

his hand; others whispered to him: "Flee! conceal yourself!" Others again gazed at him with eyes full of tenderness and emotion, and murmured: "We thank you in the name of all the faithful!" But constantly the low words of "Flee! conceal yourself!" were repeated. But the venerable man looked with a calm, proud smile at those who surrounded him, and said in a loud and firm voice, "I will not flee! I will not conceal myself!"

Just at the moment when Erman, followed by his timid friends and secret admirers, was about to cross the threshold, a loud voice was heard to exclaim, "Counsellor Erman!"

"Here I am," he replied, turning around, as well as all the rest.

A low murmur of horror pervaded the assembly; their faces turned pale, and their brows were clouded. The moment so much feared had apparently come—Erman could not escape, or conceal himself; for he who had called out his name was none other than Duroc, the emperor's grand marshal, who had evidently been sent by his master. Those who hitherto had been so anxious to leave the hall, and thronged so eagerly round the courageous old man, now stood still, and the grand marshal walked through the opened ranks directly toward him. Every one seemed to hold his breath to listen, and even to stop the pulsations of his heart, to hear the order for Erman's arrest.

The grand marshal now stood before Erman, who had seen him coming, and advanced a step to meet him. Duroc bowed, and said in a loud voice, "His majesty the emperor has ordered me to invite Counsellor Erman, of the supreme consistorial court, to dine with him to-morrow at noon. His majesty desires me to tell you that he is anxious to make the acquaintance of a man who is so faithful and courageous a servant of the royal family, and endowed with sufficient magnanimity and boldness to defend the absent and accused. His majesty has instructed me to assure you that, far from disapproving your conduct, he highly esteems and admires it, for the emperor knows how to appreciate every thing that is high-minded and noble."

CHAPTER XI.

NAPOLEON AND TALLEYRAND.

NAPOLEON was rapidly pacing his cabinet. His face was pale and gloomy; his lips firmly compressed, as they always were when he was angry, and his eyes flashed with rage. He held two papers in his hand: one of them was in writing, the other contained printed matter; and, whenever his eyes glanced at them, he clinched his small hand, adorned with diamonds, and crumpled the papers.

The emperor's anger, which filled with trembling and dismay every one who had to approach him in such moments, had no effect, however, on the man who stood in the middle of the room supporting one of his hands on the table covered with maps and papers, and with the other playing with the lace frill protruding from his velvet waistcoat. His small, twinkling eyes followed calmly and coldly every motion Napoleon made. Whenever his anger seemed to increase, a scarcely perceptible, contemptuous smile played on the lips of this man, and a flash of hatred, and, withal, of scorn burst from his eyes. But this never lasted longer than a moment; his pale and sickly face immediately resumed its impenetrable aspect, and the smile of a polite courtier reappeared on his lips. This was Talleyrand, first minister of the emperor—Talleyrand, who had originally served the Church as a priest, then the republic as a minister—who had deserted and betrayed both to become minister of the empire, and to combat and deny all the principles he had formerly advocated and declared to be necessary for the welfare of France.

"Talleyrand," exclaimed Napoleon, in an angry voice, standing still in front of the minister, "I will set a rigorous example. I will trample upon this haughty Prussian aristocracy that still dares to brave me—I will let it feel the consequences of continued opposition to me! What audacity it was for this Prince von Hatzfeld, while I was approaching with my army, and already master of Prussia, to continue sending information to his fleeing king and to the ministers, and to play the spy! Ah, I am going to prove to him that his rank will not protect him from being punished according to his deserts, and that I have traitors and spies tried and

sentenced by a court-martial, whether they be of the common people or the high-born. Both of us have seen times when the heads of the nobility were knocked off like poppies from the stalks; and we will remind this aristocracy, which relies so confidently on its ancient privileges, of the fact that such times may come for Prussia too, unless those high-born gentlemen desist from their arrogant conduct, and submit to me humbly and obediently. Cause the Prince von Hatzfeld to be arrested immediately: order a court-martial to meet within twenty-four hours, to try the traitor and spy. This letter will be proof sufficient; nothing further is necessary to pass sentence of death upon him."

"And will your majesty really carry out the sentence?" asked Talleyrand, in his soft, insinuating voice, and with his polite smile.

Napoleon flashed one of his fiery glances at him. "Why do you put that question to me?" he said, harshly.

"Sire, because I believe excessive rigor might not accomplish the desired purpose. Instead of humiliating and prostrating the aristocracy, it might bring about the reverse, and incite them to sedition and insurrection. Sometimes leniency does more good than severity, and, at all events, in applying either, the character of the nations to be subdued ought to be consulted. The Italians are easily restrained by severe measures, for they are, on the whole, cowardly and enervated; and, when the straw-fire of their first impetuosity has gone out, they feel enthusiastic admiration for him who has placed his foot on their neck, and is crushing them. But the Germans are a more tenacious and phlegmatic nation. They resemble the white bulls I have seen in Italy, who fulfil with proud composure their daily task. When the driver urges them but a little with the iron point of the stick, they work more actively and obediently; but when he wounds too deeply, their phlegm disappears, and they rush in fury against him who has irritated them too much."

"And you believe that the German white bull is already irritated?" asked Napoleon, morosely.

"Yes, sire! It is time to appease him, if he is not to grow savage and furious. The execution of Palm has stirred up a good deal of ill feeling, and it would be prudent to counteract it as much as possible. Your majesty may menace and frighten the supercilious and arrogant aristocracy of Prussia; but when they are trembling and terrified, then exercise clem-

ency and forbearance, which is the best way of subduing the refractory."

The emperor made no reply, but crossed the room repeatedly. He then stood still once more closely in front of Talleyrand, and looked him full in the face.

"I hold to my decision," he said coldly. "I must have the Prince von Hatzfeld immediately arrested, and the court-martial must meet within twenty-four hours for the purpose of trying him as a traitor and spy." He stepped to his desk, and hastily wrote a few words on a piece of paper. He himself, having folded, sealed, and directed it, rang the bell. "Take this," he said to the officer who had entered the room. "Send immediately an orderly with this letter to Governor Clarke. He must have it in five minutes."

When the officer had withdrawn, Napoleon turned once more toward Talleyrand. "Let no one dare talk to me about mercy," he said, "for I shall grant it to no one—neither to you, nor to the prince's wife, of whose beauty Duroc once informed me. If the Germans resemble the Italian bulls, I will break off their horns, and extract their teeth—then they will be powerless. Not a word, therefore, about mercy, either for the aristocracy, or for the journalists. These miserable scribblers must be made to tremble, and lay their pens aside. What language that miserable writer has dared to use against me in this paper—what sarcasms and sneers he has taken the liberty of uttering against me! And the King of Prussia did not have him arrested! this weak-headed government permitted the libeller quietly to pursue his infamous course!"

"Sire, the editor of this paper, called *The Telegraph*, I am told was one of the intimate friends and followers of Prince Louis Ferdinand."

"And, consequently, also one of the friends of the queen!" added Napoleon, quickly. "That woman has disdained no expedient to wage war against me; she hates me intensely, and with more energy than her feeble husband. I will pay her for this hatred, and she shall feel what it is to provoke my anger. Yes, I will humiliate her. She may now, perhaps, repent with tears what she has done. She is already a fugitive. I will drive her into the remotest corner of her country, and compel this proud queen to bow before me in the dust, and beg me on her knees for mercy! But I will not have mercy upon her; I will be inexorable! My anger shall crush her and her house, as it has crushed whosoever dared

oppose me. Woe unto those who have been her willing tools; they shall atone for having served her hatred against me!—Is any thing known about the fellow who edited this paper, and wrote these wretched articles?"

"Sire, the editor is a certain Professor Lange, one of the most zealous royalists, and especially an ardent admirer of the queen."

"Then he has fled with her, I suppose, and she will instigate him on the way to pen new slanders, which, by virtue of the licentiousness of the press, he will utter against me?"

"No, sire, he has not fled, but kept himself concealed here; our police, however, ferreted out his whereabouts and arrested him. It remains for your majesty to decree what is to be done with him."

"He shall be a warning example to the German scribblers, and remind them of the penalty incurred by those who stir up resistance against me by their insults and sneers. I will silence these libellers once for all, and destroy their contemptible free press by the executioner's axe. The punishment inflicted upon Palm seemed not sufficient—let M. Lange, then, be another warning to them. Let him die as Palm died!"

"Your majesty, then, will give to the sentimental Germans another martyr, to whom they will pray, and whose death will increase their enthusiasm? Sire, martyrs are like fools. 'One fool makes many others,' and thus we might say also, 'One martyr makes many others.' Suppose you have this M. Lange shot to-day, because he is a faithful adherent of the queen, and has written in accordance with her views—tomorrow pamphleteers will spring up like mushrooms—there will be more libels against your majesty, written by those having a vain desire of dying for their beautiful queen, and in the hope that she would shed tears for them, as she did for M. Lange."

"Ah," exclaimed Napoleon, scornfully, "you are strangely inclined to mercy and reconciliation to-day. It seems a sickly fever of leniency has seized you. Then you think I ought to pardon this miserable pamphleteer instead of punishing him?"

"Sire, I believe this fellow will be much more severely punished if we do not make him a martyr, but only use him as a tool as long as it suits us. As this Professor Lange is so well versed in writing pamphlets, and sending libellous articles

into the world, let him continue his trade; only let him be ordered to point his weapons against the queen, instead of your majesty, and to revile her as zealously as he reviled you."

"And do you believe he will stoop so low as to eat his own words, and to convict himself of lying? I was told he had hitherto glorified Louisa of Prussia, and abused me, with an almost frantic enthusiasm."

"Sire, let us threaten him with death—let us offer him money. He will succumb to fear and avarice. I know these journalists. They are cowardly, and always in pecuniary trouble. Lange will turn his poisoned arrows against the queen, and the admirer will become her accuser."

Napoleon, frowning, looked musingly at the floor. "What a miserable race these men are!" he muttered. "One must devour them in order not be devoured by them. Well, then," he added, in a loud voice, "you may try it. Let us turn the weapons which the fanatical queen has sharpened against us, against herself. But the accusations must be grave and well-founded. The eyes of this foolish nation must be opened. We must show to it that this woman, whom it worships as a chaste Lucretia, as a beautiful saint, is nothing but a very pretty lady with a well-developed form, endowed with little mind, but much coquetry, and who, so far from being a saint, has a very human heart, and has had many an adventure. If M. Lange is willing to write in this strain, I will pardon him.* Tragedy must be sometimes transformed into a farce, that the stupid people may laugh at what they were originally inclined to weep for. Ah, that Queen of Prussia was bent upon waging war against me! She shall have it. We will wage war against each other; let it be a mortal combat. Did the Prussian ambassador accept our terms?"

"Sire, he was undecided yesterday; but he will not be to-day."

"Why not?"

"Sire, a courier has just arrived, and I came to communicate to your majesty the news. He is from Stettin, and informed me that that fortress has capitulated. Our hussars took possession of it."

*Talleyrand's prediction was fulfilled. Threats of capital punishment, and promises of ample rewards, transformed the editor of the *Telegraph* into an enthusiastic admirer of Napoleon as he had formerly been of Queen Louisa; and, after having hitherto written nothing but fulsome eulogies, he now did not shrink from publishing the most shameless libels against her. The immediate consequence was, that the *Telegraph* lost in a single day most of its subscribers. But Lange continued publishing slanderous articles against Louisa, for the French government paid him for it.

The emperor smiled. "Well," he said, "when hussars take fortresses, new military tactics will have to be invented, and the walls of fortresses might just as well be razed. But you are right. The fall of Stettin is a most important event, and the government will have to make up its mind to accept our terms. We ought not, however, to accelerate the peace negotiations too much. The terms which we have offered to Prussia are tolerably favorable; if more couriers of this description should arrive, we ought to render the terms more onerous, and the peace more humiliating. Try to delay the definite settlement with the Prussian ambassador; it is not necessary for us to sign the treaty so soon. Let us await further news."

Just then the door opened, and the *valet de chambre* appeared, announcing a courier just arrived, who desired to deliver to his majesty dispatches from the Grand-duke of Berg. Napoleon made a sign to him. The door opened, and the courier, in his dusty and bespattered travelling-costume, entered the room.

"Where is the grand-duke?" asked the emperor, quickly.

"Sire, in Prenzlau."

"Ah, in Prenzlau!" exclaimed Napoleon. "The gates have opened to him, then! Give me your dispatches, and then go and take rest. I see you stand in need of it!"

"Sire, I have been ten hours on horseback, and have just dismounted."

"Breakfast shall be served you. Apply for it to the *valet de chambre* in the anteroom. Go!"

The courier had not yet closed the door of the cabinet after him, when Napoleon opened the dispatches, and rapidly glanced over their contents. With a proud, triumphant smile he turned toward Talleyrand. "I was right in saying that we ought to delay the definite conclusion of peace," he said; "we shall now be able to impose more onerous conditions on Prussia, and she will have to submit to them. The Grand-duke of Berg has sent me excellent news. The corps of the Prince von Hohenlohe has capitulated near Prenzlau. The Prussian army exists no more. Ten thousand men, with three hundred and twenty-five officers, about two thousand horses, and fifty-four field-pieces, have been captured by our forces. Ten thousand men! Now, if ever I should live to see the disgrace of such a surrender of any of my own corps, I would make peace with the enemy for the

sole purpose of recovering my captured troops, and of having the miserable officers shot who entered into such a capitulation. Ten thousand men, and three hundred officers! Truly, my brother the King of Prussia is unlucky, and I am sure the beautiful queen will bitterly repent of her hatred against me."

"Sire," said Talleyrand, with a malicious smile, "it is said there is but one step from hatred to love. Who knows whether the gods, in order to punish the queen for her audacity, will not cause her to take this step? Who knows whether her intense hatred is not even now but the mask which conceals her love and admiration for your majesty? Beware of approaching this beautiful Helen, lest your own hatred should run the risk of being transformed into love."

"Ah," said Napoleon, angrily, "were my heart capable of such a change, I should tear it with my own hands from my breast in order to smother its desires. Though she were the most beautiful woman in the world, and offered her love to me, I should turn away from her, and hurl my contempt and hatred into her face. She has offended me too grievously, for it is she who has destroyed all my plans, and instigated her husband to assume a hostile attitude. France and Prussia are destined to be friends, and a war against Prussia is for France equivalent to chaining her right hand. If Prussia had remained my faithful ally last year, if she had not joined the third coalition, our united armies at that time would have seen not only Germany at our feet, but all Europe. Yet the queen would not have it thus; childish and passionate, like all women, she did not consult her reason, but only her feelings; and, as her haughty heart could not bear the idea of accepting the friendship and alliance of an emperor who had not been born under a royal canopy, she preferred exasperating her husband against me, and plunging Prussia into misery, distress, and disgrace. For this capitulation of Prenzlau is a disgrace, and if I am glad of it as an enemy, because it is advantageous to me, it causes me to blush as a soldier, because it disgraces the whole military profession. Ah, there is justice in Heaven, and a Providence is directing our affairs on earth."

"Ah, your majesty believes in such things?" asked Talleyrand, with a sneer. "You believe there is a God who makes it His business to direct the world and mankind, and to dabble in the trade of princes and diplomatists?"

"As I have not been ordained a priest like you, and never have served the Church, I may be allowed to believe in God," said Napoleon, smiling. "Yes, I believe in Providence, and I believe it was a dispensation of Providence that those arrogant officers of the guard, who thought it was only necessary to show themselves in order to drive away the French, and who went so far in their madness as to whet their swords on the doorsteps of the house of our ambassadors, should now be duly humiliated and chastised. For the guards of Potsdam and Berlin are among the captured of the corps of the Prince von Hohenlohe, and they will soon arrive in Berlin. A royal prince also, the brother of Prince Louis Ferdinand, is among the prisoners."

"Your majesty is right," said Talleyrand, "we are able now to impose more rigorous terms on Prussia. If your majesty permit, I will immediately enter into negotiations concerning this point with M. de Lucchesini. He is at present awaiting me."

"Inform him of the latest news; that will render him submissive. You know my intentions, and know, too, what I expect Russia to do. The king offered Baireuth to me instead of the contribution of one hundred million francs which I had asked for. Such a substitution is out of the question now. Besides, we shall add the following conditions: Prussia, in case Russia declares war against Turkey, will ally herself with France, and march her whole army against the emperor of Russia."

"Ah, sire, you are bent, then, on breaking the heart of the beautiful Louisa?" asked Talleyrand, laughing cynically.

"It is my reply to the oath she and her husband took with Alexander at the grave of Frederick II. Go, and inform Lucchesini of the latest news and of my conditions."

"Your majesty promised to be so gracious as to receive this forenoon the ambassadors of the petty German princes, who have been begging for an audience since yesterday morning."

"It will not by any means hurt these petty dignitaries to practise a little the virtue of patience," said Napoleon, harshly. "I shall admit them to-morrow, in order to get rid at length of their complaints. Do you still remember that I instructed you several months since to draw up the necessary reports for the formation of a new state in Northern Germany, between the Rhine and the Elbe?"

"Sire, I carried out your order at that time, and delivered to you the report concerning this state."

"Yes, it is in my hands, and it is time for us to carry out my views in regard to it. You drew it up with the pen, and I executed and illustrated it with the sword. Both of us, therefore, have done our duty. To-morrow I will inform the ambassadors of these petty princes of our views as to this new state, in order that they may evacuate their own. Go to Lucchesini. I will take a ride, and pay a visit to my gardens in Charlottenburg."

Talleyrand bowed, and left the cabinet. In the large hall contiguous to it, he saw Grand-marshal Duroc, who was standing at the farthest window. Talleyrand hastened to him as fast as his limping leg would permit, and drew the grand marshal, who had come to meet him, back into the window. "M. Grand marshal," he said, in a low voice, "I am about to turn traitor and to disclose to you a secret of the emperor. My life is in your hands; if you should inform his majesty of what I am about to do, I must perish. Will you do so?"

Duroc smiled. "Your excellency," he said, "I am a good patriot, and as I know how indispensable your life is to the welfare and happiness of France, I shall take care not to undertake any thing against you; I should, on the contrary, always deem it incumbent upon me to protect the life of your excellency, and to attend to your welfare whenever an occasion offered. You may, therefore, safely communicate your secret to me. I would die sooner than betray you."

"I thank you," said Talleyrand, bowing. "Listen, then; the emperor has issued orders to arrest the Prince von Hatzfeld, and to have him tried by a court-martial."

"Impossible!" ejaculated Duroc, turning pale. "The Prince von Hatzfeld has always been a zealous and warm adherent of France, and it was precisely on account of this that he was in high disfavor with the court party. The inhabitants of Berlin also reproach him with having prevented them from defending themselves, and with having intentionally failed to remove the arms from the arsenal. What, then, may he have done that he should be tried by a French court-martial?"

An imperceptible smile passed over Talleyrand's astute features. "He has written a letter to the king," he said, "which, if need be, *may* be construed as the letter of a traitor and spy, especially since an opportunity is desired to set an

example, and to intimidate the haughty aristocracy, because they avoid coming hither and doing homage to the conqueror."

"If that be the intention," sighed Duroc, "the Prince von Hatzfeld is lost. The emperor will be inexorable."

"Is it necessary, then, to have some one put to death in order to frighten the others?" asked Talleyrand. "But you are right. The emperor will have no mercy. The court-martial will assemble to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" said Duroc, sadly. "Oh, into what distress it will plunge the family! The young princess loves her husband passionately; she expects to become a mother in a few months, and is to lose the father of her child before it sees the light!"

Again a smile overspread Talleyrand's face. He inclined closer to the grand marshal and placed his small, emaciated hand on Duroc's vigorous arm. "My friend," he said, in a low voice, "you must try to save the prince!"

"I?" asked Duroc, wonderingly.

Talleyrand nodded. "Yes, you! You have long known the family; you have, on your various missions to Berlin, been repeatedly at Hatzfeld's house, and, as a matter of course, the young princess in her distress and despair will apply to you for advice and assistance. You must procure her an interview with the emperor, and she will thus obtain an opportunity to implore his majesty on her knees to have mercy on her husband. The whole aristocracy, then, in her person will humbly kneel before the emperor, and they will all be pardoned in the person of the prince. My dear sir, you must at all events procure the princess an interview with Napoleon."

"But did you not tell me that the emperor was determined not to pardon the prince, and that the court-martial will assemble to-morrow?"

"I did. I might have added that the emperor, when I begged him to have mercy on Hatzfeld, angrily rejected my application, and told me he would not permit any one to renew it. He was very emphatic about it. Even Duroc, he said, should not dare to conduct the princess to him, and thus enable her to implore his mercy."

"Well?" exclaimed Duroc.

"Well," said Talleyrand, composedly. "I believed I might conclude precisely from this peremptory order, that he wished to indicate to me that he was inclined to pardon the offender in this manner."

"What!" said Duroc, smiling, "the emperor orders us not to admit the Princess von Hatzfeld; he says he will not pardon the prince, and you conclude from all this that he will grant her an audience and the pardon of her husband?"

"Certainly," said Talleyrand. "What is language given us for, unless to veil our thoughts? Whenever I have to deal with sagacious and prominent men, I presume that their thoughts are just the reverse of what their words express. Only simpletons, and men of no position, say what they mean. Try it, by all means. Procure the princess an interview with the emperor, and leave the rest to her eloquence and beauty."

"But I cannot go to her and offer her my intercession. It would look as though the emperor had sent me; and if he then should pardon the prince, it would be generally believed to be a mere *coup de théâtre*."

"You are right. We must avoid by all means letting the affair assume such a character," said Talleyrand, smiling. "If the princess really loves her husband, and if she really intends to save him, she will naturally first think of you; for you are acquainted with her and her family, and are known to be the emperor's intimate and influential friend. It will be but natural for her to invoke your intercession."

"If she does so, I will try, to the best of my power, to be useful to her, for I have spent many pleasant hours at the prince's house, and it would be agreeable to me to do her a favor. But I am afraid you are mistaken. The emperor never takes back his word, and if he has said that he will have no mercy, and not admit the princess, that will be the end of it, and all endeavors of mine will be in vain."

"Try it at least," said Talleyrand. "Perhaps you may accomplish your purpose. But you have no time to lose, for, as I have told you already, the court-martial is to assemble to-morrow. What is to be done, must be done, therefore, in the course of to-day."

CHAPTER XII.

THE PRINCESS VON HATZFELD.

GRAND-MARSHAL DUROC was pacing his room in great agitation. Evening was drawing nigh, and still he had not received any intelligence from the Princess von Hatzfeld.