

A wave of his hand commanded them to be still, and, as if fascinated by a magician's wand, the roaring masses grew dumb, and profound silence ensued. Amidst this silence, Napoleon raised his clear, ringing voice, and its sonorous notes swept like eagle-wings over the sea of soldiers.

"Brave soldiers of the camp of Boulogne," he said, "you will not go to England. The gold of the English government has seduced the Emperor of Austria, and he has again declared war against France. His army has crossed the line of demarcation assigned to it, and inundated Bavaria. Soldiers, fresh laurels are awaiting you beyond the Rhine; let us hasten to vanquish once more enemies whom we have already vanquished. On to Germany!" *

"On to Germany!" shouted the soldiers, jubilantly. "On to Germany!" was repeated from mouth to mouth, and even the sea seemed to roar with delight and its waves, thundering against the beach, to shout, "On to Germany!"

CHAPTER XLIII.

NAPOLEON AND THE GERMAN PRINCES.

THE Emperor of France with his army had crossed the boundaries of Germany. He had come to assist his ally, the Elector of Bavaria, against the Austrians who had invaded Bavaria; not, however, in order to menace Bavaria, but, as an autograph letter from the Emperor Francis to the elector expressly stated, to secure a more extended and better protected position.

The Elector of Bavaria, Maximilian Joseph, had declared, in a submissive letter to the Austrian emperor, that he was perfectly willing to let the Austrian regiments encamp within his dominions. "I pledge my word as a sovereign to your majesty," he had written to the Emperor of Germany, "that I shall not hinder the operations of your army in any manner whatever, and if, what is improbable, however, your majesty should be obliged to retreat with your army, I promise and swear that I shall remain quiet and support your projects in every respect. But I implore your majesty on my knees to permit me graciously to maintain the strictest neutrality. It is a father, driven to despair by anguish and care, who implores your majesty's mercy in favor of his child. My son is just now traveling in southern France. If I should be obliged to send my troops into the field against France my son would be lost, and the fate of the Duke d'Enghien would be in store for him, too; if I should,

* Napoleon's own words.—Constant, vol. i., p. 282.

however, remain quietly and peaceably in my states, I should gain time for my son to return from France." *

But on the same day, and with the same pen, on which the ink with which he had written to the Emperor of Germany was not yet dry, the elector had also written to the Emperor of France and informed him "that he was ready to place himself under his protection, that he would be proud to become the ally of France, and that he would thenceforward lay himself and his army at the feet of the great and august Emperor of France."

And the courier who was to deliver the letter with the sacred pledges of neutrality to the Emperor of Germany, had not yet reached Vienna when the Elector of Bavaria secretly fled from Munich to Wurzburg, where his army of twenty-five thousand men was waiting for him.

He sent his army, commanded by General Dero, to meet the Emperor of the French; it was not to attack him as the enemy of Germany, but to hail him as an ally and to place itself under his direction. He then issued a proclamation.

"We have separated from Austria," he said, "from Austria, who wanted to ensnare and annihilate us by her perfidious schemes, and to compel us to fight at her side for foreign interests; from Austria, the hereditary foe of our house and of our independence, who is just now going to make another attempt to devour Bavaria, and degrade her to the position of an Austrian province. But the Emperor of the French, Bavaria's natural ally, hastened to the rescue with his brave warriors, in order to avenge you; your sons will soon fight at the side of men accustomed to victory; soon, soon the day of retribution will be at hand." †

Thanks to the hatred of the Germans against their German brethren, thanks to the hatred of the Bavarians against the Austrians, this proclamation had been received with joyful acclamations throughout the whole state, and Bavaria felt proud and happy that she should fight under the Emperor of the French, her "natural ally," against the Emperor of Germany.

The French army was drawn up in line in the plain near Nordlingen, in order to solemnly receive its German auxiliaries. They were the first German troops that Napoleon had gained over to his side, and therefore he wished to welcome them pompously and with all honors. Amidst the jubilant notes of all the bands of the French army, amidst the enthusiastic shouts of the French soldiers, the Bavarians marched into the French camp. The emperor, in full uniform, surrounded by all his generals, welcomed General Dero

* "Mémoires sur l'Intérieur du Palais de Napoléon," by De Bausset, vol. i., p. 59.

† Häusser's "History of Germany," vol. ii., p. 611.

and the Bavarian officers; accompanied by a wave of his sword, he said to them:

"I have placed myself at the head of my army in order to deliver your country, for the house of Austria intends to annihilate your independence. You will follow the example of your ancestors, who constantly preserved that independence and political existence which are the first blessings of a nation. I know your valor, and am sure that I shall be able after the first battle to say to your sovereign and to my people, that you are worthy to fight in the ranks of the grand army."

The Bavarian soldiers hailed this proud address with the same exultation with which the Bavarian people had received the proclamation of the elector; and never had the French soldiers manifested greater enthusiasm for their chieftain and emperor than did these German soldiers, the first German auxiliaries of the emperor.

Napoleon received their jubilant shouts with a gracious smile.

"Duroc," he said, turning to his friend and comrade, who was riding at his side—"Duroc, listen to what I am going to say to you. The Germans are not good patriots; they are capable of loving the conqueror of their country just as well as their legitimate sovereign. Even at the time of Julius Cæsar there was no harmony among the Germans; and while Arminius opposed the Romans heroically, Segestes declared in favor of them. If, as a modern Julius Cæsar, I should wish to conquer Germany, I believe I should find there no Arminius, but certainly many Segesteses."

"But, perhaps, a few Thusneldas, sire," said Duroc, laughing; "and your majesty knows full well that it was Thusnelda, after all, who filled her husband with so undying a hatred against the Romans."

"And the son of Thusnelda became a prisoner of the Romans!" exclaimed Napoleon; "he became a miserable slave of the Romans, and preferred a life of humiliation and disgrace to an honorable death. The Germans are great talkers; they are always ready to fight with their tongues for the honor of their country, but they do not like to die for it. But who are the Thusneldas with whom you threatened me? Did you allude to Queen Caroline of Naples, the daughter of Maria Theresa?"

"Oh, no, sire; she is no longer a German, but an Italian intriguer—a—"

"She is, as I told her own ambassador in Milan, a modern Athalia, a daughter of Jezebel," said Napoleon, interrupting him vehemently. "But patience, patience, I shall punish her for her bitter hatred and intrigues."

"Sire, it was in your power to receive ardent love at the hands

of Queen Caroline, instead of her hatred, which is, perhaps, nothing but concealed love. I suppose your majesty knows what the queen said only a few years ago to the French minister?"

"No, I do not, or perhaps I have only forgotten it," replied Napoleon, carelessly. "Did she want to make a *postillon d'amour* of him?"

"Nearly so, sire. She told him she would willingly travel four hundred leagues in order to see General Bonaparte. She added that you were the only great man in the world, and none but idiots were seated at the present time on all the thrones of Europe."*

"A very flattering remark for her husband and for her nephew, the Emperor of Austria," said Napoleon. "She referred, however, only to those who are seated on thrones, but the tender queen has been able to discover a few real men by the side of her husband's throne. I have never hankered after becoming the rival of Acton and Nelson. I do not like passionate and ambitious women. They must be gentle and charming like Josephine if they are to please me."

"I wish the empress were here and able to hear your words," exclaimed Duroc.

"Does she again doubt my constancy?" asked Napoleon, quickly. "Have my brothers again frightened her by threats of a divorce? Let her be reassured, I do not think of a separation from her, and all the Thusneldas of Germany cannot become dangerous to me. But you have not yet told me the names of those Thusneldas. Let me hear them."

"Sire, first there is the beautiful Queen of Prussia. She is said to be a bitter enemy of France."

"Yes, a bitter enemy of *mine!*" exclaimed Napoleon, with a gloomy and threatening glance; "a short-sighted woman, who does not see that she will ruin her good-natured, weak, and irresolute husband if she carries him along with her on this path of hostility and hatred. She will repent one day having scorned my friendship, for, if she succeeds in gaining her husband over to an alliance with Russia, I shall be inexorable, and mercilessly trample the whole vacillating and fickle Prussia in the dust. And do you still know of another Thusnelda?"

"Yes, sire; it is the wife of the Elector Frederick of Wurtemberg, who is also said to have filled her husband with ardent hatred against France, and with fervent patriotism for Germany. The elector and electress are reported to have taken a solemn oath in the presence of their whole court never to bow or submit to France, and never to prove recreant to the interests of Germany."

* Queen Caroline actually said this to the French minister.

"I shall compel them to believe that the interests of Germany require them to bow to France and to become our allies!" exclaimed Napoleon, proudly. "The electress of Wurtemberg is a daughter of George the Third of England, a daughter of my mortal enemy; hence, she shall bow to me or feel my power and my wrath. The time for hesitation and procrastination is over. I want to have my friends at my side and my enemies opposite me. Let the German princes choose whether they will go with France against Austria, their common despot, or whether, like Austria, they wished to be conquered by France! We shall see which side Wurtemberg will espouse, for Ney is already with his corps on the road to Stuttgart, and in the course of a few days I shall pay a visit to the elector and electress at their own palace."

And a few days later Napoleon really kept his word: he paid a visit to the elector and electress at Louisburg, after Ney had compelled the government of Wurtemberg to open the gates of Stuttgart to his troops.

The elector received the emperor at the foot of the palace staircase, where only an hour ago he had assured his courtiers he would not receive the upstart Napoleon as an equal and shake hands with him; but as Napoleon now saluted him with a kind nod, and gave him his hand, the elector bowed so deeply and respectfully that it almost looked as if he wished to kiss the small, white, imperial hand which he had seized so joyfully and reverentially.*

The electress, who entered at the side of her husband, received the emperor in the large and brilliant throne-room of the palace. Her face was pale and gloomy when she bowed ceremoniously to the hereditary foe of her house, and not the faintest tinge of a smile was to be seen on her lips when she replied to the emperor's address.

Napoleon's face, however, was strangely mild and winning to-day, and yet radiant with dignity and grandeur. It was the face of a conqueror who does not intend to treat those whom he has subjugated with arrogance and rigor, but desires to win their affection by gentleness and love. Hence, his eyes had only mild and kind glances, and on his finely-formed lips there was playing that smile which the Empress Josephine said was the sunbeam of his face, and irresistible to any woman.

Nor was the electress able to withstand this smile and this kind bearing of Napoleon. She had expected to find in the emperor an ardent enemy of her native England, and he now paid a glowing and eloquent tribute to the English, to their country, to their institutions and character. Napoleon had been described to her as a barbarian, taking interest only in warfare and every thing con-

* "Memoirs of General de Wolzogen," p. 24.

nected with it; and now she found him to be an admirer of the English poets, and heard him expatiate enthusiastically on Ossian, some of whose most magnificent verses he recited to her in a French translation.

The stern features of the electress gradually began to relax; the smile gradually returned to her lips, and she bent her proud head more graciously to the "upstart" Napoleon.

"Oh, sire!" she exclaimed, joyfully, and for the first time she did not avoid addressing him with the title due to his rank—"oh, sire, he who admires the English poets so enthusiastically cannot possibly be an enemy of England!"

"I am not by any means," said Napoleon, smiling; "I know no enmity whatever; peace is the sole aim of my efforts, and I believe Fate has sent me to mankind for the purpose of establishing eternal peace. It is true, I have to conquer peace by wars and commotions, but I shall conquer it, and you, princess, you and your husband must help me to do so. I intrust to your hands a noble task, which the high-minded and proud daughter of England is worthy of, and the German elector will not hinder the noble endeavors of his wife, especially as the honor and welfare of Germany are at stake."

"I am ready and willing to do for Germany what I can, and whatever your majesty may command me to do," exclaimed the elector. "Will your majesty now tell me what I must do?"

"You must conclude an alliance with France, in order to save Germany," said the emperor, almost sternly.

"Sire, I have not the power to conclude such an alliance—I am unable to do so," said the elector, sighing.

"Your state can if you cannot," said Napoleon, quickly.

"But the representatives of my people will not consent."

"I shall protect you against these representatives of your people. You will tell them, besides, that you have saved Wurtemberg by becoming my ally. For he who is not for me is against me, and I shall annihilate those who are against me, and their states shall fall to ruin. Those, however, who are for me I shall elevate, and it seems to me I see already a royal crown on the noble brow of the electress. I suppose," asked Napoleon, turning again with a smile toward the electress, "your royal highness would not be dissatisfied if you should become the queen of your people; it would be agreeable to you to be called 'your majesty,' and if it were only because it would remind you in so pleasant a manner of your royal parents who are addressed with the same title?"

"Oh, sire," exclaimed the electress, with radiant eyes, and unable to conceal her joy—"oh, sire, you are right, it would remind me most pleasantly of my paternal home and of England."

"But would not a royal crown crush my state which is too small for it?" asked the elector.

"Well, we shall enlarge it so as to render it able and worthy to support a royal crown," exclaimed Napoleon, hastily. "I believe I shall have the power and opportunity to bestow on my ally, the elector of Wurtemberg, some aggrandizements in Germany to compensate and reward him for the auxiliaries which he is to furnish to me. Besides, your task is a truly grand one. You shall assist me in subduing Austria, that arrogant Austria which would like to treat all Germany as her property, and who considers all German princes as her servants and vassals."

"You are right," said the elector, vehemently; "Austria constantly endeavors to meddle with my prerogatives in an unbecoming and arrogant manner. She would like to degrade us to the position of vassals who must always be ready to obey their emperor, but who, when they are themselves in danger, never can count on the assistance and support of their emperor."

"Let us, then, dispel Austria's illusion as though she were your master," said Napoleon, smiling. "Become my ally, and believe me, we shall have the power to teach the Emperor of Austria to respect the *King* of Wurtemberg, my ally. Will you be my ally for that purpose? Will you assist me, as a German prince, in delivering Germany from the yoke Austria has laid around her neck?"

"Sire, I am ready to save Germany with my life-blood!" exclaimed the elector, "and as your majesty has come to deliver Germany from Austria, it would be a crime for any German prince to withhold his assistance from you. Hence, I accept your alliance. Here is my hand! I shall stand by you with my troops and with my honor!"*

CHAPTER XLIV.

QUEEN LOUISA'S PIANO LESSON.

THE queen sat at the piano, practising one of Reichardt's new songs which her singing-teacher, the royal concert-master and composer, Himmel, had just brought to her. The queen wore a most brilliant costume, which, however, seemed calculated less for her silent cabinet and for the music-teacher than for a great gala-day

* The whole account of this interview is strictly historical. Vide "Memoirs of General de Wolzogen," and Häusser's "History of Germany," vol. ii., p. 613. The Elector of Wurtemberg became the *third* German ally of the French emperor, the Electors of Bavaria and Baden having preceded him. He furnished ten thousand German troops to Napoleon.

and an aristocratic assembly at court. A white satin dress, interwoven with golden flowers, and closely fitting, according to the fashion of that period, surrounded her noble figure. Her splendid white arms were bare, and her wrists were adorned with two bracelets of gold and precious stones. Her neck and shoulders, showing the noble lines and forms of a Venus of Melos, were uncovered like her arms, and adorned only with jewelry. Her hair, surrounding a forehead of classical beauty in waving masses, was fastened behind in a Grecian knot holding the golden diadem, set with diamonds, which arose on the queen's head.* A gentle blush mantled her cheeks, and a smile of melancholy and tenderness trembled on her purple lips. She had her hands on the keys, and her eyes were fixed on the music-book before her; but she had suddenly ceased singing in the middle of the piece, and her voice had died away in a long sigh.

Mr. Himmel, the concert-master, stood behind her; he was a man more than forty years of age, with a broad, full face, beaming with health, and a tall and slender form which would have been more fitting for the head of an Apollo than for this head, which reminded the beholder of a buffalo rather than of a god.

When the queen paused, a joyful smile overspread his features, which had hitherto been gloomy and ill at ease. "Your majesty pauses?" he asked, hastily. "Well, I wish your majesty joy of it. That Mr. Reichardt, of Halle, is too sentimental and arrogant a composer, and never should I have dared to lay these new pieces of his before your majesty if you had not asked me to bring you every thing written by Reichardt. Well, you have seen it now; it displeases your majesty, and I am glad of it, for—"

"For," said the queen, gently interrupting him, "for the great composer Himmel is again jealous of the great composer Reichardt. Is it not so?"

She raised her dark-blue eyes at this question to Himmel's face, and he saw to his dismay that there were tears in those eyes.

"What!" he asked in terror, "your majesty has wept?"

She nodded in the affirmative, smiling gently. "Yes," she said, after a pause, "I have wept, and hence I could not continue singing. Do not scold me, do not be angry with me, my dear and stern teacher. This song has moved me profoundly; it is so simple and yet so touching, that it must have come out of the depths of a truly noble heart."

Mr. Himmel replied only with a low sigh and an almost inaudible murmur, which the queen, however, understood very well.

* A portrait, representing the queen precisely in this costume, may be seen at the royal palace in Berlin.

"Perhaps," she said, trying gently to heal the jealous pangs of the composer, "perhaps I was so deeply moved by the words rather than by the music; these words are so beautiful that it seems to me Goethe never wrote any thing more beautiful."

And bending over the music-book, she read in an undertone:

"Wer nie sein Brod mit Thränen ass,
Wer nie die kummervollen Nächte
Auf seinem Bette einsam sass,
Der kennt euch nicht, Ihr himmlischen Mächte!" *

"Say yourself, Mr. Himmel, is not that beautiful and touching?" she asked, looking up again to her teacher.

"Beautiful and touching for those who have wept much and suffered much," said Himmel, harshly; "but I cannot conceive why these words should touch your majesty, whose whole life has hitherto illuminated the world like an uninterrupted sunny spring morning."

"Hitherto," repeated the queen, musingly, "yes, hitherto, indeed, my life was a sunny spring morning, but who is able to fathom what clouds may soon appear on the horizon, and how cloudy and gloomy the evening may be? This song reëchoes in my soul like a melancholy foreboding, and clings to its wings as if it wanted to paralyze their flight. 'He who never ate his bread with tears,' ah, how mournful it sounds, and what a long story of suffering is contained in these few words!"

The queen paused, and two tears, glistening more beautifully than the diamonds of her golden diadem, slowly ran down her cheeks.

Concert-master Himmel was not courageous enough to interrupt the silence of the queen, or, may be, he had not listened very attentively to her words, and his thoughts perhaps were fixed on matters of an entirely different character, for his air was absent and gloomy; his eyes glanced around the room, but returned continually to the lovely form of the queen.

Suddenly Louisa seemed to arouse herself violently from her gloomy meditation, and after hastily wiping the tears from her eyes she forced herself to smile.

"It is not good to give way to melancholy forebodings," she said, "particularly in the presence of a stern teacher. We must improve our time in a more useful manner, for time is a very precious thing; and if I had not judiciously profited by my short leisure to-day, I should not have had a single hour to spare for my teacher, for there

* "He who never ate his bread with tears,
He who never, through nights of affliction,
Sat on his lonely bed,
He does not know you, powers of heaven!"

will be a reception in the palace to-night, and I must previously give audience to several visitors. I have, therefore, made my evening toilet in the afternoon, and thereby gained time to take my dear singing-lesson. But now let us study, so that your pupil may redound to your honor."

"Oh, your majesty," ejaculated Himmel, "my honor and my happiness!"

"Hush, hush," said Louisa, interrupting him, with an enchanting smile, "no flattery! no court-phrases! Here I am not the queen, nor are you my devoted subject; I am nothing but an obedient pupil, and you are my rigorous master, who has a right to scold and grumble whenever I sing incorrectly, and who very frequently avails himself of this privilege. Do not apologize for it, but go on in the same manner, for I will then only learn the more."

"Your majesty sings like an angel," murmured Himmel, whose eyes were fixed steadfastly on the queen.

"Well, as far as that is concerned, you are a competent judge," exclaimed Louisa, laughing, "for being *Himmel* (heaven), you must know how the angels sing, and your opinion cannot be disputed. The angels, then, sing incorrectly, like your obedient pupil? Let the angels do so, but not your pupil. Come, Mr. Himmel, sit down. It does not behoove the *maestro* to stand at the side of his pupil. Sit down."

She pointed with a graceful wave of her hand at the chair standing at her side, and Mr. Himmel, complying with her order, sat down. His glances returned involuntarily to the queen, whose beauty only now burst on his short-sighted eyes, and whom he believed he had never seen so lovely, so fascinating and graceful. Her beautiful face seemed to him like that of a fairy queen, and her wonderful shoulders, her superb, dazzling neck, which he had never seen unveiled and so very near, appeared to him like the bust of a goddess, moulded by Phidias from living marble.

"Well, let us commence," said the queen, calmly. "Pray play the melody in the treble and let me play the accompaniment a few times; I shall then be better able to sing the song."

She commenced eagerly playing the prelude, while a deeper blush mantled her cheeks. It was Himmel's turn now to begin with the melody; his eyes, however, were not fixed on the music, but on the queen, and hence he blundered sadly.

"Well?" asked the queen, looking at him in charming confusion. "You do not play correctly."

"Yes, I have blundered, your majesty," said Himmel, gloomily; "I have blundered, for I am only a man after all, and cannot look into the sun without having a *coup de soleil*. Your majesty, I have

had such a *coup de soleil*, and you see I have lost my reason in consequence."

With these words he bent over the queen and imprinted a glowing kiss on her shoulders; then he hastily rose, took his hat, and rushed out of the room.*

The queen's eyes followed him with an air of surprise and embarrassment; then she burst into ringing, charming laughter.

"Ah," she said, "if that austere 'Madame Etiquette,' the mistress of ceremonies, should have seen that, she would have either died with horror, or her wrath would have crushed the criminal. I believe I will confess the terrible crime to her. Oh, my dear mistress of ceremonies! my dear mistress of ceremonies!" she cried.

The door of the adjoining room opened immediately, and the Countess von Voss made her appearance.

"Your majesty has called me," she said, and, after looking around the room, she cast a glance of surprise on the clock.

"Ah, my dear countess, you are surprised that Mr. Himmel, my singing-master, has already left, although the hour has only half expired?" asked the queen, merrily.

"Your majesty," said the countess, sighing, "I really ought no longer to be surprised at any thing, nor wonder at any violation of etiquette, for such things, unfortunately, occur every day and every hour. Your majesty knows, moreover, that this Mr. Himmel is altogether distasteful to me."

"And why?" asked the queen, gayly.

"Your majesty, because it is contrary to etiquette for a queen to take lessons, and to have a teacher."

"What!" exclaimed Louisa. "According to etiquette, then, a queen is not permitted to learn any thing after ascending the throne?"

"No, your majesty, for it is entirely unbecoming that one of your subjects should become the teacher of his queen, and that anybody should be permitted and dare to censure her."

"Well, do not you do so very often, my dear countess?" asked the queen, good-naturedly.

"I dare not censure the queen, but merely to defend and maintain etiquette, as my duty and official position require me to do. But a queen who takes lessons must descend from her throne so long as her teacher is with her; must renounce her exalted position, and obey instead of commanding. In such a case, therefore, etiquette is altogether out of the question."

"You are right," said Louisa, merrily. "Mr. Himmel, the concert-master, at least, entirely coincides with you, and he takes

*Historical.

no notice whatever of etiquette. Shall I confess to you, my dear countess, why Mr. Himmel has run away to-day half an hour before the regular time?"

"Run away?" asked the mistress of ceremonies, in dismay. "He has dared to run away in the presence of your majesty?"

"Yes, he has dared to do so, but previously he has dared to do something a great deal worse. He has—but, dear countess, sit down; you might turn giddy."

"Oh no, your majesty, permit me to stand. Your majesty was going to communicate graciously to me what Mr. Himmel—this teacher of a queen is not even a nobleman—has dared to do in the presence of your majesty."

"Well, listen to me," said the queen, smiling; and bending down closely to the ear of the countess, she whispered: "He has kissed my shoulder!"

The mistress of ceremonies uttered a piercing cry and tottered back in dismay.

"Kissed!" she faltered.

"Yes, kissed," sighed the queen; "I really believe it is still to be seen."

She walked with light, swinging steps to the large looking-glass, and looked at her shoulder with a charming, child-like smile.

"Yes, that small red spot there is Mr. Himmel's crime!" she said. "Tell me what punishment he has deserved, countess."

"That is a question for the courts alone to decide," said the mistress of ceremonies, solemnly; "for we shall bring the occurrence, of course, at once to their notice. Orders should be issued immediately to arrest him, and his punishment should be as unparalleled as was his offence. Your majesty will permit me to repair at once to the king in order—"

"No, my dear mistress of ceremonies," said the queen, who was still standing in front of the looking-glass and contemplating her own form, not with the contented looks of a concealed woman, but with the calm, stern eyes of a critic examining a work of art—"no, my dear mistress of ceremonies, we shall take good care not to raise a hue and cry about it. And Mr. Himmel is not so culpable, after all, as he seems to be."

"What! Your majesty intends to defend him?"

"Not to defend, but to excuse him, my dear countess. He was at my side as my dear old teacher, and I was to him not a queen, but a pupil; and, moreover, a pupil with very beautiful shoulders. My dear countess, I am really more culpable than poor Himmel, for, if the queen becomes a pupil, she must remember that her teacher is a man, and she must not treat him merely as an automaton instruct-

ing her. The only judge who is able to decide this matter is my husband, the king. He shall pronounce judgment on it, and if he permits Mr. Himmel to come back, I shall go on with my singing-lessons. However," added the queen, smiling, and blushing delicately, "in future I shall wrap a shawl around my shoulders. And now, my dear countess, pray let us not mention this little affair to anybody. I shall submit it to the king and ask him to decide it."

"I shall be silent because your majesty orders me to keep the occurrence secret," sighed the countess. "But it is unheard-of, it is dreadful. It is rank treason, and the offended royal majesty will forgive without punishing."

"Oh, yes, I will!" exclaimed the queen, joyfully. "Forgiving without punishing, is not that the most sacred and sublime power of a queen; is it not the most brilliant gem in our crown? How miserable and deplorable would monarchs be if God had not conferred the right of mercy upon them! We stand ourselves so much in need of mercy and forbearance, for we commit errors and faults like other mortals, and yet we judge and punish like gods. Let us be merciful, therefore, that we may be judged mercifully."

The door of the anteroom opened at this moment, and the chamberlain-in-waiting entered.

"Your majesty," he said, "Prince Louis Ferdinand and Minister von Hardenberg beg leave to wait on your majesty."

"I expected these gentlemen at this hour," said the queen, glancing at the clock; "let them come in, therefore. And you, my dear countess, farewell."

"Your majesty orders me to withdraw?" asked the mistress of ceremonies, hesitatingly. "Etiquette requires that the queen should give her audiences only in the presence of her mistress of ceremonies, or of one of her ladies of honor."

"My dear countess," said the queen, with a slight tinge of impatience, "I am not going to give any audience, but merely to receive a friendly visit from my royal cousin and his friend; as I know it is their intention to communicate to me matters which no one except myself can hear, I shall receive them alone. Hence be so kind as to withdraw."

"His royal highness Prince Louis Ferdinand and his excellency Minister von Hardenberg!" shouted the footman, opening the folding-doors.

The queen nodded a parting greeting to the mistress of ceremonies, and advanced a few steps to meet the visitors, while the countess, heaving mournful sighs, disappeared through the side-door.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE CONFERENCE.

PRINCE LOUIS FERDINAND, a nephew of Frederick the Great, and Minister von Hardenberg, were at that time the most popular men in Prussia, because they were known to be the leaders of the party which at the court of Berlin considered the accession of Prussia to the coalition of Russia, England, and Austria, as the only means to save the country, while Minister von Haugwitz, Lombard, the first secretary of foreign affairs, and General Köckeritz, constantly renewed their efforts to win the king to an alliance with France.

Prince Ferdinand, a fine-looking young man, scarcely thirty years of age, in his brilliant uniform, in which his tall and noble form presented a very imposing appearance, and in which he looked like the incarnation of an heroic warrior, was consequently the special favorite of the soldiers, who told the most astonishing and incredible stories about his intrepidity and hardihood. He was, besides, the favorite of the ladies, who called him the best-looking and most amiable man in the whole monarchy; and, with amiable indulgence, attributed his many adventures and acts of inconstancy, his wild and dissipated life, his extravagance and numerous debts, to the genius of the prince. He was, indeed, an extraordinary man, one of those on whose brow Providence has imprinted the stamp of genius,—not to their own good, but to their misfortune, and who either miserably perish by their genius, or constantly inflict with it the most painful wounds upon others.

Minister von Hardenberg, who now, after a long struggle, had succeeded in overcoming the influence of Minister von Haugwitz, and, with him, that of the French party, was one of those rare and extraordinary statesmen who have made diplomacy not a business, but the task of their whole life, and who have devoted to it all the strength, all the thoughts and feelings of their soul. A native of Hanover, and receiving rapid promotion at the hands of the government of that country, he had, nevertheless, soon entered the service of the Duke of Brunswick, who had charged him, after the death of Frederick the Great, to take the king's will, which had been deposited in the ducal archives at Brunswick, to Berlin.* King Frederick William the Second, who was so sagacious as to perceive and appreciate the diplomatic talents of the young ambassador, had induced him to enter his service, and intrusted to him the difficult mission of negotiating the annexation of Baireuth to Prussia, of

* "Mémoires d'un Homme d'État," vol. i., p. 302.