

I request him to extricate me from my embarrassment. I ask him to appoint an hour during the forenoon when I may call upon him and get the money."

"And you really believe that he will give you the money?"

"My dear sir, I am perfectly sure of it, and in order to satisfy you likewise, I will make a proposition. Accompany my footman to the minister's house, carry the letter to him yourself, and hear his reply. You may then repeat this reply to my footman, go home in good spirits, and wait there until I bring you the money."

"And if you should fail to come?" asked Werner.

"Then that last remedy you alluded to, suicide, always remains to you. Now go, my dear sir. John! John!"

The footman opened the door with a rapidity indicating that his ears probably had not been very far from the keyhole.

"John," said Gentz, "accompany this gentleman to the house of Minister Schulenburg-Kehnert, and wait at the door for the reply he will repeat to you. And now, Mr. Werner, good-by; you see I have done all I can, and I hope you will remember that in future, and not make so much noise for the sake of a few miserable dollars. Good gracious, if I did not owe any one more than you, my creditors might thank their stars—"

"Poor creditors!" sighed Mr. Werner, saluting Gentz, and left the room with the footman, holding the letter like a trophy in his hand

CHAPTER XIII.

THE INTERVIEW WITH THE MINISTER OF FINANCE.

"WELL, I am really anxious to know whether the minister will give me the money," murmured Gentz; "his reply will indicate to me, if the letter to the king I intrusted yesterday to Menken, has made a favorable impression, and if I may hope at length for promotion and other favors. My God, I am pining away in my present miserable and subordinate position! I am able to accomplish greater things. I am worth more than all these generals, ministers, and ambassadors, who are so proud and overbearing, and dare to look down upon me as though I were their inferior. Ah! I shall not stoop so low as to knuckle to them and flatter them. I don't want to be lifted up by them, but I will be their equal. I feel that I am the peer of the foremost and highest of all these so-called statesmen. I do not need *them*, but *they* need me. Ah, my God! somebody knocks at the door again, and John is not at home. Good Heaven, if it should be another of those noisy, impertinent creditors! I am

indebted to Julia for all these vexations. Because her things are being sent away, every door in the house is open, and every one can easily penetrate into my room. Yes, yes, I am coming. I am already opening the door."

He hastened to the door and unlocked it. This time, however, no creditor was waiting outside, but a royal footman, who respectfully bowed to the military counsellor.

"His royal highness Prince Louis Ferdinand," he said, "requests Mr. Counsellor Gentz to dine with him to-morrow."

Gentz nodded haughtily. "I shall come," he said briefly, and then looked inquiringly at his own footman who had just entered the other room.

"Well, John, what did the minister reply?"

"His excellency requests Mr. Counsellor Gentz to call on him in the course of an hour."

"All right!" said Gentz, and an expression of heart-felt satisfaction overspread his features. He closed the door, and stepped back into his study, and, folding his hands on his back, commenced pacing the room.

"He is going to receive me in the course of an hour," he murmured. "I may conclude, therefore that the king was pleased with my letter, and that I am at last to enter upon a new career. Ah, now my head is light, and my heart is free; now I will go to work."

He sat down at his desk and commenced writing rapidly. His features assumed a grave expression, and proud and sublime thoughts beamed on his expansive forehead.

He was so absorbed in his task that he entirely forgot the audience the minister had granted to him, and his footman had to come in and remind him that the hour for calling upon his excellency was at hand.

"Ah! to be interrupted in my work for such a miserable trifle," said Gentz, indignantly laying down his pen and rising. "Well, then, if it must be, give me my dress-coat, John, and I will go to his excellency."

A quarter of an hour later Counsellor Frederick Gentz entered the anteroom of Count Schulenburg-Kehnert, minister of finance. "Announce my arrival to his excellency," he said to the footman in waiting, with a condescending nod, and then quickly followed him to the door of the minister's study.

"Permit me to announce you to his excellency," said the footman, and slipped behind the *portière*. He returned in a few minutes.

"His excellency requests Mr. Gentz to wait a little while. His excellency has to attend to a few dispatches yet, but will very soon be ready to admit Mr. Gentz."

"Very well, I shall wait," said Gentz, with a slight frown, and he approached the splendidly bound books which were piled up in gilt cases on the walls of the room. The most magnificent and precious works of ancient and modern literature, the rarest editions, the most superb illustrated books were united in this library, and Gentz noticed it with ill-concealed wrath.

"These men can have all these treasures, nay, they have got them, and value them so little as to keep them in their anterooms," he murmured, in a surly tone, forgetting altogether that the footman was present and could overhear every word he said. He had really heard his remark, and replied to it, approaching Gentz:

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Counsellor, his excellency does not undervalue these treasures, but appreciates them highly, and is always glad enough when the bookbinder delivers new volumes in gorgeous bindings. For this very reason his excellency has ordered the library to be placed in this anteroom, so that it also may gladden the hearts of other people, and those gentlemen who have to wait here may have something wherewith to while away their time."

"They are permitted, then, to take the books down and read them?" asked Gentz.

The footman looked somewhat embarrassed. "I believe," he said, timidly, "that would not be altogether agreeable to his excellency, for you see, Mr. Counsellor, all of these beautiful books are gilt-edged, and gilt edges suffer greatly if the books are read. You cannot even open the books without injuring them slightly."

"And the gilt edges on this row of the books before me are as good as new, and perfectly uninjured," said Gentz, gravely.

"Well, that is easily explained. They have not been disturbed since the bookbinder brought them here," exclaimed the footman, solemnly. "No one would dare to handle them."

"Does not his excellency read these books?"

"God forbid! His excellency likes books, but he has not got time to read much. But whenever his excellency passes through this anteroom, he pauses before his bookcases, and looks at them, and, with his own hands, frequently wipes off the dust from the gilt edges of the books."

"Indeed, that is a most honorable occupation for a minister of finance," said Gentz, emphatically. "It is always a great consolation to know that a minister of finance wipes off the dust from the gold. I should be very happy if his excellency should consent to do that also for me as often as possible. But does it not seem to you, my dear fellow, that it takes his excellency a good while to finish those dispatches? It is nearly half an hour since I have been waiting here."

"I am sure his excellency will soon ring the bell."

"Ring the bell?" asked Gentz, uneasily, "for whom?"

"Why, for myself, in order to notify me to admit you, Mr. Counsellor."

"Ah, for you?" asked Gentz, drawing a deep breath, and turning once more to the books in order to while away the time by reading at least the titles, as he was not permitted to take down and open one of the magnificent volumes.

Time passed on in this manner, and Gentz was walking up and down near the bookcases, studying the titles, and waiting. The footman had withdrawn into the most remote window, and was waiting likewise.

Suddenly the large clock commenced striking solemnly and slowly, and announced to Gentz that he had been a whole hour in his excellency's anteroom. And his excellency had not yet rung the bell.

At this moment Gentz turned toward the footman with a gesture of indignation and impatience.

"I am satisfied that his excellency has entirely forgotten that I am waiting here in the anteroom," he said, angrily. "The dispatches must be quite lengthy, for I have been here now for an hour already. Hence I must beg you to inform the minister that I cannot wait any longer, for I am quite busy too, and have to return to my study. Please say that to his excellency."

"But can I dare to disturb his excellency?" asked the footman, anxiously. "He has not rung the bell, sir."

"Well, you must be kind enough to disturb him and tell him I must leave unless he can admit me at once," exclaimed Gentz, energetically. "Go, sir, go!"

The footman sighed deeply. "Well, I will do so at your risk, Mr. Counsellor," he said, in a low voice, stepping behind the *portière*. He soon returned, a malicious smile playing on his lips.

"His excellency regrets that you cannot wait any longer, Mr. Counsellor," he said. "His excellency being so busy that he cannot be disturbed, he requests you to call again to-morrow at the same hour."

"So his excellency dismisses me after detaining me here in the anteroom for more than an hour?" asked Gentz, incredulously.

"His excellency is overwhelmed with unexpected business," said the footman, with a shrug of his shoulders. "His excellency therefore requests you, Mr. Counsellor, to call again to-morrow."

Gentz cast upon the footman a glance which would have shivered him like a thunderbolt if he had not been a man of stone. But being a man of stone, the thunderbolt harmlessly glanced off from

him. With a peculiar smile, he assisted the enraged counsellor in putting on his cloak, handed him his hat with a polite bow, and then hastened to the door in order to open it to him.

At this moment the minister in his study rang the bell loudly and violently. The footman quickly opened the door leading to the hall, and, with a polite gesture, invited Gentz to step out. The latter, however, did not stir. He had hastily placed his hat on his head and was now putting on his gloves with as grave an air as if they were gauntlets with which he was going to arm himself for the purpose of stepping out into the arena.

The minister's bell resounded even louder and more violently than before.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Counsellor," the footman exclaimed, impatiently, "his excellency is calling me. Be kind enough to close the door when you leave. I must go to his excellency."

He hurriedly crossed the room and hastened into the minister's study.

Gentz now put on his gloves and approached the door. He bent one more glance full of anger upon the anteroom, and finally fixed his eyes upon the glittering books in the cases on the wall. An expression of malicious joy suddenly overspread his features. He drew back from the door, and hurriedly crossing the room, he approached the books. Without any hesitation whatever, he took down one of the largest and most richly ornamented volumes, concealed the book under his cloak, hastened back to the door, and left the house of the minister of finance with a haughty and defiant air.

Without nodding or greeting any one, he hastened through the streets back to his own house. At the door of the latter there stood two huge furniture-wagons, half filled with the sofas, arm-chairs, tables, and looking-glasses which heretofore had adorned his rooms, and which he was now going to lose with his wife.

The servants had not finished removing the furniture, and he had to pause in the hall in order to let them pass with the large silken sofa which had been the chief ornament of his own parlor. This greatly increased his anger; with furious gestures he rapidly ascended the staircase and went to his rooms. Every door was open—the apartments which he crossed with ringing steps, were empty and deserted, and finally he reached the door of his study, where his footman had posted himself like a faithful sentinel. Gentz silently beckoned him to open it, and entered. But when the servant was going to follow him, he silently but imperiously kept him back, and slammed the door in his face.

Now at last he was alone; now no one could see and watch him any longer; now he could utter the cry of rage that was filling his

breast and almost depriving him of the power of speech; and after uttering this cry, he could appease his wrath still in some other way.

He threw his cloak and hat upon a chair, seized the splendidly bound and richly gilt volume from the minister's library with both hands and hurled it upon the floor.

"Lie there, toy of a proud minister!" he exclaimed furiously. "I will treat you as I would like to treat him. I will abuse you as I would like to abuse him. There! take this! and this! and that!"

And he stamped with his heels upon the magnificent work, clinching his fists and swearing fearfully.*

A loud and merry laugh was heard behind him, and upon turning round he beheld in the door one of his friends, who was looking at him with a radiant face.

"Herr von Gualtieri, you laugh, and I am furious," exclaimed Gentz, stamping again upon the costly volume.

"But why, for God's sake, are you furious?" asked Herr von Gualtieri. "Why do you perpetrate such vandalism upon that magnificent volume under your feet?"

"Why? Well, I will tell you. I was to-day at the house of Count Schulenburg-Kehnert; he had sent me word to call on him at ten o'clock, and when I was there, he made me stand for an hour in his anteroom like his gorgeous, gilt-edged books, which his footman told me he never opens because he is afraid of injuring their gilt edges."

"And did he admit you after you had been in the anteroom for an hour?"

"No. When I had been there for an hour, he sent me word through his footman that he was too busy to receive me, and that I had better call again to-morrow. Bah! He wanted to treat me like those books of his, which he never opens; he did not want to open me either—me, a man who has got more mind, more knowledge, and information than all his books together. He made me wait in his anteroom for a whole hour, and then dismissed me!"

"And you allowed yourself to be dismissed?"

"Yes, sir, I did; but I took one of his splendid gilt-edged volumes along, in order to stamp on it and maltreat it, as I would like to maltreat him. Thus! and thus! To crush it under my heels. It does me good. It relieves me. At this moment this is the only revenge I can take against the miserable fellow." †

Herr von Gualtieri laughed uproariously. "Ah! that is an entirely novel *jus gentium*," he exclaimed; "an exceedingly funny

* Vide "Gallerie von Bildnissen aus Rahel's Umgang," edited by Varnhagen von Ense, vol. ii., p. 168

† Gentz's own words.—Vide "Rahel's Umgang," vol. ii., p. 168.

jus gentium. My friend, let me embrace you; you are a glorious fellow!"

With open arms he approached Gentz and pressed him tenderly, laughing all the while, to his heart.

Gentz was unable to withstand this kindness and this laughter, and suddenly forgetting his anger, he boisterously joined his friend's mirth.

"You like my revenge?" he asked.

"Ah! it is admirable; it is the revenge of a genuine Corsican!" said Gualtieri, gravely.

"Of a Corsican?" asked Gentz, shrinking back. "That is an ugly comparison, sir. I do not want to have any thing in common with that Corsican, General Bonaparte. I tell you I am afraid that man will some day prove a terrible scourge for us."

"And I adore him!" exclaimed Gualtieri. "He is the resuscitated Alexander of Macedon, the conqueror of the world, the master of the world. He alone has stemmed the tide of revolution in France. To him alone the French are indebted for the restoration of order and tranquillity in their country. The thirteenth of Vendémiaire is as heroic a deed, as great a victory, as the battles of Lodi and Arcole."

"That may be," said Gentz, morosely. "I am no soldier, and do not like battles and warfare. And what do we Germans care for the Corsican? Have we not got enough to do at home? Germany, however, is so happy and contented that, like the Pharisee, she may look upon republican France and exclaim: 'I thank thee, my God, that I am not like this man.'"

"You are right," replied Gualtieri. "We also stand in need of a revolution. In Germany, too, a guillotine must be erected—heads must fall, and death must hold its bloody harvest."

"Hush, my friend, hush!" said Gentz, drawing back in dismay. "Did you merely come to me for the purpose of speaking of such dreadful matters, while you are well aware that I don't like to hear anybody allude to bloodshed, murders, and similar horrors?"

"I merely wanted to try you a little in order to see whether you are still the same dear old childish coward," exclaimed Gualtieri, laughing. "The same great child with the strong, manly soul, and the gentle, weak, and easily moved child's heart. Now, let me know quickly what you wanted of the minister of finance, and I shall reward you then by telling you some good news. Well, then, what did you want of Schulenburg?"

"I had asked him to lend me five hundred dollars, and to appoint an hour when I might call for the money. He named ten o'clock, and I went to his house, merely to leave it an hour after in a tower-

ing passion and with empty hands. Oh, it is infamous, it is dreadful! It is—"

At that moment the door opened, and the footman entered.

"From his excellency, General von Schulenburg-Kehnert," he said, delivering to Gentz a small sealed package and a letter. "The servant who brought it has left, as he said no reply was required."

Gentz beckoned his servant to withdraw, and he then hastily opened the package.

"Twelve fifty-dollar bills!" he exclaimed, triumphantly. "One hundred dollars more than I had asked for! That is very kind, indeed."

"May be he does not give it to you, but merely lends it to you," said Gualtieri, smiling.

"Lend it to me!" exclaimed Gentz, scornfully. "People don't lend any money to me, because they know that I am unable to pay it back; people reward me, sir; they show their gratitude toward me in a substantial manner, but they are not so mean as to lend me what I ask for."

"Does the minister tell you so in his letter?" asked Gualtieri, dryly.

"Ah! that is true. I have not yet read the letter," said Gentz, breaking the seal. While he was reading it, a slight blush suffused his cheeks, and an expression of shame overspread his features. "Here, read it," he murmured, handing the letter to his friend.

Gualtieri took it and read as follows:

"MY DEAR COUNSELLOR,—You wished to see me, and I begged you to call at ten o'clock, although I was overwhelmed with business and hardly had any time to spare. Precisely at ten o'clock I was ready to receive you, for in all matters of business I am a very punctual man. However, after vainly waiting for you for half an hour, I resumed my work. I had to examine some very complicated accounts, and could not allow myself to be interrupted after once taking them up. Hence I had to ask you to wait, and when, after waiting for half an hour, *like myself*, you grew impatient and would not stay any longer, I sent you word to call again to-morrow. Now, that I have concluded my pressing business, however, I hasten to comply with your request. You asked me for five hundred dollars; here they are. Knowing, however, how precious your time is, and that you had to wait for half an hour through my fault, I take the liberty of adding one hundred dollars for the time you have lost to-day. Farewell, sir, and let me conclude with expressing the hope that you will soon again delight the world and myself with one of your excellent works."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MEMORIAL TO FREDERICK WILLIAM III.

"I BELIEVE," said Gualtieri, returning the letter to Gentz, "I believe the minister wanted to teach you a lesson. He made you wait in order to teach you the necessity of being punctual."

"And I shall not forget the lesson."

"You will be punctual hereafter?"

"On the contrary. This time I was half an hour behind time, and he paid me one hundred dollars for it. Hereafter I shall be an hour too late; he will make me wait an hour and pay me two hundred dollars for it. I believe that is sound arithmetic. Don't look at me so scornfully, Gualtieri; this state of affairs will not last for any length of time; there will be a time at no distant period when no minister will dare to make me wait in his anteroom, nor to pay me such petty, miserable sums. The ministers then will wait in my anteroom, and will be only too happy if I accept the thousands which they will offer to me. I have formed the fixed resolution to obtain a brilliant position and to coin wealth out of my mind."

"And I am sure you will succeed in accomplishing your purpose," said Gualtieri. "Yes, I am satisfied a brilliant future is in store for you. You are a genius such as Germany has not seen heretofore, for you are a political genius, and you may just as well confess that Germany greatly lacks politicians who are able to wield their pen like a pointed two-edged sword, to strike fatal blows in all directions and obtain victories. Germany has already fixed her eyes upon you, and even in England your name is held in great esteem since you published your excellent translation of Burke's work on the French Revolution. The political pamphlets you have issued since that time, and the excellent political magazine you have established, have met with the warmest approval, and the public hopes and expects that you will render great and important services to the country. Go on in this manner, my friend; boldly pursue the path you have entered, and it will become for you a path of glory, honor, and wealth."

Gentz looked at him almost angrily.

"I hope," he said, "you will not believe me to be an avaricious and covetous man. I value money merely because it is an instrument wherewith to procure enjoyment, and because, without it, we are the slaves of misery, privations, and distress. Money renders us free, and now that people would like to set up freedom as the religion of all nations, every one ought to try to make as much

money as possible, that alone rendering him really free. The accursed French Revolution, which has dragged all principles, all laws and old established institutions under the guillotine, was under the necessity of leaving one power unharmed—the power of money. The aristocracy, the clergy, nay, even royalty had to bleed under the guillotine, but money never lost its power, its influence, and its importance. Money speaks a universal language, and the *sans-culotte* and Hottentot understand it as well as the king, the minister, and the most beautiful woman. Money never needs an interpreter; it speaks for itself. See, my friend, that is the reason why I love money and try to make as much as possible, not in order to amass it, but because with it I can buy the world, love, honor, enjoyment, and happiness. But not being one of those who find money in their cradles, I must endeavor to acquire it and avail myself of the capital God has given me in my brains. And that I shall and will do, sir, but I pledge you my word, never in a base and unworthy manner. I shall probably make people *pay* very large sums of money for my services, but never shall I *sell* myself; all the millions of the world could not induce me to write *against my principles*, but all the millions of the world I shall demand, when they ask me to write *for my principles!* See, my friend, that is my programme, and you may be sure that I shall live up to it. I am an aristocrat by nature and conviction; hence I hate the French Revolution which intended to overthrow every aristocracy, not only that of pedigree, but also that of the mind, and therefore I have sworn to oppose it as an indefatigable and indomitable champion, and to strike it as many blows with my pen and tongue as I can. Hence I shall never join the hymns of praise which the Germans, always too complaisant, are now singing to the little Corsican, General Bonaparte. Whatever you may say about his heroism and genius, I believe him to be an enemy of Germany, and am, therefore, on my guard."

"So you do not admire his victories, the incomparable plans of his battles, which he conceives with the coolness of a wise and experienced chieftain, and carries out with the bravery and intrepidity of a hero of antiquity?"

"I admire all that, but at the same time it makes me shudder when I think that it might some day come into the head of this man who conquers every thing, to invade and conquer Germany also. I believe, indeed, he would succeed in subjugating her, for I am afraid we have no man of equal ability on our side who could take the field against him. Ah, my friend, why does not one of our German princes resemble this French general, this hero of twenty-seven years? Just think of it, he is no older than our young king; both were born in the same year."

"You must not count his years," exclaimed Gualtieri, "count his great days, his great battles. The enthusiasm of all Europe hails his coming, for he fights at the head of his legions for the noblest boons of manhood—for freedom, honor, and justice. No wonder, therefore, that he is victorious everywhere; the enslaved nations everywhere are in hopes that he will break their fetters and give them liberty."

"He is a scourge God has sent to the German princes so that they may grow wiser and better. He wishes to compel them to respect the claims of their subjects to freedom and independence, that being the only way for them to erect a bulwark against this usurper who fights his battles not only with the sword, but also with ideas. Oh, I wish our German sovereigns would comprehend all this, and that all those who have a tongue to speak, would shout it into their ears and arouse them from their proud security and infatuation."

"Well, have not you a tongue to speak, and yet you are silent?" asked Gualtieri, smiling.

"No, I have not been silent," exclaimed Gentz, enthusiastically. "I have done my duty as a man and citizen, and told the whole truth to the king."

"That means—"

"That means that I have written to the king, not with the fawning slavishness of a subject, but as a man who has seen much, reflected much, and experienced much, and who speaks to a younger man, called upon to act an important part, and holding the happiness of millions of men in his hands. It would be a crime against God and humanity, if we knew the truth and should not tell it to such a man. Because I believe I know the truth, I have spoken to the king, not in a letter which he may read to-day and throw to-morrow into his paper-basket, but in a printed memorial, which I shall circulate in thousands of copies as soon as I have heard that it is in the hands of the king."

"And you believe the king will accept this printed memorial of yours?"

"My friend, Counsellor Menken, has undertaken to deliver it to the king."

"In that case he will accept it, for he thinks very highly of Menken. But what did you tell the king in this memorial?"

"I gave him sound advice about government affairs."

"Advice! my friend, kings do not like to listen to advice, especially when it is given to them spontaneously. Did you confine yourself to general suggestions? You see I am very anxious to learn more about your bold enterprise. Just read the memorial to me, friend Gentz!"

"Ah, that would be a gigantic task for you to hear it, and for myself to read it, the memorial being quite lengthy. I ask the king therein in impressive and fervent words—oh, I wept myself when I penned them—to make his people happy and prosperous. I directed his attention to the various branches of our administration; first, to military affairs—"

"And you advise him to make war?" asked Gualtieri, hastily.

"No, I advise him always to be armed and prepared, but to maintain peace as long as it is compatible with his honor. Next I allude to the condition of our judicial and financial affairs. I beseech him to abstain from interference with the administration of justice, to insist upon a constant equilibrium being maintained between the expenses and revenues of the state, so as not to overburden his subjects with taxes, and not to curtail the development of commerce and industry by vexatious monopolies. Finally, I ask him to devote some attention to intellectual affairs and to the press."

"Oh, I expected that," said Gualtieri, smiling, "and I should not be surprised at all if you had been bold enough to ask the timid and diffident young king to grant freedom of the press to his people."

"Yes, that is what I ask him to do," said Gentz, enthusiastically.

"You want me to read the whole memorial to you. Let me read at least what I have said about the freedom of the press. Will you listen to it?"

"Oh, I am most anxious to hear it," said Gualtieri, sitting down on the sofa.

Gentz took several sheets of paper from his desk, sat down opposite his friend and commenced reading in a loud and enthusiastic voice:

"Of all things repugnant to fetters, none can bear them as little as human thought. The oppression weighing down the latter is not merely injurious because it impedes what is good, but also because it promotes what is bad. Compulsion in matters of faith may be passed over in silence. It belongs to those antiquated evils on which now that there is greater danger of an utter prostration of religious ideas than of their fanatical abuse, only narrow-minded babblers are declaiming. Not so, however, with regard to freedom of the press. Misled by unfounded apprehensions, arising from the events of the times, even sagacious men might favor a system which, viewed in its true light, is more injurious to the interests of the government than it ever can be to the rights of the citizens, even in its most deplorable abuses.

"What, even aside from all other considerations, peremptorily and absolutely condemns any law muzzling the press, is the important fact that it is impossible to enforce it. Unless there be a regular

inquisition watching over the execution of such a law, it is now-a-days utterly impossible to carry it out. The facilities for bringing ideas before the public are so great, as to render any measure destined to curtail this publicity a mere matter of derision. But if these laws prove ineffectual they may yet exasperate the people, and that is precisely their most dangerous feature; they exasperate without deterring. They instigate those against whom they are directed to offer a resistance which frequently not only remains successful, but moreover becomes glorious and honorable. The most wretched productions, whose real value would not secure a life of two hours, obtain general circulation because it seems to have required some degree of courage to write them. The most insignificant scribblers will be looked upon as men of mind, and the most venal writers suddenly become 'martyrs of truth.' A thousand noxious insects, whom a sunbeam of truth and real sagacity would have dispersed, favored by the darkness created for them with deplorable short-sightedness, insinuate themselves into the unarmed minds of the people, and instil their poison to the last drop, as though it were a forbidden delicacy of the most exquisite character. The only antidote, the productions of better writers, loses its strength because the uninformed only too easily mistake the advocates of salutary restrictions for the defenders of such as are manifestly unjust and oppressive.

"Let freedom of the press, therefore, be the immovable principle of your government, not as though the state or mankind, in this age so prolific in books, were interested in the publication of a thousand works more or less, but because your majesty is too great to maintain an unsuccessful, and therefore disastrous struggle, with petty adversaries. Every one should be held responsible, strictly responsible for unlawful acts and writings assuming such a character, but mere opinion should meet with no other adversary than its opposite, and if it be erroneous, with the truth. Never will such a system prove dangerous to a well-regulated state, and never has it injured such a one. Where it apparently became pernicious, destruction had preceded it already, and mortification and putrefaction had set in."*

"Well?" asked Gentz, with glowing cheeks and flashing eyes, when he had ceased reading, "what do you think of my exposition of the freedom of the press? Is it not clear, convincing, and unanswerable? Will not the king see that my words contain the truth, and hence follow them?"

Gualtieri looked at his friend with an air of compassionate tenderness.

* Memorial respectfully presented to his majesty Frederick William III., on his accession to the throne, November 16, 1797, by Frederick Gentz.

"Oh, you are a full-grown child," he said; "you still believe in the possibility of realizing Utopian dreams, and your faith is so honest, so manly! You want to force a scourge upon a timid young king, who most ardently desires to maintain peace, and to remain unnoticed, and tell him, 'With this scourge drive out the evil spirits and expel the lies, so as to cause daylight to dawn, and darkness to disappear!'—as though that daylight would not be sure to lay bare all the injuries and ulcers of which our own poor Prussia is suffering, and for which she greatly needs darkness and silence."

"What! you think the king will take no notice of my demands?"

"I believe," said Gualtieri, shrugging his shoulders, "that you are a highly-gifted visionary, and that the king is a tolerably intelligent and tolerably sober young gentleman, who, whenever he wants to skate, does not allow himself to be dazzled and enticed by the smooth and glittering surface, but first repeatedly examines the ice in order to find out whether it is firm enough to bear him. And now good-by, my poor friend. I came here to congratulate you for having regained your liberty, and for belonging again to the noble and only happy order of bachelors; but instead of hearing you rejoice, I find in you a philanthropic fanatic, and an enthusiastic advocate of a free press."

"But that does not prevent you from wishing me joy at my return to a bachelor's life," exclaimed Gentz, laughing. "Yes, my friend, I am free; life is mine again, and now let the flames of pleasure close again over my head—let enjoyment surround me again in fiery torrents, I shall exultingly plunge into the whirlpool and feel as happy as a god! We must celebrate the day of my regeneration in a becoming manner; we must celebrate it with foaming champagne, *pâtés de foie gras*, and oysters; and if we want to devote a last tear to the memory of my wife, why, we shall drink a glass of *Lacrymæ Christi* in her honor. You must come and see me to-night, Gualtieri. I shall invite a few other friends, and if you will afford us a rare pleasure, you will read to us some of La Fontaine's Fables, which no one understands to recite so well as you."

"I shall do so," said Gualtieri, extending his hand to Gentz. "I shall read to you one of La Fontaine's Fables, the first two lines of which eloquently express the whole history of your past."

"Let me hear those two lines."

Gualtieri covered his head, and standing in the door he had opened, he said with a deep pathos and in a profoundly melancholy voice:

"Deux coqs vivaient en paix; une poule survint,
Et voilà la guerre allumée"—

and nodding a last adieu, he disappeared.

Gentz laughed. "Indeed, he is right," he exclaimed; "that is the end of wedded life. But, thank God, mine is over, and, I swear by all my hopes, never will I be such a fool as to marry again! I shall remain a bachelor as long as I live; for he who belongs to no woman owns all women. It is time, however, to think of to-night's banquet. But in order to give a banquet, I must first procure new furniture for my rooms, and this time I won't have any but beautiful and costly furniture. And how shall I get it? Ah, *parbleu*, I forgot the six hundred dollars I received from the minister. I shall buy furniture for that sum. No, that would be very foolish, inasmuch as I greatly need it for other purposes. The furniture dealers, I have no doubt, will willingly trust me, for I never yet purchased any thing of them. Unfortunately, I cannot say so much in regard to him who is to furnish me the wines and delicacies for the supper, and I have only one hundred dollars in my pocket. The other five hundred dollars I must send to that bloodsucker, that heartless creditor Werner. But must I do so? Ah! really, I believe it would be rank folly. The fellow would think he had frightened me, and as soon as I should owe him another bill, he would again besiege my door, and raise a fresh disturbance here. No; I will show him that I am not afraid of him, and that his impudent conduct deserves punishment. Oh, John! John!"

The door was opened immediately, and the footman entered.

"John," said Gentz, gravely, "go at once to Mr. Werner. Tell him some friends are coming to see me to-night. I therefore want him to send me this evening twenty-four bottles of champagne, three large *pâtés de foie gras*, two hundred oysters, and whatever is necessary for a supper. If he should fill my order promptly and carefully, he can send me to-morrow a receipt for two hundred dollars, and I will pay him the money. But if a single oyster should be bad, if a single bottle of champagne should prove of poor quality, or if he should dare to decline furnishing me with the supper, he will not get a single *groschen*. Go and tell him that, and be back as soon as possible."

"Meantime, I will write a few invitations," said Gentz, as soon as he was alone. "But I shall invite none but unmarried men. In the first place, the Austrian minister, Prince von Reuss. This gentleman contents himself with one mistress, and as he fortunately does not suspect that the beautiful Marianne Meier is at the same time *my* mistress, he is a great friend of mine. Yes, if he knew that—ah!" he interrupted himself, laughing, "that would be another illustration of La Fontaine's fable of the two cocks and the hen. Well, I will now write the invitations."

He had just finished the last note when the door opened, and John entered, perfectly out of breath.

"Well, did you see Mr. Werner?" asked Gentz, folding the last note.

"Yes, sir. Mr. Werner sends word that he will furnish the supper promptly and satisfactorily, and will deliver here to-night twenty-four bottles of his best champagne, three large *pâtés de foie gras*, two hundred oysters, etc., but only on one condition."

"What! the fellow actually dares to impose conditions?" exclaimed Gentz, indignantly. "What is it he asks?"

"He asks you, sir, when he has delivered every thing you have ordered, and before going to supper, to be kind enough to step out for a moment into the anteroom, where Mr. Werner will wait for you in order to receive there his two hundred dollars. I am to notify him if you accept this condition, and if so, he will furnish the supper."

"Ah, that is driving me to the wall," exclaimed Gentz, laughing. "Well, go back, to the shrewd fellow and tell him that I accept his conditions. He is to await me in the anteroom, and as he would, of course, make a tremendous noise in case I should disappoint him, he may be sure that I shall come. So go to him, John."

"As for myself," said Gentz, putting on his cloak, "I shall go and purchase several thousand dollars' worth of furniture; my rooms shall hereafter be as gorgeous as those of a prince. By the by, I believe I have been too generous. If I had offered Werner one hundred dollars, he would have contented himself with that sum."

CHAPTER XV.

THE WEDDING.

At the house of the wealthy banker Itzig a rare festival took place to-day, a festival which all Berlin had been talking of for the last few days, and which had formed the topic of conversation, no less among the people on the streets, than among the aristocratic classes in their palatial mansions. To-day the wedding of three of his beautiful young daughters was to take place, and the rich, ostentatious, and generous gentleman had left nothing undone in order to celebrate this gala-day in as brilliant and imposing a manner as possible. All the manufacturers of Berlin had been employed for months to get up the *trousseaux* of his daughters, for he had declared that they should wear exclusively the productions of German