

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

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

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

CHAPTER XX.

THE RECEPTION OF THE AMBASSADORS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER XXI.

FRANCE AND AUSTRIA.

BONAPARTE had scarcely reached his room and just closed the door, when the opposite door opened, and the entering footman announced, "His excellency Count Louis Cobenzl."

Bonaparte waved his hand and went to meet the count in the anteroom, where he welcomed him with the utmost kindness and courtesy.

The two gentlemen thereupon reëntered the room hand in hand, a pleasant smile playing on their lips, while both were assuring each other of their kind intentions, but at the same time secretly entertaining the ardent desire and purpose to divine their mutual thoughts, but to conceal their own schemes. The general, with great politeness, offered the seat of honor on the sofa to the count, and sat down in an arm-chair in front of him. A small round table with writing-materials and paper stood between them, forming as it were the frontier between Austria and France.

"So the ardent desires of Austria are fulfilled now," said Count Cobenzl, with a sweet smile. "France will no longer oppose us; she will be our friend and ally."

"France will welcome this new friend and ally of hers," exclaimed Bonaparte, feelingly, "provided Austria's intentions are loyal. Ah, my dear count, no protestations now! In politics words prove nothing, deeds every thing. Let Austria, then, prove by her deeds that she really desires to keep up a good understanding with France, and that she has given up forever her hostile attitude toward the republic."

"But has not Austria given proof of her intentions toward France already?" asked the count, in surprise. "Has not his majesty the emperor declared his willingness to resume diplomatic relations with France, and thereby formally and before the whole world to recognize the French Republic?"

"Sir," exclaimed Bonaparte, "the French Republic does not humbly solicit to be recognized. She compels hostile states to recognize her, for, like the sun, she sheds her light over the whole globe, and she would pierce the eyes of such as would feign not to see her, rendering them blind for all time to come!* Austria beheld this radiant sun of the republic at Lodi, at Rivoli, Arcole, and Mantua; whence, then, would she derive courage enough to refuse

* Bonaparte's own words.—Vide Constant, vol. i., p. 284.

recognizing France? But instead of words, prove to us by your actions that your friendship is honest and sincere."

"We are ready to do so," said Count Cobenzl, politely. "Austria is ready to give a public and brilliant proof of her devotion to the great general whose glory is now filling the whole world with astonishment and admiration. His majesty the emperor, in the letter which I had the honor of delivering to you some time ago, told you already in eloquent words how greatly he admired the conqueror of Italy, and how gladly his majesty, if it were in his power, would grant you such favors as would be agreeable to you. But at that time you rejected all such offers, general, and nothing could induce you to accept of what we wished to present to you. It seemed not to have value enough to—"

"Rather say, count, it was all too valuable not to be looked upon as a bribe," exclaimed Bonaparte. "I was negotiating with you, sword in hand, and it would not have been becoming of me to lay the sword aside in order to fill my hands with your presents."

"But now, general, now that we have laid the sword aside, that we have made peace, that we have exchanged the ratifications of the treaty—now that you tender your hand to Austria in friendship and peace, you might permit his majesty the Emperor of Austria to deposit something in your friendly hand, that might prove to you how sincerely my august master the emperor is devoted to you."

"And what does the emperor desire to deposit in my hand?" asked Bonaparte, with a quiet smile.

Count Cobenzl hesitated a little before making a reply. "General," he then said, "when I see you thus before me in your marble beauty, I am involuntarily reminded of the heroes of Rome and Greece, who have immortalized the glory of their countries, but whom the admiration of posterity had to compensate for the ingratitude of their contemporaries. General, republics never were grateful to their great men, and only too often have they stigmatized their most glorious deeds; for the republics deprecated the greatness of their heroes, because he who distinguished himself, thereby annulled the equality and fraternity of all the citizens. Pericles was banished from Athens, and Julius Cæsar was assassinated! General, will modern republics be more grateful than those of antiquity? For my part, I dare say, it is rather doubtful, and the French being descendants of the Romans, I am afraid they will not prove any more grateful than the latter. The emperor, my august master, shares my fears, and as he loves and venerates you, he would like to exalt you so high as to prevent the hands of the political factions from reaching up to you. His majesty therefore proposes to create a principality for you in Germany, and to make you the

sovereign ruler of two hundred thousand people, appointing you at the same time a prince of the German empire, and giving you a seat and vote at the imperial diet.* General, do you accept my emperor's offer?"

"To become the emperor's vassal?" asked Bonaparte, with an imperceptible smile. "A small prince of the German empire who on solemn occasions might be deemed worthy to present the wash-basin to the emperor, or to be his train-bearer, while every king and elector would outrank me. No, my dear count, I do not accept the offer. I sincerely thank the emperor for the interest he takes in my welfare, but I must accept no gifts or favors not coming directly from the French nation, and I shall always be satisfied with the income bestowed upon me by the latter."†

"You reject the emperor's offer?" asked Cobenzl, mournfully—"you disdain wearing a crown?"

"If the crown should crush the few laurels with which my victories have adorned me, yes; in that case I should prefer to decline the crown in favor of my laurels. And, my dear count, if I had been so anxious for a crown, I might have picked up one of those crowns that fell down at my feet in Italy. But I preferred to crush them under my heels, just as St. George crushed the dragon; and the gold of the crushed crowns, as it behooved a good and dutiful son, I laid down on the altar of the great French Republic. So you see I am not longing for crowns. If I might follow my own inclinations, I should return to the silence and obscurity of my former life, and I should lay my sword aside in order to live only as a peaceable citizen."

"Oh, general, if you should do so," exclaimed Cobenzl, "there would soon be men to pick up your sword in order to fight with it against the Republic and to recall the Bourbons to the throne of the lilies."

A rapid flash from Bonaparte's eyes struck the count's face and met his sharp, searching glance.

"Count Cobenzl," he said, quietly and coldly, "the lilies of France have dropped from their stems, and, being drowned in the blood of the guillotine, they could not be made to bloom again. He would be a poor, short-sighted gardener who would try to draw flowers from seeds dead and devoid of germs. And believe me, we are no such poor, short-sighted gardeners in France. You alluded just now to the ingratitude of republics, and you apprehended lest I might likewise suffer thereby. Let me assure you, however, that even my country's ingratitude would be dearer to me than the grati-

* Historical.—Vide "Mémoires d'un Homme d'État," vol. v., p. 67.

† Bonaparte's own reply.—Vide "Mémoires d'un Homme d'État," vol. v., p. 67.

tude of a foreign power, and that the crown of thorns, which France may press upon my head, would seem to me more honorable than the coronet with which an enemy of France might adorn my brow. And now, count, a truce to such trifling matters! Let us speak about business affairs. We have signed the ratifications of peace, which are to be laid before the congress; it only remains for us to sign the *secret* articles which shall be known by none but France and Austria. The main point is the evacuation of Mentz by your troops, so that our army may occupy the fortress."

"I am afraid, general, this very point will be a stumbling-block for the members of the congress. They will raise a terrible hue and cry as soon as they learn that we have surrendered Mentz."

"Let these gentlemen say what they please," said Bonaparte, contemptuously; "we have called them hither that they may talk, and while they are talking, we shall act!"

"They will say that Austria has sacrificed the welfare and greatness of Germany to her own private interests," exclaimed Count Cobenzl, anxiously.

"Fools are they who care for what people will say!" replied Bonaparte, shrugging his shoulders. "A prudent man will pursue his path directly toward his aim, and the hum of babblers never disturbs him. Hear, then, my last words: in case the Austrian troops do not leave Mentz within one week, and surrender the fortress to the French forces, the French army will remain in Venice, and I would sooner send the latter city to the bottom of the sea than to let Austria have a single stone of hers. Mentz must be ours, or I tear the treaty, and hostilities will recommence!"

And Bonaparte, with a furious gesture, seized the papers lying on the table and was about to tear them, when Count Cobenzl suddenly jumped up and grasped his hands.

"General," he said, imploringly, "what are you going to do?"

"What am I going to do?" exclaimed Bonaparte, in a thundering voice, "I am going to tear a treaty of peace, which you merely wanted to sign with words, but not with deeds! Oh, that was the nice little trick of your diplomacy, then! With your prince's coronet you wanted to dazzle my eyes—with the two hundred thousand subjects you offered me just now, you wanted me to corrupt my soul, and induce me to barter away the honor and greatness of France for the miserable people of a petty German prince! No, sir. I shall not sell my honor at so low a price. I stand here in the name of the French Republic and ask you, the representative of Austria, to fulfil what we have agreed upon at Campo Formio. Mentz must be ours even before our troops leave Venice. If you refuse that, it is a plain infringement of the treaty, and hostilities will be resumed.

Now, sir, come to a decision. I am only a soldier; and but a poor diplomatist, for with my sword and with my word I always directly strike at my aim. In short, then, count, will you withdraw your troops from Mentz and from the other fortresses on the Rhine, and surrender Mentz to our army? Yes, or no?"

"Yes, yes," exclaimed Count Cobenzl, with a sigh, "we will fulfil your wishes—we will withdraw our troops from Mentz and surrender the fortress to the French."

"When will the surrender take place? As speedily as possible, if you please."

"On the ninth of December, general."

"Very well, on the ninth of December. The matter is settled, then."

"But let there be no solemn ceremonies at the surrender," said the count, imploringly. "Let our troops withdraw quietly—let your forces occupy the place in the same manner, so that when the delegates of the German empire, assembled in congress in this city, and to whom the Emperor of Germany has solemnly guaranteed the entire integrity and inviolability of the empire, hear the news of the transaction, the latter may be already an accomplished fact, to which every one must submit."

"Be it so, if that be Austria's desire," said Bonaparte, smiling. "And now we will consider the other secret articles. The Austrian troops retire from the German empire up to the line of the Inn and Lech, occupying hereafter only Austrian territory."

"Yes, general; in return for all these concessions on our part, the French troops will evacuate on the thirtieth of December the fortresses and territory of Venice, which has been ceded to Austria by the treaty of Campo Formio, and retire behind the line of demarcation."

"Granted! At the same time the troops of the republic seize the *tête-de-pont* at Mannheim either by intimidating the isolated garrison, or by making a sudden dash at the position,* and during the continuation of the negotiations here at Rastadt, the French forces leave the left bank of the Rhine and occupy the right bank from Basle to Mentz."

"Granted," sighed Count Cobenzl. "Austria yields the frontier of the Rhine to France—that is, by the simultaneous retreat of her own forces she surrenders to the republic the most important points

* "Mémoires d'un Homme d'État." The French took the *tête-de-pont* at Mannheim by assault, on the 25th of January, 1798, the garrison refusing to evacuate it. Mentz surrendered without firing a gun, and during the night of the 28th of December, 1797, the French entered this great fortress, which was thereupon annexed to the French Republic.

of the German empire, including Ehrenbreitstein. The congress of the states of the German empire will deliberate, therefore, under the direct influence produced by the immediate neighborhood of a French army."

"In case the delegates of Germany do not like the looks of the French soldiers, they may turn their eyes to the other side, where the Austrian army is encamped on the Danube and on the Lech," exclaimed Bonaparte. "Thus the delegates will be surrounded by two armies. This fact may interfere a little with the freedom of speech during the session of congress, but it will be advantageous, too, inasmuch as it will induce the delegates to accelerate their labors somewhat, and to finish their task sooner than they would have done under different circumstances."

"It is true, right in the face of these two armies at least the small German princes will not dare to oppose the German emperor in ceding the entire left bank of the Rhine to France. But it is only just and equitable for us to indemnify them for their losses. In one of our secret articles, therefore, we should acknowledge the obligation of promising compensations to the princes and electors—"

"Yes, let us promise compensations to them," said Bonaparte, with a tinge of sarcasm. "As to the possessions of Prussia on the left bank of the Rhine, France declares her readiness to give them back to the King of Prussia."

"But both powers agree not to allow the King of Prussia to acquire any new territory," exclaimed Count Cobenzl, hastily.

"Yes, that was our agreement at Campo Formio," said Bonaparte. "Austria's increase of territory, besides Venice, will consist of Salzburg and a piece of Upper Bavaria. In case she should make further conquests in the adjoining states, France may claim a further aggrandizement on the right bank of the Rhine."*

"Yes, that was the last secret article of the preliminaries of Campo Formio," said Cobenzl, sighing.

"Then we have remained entirely faithful to our agreement," said Bonaparte. "We have not made any alterations whatever in the programme which we agreed upon and deposed in writing at the castle of Campo Formio. It only remains for us to-day to sign these secret articles."

He took the pen and hastily signed the two documents spread out on the table.

Count Cobenzl signed them also; but his hand was trembling a little while he was writing, and his face was clouded and gloomy. Perhaps he could not help feeling that Austria just now was signing the misery and disgrace of Germany in order to purchase thereby

* Schlosser's "History of the Eighteenth Century," vol. v., p. 43.

some provinces, and that Austria enlarged her territory at the expense of the empire whose emperor was her own ruler—Francis II.

Their business being finished, the two plenipotentiaries rose, and Count Cobenzl withdrew. Bonaparte accompanied him again to the door of the anteroom, and then returned to his cabinet.

A proud, triumphant smile was now playing on his pale, narrow lips, and his eyes were beaming and flashing in an almost sinister manner. Stepping back to the table, he fixed his eyes upon the document with the two signatures.

"The left bank of the Rhine is ours!" he said, heavily laying his hand upon the paper. "But the right bank?"

He shook his head, and folding his arms upon his back, he commenced pacing the room, absorbed in profound reflections. His features had now resumed their marble tranquillity; it was again the apparition of Julius Cæsar that was walking up and down there with inaudible steps, and the old thoughts of Julius Cæsar, those thoughts for which he had to suffer death, seemed to revive again in Bonaparte's mind, for at one time he whispered, "A crown for me! A crown in Germany. It would be too small for me! If my hand is to grasp a crown, it must—"

He paused and gazed fixedly at the wall as if he saw the future there, that arose before him in a strange phantasmagoria.

After a long pause, he started and seemed to awake from a dream.

"I believe I will read the letter once more, which I received yesterday by mail," he murmured, in an almost inaudible tone. "It is a wonderful letter, and I really would like to know who wrote it."

He drew a folded paper from his bosom and opened it. Stepping into a bay window, he perused the letter with slow, deliberate glances. The bright daylight illuminated his profile and rendered its antique beauty even more conspicuous. Profound silence surrounded him, and nothing was heard but his soft and slow respiration and the rustling of the paper.

When he had finished it, he commenced perusing it again, but this time he seemed to be anxious to hear what he was reading. He read it, however, in a very low and subdued voice, and amidst the silence surrounding him the words that fell from the lips of the resurrected Cæsar sounded like the weird whispers of spirits.

"You have to choose now between so great an alternative," he read, "that however bold your character may be, you must be uncertain as to the determination you have to come to, if you are to choose between respect and hatred, between glory or disgrace, between exalted power or an abject insignificance, that would lead

you to the scaffold, and, finally, between the immortality of a great man, or that of a punished partisan."

"Ah!" exclaimed Bonaparte, and his voice was now loud and firm. "Ah! I shall never hesitate between such alternatives. I should bear disgrace, abject insignificance, and an utter lack of power? And my hand should not be withered—it should be able yet to grasp a sword and pierce my breast with it?"

He lowered his eyes again and continued reading: "You have to choose between three parts: the first is to return quietly to France and to live there as a plain and unassuming citizen; the second, to return to France at the head of an army and there to become the leader of a party; the third, to establish a great empire in Italy and proclaim yourself king of the peninsula. I advise you to do so, and to grasp the Italian crown with a firm hand."*

"He is a fool," said Bonaparte, "who believes a man might make himself king of Italy and maintain himself on the throne, unless he previously has seized the sovereign power in France.† But no one must hear these thoughts! I will go to Josephine!"

He hastily folded the paper and concealed it again in his bosom. Then stepping to the looking-glass, he closely scanned his face in order to see whether or not it might betray his thoughts; and when he had found it to be as pale and impassive as ever, he turned round and left the room.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE BANNER OF GLORY.

FOUR days had elapsed since Bonaparte's arrival at Rastadt, and the congress had profited by them in order to give the most brilliant festivals to the French general and his beautiful wife. All those ambassadors, counts, barons, bishops, and diplomatists seemed to have assembled at Rastadt for the sole purpose of giving banquets, tea-parties, and balls; no one thought of attending to business, and all more serious ideas seemed to have been utterly banished, while every one spoke of the gorgeous decorations of the ball-rooms and of the magnificence of the state dinners, where the most enthusiastic toasts were drunk in honor of the victorious French general; and the people seemed most anxious entirely to forget poor, suffering, and patient Germany.

* Sabatier de Castres, living at that time in exile at Hamburg, had written this anonymous letter to Bonaparte.

† "Mémoires d'un Homme d'État," vol. v., p. 69.