

"To horse, gentlemen!" exclaimed Napoleon. "Let us ride over to Sans-souci, and do homage to the manes of the king who was a philosopher and a great general at the same time."

The streets of Potsdam were deserted as the emperor and his brilliant suite rode through them. All the windows were closed; the citizens were nowhere to be seen; only a crowd of idle boys followed the imperial cavalcade. The soldiers of the grand French army alone greeted the emperor with joyous cheers outside of the city, where they were encamped. Potsdam thought, perhaps, of its king, who had immortalized it, and was sad and ashamed that those whom Frederick the Great had routed in so glorious a manner at Rossbach now made their triumphal entry into his capital.

Napoleon's brow was gloomy; this silence of the population was disagreeable and oppressive. It seemed to him to be a sign of the hostile spirit of the Prussians; and as he was riding slowly, his head slightly bent forward, along the avenue toward Sans-souci, he muttered: "This is a malicious and infamous trick! The haughty nobility will still oppose me, but I will crush them. They must not succeed, however, in making me angry, but I shall chastise those who have induced the citizens to remain at home, and not to greet me." And, thoughtfully, he rode on toward the country-seat of Frederick the Great.

No one was at the palace to welcome him but the castellan, a venerable man, who, with a few aged servants in faded liveries, received the all-powerful conqueror at the open folding-doors of the hall leading to the terrace. Napoleon looked at him with a rapid, piercing glance. "You lived in the period of Frederick II.?" he asked hastily.

"Yes, sire, we were fortunate enough to serve the great king," said the castellan, in faultless, fluent French. "Hence, the honorable task has been intrusted to us to watch over his sacred resting-place, and to protect it from injury."

"The name of the great king is a sufficient protection for this house," said Napoleon. "My soldiers have a profound respect for true greatness; they will not dare to desecrate this sanctuary. Be my guide, my friend. Let me see the sitting-room of your king!"

"Of the present king, sire?" asked the castellan.

Napoleon smiled. "I think there is but one king in Sans-souci," he said, "and that is Frederick II. Conduct me to

his sitting-room!" and rapidly crossing the semicircular marble hall, he walked toward the side-door which the castellan opened.

"Sire," he said, solemnly, "this is the king's sitting-room; it is still furnished precisely as when he lived in it. It has undergone no change whatever."

Napoleon entered; his marshals followed him. None of them uttered a word; every one seemed involuntarily to tread lightly, as if he feared to disturb the silence reigning in this room, sacred by its great reminiscences. The emperor walked rapidly into the middle of the room; there he paused with folded arms, and his large dark eyes glided slowly from object to object. The marshals moved softly around, and, on contemplating the old-fashioned furniture, their ragged silken covers, the plain desk with the inkstand placed near the window, the large easy-chair, shrouded in a ragged purple blanket, smiled disdainfully and whispered to each other that this was a room entirely unfit for a king, and that one might purchase better and more tasteful furniture of any second-hand dealer in Paris. Napoleon, perhaps, had overheard their words, or at least noticed their whisperings, for he bent an angry glance on them. "Gentlemen," he said, "this is a place which deserves our profound respect. Here lived one who was a greater general than Turenne, and from whose campaigns we all might derive instruction. Alexander the Great himself would have admired Frederick's battle of Leuthen."

The aged castellan, who was standing at the door, raised his head, and with a kind glance seemed to thank Napoleon for the tribute he had paid to the manes of the heroic dead.

The emperor's eyes were now fixed on the large clock placed on a gilded pedestal. It was a masterpiece of the period of Louis XV., and adorned in the most brilliant roccoco style. The large dial, with the figures of colored enamel, rested in a frame and case of splendidly-wrought gold, and this was surmounted by a portrait of the Emperor Titus, with the inscription, "*Diem perdidit.*"

"Is that the clock which the king caused to be purchased from the heirs of the Marquise de Pompadour?"

"Yes, sire, it is. It has always stood in this room, since he purchased it. Frederick the Great prized it very highly, and consulted it exclusively until his death. And it seemed to know that he liked it, for when he closed his eyes, the clock stopped and never went again."

"Ah," exclaimed Napoleon, quickly, "since the death of Frederick the government of Prussia, it seems, really did not know the time any more. And what about that ragged old easy-chair? Did the king use it, too?"

"Sire," said the castellan, solemnly, laying stress on every word he uttered—"sire, the great king died in that chair; his head rested on the pillow now lying on the seat, and he was covered with that blanket."

The emperor rapidly approached; the marshals followed his example and walked toward it on tiptoe. He stood before it; his arms folded, his lips compressed, contemplating it. Behind him stood the marshals, whose indifferent countenances and curious glances contrasted strangely with the pale face of their master. Not far from them, near the door, stood the white-haired castellan; his hands clasped, and his head bowed mournfully on his breast.

Suddenly the room was filled with light; the sun, which had hitherto been hidden by clouds, burst forth and shone brilliantly; golden beams fell upon the easy-chair of Frederick the Great, and surrounded it, as it were, with a halo.

"This, then, is the death-bed of the great king," said Napoleon, musingly. "The gods did not permit him to fall on the battle-field. Disease and age vanquished the hero of the Seven Years' War, and he died not amid the triumphs of his soldiers, but solitary and alone! May Providence, in His mercy, preserve us from such a fate!" And turning quickly to the castellan, he asked, "Were you present when the king died?"

"Yes, sire, I was; for I was his *valet de chambre*."

"Tell me the last words he uttered."

"Sire, he spoke repeatedly, but so inaudibly and rapidly that we did not apprehend him. The last words which we were able to understand were: 'Give me back my soldiers of the Seven Years' War! I am tired of ruling over slaves!'"

"Strange, strange," murmured Napoleon; "he was tired of ruling over slaves! as though it were possible to rule over free men! Ah, I should like to have known this king, who was such an autocrat, and yet despised slaves! who wielded the sword as skilfully as the pen! to whom the booming of the cannon sounded as melodious as the notes of his flute—who made verses with Voltaire, and won battles with Schwerin and Ziethen! He was able to do every thing, and we have not seen his equal!"

"Oh, sire," murmured the marshals, "your majesty forgets—"

"Silence, gentlemen!" he exclaimed, in an angry voice, pointing with his outstretched arm to the easy-chair, "do not flatter me in *this* room. I wish I had known Frederick the Great, for I believe we should have understood each other."

"Sire," said the castellan, "it is true, his majesty did not know you; nevertheless, he dreamed of you."

Napoleon hastily turned toward him and asked: "What? He dreamed of me? Tell me all about it. Approach!"

The castellan, obeying the sign made to him, advanced a few steps slowly and hesitatingly.

"Sire," he said, "it was a few years after the Seven Years' War. I had just entered the king's service, and was on duty during that night; that is to say, I slept in the anteroom, and had received strict orders to awaken the king at a fixed hour in the morning, and to enter his bedroom during the night as soon as he called me, or if I should hear any noise. Suddenly I heard the cry, 'Fire, fire!' I rushed immediately into the bedroom, but no fire was to be seen. My master lay on his couch, groaning, breathing heavily, and evidently under the influence of bad dreams. I, therefore, took the liberty to awaken him. 'Ah,' said he, heaving a deep sigh, 'I am glad you awakened me; I had a weird, terrible dream, and I will relate it to you. I dreamed I was standing on the terrace of Sans-souci, and around me I beheld my state and all my palaces close together, and behind them I thought I could descry the whole world, with all its cities and countries; it was spread out before my eyes like a painting of wondrous beauty, and I was rapturously gazing at it. All at once the sky grew dark; black clouds passed over it; profound darkness covered the beautiful world, and dreadful shrieks and groans resounded through the air. But from the midst of the black clouds a bright, dazzling star burst like a rocket, and set fire to every thing, until all countries were in ruins, and all cities burned down. And as I saw that, I cried in my anguish, 'Fire! fire!' Fortunately, you came and awakened me.' That, sire," said the castellan, drawing a deep breath, "that was the dream. The king went on to say: 'The dream, I am sure, is a portentous one, and some remarkable event will doubtless happen in the course of this night. Write down every thing I told you, and remember the date and year!' I did as his majesty ordered me; I wrote down

the date, the year, and even the hour in which the dream occurred."

"Was the dream really a portentous one? Did any remarkable event occur in that night?"

"Yes, sire, a very remarkable event occurred in that night, but his majesty did not hear of it; he died too early."

"When did he have that dream?" asked Napoleon, fixing his eyes on the old man, who composedly bore the searching gaze.

A pause ensued. The castellan replied: "Sire, Frederick the Great had that dream on the 15th of August, 1769."

"On my birthday!" ejaculated Napoleon.

"On the 15th of August, 1769," repeated the old man, "at three o'clock in the morning."

"The hour of my birth," muttered the emperor to himself. After a short pause he turned again toward the castellan, and a strange, sarcastic smile played on his lips.

"The star fell from the sky, and set fire to all the palaces and countries?" he asked.

The castellan nodded.

"And you believed that the dream referred to me, and that I am the fallen star?"

"Sire, I only related what the king had dreamed, and in what night and in what hour he had the remarkable dream. His majesty spoke frequently about it, and all his friends heard of it. But nobody was able to interpret it. He died without obtaining the solution."

"But you have solved it," said Napoleon, sneeringly. "I am the fallen star, and you think I have come to fulfil that dream?"

"Sire, I—"

"I shall burn down your palaces and scourge your country," added he, harshly. "Why did you irritate me? I did not commence the war; since you desired it, I gave it to you. But tell your friends and the good citizens of Potsdam that the dream of their king will not be entirely fulfilled. It may be that I shall be compelled to destroy royal palaces, but the house of the citizen and the cabin of the peasant will not feel my wrath, nor will I lay waste your fields. Tell the good denizens of this city—tell them not to be afraid of me; for never shall I assail their rights and privileges, nor interfere with their interests. And now, gentlemen, let us proceed!" He quickly crossed the room, and entered the adjoining apartment.

"Sire, this is the reception-room of Frederick the Great," said the castellan, who had followed. "On that table lies the full suit in which his majesty gave his last audience—his uniform, his order of the Black Eagle, his hat and sword."

Napoleon hastened to the table, and seized the sword. "Ah, the sword of Frederick II.," he exclaimed, with sparkling eyes. "He often wielded it with a victorious hand, and that hat covered a head adorned with the laurel-wreath of the poet and the great general! These are trophies that I prefer to all the treasures of Prussia. What a capital present for the Invalides, especially for those who formed part of the army of Hanover! They will be delighted, no doubt, when they see in our possession the sword of him who beat them at Rossbach! And as my dear brother, Frederick William III., has conferred the order of the Black Eagle on me, I suppose he will permit me to take this decoration as a souvenir of the greatest king of the house of Hohenzollern. What about the bell that is placed beside the hat?"

"Sire," said the castellan, mournfully and hesitatingly, "it is the bell which the king used during his whole reign to call the gentlemen waiting in the anteroom, and the footmen at night."

"That bell shall stand henceforward in my cabinet and on my desk," said Napoleon. "Grand marshal, order all these things to be packed up and to be sent immediately to Paris, and add to them also the clock in the other room—the clock that was so faithful to the great king as to stop at his death, and to refuse to mark the time for any one else. I will wind it up, and the clock of Frederick the Great must strike again for me. Conduct us to the other rooms, castellan."

The old man cast a long and melancholy look on the precious relics that were about to be taken from him, and took leave of them with a profound sigh. He then conducted the party to the other rooms. He showed them the library, where Frederick, during the last years of his life, had spent every hour when not occupied with government affairs, longing for no other society than that of his books. He then took them to the rooms in which Voltaire had lived, and showed the emperor a paper on which the king had written verses that Voltaire had corrected and revised. Napoleon contemplated every thing with the greatest attention, and then caused himself to be conducted to the fine long hall, in which Frederick, accompanied by his dog, used to take his daily

walk when the weather was too bad for him to do so in the open air. The walls of this hall were adorned with many paintings and engravings—all, however, did not apparently belong to the period of Frederick; for there were among them paintings and engravings representing his last hours, and his lonely nocturnal funeral.—Others again depicted the scene of young Frederick William II. standing by the corpse of his great uncle, and swearing with tearful eyes, his hand placed on the head of Frederick, that he would be a just and good ruler to his people.

“And what does this picture represent?” asked Napoleon, pointing to an engraving by the side of the above-mentioned painting.

“Sire,” said the castellan, in confusion, “it is a copper-plate, representing the king’s tomb. It does not properly belong here, but has been placed here temporarily. The artist sent it hither with the request to place it somewhere in Sans-souci, and I hung it up in this place until my master disposes of it in some other way.”

“But what about this one?” asked the emperor, whose piercing eyes were fixed on another engraving. “There is the tomb of Frederick; two men, in full uniform, are standing by its side; a beautiful lady is with them, and all three are raising their hands in an odd manner. Ah, ah, now I comprehend: that is last year’s scene, when the Emperor Alexander took leave of the king and queen at the grave of Frederick the Great, and swore eternal friendship to them as well as eternal enmity to France? That is what this engraving represents, I suppose?”

“Yes, sire, it is,” said the castellan, timidly.

Napoleon, with a flashing glance, called his marshals to his side. “Behold there, gentlemen, one of those theatrical scenes with which people here in Prussia were declaiming against me, while I was silent, but arming against them,” said he with a sneer. “If the King of Prussia does not fulfil the other oaths he has taken more faithfully than this one, I pity his people; but he has incurred the retribution of the gods, who insist on it that men shall fulfil their promises or they will be crushed. We have seen enough of the place where Frederick the Great passed his life; let us pay a last visit to him in his tomb. Where is it?”

“In Potsdam, sire, in the church close to the palace.”

“Very well. Come, gentlemen. And you, castellan, do

not forget that the dream has not been altogether fulfilled. The ‘fallen star’ is only a devouring fire to the kings who bid him defiance, but not to the people who obediently submit.” He nodded, stepped from the hall into the anteroom, and then into the vestibule, where the horses were ready for him and his suite.

The old man gazed mournfully after the brilliant cavalcade. “He looks like a marble statue,” he muttered, “and I believe that he has no heart in his breast. Every thing in him is made of stone. If he had a heart, he would not dare to come hither and appropriate with a rapacious hand the sacred relics of our great king. I must really go and see whether his commands to that effect will be carried out or not.” And he left the hall with youthful alacrity, hastening through the apartments back to the reception-room.

Yes, the commands had been obeyed! The hat and sword, the order of the Black Eagle, and the bell, had disappeared. The old castellan uttered a groan, and proceeded to the sitting-room. His anxious eyes glanced at the spot where the clock had stood. That was also gone. But he heard men talking and laughing in the anteroom, and when he hastened hither, he saw some of the emperor’s servants, who, in compliance with the orders of the grand marshal, were engaged in packing up the relics in a basket, and jesting at what they called the strange and insignificant spoils which the emperor had obtained here. The white-haired servants of Frederick the Great were standing close by, and witnessing with tearful eyes the removal of treasures so sacred on account of the reminiscences connected with them. The men were just engaged in placing the clock on the other articles in a basket. The castellan approached hurriedly and placing his hand on the dial, said in a low voice, “Farewell! The eyes of Frederick the Great have often gazed at you. His eyes were also stars, but not fallen stars, and they did not scorch and burn, but rendered the people happy. Farewell, faithful clock, that stopped with grief in the last hour of my king! When *his* last hour comes, announce it loudly and joyously, and commence going again, for the worst time will be over then, and the fallen star will cease burning. Farewell, and strike that hour as soon as possible!” *

* The clock remained in Napoleon’s possession and accompanied him to St. Helena. It stood on the mantelpiece in his small parlor, and is mentioned in his will. He bequeathed it to his son, the Duke de Reichstadt, in the following words: “The clock which always awakened me in the morning; it belonged to Frederick

Looking even more gloomy than on leaving the city, the emperor rode with his suite again through the deserted, silent streets of Potsdam. The brilliant cavalcade moved as slowly and solemnly as a funeral procession toward the church, the lower vault of which contained the coffin with the remains of Frederick. The sexton and his assistants, bearing the large bunch of keys and a blazing torch, conducted the emperor through the dark and silent corridors, and opened the heavy, clanking iron doors leading into the vault. Napoleon entered. For a moment he stood still on the threshold and gazed in surprise at its plain, gloomy vault, the walls of which were not adorned with trophies, nor with any decorations whatever, and at that humble wooden coffin, which stood so bare and solitary in the middle of the sombre room. Behind him were his marshals, who looked at the strange scene with an air of curiosity and astonishment.

"Ah," said Napoleon, gently turning his head toward them, and pointing with his right hand to the coffin, "a man must have distinguished himself by many great deeds, and obtained immortal glory, to need thus no earthly pomp and splendor!"

He approached closely to the coffin; folding his arms on his breast, his lips firmly compressed, he gazed long and steadfastly at it. The blaze of the torch shed a bright light on his face, and as his pale head alone was distinctly visible in the darkness, the beholders might have believed one of the marble statues of the Cæsars on the terrace of Sans-souci, had descended from its pedestal in order to pay a visit to the dead king.

After a long pause Napoleon's eye resumed its wonted brilliancy. He pointed with a strange smile at the dust covering the lid of the coffin. "Dust without and dust within! that within was a great king and a hero; yet that without is more lasting than the oaths which the Emperor Alexander swore here a year ago, with Frederick William and the beautiful Louisa. Even the kiss which Alexander imprinted at that time on the coffin of Frederick is no longer visible; dust has

II., and I appropriated it in Potsdam." The bell he also bequeathed to his son. Many conflicting statements have been made concerning the sword Napoleon took. It was certainly not the sword which Frederick had worn to the last. The latter had a leathern scabbard which, in several defective places, had been repaired with sealing-wax because Frederick found this to be less expensive than to have it repaired by a harness-maker. The king had taken this sword along, when, in September, 1806, he repaired with the queen to the headquarters of the army; it accompanied him during his flight, and was safely brought back by him. It was afterward at the "*Kunstammer*" in Berlin. The sword which Napoleon sent to Paris had been presented to Frederick by Peter III. of Russia, who, it is well known, was an ardent admirer of the great king. Blücher, in 1814, brought it back from Paris.

covered it, and equalized every thing." Thus speaking, he drew lines with his hand; without knowing it, perhaps, his finger traced a large *N* in the dust of the royal coffin. He then hastily left the dark vault to return to the palace.*

The emperor paced the room a long while, his hands clasped on his back; he then rang the bell impetuously, and sent for the chief of his cabinet, M. de Menneval.

"Be seated," said he, as soon as that functionary made his appearance; "take my pen, I will dictate to you my eighteenth bulletin." †

M. de Menneval sat down at the desk. Napoleon walked slowly up and down, and dictated in a loud, stern voice as follows: "The emperor arrived in Potsdam on the 25th of October, and took up his residence at the royal palace. He visited on the first day Sans-souci and the environs of Potsdam, spending some time in the rooms of Frederick II., where every thing is still in the same condition as at the time of his death. In the arsenal at Berlin, five hundred cannon, several hundred thousand pounds of powder, and several thousand muskets, were found in excellent condition. It has been noticed as a singular coincidence that the emperor arrived in Potsdam on the same day and at the same hour, and occupied the same rooms, as the Emperor of Russia during the latter's visit—a visit last year which has had such fatal consequences for Prussia. Since that moment the queen has forgotten to take care of her domestic affairs, and of the most important duties of the toilet, in order to occupy herself with politics, gain power over the king, and spread everywhere the evil influence which possesses her. The result of that famous oath which was taken on the 4th of November, 1805, is the battle of Austerlitz, and the speedy evacuation of Germany by the Russian army in the manner prescribed by France. Forty-eight hours afterward that oath at the coffin of Frederick the Great was made the subject of a copper-plate, which is to be found in all the shops, and even causes the peasants to laugh. On it is represented the handsome Emperor of Russia; by his side the queen, and opposite him the king, who lifts up his hand over the coffin; the queen, wrapped in a shawl, like lady Hamilton, as seen on the London copper-

* One of Horace Vernet's most beautiful paintings represents this visit of Napoleon paid to the grave of Frederick the Great.

† Napoleon wrote or dictated all his bulletins without consulting any one in regard to them. After being dictated, the bulletins were, however, submitted to Talleyrand, who took good care to make no alteration.

plates, places her hand on her heart, and seems to look at the Emperor of Russia. It is incomprehensible how the Berlin police could permit the circulation of so base a satire. At all events, the shade of Frederick cannot have contemplated this scandalous scene but with indignation and disgust. His mind, his genius, his wishes, belong to the French nation, which he esteemed so highly, and of which he said that, if he were its king, no cannon should be discharged in Europe without his permission. On his return from Sans-souci the emperor visited also the tomb of Frederick the Great. The remains of this great man are reposing in a wooden coffin, covered with one of copper, and in a vault devoid of drapery, trophies, or any thing that might remind the beholder of his heroic deeds. The emperor has presented the *Hôtel des Invalides* at Paris with the sword of Frederick, with his insignia of the order of the Black Eagle, as well as with the stands of colors used by the king's lifeguards in the Seven Years' War. The veterans will receive with reverent awe every thing that belonged to one of the greatest generals known in history."*

CHAPTER X.

NAPOLEON'S ENTRY INTO BERLIN.

THE city of Berlin had not exhibited for many years so festive and lively a spectacle as on the morning of the 27th of October. An immense crowd was moving across the Palace Place, Broad Street, and the Linden, toward the Brandenburg Gate, and forming in line on both sides of the street. Thousands of boys and youths climbed the linden-trees, that stand in two rows in the middle of this thoroughfare, causing the trees to move to and fro under their heavy burden, and gazed with eyes full of curiosity from their lofty position on the bustle reigning beneath. Through the crowd hundreds of busy figures were gliding, standing still here and there, and addressing the people in low and impressive tones; now and then, however, they did not content themselves with mere words, but to some handed pieces of money, and whispered, "Drink the emperor's health, in order that your throats may be prepared, when he makes his entry, to shout in stentorian tones, *Vive l'Empereur!*"

* Goujon, "Collection des Bulletins de Napoléon," vol. xvii., Bulletin xviii.

These liberal adherents of Napoleon were agents of the French police, already fully organized in Berlin—the hirelings of General Clarke, who was now governor of the capital, and treated the subjugated inhabitants with all the haughtiness and scorn of a triumphant conqueror.

Many tears were shed in the city during these days—many imprecations uttered, but only secretly and in a low voice, for the people could not venture to provoke the anger of the victor, but had to bear whatever burdens he imposed on them. The odds were too heavy; the army was defeated; the king with his court had fled; the higher functionaries had either concealed themselves or loudly declared their willingness to take the oath of allegiance to the Emperor of the French, and to serve him as their master.

What remained, therefore, for the poor inhabitants of Berlin but to submit? All had deserted them; even the governor had escaped, and his lieutenant, the Prince von Hatzfeld, seemed to have no other task than to admonish them to be quiet and obedient, and to implore them to undertake, utter, and even think nothing that might be distasteful to the new French government; but to bow willingly and cheerfully to every thing that the conqueror might demand.

The citizens, therefore, had bowed to their fate; they had submitted silently, and now hastened to the Linden and the Brandenburg Gate to witness the entry of the emperor. Not only the citizens and the people generally desired to witness this entry—the higher classes, and even the ladies, were anxious to do so. Every one felt that a great historical event was to transpire, and eagerly desired to behold the celebrated man who was hated and admired at the same time; who was cursed as an enemy, and yet glorified on account of his heroic deeds. The streets and trees were filled with spectators; and the windows of the splendid buildings, from the ground-floor up to the attic, were crowded, and even the roofs had been opened here and there for the purpose of obtaining more room.

The Linden exhibited a most imposing and brilliant spectacle; still it seemed as though the crowd were to celebrate a funeral pageant, and as though they had come as mourners for such an occasion. Nowhere joyous faces were to be seen—nowhere were heard outbursts of mirth, or those gay, amusing remarks with which the populace of Berlin seldom fail to season a festival. The faces of the people were grave and