-be wise, noisy, and miserable people, and you shall have a brilliant position and an annual salary of four thousand florins. You are silent? You are right; consider well what I am proposing to you. I offer you a brilliant position. I will make you the great historian of our times. It affords you always so much pleasure to praise and commend; well, sir, praise and commend what we are doing. Assist me, at least, in mystifying our contemporaries and posterity a little, and I will reward you in the most liberal manner. A good title, a large salary, and we will, moreover, pay your debts."

"Ah! your excellency knows that I have debts, and you believe that to be the string by which you may draw me to you like an insect?" asked Müller, smiling. "To become the historian of our times is an honorable and welcome offer, and I confess to your excellency that I have already finished many a chapter of it in my head, and that I have devoted a great deal of attention to the special history of Austria. It would be agreeable to me if your excellency would permit me to recite to you a few passages from the history of Austria, as I have elaborated it in my head. This will be the best way for your excellency to obtain the conviction whether I am really able to fill so brilliant a position as your excellency has offered me, and whether my services deserve so liberal a salary."

"Well, sir, let me hear a few passages from your 'History of Austria.' I am very anxious to listen to them."

"And your excellency remembers the promise that there is to be irresponsibility and impunity for whatever will be said during this interview?"

"I do, sir, and I swear that your words shall never be repeated to any one, and that I shall only remember them when I have to reward you for them. I swear, besides, that I will quietly and patiently listen to you until you have concluded."

"I thank your excellency," said Johannes Müller, bowing gracefully. "I should like to recite to your excellency now a chapter that I desire to write on the literature of Austria. I turn my eyes back to the days of Maria Theresa and Joseph the Second. Both of them were lovers of literature, art, and science, which both of them promoted and fostered. Joseph expelled darkness from his states and uttered the great words, '*The mind shall be free!*' And the mind became free. It became active and exalted in every art; the poets raised their voices; the learned sent the results of their studies into the world, and labored powerfully for the advancement and enlightenment of the people. The mind tore down the barriers that stupid

fear had raised between Austria and the other German states, and the great poets who had lately arisen in Germany now became, also, the poets and property of Austria. Austria called Lessing and Klopstock *her* poets; like the rest of Germany, she enthusiastically admired Schiller's 'Robbers,' and wept over 'Werther's Sorrows;' she was delighted with the poetry of Wieland; she learned to love the clear and noble mind of Herder, and the writings of Jean Paul admonished her to learn and to reflect. It was a glorious period, your excellency, for a young nation had arisen in Austria, and it was drawing its nourishment from the breasts of a young literature."

"And sucking from these breasts the revolutionary spirit, and the arrogance of independent thinkers," interrupted Thugut, rudely.

Johannes Müller seemed not to have heard him, and continued: "Joseph the Second died; scarcely a decade has passed, and what has this decade made of Austria? The mind has been chained again; the censor with his scissiors has taken his stand again by the side of the Austrian boundary-post; and the wall severing Austria from Germany has been reërected. Every thing now has become again suspicious; even the national spirit of the Austrian, even his hatred of foreign oppression, and his hostility to foreign encroachments. In this hatred itself the government sees the possibility of a rising, and a spirit of opposition, for it sees that the people are no longer asleep, but awake and thinking, and thought in itself is even now an opposition. Every manifestation of enthusiasm for a man who has spoken of the freedom and independence of Germany is looked upon with suspicion, and the noblest men are being proscribed and banished, merely because the people love them, and hope and expect great things from them. The people, according to the wishes of government, shall do nothing but sleep, obey, and be silent; the people shall manifest no enthusiasm for any thing; the people shall love nothing, desire nothing, think nothing; the people shall have no heroes, to whom they are attached; for the glory of the heroes might eclipse the emperor, and the shouts of love sound like shouts of insurrection."

"You refer to the Archdukes Charles and John," said Thugut, quietly. "It is true, I have removed Archduke Charles from his command, for his popularity with the army and people is very great, and would have become dangerous to the emperor. We must conquer through tools, and not through heroes; the latter are very unpleasant to deal with, for they do not gratefully receive their reward as a favor, but they impudently claim and take it as a right. The imperial throne must be surrounded by heroes, but these heroes must never eclipse the imperial throne. Pardon this note to your chapter, and proceed."

"The heroes of the sword are cast aside," continued Johannes Müller, "but neither the heroes of thought nor the heroes of literature are spared. The government tries to disgrace and insult literature, because it is unable to assassinate it entirely; it drags literature into the caves of unworthy censors, and mutilates its most beautiful limbs and destroys the most magnificent splendor of its ideas. The government is *afraid* of the mind; hence it desires to kill it. A government, however, may commit many mistakes, but it never ought to show that it is afraid, fear exposing it to ridicule. And if we ought not to weep over the persecutions which the apprehensions of the government have caused to be instituted against literature, we ought to laugh at them. Whole volumes of the most sublime works of Gibbon, Robertson, Hume, and other great historians have been prohibited; and there is not one of our German poets—neither Goethe, nor Schiller, nor Herder, nor Wieland, nor Lessing, nor Jean Paul—whose works are not ostracized in German Austria. Fear and a bad conscience scent everywhere allusions, references, and hints. Hence history is banished from the stage; for the history of the past constantly points with a menacing finger at the sore spots of the present. Shakespeare's 'King Lear' has been prohibited, because the public might believe princes would lose their heads if weighed down by misfortunes. 'Hamlet,' 'Richard the Third,' and 'Macbeth' must not be performed, because people might get accustomed to the dethronement and assassination of emperors and kings. Schiller's 'Mary Stuart' is looked upon as an allusion to Marie Antoinette; 'Wallenstein' and 'Tell' are ostracized, because they might provoke revolutions and military mutinies. The 'Merchant of Venice' must not be performed, because it might give rise to riotous proceedings against the Jews; and in Schiller's 'Love and Intrigue,' President de Kalb has been transformed into a plebeian *vicedomus*, in order to maintain the respect due to the nobility and to the government functionaries. It is true, it is permitted to represent villains and impostors on the stage, but they must never be noblemen; and if men of ideal character are to be brought upon the stage, they must be either princes, counts, or police-directors. For even more sacred than the dignity of the highest classes is the holy police, the great guardian of the government, the great spy watching the people, who are being deprived of every thing; to whom every intellectual enjoyment, every free manifestation of their enthusiasm is forbidden, and who are yet required to deem themselves happy, and that they shall be faithfully attached to their government! If the government enslaves the people, it must expect that these slaves will lose all sense of honor and justice, and willingly sell themselves to him who holds out to them the most glittering offers, and knows

best how to tempt them by golden promises!—I am through, your excellency," said Johannes Müller, drawing a deep breath; "I have recited to you my whole chapter on the literature of Austria, and I thank you for having listened to me so patiently. Now it is for your excellency alone to decide whether you deem me worthy of filling the honorable position you have offered. I am ready to accept it, and to write the history of our times in *this* spirit, and shall be very grateful if your excellency will grant me for this purpose your protection and a salary of four thousand florins."

Thugut looked with an air of pride and disdain into his glowing face.

"My dear sir," he said, after a long pause—"my dear sir, I was mistaken in you, for I believed you to have a clear head and a strong mind, and I perceive now that you are nothing but a weak enthusiast, dreaming of ideal fancies which one day will turn out entirely differently; to become spectres, from which you will shrink back in dismay. You will not always remain the enthusiastic admirer of freedom as at present; and the proud republican will one day, perhaps, be transformed into the obedient servant of a tyrant. You assured me quite haughtily that you had no stain on your conscience; let me tell you, sir, that there is a stain on your character, and I should have profited by it—you are vain. I should not have tried to bribe you with money, but with flattery, and I had been successful. I had too good an opinion of you, however. I believed you had a vigorous mind, capable of comprehending what is necessary and useful, and of preferring the practical and advantageous to the ideal. Although a native of Switzerland, you are a genuine German dreamer, and I hate dreamers. Go, sir, remain custodian of the Imperial Library and complete your catalogues, but never imagine that you will be able with your weak hand to stem the wheel of history and of political affairs; the wheel would only destroy your hand and what little glory you have obtained, and hurl you aside like a crushed dog. Farewell!"

He turned his back upon Johannes Müller, and placed himself at the window until the soft noise of the closing door told him that the historian had left him.

"What a fool!" he said. Then, turning around again—"a genuine German fool! Wanted to lecture me—*me!*"

And, amused by the idea, Thugut burst into loud laughter. He then rang the bell violently, and as soon as the *valet de chambre* made his appearance he ordered him to get the carriage ready for him.

Fifteen minutes later the minister left the chancery of state for the purpose of repairing, as was his custom every evening, to his

garden in the Währinger Street. The streets through which he had to pass were crowded with citizens, who were talking with ill-concealed rage about the fresh defeat of the Austrians at Marengo, and were loudly calling out that Minister Thugut was alone to blame for Austria's misfortunes, and that he was the only obstacle that prevented the emperor from making peace. And the people surrounded the well-known carriage of the minister with constantly-increasing exasperation, and cried in a constantly louder and more menacing tone: "We do not want war! We want peace! peace!"

Thugut was leaning back comfortably on the cushions of his carriage. He seemed not to hear the shouts of the people, and not to deem them worthy of the slightest notice. Only when the tumult increased in violence, and when the incensed people commenced hurling stones and mud at his carriage, the minister rose for a moment in order to look out with an air of profound disdain. He then leaned back on his seat, and muttered, with a glance of indescribable contempt:

"*Canaille!*" *

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THUGUT'S FALL.

TIDINGS of fresh defeats had reached Vienna; more disasters had befallen the army, and the great victory of Marengo had been followed, on the 3d of December, 1800, by the battle of Hohenlinden, in which Moreau defeated the Austrians under Archduke John.

Even Thugut, the immovable and constant prime minister, felt alarmed at so many calamities, and he was generally in a gloomy and spiteful humor.

He felt that there was a power stronger than his will, and this feeling maddened him with anger. He was sitting at his desk, with a clouded brow and closely compressed lips, his sullen eyes fixed on the papers before him, which a courier, just arrived from the headquarters of the army, had delivered to him. They contained evil tidings; they informed him of the immense losses of the Austrians, and of the insolence of the victorious French general, who had only granted the Austrian application for an armistice on condition that the fortresses of Ulm, Ingolstadt and Philippsburg be surrendered to him; and these humiliating terms had been complied with in order to gain time and to concentrate a new army. For Thugut's stubbornness had not been broken yet, and he still obsti-

* Hormayer's "Lebensbilder," vol. i., p. 230.