

LOUISA OF PRUSSIA AND HER TIMES.

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CHAPTER I.

DREADFUL TIDINGS.

THE population of Vienna was paralyzed with terror; a heavy gloom weighed down all minds, and the strength of the stoutest hearts seemed broken. Couriers had arrived to-day from the camp of the army, and brought the dreadful tidings of an overwhelming defeat of the Austrian forces. Bonaparte, the young general of the French Republic, who, in the course of one year (1796), had won as many battles and as much glory as many a great and illustrious warrior during the whole course of an eventful life—Bonaparte had crossed the Italian Alps with the serried columns of his army, and the most trusted military leaders of Austria were fleeing before him in dismay. The hero of Lodi and Arcole had won new victories, and these victories constantly diminished the distance between his army and the menaced capital of Austria.

Archduke Charles had been defeated by Massena, and driven back to Villach; Bernadotte had reached Laybach; the citadels of Goritz, Triest, and Laybach had surrendered; Klagenfurth, after a most desperate struggle, had been forced to open its gates to the conquerors; Loudon, with his brave troops, had been dispersed in the Tyrol; Botzen had opened its gates to General Joubert, who, after a brief sojourn, left that city in order to join Bonaparte, who, in his victorious career, was advancing resistlessly toward Vienna.

Such were tidings which the couriers had brought, and these tidings were well calculated to produce a panic in the Austrian capital. While the court and the nobility were concealing their grief and their sorrows in the interior of their palaces, the populace

rushed into the streets, anxiously inquiring for later intelligence, and still hopeful that God in His mercy might perhaps send down some ray of light that would dispel this gloom of anguish and despair.

But a pall covered Vienna, and everybody looked sad and dejected. Suddenly some new movement of terror seemed to pervade the crowd that had gathered on the *Kohlmarkt*.* As if a storm were raising up the waves of this black sea of human figures, the dense mass commenced to undulate to and fro, and a wail of distress arose, growing louder and louder, until it finally broke out into the terrible cry: "The emperor has deserted us! the emperor and the empress have fled from Vienna!"

While the masses were bewailing this new misfortune with the manifestations of despair, while they assembled in small groups to comment vociferously on this last and most dreadful event of the day, all of a sudden Hungarian hussars galloped up and commanded the people, in the most peremptory manner, to stand aside and to open a passage for the wagons which were about to enter the market from one of the adjoining streets.

The people, intimidated by the flashing swords and harsh words of the soldiers, fell back and gazed with an expression of anxious suspense upon the strange procession which now made its appearance.

This procession consisted of twelve wagons, apparently not destined to receive living men, but the remains of the dead. The broad and heavy wheels were not surmounted by ordinary carriage-boxes, but by immense iron trunks, large enough to enclose a coffin or a corpse; and these trunks were covered with heavy blankets, the four corners of which contained the imperial crown of Austria in beautiful embroidery. Every one of these strange wagons was drawn by six horses, mounted by jockeys in the imperial livery, while the hussars of the emperor's Hungarian bodyguard rode in serried ranks on both sides.

The horses drew these mysterious wagons slowly and heavily through the streets; the wheels rolled with a dull, thundering noise over the uneven pavement; and this noise resounded in the ears and hearts of the pale and terrified spectators like the premonitory signs of some new thunderstorm.

What was concealed in these mysterious wagons? What was taken away from Vienna in so careful a manner and guarded so closely? Everybody was asking these questions, but only in the depth of his own heart, for nobody dared to interrupt the painful and anxious silence by a loud word or an inquisitive phrase.

* Cabbage-Market.

Every one seemed to be fascinated by the forbidding glances of the hussars, and stunned by the dull rumbling of the wheels.

But, when finally the last wagon had disappeared in the next street, when the last horseman of the hussar escort had left the place, the eyes of the anxious spectators turned once more toward the speakers who had previously addressed them, and told them of the misfortunes of Austria, and of the brilliant victories of the youthful French General Bonaparte.

"What do those wagons contain?" shouted the crowd. "We want to know it, and we must know it!"

"If you must know it, why did you not ask the soldiers themselves?" shouted a sneering voice in the crowd.

"Yes, yes," said another voice, "why did you not approach the wagons and knock at the trunks?—may be the devil would have jumped out and shown you his pretty face!"

The people paid no attention to these sneering remarks. The painful uncertainty, the anxious excitement continued unabated, and everybody made surmises concerning the contents of the wagons.

"The trunks contain perhaps the coffins of the imperial ancestors, which have been removed from the *Kapuzinergruft*, in order to save them from the French," said an honest tailor to his neighbor, and this romantic idea rolled immediately, like an avalanche, through the vast crowd.

"They are removing the remains of the old emperors from Vienna!" wailed the crowd. "Even the tombs are no longer safe! They are saving the corpses of the emperors, but they are forsaking us—the living! They abandon us to the tender mercies of the enemy! All who have not got the money to escape are lost! The French will come and kill us all!"

"We will not permit it!" shouted a stentorian voice. "We want to keep the remains of Maria Theresa and of the great Emperor Joseph here in Vienna. As long as they lived they loved the people of the capital, and they will protect us in death. Come, brethren, come; let us follow the wagons—let us stop them and take the bodies back to the *Kapuzinergruft*."*

"Yes, let us follow the wagons and stop them," yelled the crowd, which now, when it could no longer see the flashing and threatening weapons of the soldiers, felt exceedingly brave.

Suddenly, however, these furious shouts and yells were interrupted by a powerful voice which ordered the people to desist, and they beheld a tall man who, with cat-like agility, climbed upon the iron lamp-post in the centre of the square.

* Vaults of the Capuchins.

"Stop, stop!" roared this man, extending his arms over the crowd as if, a new Moses, he wanted to allay the fury of the sea and cause it to stand still.

The crowd instantly obeyed this tremendous voice, and all these indignant, anxious, and terrified faces now turned toward the speaker who stood above them on top of the lamp-post.

"Don't make fools of yourselves," said he—"don't give these Hungarians—who would be only too glad to quench their present rage in German blood—a chance to break your bones. Have you any arms to compel them to show you the wagons and their contents? And even if you were armed, the soldiers would overpower you, for most of you would run away as soon as a fight broke out, and the balance of you would be taken to the calaboose. I will do you the favor, however, to tell you all about those wagons. Do you want to know it?"

"Yes, yes, we do!" shouted the crowd, emphatically. "Be quiet over there!—Stop your noise!—Do not cry so loud!—Hush!—Let us hear what is in the wagons.—Silence, silence!"

Profound silence ensued—everybody held his breath and listened.

"Well, then, listen to me. These wagons do not contain the remains of the former emperors, but the gold and the jewels of the present emperor. It is the state treasure which those hussars are escorting from Vienna to Presburg, because the government deems it no longer safe here. Just think of what we have come to now—days! Our imperial family, and even the state treasure, must flee from Vienna! And whose fault is it that we have to suffer all this? Who has brought these French down upon us? Who is inundating all Austria with war and its calamities? Shall I tell you who is doing it?"

"Yes, tell us, tell us!" shouted the crowd. "Woe unto him who has plunged Austria into war and distress, and caused the flight of the emperor and the removal of the treasure from Vienna!"

The speaker waited until the angry waves of the people's wrath had subsided again, and then said in the clear, ringing tones of his powerful voice: "It is the fault of our prime minister, Baron von Thugut. He don't want us to make peace with the French. He would rather ruin us all than to make peace with the French Republic."

"But we don't want to be ruined!" shouted the crowd—"we don't want to be led to the shambles like sheep. No, no; we want peace—peace with France. Prime Minister Thugut shall give us peace with France!"

"You had better go and inform the proud minister himself of

what you want," said the speaker with a sneer. "First compel him to do what the emperor and even our brave Archduke Charles wanted to be done—compel the omnipotent minister to make peace."

"We will go and ask him to give us peace," said several voices in the crowd.

"Yes, yes, we will do that!" shouted others. "Come, come; let us all go to the minister's house and ask him to give us back the emperor and the state treasure, and to make peace with Bonaparte."

The speaker now descended hurriedly from the lamp-post. His tall, herculean figure, however, towered above the crowd even after his feet had touched the pavement.

"Come," said he to the bystanders in a loud and decided tone, "I will take you to the minister's house, for I know where he lives, and we will shout and raise such a storm there until the proud gentleman condescends to comply with our wishes."

He led the way rapidly, and the crowd, always easily guided and pliable, followed its improvised leader with loud acclamations. Only one idea, only one wish, animated all these men: they wanted peace with France, lest Bonaparte might come to Vienna and lay their beautiful capital in ashes in the same manner in which he had treated so many Italian cities.

Their leader walked proudly at the head of the irregular procession, and as the crowd continued to shout and yell, "Peace with France!" he muttered, "I think I have accomplished a good deal to-day. The archduke will be satisfied with what I have done, and we may compel the minister after all to make peace with France."

CHAPTER II.

MINISTER VON THUGUT.

THE prime minister, Baron von Thugut, was in his cabinet, in eager consultation with the new police minister, Count von Saurau, who had given him an account of the safe removal of the imperial state treasure which, like the emperor and the empress, had set out for Hungary.

"All right! all right!" said Thugut, with a sinister chuckle. "In Hungary both will be safe enough, for I think I have intimidated the Hungarians so much that they will remain very quiet and very humble."

"Your excellency refers to the conspiracy which we discovered

there two years ago," said Count Saurau, smiling, "and which the accursed traitors expiated on the gallows!"

"*De mortuis nil nisi bene!*" exclaimed Thugut. "We are under many obligations to these excellent traitors, for they have enabled us to render the Hungarians submissive, just as the traitors who conspired here at Vienna two years ago enabled us to do the same thing to the population of the capital. A conspiracy discovered by the authorities is always a good thing, because it furnishes us with an opportunity to make an example, to tell the nation through the bloody heads of the conspirators: 'Thus, thus, all will be treated who dare to plot against the government and against their masters!' The Viennese have grown very humble and obedient since the day they saw Hebenstreit, the commander of the garrison, on the scaffold, and Baron Riedel, the tutor of the imperial children, at the pillory. And the Hungarians, too, have learned to bow their heads ever since the five noble conspirators were beheaded on the *Generalwiese*, in front of the citadel of Ofen. Believe me, count, that day has contributed more to the submissiveness of Hungary than all the favors and privileges which the Emperors of Austria have bestowed upon the Magyars. Nations are always frivolous and impudent children: he who tries to educate them tenderly is sure to spoil them; but raise them in fear and trembling, and they will become quiet and obedient men. And for that reason, I tell you once more, don't call those men, now that they are dead, accursed traitors, for they have been very useful to us; they have been the instrument with which we have chastised the whole overbearing people of Austria and Hungary, and those were blessed days for us when we mowed down the high-born traitors of both countries. The sword of our justice performed a noble work on that day, for it struck down a *savant* and a poet, a count and a distinguished prelate. Oh, what a pity that there was no prince among them!"

"Well, a prince might have been found likewise," said Count Saurau, "and perhaps he may get into our meshes on some other occasion. Your excellency is an adroit hunter."

"And you are an excellent pointer for me. You scent such things on the spot," Count Thugut exclaimed, and broke out into a loud burst of laughter.

Count Saurau laughed also, and took good care not to betray how cruelly the joke had wounded his aristocratic pride. The Austrian aristocracy was accustomed to such insults at the hands of the powerful and proud prime minister, and everybody knew that Thugut, the son of a poor ship-builder, in the midst of his greatness, liked to recall his modest descent, and to humble the nobility through the agency of the ship-builder's son.

"Your excellency will permit me to render myself at once worthy of the praise you have kindly bestowed upon me," said the police minister, after a short pause. "I believe we have discovered another conspiracy here. True, it is only an embryo as yet, but it may grow into something if we give it the necessary time."

"What is it, Saurau?" said Thugut, joyfully—"tell me at once what it is! A conspiracy—a good, sound conspiracy?"

"Yes, a most malignant and important conspiracy! A conspiracy against your excellency's life!"

"Bah!—is that all?" said Thugut carelessly, and with evident disappointment. "I was in hopes that by this time you would hand over to me some high-born aristocrats who had held secret intercourse with that execrable French Republic. It would have been a splendid example for all those hare-brained fools who are so fond of repeating the three talismanic words of the republican regicides, and who are crazy with delight when talking of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*. I would have liked to chastise a few of these madmen, in order to put a stop to the prevailing republican enthusiasm. But instead of that, you talk to me of a conspiracy only aimed at myself!"

"Only at yourself!" repeated the count, with great indignation. "As if it were not the most dreadful calamity for Austria if she should be deprived of your services. You know that we are standing on the verge of a precipice; in the interior, the liberal and seditious desires which the senseless reforms of the Emperor Joseph have stirred up, are still prevalent, and the people only submit with reluctance and with spiteful feelings to the reforms which your excellency has inaugurated with a view to the best interests of Austria. Abroad, on the other hand, the blood-stained French Republic incites the malecontents to imitate its own infamies; they would like to see the victorious banners of General Bonaparte here in order to have his assistance in establishing a republican government in Austria."

"It is true," said Thugut, "the Austrian empire, at the present time, is exposed to great dangers from within and without; the reins must be held very firmly in order to conduct the ship of state safely through the breakers, and I believe I am the man to do it. You see, count, I do not underrate my own importance. I know only too well that Austria needs me. Still, the plots and conspiracies that are merely directed against myself, make me laugh. For let me tell you, my dear little count, I really fancy that my person has nothing to fear either from daggers, or from pistols, or from poisoned cups. Do you believe in a Providence, count? Ah!—you look surprised, and wonder how such a question could fall from

infidel lips like mine. Yes, yes, I am an infidel, and I honestly confess that the heaven of Mohammed, where you are smoking your chibouk, seated on cushions of clouds, while houris, radiant with beauty, are tickling the soles of your feet with rosy fingers, appears to me by far more desirable than the Christian heaven where you are to stand in eternal idleness before the throne of God Almighty, singing hymns, and praising His greatness. Ah! during the happy days of my sojourn at Constantinople, I have had a slight foretaste of the heaven of Mohammed; and again, in the tedious days of Maria Theresa, I have had a foretaste of the heaven of Christianity!"

"And which Providence did your excellency refer to?" asked Saurau. "I pray your excellency to tell me, because your faith is to be the model of mine."

"I believe in a Providence that never does any thing in vain, and never creates great men in order to let them be crushed, like flies, by miserable monkeys. That is the reason why I am not afraid of any conspiracy against myself. Providence has created me to be useful to Austria, and to be her bulwark against the surging waves of the revolution, and against the victorious legions of General Bonaparte. I am an instrument of Providence, and therefore it will protect me as long as it needs me. But if, some day, it should need me no longer, if it intended then that I should fall, all my precautions would be fruitless, and all your spies, my dear count, would be unable to stay the hand of the assassin."

"You want me to understand, then, that no steps whatever are to be taken against the criminals conspiring against your excellency's life?"

"By no means, count—indeed, that would be an exaggeration of fatalism. I rely greatly on your sagacity and on the vigilance of your servants, count. Let them watch the stupid populace—see to it that *faux frères* always attend the meetings of my enemies, and whenever they inform you of conspiracies against myself, why, the malefactors shall be spirited away without any superfluous noise. Thank God, we have fortresses and state prisons, with walls too thick for shrieks or groans to penetrate, and that no one is able to break through. The public should learn as little as possible of the fate of these criminals. The public punishment of an assassin who failed to strike me, only instigates ten others to try if they cannot hit me better. But the noiseless disappearance of a culprit fills their cowardly souls with horror and dismay, and the ten men shrink back from the intended deed, merely because they do not know in what manner their eleventh accomplice has expiated his crime. The disappearance of prisoners, the *oubliettes*, are just what is needed.

You must quietly remove your enemies and adversaries—it must seem as if some hidden abyss had engulfed them; everybody, then, will think this abyss might open one day before his own feet, and he grows cautious, uneasy, and timid. Solely by the wisdom of secret punishments, and through the terror inspired by its mysterious tribunals, Venice has been able to prolong her existence for so many centuries. Because the spies of the Three were believed to be ubiquitous—and because everybody was afraid of the two lions on the Piazzetta, the Venetians obeyed these invisible rulers whom they did not know, and whose avenging hand was constantly hanging over them."

"Now, however, it seems that a visible hand, a hand of iron, is going to strike away the invisible hands of the Three," said Count Saurau, quickly. "Bonaparte seems to desire to force Venice, too, into the pale of his Italian republics. The city is full of French emissaries, who, by means of the most eloquent and insidious appeals, try to bring about a rising of the Venetians against their rulers, in order—but hark!" said the count, suddenly interrupting himself. "What is that? Don't you hear the clamor in the street, right under our window?"

He paused, and, like the minister, turned his eyes and ears toward the window. A confused noise, loud shouts and yells, resounded below.

The two ministers, without uttering a word, arose from their arm-chairs and hurried to one of the windows, which looked upon the wide street extending from the *Kohlmarkt* to the minister's palace. A vast mass of heads, broad shoulders, and uplifted arms, was visible there, and the angry roar of the excited populace was approaching already the immediate neighborhood of the palace.

"It seems, indeed, as if these honorable representatives of the people, intended to pay me a visit," said Thugut, with great composure. "Just listen how the fellows are roaring my name, as if it were the refrain of some rollicking beer-song!"

"Why, it is a regular riot!" exclaimed the police minister, angrily. "Your excellency will permit me to withdraw—"

He left the window hastily, and took his hat, but Thugut's vigorous hand kept him back.

"Where are you going, count?" said he, smiling.

"To the governor of Vienna," said Saurau. "I want to ask him why he permits this nonsense, and order him to disperse the rabble in the most summary manner!"

"Pray, stay here," said Thugut, quietly. "The governor of Vienna is a man of great sagacity, who knows perfectly well how we have to treat the people. Why, it would be an unparalleled tyranny

if the poor people were not even allowed to give the prime minister their good advice, and tell him what they think of the state of affairs. Just give them this permission, and they will believe they have performed a most heroic deed, and it will seem to them as if they could boast of great liberty. True political wisdom, my dear little count, commands us to give the people a semblance of liberty; we thereby succeed in dazzling their eyes so well that they do not perceive that they have no real liberty whatever."

The clamor and noise in the street below had increased in fury. The people, whose dense masses now entirely obstructed the street, impetuously moved up to the portal of the ministerial palace, the front door of which had been locked and barred already by the cautious porter. Vigorous fists hammered violently against the door, and as an accompaniment to this terrible music of their leaders, the people howled and yelled their furious refrain: "We want to see the minister! He shall give us peace! peace! peace!"

"Ah! I know what it means!" exclaimed Count Saurau, gnashing his teeth. "Your enemies have instigated these scoundrels. The party that would like to overthrow you and me, that wants to make peace with France at any price, and to keep Belgium united with Austria—this party has hired the villains below to get up a riot. They want to compel your excellency either to resign or to comply with the wishes of the people, and make peace with the French Republic."

Thugut laughed. "Compel *me!*" said he, laconically.

At that moment the mob yelled louder than ever, and the shout—"Peace! we want peace!" shook the windows.

Simultaneously the furious blows against the front door redoubled in violence.

"Assuredly, I cannot stand this any longer!" exclaimed the police minister, perfectly beside himself. "I ought not to listen quietly to this outrage."

"No," said Thugut, very quietly, "we won't listen to it any longer. This is my breakfast-hour, and I invite you to be my guest. Come, let us go to the dining-room."

He took the count's arm, and proceeded with him to the adjoining room. Breakfast for eight persons was served in this room, for Baron Thugut was in the habit of keeping every day open table for seven uninvited guests, and his intimate acquaintances, as well as his special favorites, never failed to call on the minister at least once a week during his well-known breakfast and dinner hours.

To-day, however, the minister's rapid and inquisitive glances did not discover a single guest. Nobody was in the room except the eight footmen who stood behind the chairs. Well aware of their

master's stern and indomitable spirit, they occupied their usual places, but their faces were very pale, and their eyes turned with an expression of extreme anxiety toward the windows which, just then, trembled again under the heavy, thundering blows levelled at the front door.

"Cowards!" muttered Thugut, while walking to his chair at the upper end of the table and beckoning Count Saurau to take a seat at his side.

At this moment, however, the door was hastily opened, and the steward, pale and with distorted features, rushed into the room.

CHAPTER III.

THE INTERVIEW.

"EXCUSE me, your excellency," said he, "but this time they are assuredly in earnest. The people are storming the front door—the hinges are beginning to give way, and in fifteen minutes, at the latest, the scoundrels will have forced an entrance!"

"You had no business to close the door," said the minister. "Who ordered you to do so? Who ordered you to barricade the house, as if it were a fortress—as if we had a bad conscience and were afraid of the people?"

The steward looked aghast, and did not know what to reply.

"Go down-stairs at once," continued the minister; "order the porter to open the door, and admit everybody. Show the people up-stairs; and you rascals who are standing there with pale faces and trembling knees, open the two folding-doors so that they can get in without hurting each other. Now do what I have told you."

The steward bowed with a sigh expressive of the agony he felt, and hurriedly left the room.

The footmen, meanwhile, hastened to open the folding-doors of the dining-room, as well as those of the antechamber. The two gentlemen at the table obtaining thereby a full view of the landing of the large staircase, directly in front of the open door of the first room.

"And now, Germain," said Thugut to the footman behind his chair, "now let us have our breakfast. Be wise, my dear count, and follow my example; take some of this sherbet. It cools the blood, and, at the same time, is quite invigorating. Drink, dear count, drink! Ah! just see, my cook has prepared for us to-day a genuine Turkish meal, for there is a turkey boiled with rice and *paprica*. The chief cook of the grand vizier himself furnished me

the receipt for this exquisite dish, and I may venture to assert that you might look for it everywhere in Vienna without finding it so well prepared as at my table."

Heavy footsteps and confused voices were now heard on the staircase.

"They are coming—they really dare to enter here!" said Count Saurau, trembling with anger. "Pardon me, your excellency; I admire your heroic equanimity, but I am unable to imitate it. It is an utter impossibility for me to sit here calmly and passively, while a gang of criminals is bold enough to break into your house!"

"I beg your pardon, count: these people did not break into my house, but I voluntarily opened the door to admit them," said Baron Thugut, coolly. "And as far as your official position is concerned, I pray you to forget it for half an hour, and remember only that I have the honor of seeing you—a rare guest—at my table. Let me beg you to take some of that fowl; it is really delicious!"

Count Saurau, heaving a loud sigh, took a piece of the fowl which Germain presented to him, and laid it on the silver plate that stood before him. But just as he was going to taste the first morsel, he hesitated, and looked steadily through the open doors. Several heads with shaggy hair and flashing eyes emerged above the railing of the staircase; many others followed—now the entire figures became visible, and in the next moment, from twenty to thirty wild-looking men reached the landing, behind whom, on the staircase, a dense mass of other heads rose to the surface.

But the loud shouts, the fierce swearing and yelling, had ceased; the awe with which the intruders were filled by the aristocratic appearance of every thing they beheld, had hushed their voices, and even the intrepid orator, who previously, on the *Kohlmarkt*, had excited the people to commit acts of violence, and brought them to the minister's house—even he stood now hesitating and undecided, at the door of the dining-room, casting glances full of savage hatred and rage into the interior.

Thugut took apparently no notice whatever of what was going on; his breakfast entirely absorbed him, and he devoted his whole attention to a large piece of the turkey, which he seemed to relish greatly.

Count Saurau merely feigned to eat, and looked steadfastly at his plate, as he did not want the rioters to read in his eyes the furious wrath that filled his breast.

The men of the people did not seem to feel quite at ease on beholding this strange and unexpected scene, which all of a sudden commenced to cool their zeal and heroism, like a wet blanket. They had triumphantly penetrated into the palace, shouting vociferously,

and quite sure that the minister would appear before them trembling and begging for mercy; and now, to their utter amazement, they beheld him sitting very calmly at the breakfast-table!

There was something greatly embarrassing for the poor men in this position. They suddenly grew quite sober, and even intimidated, and many of those who had ascended the staircase so boisterously and triumphantly, now deemed it prudent to withdraw as quietly as possible. The number of the heads that had appeared above the balusters was constantly decreasing, and only about twenty of the most resolute and intrepid remained at the door of the ante-room.

At length, the speaker who had addressed them on the *Kohlmarkt*, conscious of his pledges and of the reward promised to him, overcame his momentary bashfulness and stepped boldly into the ante-room, where the others, encouraged by his example, followed him at once.

Baron Thugut now raised his eyes with an air of great indifference from his plate and glanced at the men who with noisy steps approached through the anteroom. Then turning to the footman behind him, he said, in a loud voice:

"Germain, go and ask these gentlemen if they want to see me? Ask them likewise whom you will have the honor to announce to your master?"

The men, overhearing these words, grew still more confused when the servant in his gorgeous livery stepped up to them, and, with a most condescending smile, informed them of the errand his master had given to him.

But now it was out of the question to withdraw, as there was nothing left to them but to arm themselves with whatever pluck and boldness they had at their command in order to carry out the *rôle* they had undertaken to play in the most becoming manner.

"Yes," said the speaker of the *Kohlmarkt*, loudly and resolutely, "we want to see the minister; and as for our names, I am Mr. Wenzel, of the tailors' guild; my neighbor here is Mr. Kahlbaum, also a tailor; and others may mention their own names, so that this polite gentleman may answer them to his excellency."

But none of the other men complied with this request; on the contrary, all looked timidly aside, a misgiving dawning in their minds that such a loud announcement of their names might not be altogether without danger for them.

Germain did not wait for the final conclusion, but hastily returned to his master, in order to inform him of what he had heard.

"Mr. Wenzel, of the tailors' guild, Mr. Tailor Kahlbaum, and the other gentlemen, whatever their names may be, are welcome,"

said the minister, aloud, but without interrupting his meal for a single moment.

The men thereupon advanced to the door of the dining-room. But here a proud and imperious glance from the minister caused them suddenly to halt.

"I believe you have breakfasted already?" asked Thugut.

"Yes, we have breakfasted already," replied Mr. Wenzel, in a surly voice.

"Well, unluckily, I have not, and so I request you to let me finish my breakfast first," said Thugut, attacking once more the wing of the turkey on his plate.

A long pause ensued. The men stood in the most painful embarrassment at the door, where the minister's stern glance had arrested them, and a most unpleasant apprehension of what might be the result of this scene began to take hold of their minds. Flashing sword-blades and muskets aimed at their breasts would not have frightened them so much as the aspect of the calm, proud, and forbidding figure of the minister, and the utter indifference, the feeling of perfect security with which he took his breakfast in full view of a seditious mob filled the rioters with serious apprehensions for the safety of their own persons.

"I am sure a good many soldiers and policemen are hidden about the palace," thought Mr. Wenzel, "and that is the reason why he permitted us to enter, and why he is now so calm and unconcerned; for as soon as we get into the dining-room, those fine-looking footmen will lock the door behind, and the soldiers will rush out of that other door and arrest us."

These pleasant reflections were interrupted by another terrible glance from the minister, which caused poor Mr. Wenzel to tremble violently.

"Now, gentlemen, if you please, come in; I have finished my breakfast," said Thugut, with perfect coolness. "I am quite ready and anxious to hear what you wish to say to me. So, come in, come in!"

The men who stood behind Mr. Wenzel moved forward, but the tall, herculean figure of the member of the tailors' guild resisted them and compelled them to stand still.

"No, I beg your excellency's pardon," said Mr. Wenzel, fully determined not to cross the fatal threshold of the dining-room, "it would not become poor men like us to enter your excellency's dining-room. Our place is in the anteroom—there we will wait until your excellency will condescend to listen to us."

This humble language, this tremulous voice, that did not tally at all with the air of a lion-hearted and outspoken popular leader,

which Mr. Wenzel had assumed in the street, struck terror and consternation into the souls of the men who had so rashly followed him into the palace.

The minister rose; his broad-shouldered figure loomed up proudly, a sarcastic smile played on his angular and well-marked features; his shaggy white eyebrows convulsively contracted up to this moment—the only outward symptom of anger which Thugut, even under the most provoking circumstances, ever exhibited—relaxed and became calm and serene again, as he approached the men with slow and measured steps.

"Well, tell me now what you have come for? What can I do for you?" asked Thugut, in the full consciousness of his power.

"We want to implore your excellency to give us peace. The poor people—"

"Peace with whom?" calmly asked the minister.

"Peace with France, your excellency—peace with General Bonaparte, who is said to be a magician, bewitching everybody, and capable of conquering all countries by a glance, by a motion of his hands, whenever he wishes to do so. If we do not make peace, he will conquer Austria too, come to Vienna, and proclaim himself emperor; whereupon he will dismiss our own wise and good ministers, and give us French masters. But we would like to keep our emperor and our excellent ministers, who take care of us so paternally. And that is the only reason why we have come here—just to implore your excellency to have mercy with the poor people and make peace, so that the emperor may return to Vienna, and bring his state treasury back to the capital. Yes, men, that is all we wanted, is it not? We just wanted to pray your excellency to give us peace!"

"Yes, your excellency," shouted the men, "have mercy with us, and give us peace!"

"Well, for angels of peace, you have penetrated rather rudely into my house," said the minister, sternly. "You got up a riot in order to obtain peace."

"It was merely our anxiety that made us so hasty and impetuous," said Mr. Wenzel, deprecatingly. "We ask your excellency's pardon if we have frightened you."

"Frightened me!" echoed Thugut, in a tone of unmeasured contempt. "As if you were the men to frighten *me*! I knew that you would come, and I knew, too, who had bribed you to do it. Yes, yes, I know they have paid you well, Mr. Wenzel, to get up a riot—they have given you shining ducats for leading a mob into my house. But will their ducats be able to get you out of it again?"

Mr. Wenzel turned very pale; he uttered a shriek and staggered back a few paces.

"Your excellency knew—" he said.

"Yes, I knew," continued Thugut, sternly, "that men who have no regard for the honor and dignity of their country—men who are stupid enough to believe that it would be better to submit voluntarily to the dominion of the French Republic, instead of resisting the demands of the regicides manfully and unyieldingly—that these men have hired you to open your big mouth, and howl about things which you do not understand, and which do not concern you at all."

At this moment, shrieks of terror and loud supplications, mingled with violent and threatening voices, and words of military command were heard outside.

The men turned anxiously around, and beheld with dismay that the staircase, which only a few minutes ago was crowded with people, was now entirely deserted.

Suddenly, however, two men appeared on the landing, who were little calculated to allay the apprehensions of the rioters, for they wore the uniform of that dreaded and inexorable police who, under Thugut's administration, had inaugurated a perfect reign of terror in Vienna.

The two officers approached the door of the anteroom, where they were met by Germain, the footman, who conversed with them in a whisper. Germain then hastened back to the door of the dining-room and walked in, scarcely deigning to cast a contemptuous glance on the dismayed rioters.

"Well, what is it?" asked Thugut.

"Your excellency, the chief of police sends word that his men are posted at all the doors of the palace, and will prevent anybody from getting out. He has cleared the streets, besides, and dispersed the rioters. The chief of police, who is in the hall below, where he is engaged in taking down the names of the criminals who are yet in the house, asks for your excellency's further orders."

"Ah, he does not suspect that his own chief, the minister of police is present," said Thugut, turning with a smile to Count Saurau, who, being condemned to witness this scene in the capacity of an idle and passive spectator, had withdrawn into a bay-window, where he had quietly listened to the whole proceedings.

"My dear count, will you permit the chief of police to come here and report to yourself?" asked Thugut.

"I pray *you* to give him this permission," replied the count, approaching his colleague.

Germain hastened back to the policemen in the anteroom.

"And what are we—?" asked Mr. Wenzel, timidly.

"You will wait!" thundered the minister. "Withdraw into yonder corner! may be the chief of police will not see you there."

They withdrew tremblingly into one of the corners of the anteroom, and did not even dare to whisper to each other, but the glances they exchanged betrayed the anguish of their hearts.

The two ministers, meanwhile, had likewise gone into the anteroom, and, while waiting for the arrival of the chief of police, conversed in a whisper.

In the course of a few minutes, the broad-shouldered and erect figure of the chief of the Viennese police appeared in the official uniform so well known to the people of the capital, who, for good reasons, were in the utmost dread of the terrible functionary. When the rioters beheld him, they turned even paler than before; now they thought that every thing was lost, and gave way to the most gloomy forebodings.

Count Saurau beckoned the chief to enter; the latter had a paper in his right hand.

"Your report," said the count, rather harshly. "How was it possible that this riot could occur? Was nobody there to disperse the seditious scoundrels before they made the attack on his excellency's palace?"

The chief of police was silent, and only glanced anxiously at Baron Thugut. The latter smiled, and turned to the count:

"I beg you, my dear count, don't be angry with our worthy chief of police. I am satisfied he has done his whole duty."

"The whole house is surrounded," hastily added the chief. "Nobody can get out, and I have taken down the names of all the criminals."

"Except these here," said Thugut, pointing at Mr. Wenzel and his unfortunate companions, who vainly tried to hide themselves in their corner. "But that is unnecessary, inasmuch as they have given us their names already, and informed us of their wishes. Then, sir, the whole honorable meeting of the people is caught in my house as in a mouse-trap?"

"Yes, we have got them all," said the chief. "Now, I would like to know of his excellency, the minister of police, what is to be done with them."

"I beg you, my dear count," said Thugut, turning to Count Saurau, "let me have my way in this matter, and treat these men in a spirit of hospitality. I have opened them the doors of my palace and admitted them into my presence, and it would be ungenerous not to let them depart again. Do not read the list of the names which the chief holds in his hand, but permit him to give it to me, and order him to withdraw his men from my house, and let the

prisoners retire without molestation, and with all the honors of war."

"Your will shall be done, of course, your excellency," said the count, bowing respectfully. "Deliver your list to the prime minister, and go down-stairs to carry out the wishes of his excellency."

The chief delivered the list of the captured rioters, and left the room, after saluting the two dignitaries in the most respectful manner.

"And we—? may we go likewise, your excellency?" asked Mr. Wenzel, timidly.

"Yes, you may go," said Thugut. "But only on one condition. Mr. Wenzel, you must first recite to me the song which the honorable people were howling when you came here."

"Ah, your excellency, I only know a single verse by heart!"

"Well, then, let us have that verse. Out with it! I tell you, you will not leave this room until you have recited it. Never fear, however; for whatever it may be, I pledge you my word that no harm shall befall you."

"Very well," said Mr. Wenzel, desperately. "I believe the verse reads as follows:

"Triumph! triumph! es siegt die gute Sache!
Die Türkenknechte flieh'n!
Laut tönt der Donner der gerechten Sache,
Nach Wien und nach Berlin!"*

"Indeed, it is a very fine song," said Thugut, "and can you tell me who has taught you this song?"

"No, your excellency, I could not do it. Nobody knows it besides. It was printed on a small handbill, and circulated all over the city. A copy was thrown into every house, and the working-men, when setting out early one morning, found it in the streets."

"And did you not assist in circulating this excellent song, my dear Mr. Wenzel?"

"I? God and the Holy Virgin forbid!" exclaimed Mr. Wenzel, in dismay. "I have merely sung it, like all the rest of us, and sung it to the tune which I heard from the others."

"Well, well, you did right, for the melody is really pleasing. Such songs generally have the peculiarity that not a single word of them is true; people call that poetry. Now, you may go, my poeti-

* "Triumph! triumph! the good cause conquers!
The despots' minions flee!
The thunders of the just cause
Reach Vienna and Berlin!"

This hymn was universally sung at that time (1797) in all the German States, not merely by the popular classes, but likewise in the exclusive circles of the aristocracy. It is found in a good many memoirs of that period.

cal Mr. Wenzel, and you others, whom the people sent with this pacific mission to me. Tell your constituents that I will this time comply mercifully with their wishes, and give them peace, that is, I will let them go, and not send them to the calaboose, as they have abundantly deserved. But if you try this game again, and get up another riot, and sing that fine song once more, you may rest assured that you will be taken to jail and taught there a most unpleasant lesson. Begone now!"

He turned his back on the trembling citizens, and took no notice of the respectful bows with which they took leave of him, whereupon they retired with soft but hasty steps, like mice escaping from the presence of the dreaded lion.

"And now, my dear count, as we have finished our breakfast, let us return to my cabinet, for I believe we have to settle some additional matters."

CHAPTER IV.

THE TWO MINISTERS.

BARON THUGUT took the count's arm and led him back to his cabinet.

"I read a question in your eyes," he said, smiling; "may I know what it is?"

"Why, yes, your excellency," replied Count Saurau.

"Let me ask you, then, what all this means? Why did you excuse the chief of police, who evidently had not done his duty and been guilty of a lack of vigilance? And why did you let these rascals go, instead of having them whipped to death?"

"You were away from Vienna, count? You were absent from the capital because you accompanied their majesties on their trip to Presburg, and have returned only an hour ago. Am I right?"

"Perfectly right, your excellency."

"Then you could not be aware of what has happened meanwhile here in Vienna, and the chief of police could not have informed you of the particulars. Well, then, he came to me and told me that an insurrection had been planned against the two emperors—(I believe you know that the people does us the honor of calling us the two emperors of Vienna), and that the faction hostile to us was going to make an attempt to overthrow us. A great deal of money had been distributed among the populace. Prince Carl von Schwarzenburg himself had dropped some indiscreet remarks. In short, the faction which hates me because I do not deem seditious Belgium a priceless jewel of the crown of Austria, and do not advise the emperor to keep