

"Sire," said M. de Müller, "the duchess sent me hither in order to inform your majesty that her husband has left the Prussian service, and will return to Weimar to occupy himself only with the welfare of his own state. She ventures now to remind your majesty of your promise to forgive the duke and leave him in possession of his inheritance."

"Well, if that be so, I shall fulfil my promise," said Napoleon, in a milder voice. "I shall not deprive your master of his sovereignty; but, as a matter of course, he will have to submit to some sacrifices. I shall communicate my wishes concerning this point to my minister, M. de Talleyrand, and he will inform you of them. Do not fail to give the duke distinctly to understand that he is indebted for his state and political existence solely to the respect I feel for his wife and her sister, the Margravine of Baden." The conqueror nodded to the envoy and walked toward the door leading into the audience-hall. Talleyrand quickly picked up the emperor's hat from the floor, and carrying it to him, said, "Sire, you have lost your hat."

Napoleon smiled. "Well," he said, "now-a-days, when so many lose their heads and their crowns, a man may be pardoned for once losing his hat. Come, accompany me to the good, enthusiastic Poles!"

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### TRIUMPH AND DEFEAT.

SCARCELY had the emperor crossed the threshold of the audience hall, when it resounded with cheers and the constantly-repeated shout of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" He thanked the envoys of Poland for these greetings, and quickly approached them. They presented a magnificent spectacle in their national costume, adorned as it was with gorgeous embroidery and diamonds. "Introduce these gentlemen to me, Talleyrand," he said; "I will cherish in my memory the names of those whom henceforth I shall regard as friends!"

When Talleyrand presented them in succession, Napoleon listened to each of their high-sounding old aristocratic names with a kindly nod and a gracious air, which delighted the hearts of the Poles.

"Sire," said the Count of Dombrowsky, a silvery-haired man of seventy years—"sire, in bending our knees before your majesty, we represent all Poland, which is exclaiming, 'God save Napoleon the Great!—the liberator of nations!'"

"God save Napoleon the Great!—the liberator of nations!" echoed the others, kneeling down and extending their arms toward the emperor.

"Liberator of nations!" repeated Napoleon, smiling. "No one can liberate nations unless they do so themselves."

"But, in order to liberate themselves, the nations stand in need of a noble and high-minded chieftain!" exclaimed the old count. "Sire, the Polish nation trusts in you; it is on its knees, praying your majesty that you may become the liberator whom it has so long looked for. The great Napoleon has arisen upon France like a sun—he has come, seen, and vanquished the universe! O invincible Caesar! In seeing you, all my wishes and those of my countrymen are fulfilled! Already we consider our country as saved, for in your person we worship the wisest and most equitable of legislators. You will redeem us! You will not permit Poland to be dismembered. Oh, sire, Poland puts her trust in the redeemer of nations! Poland puts her trust in Napoleon the Great, who will raise her from her degradation!"

"Poland puts her trust in you," repeated the Poles; and, in the enthusiasm of their patriotism, forgetful of etiquette, they crowded around Napoleon, and, again kneeling, kissed his hands and the hem of his garment.

Napoleon smilingly allowed them to do so, but his eyes assumed a graver expression. "Rise now, gentlemen," he said, "I have received through you the homage of poor, weeping Polonia, but now let me receive also in you the brave sons of this unhappy land, and speak to the *men* of Poland. Rise!"

The Poles rose, and looked with beaming eyes and in breathless suspense at the emperor, whose face exhibited the austere regularity of a statue of ancient Rome.

"It would afford me the liveliest pleasure to see the royal throne of Poland restored," he said, "for it would also secure the independence of the adjoining states, which are now threatened by the unmeasured ambition of Russia. But words and idle wishes are not sufficient. When the priests, the nobility, and the citizens, make common cause—when they are determined to conquer or die—then they will triumph, and may count on my protection."



"Sire, the nobility, priests, and citizens, are already united and resolved," exclaimed Count Dombrowsky. "We are only waiting for our liberator to proclaim our independence."

Napoleon assumed a very serious air. "I cannot proclaim your independence before you are determined, sword in hand, to defend your rights as a nation."

"Sire, we are so determined!" unanimously shouted the Poles.

The emperor received this interruption with a gracious smile and added: "You have been upbraided with losing sight of your genuine interest, and of the welfare of your country, during your long-continued domestic dissensions. Taught by your misfortunes, be harmonious, and prove to the world that the whole Polish nation is animated by one spirit."

"Sire, we will prove it to the world," exclaimed the Poles, lifting up their hands, as if taking a solemn oath.

The emperor turned his stern eyes slowly and piercingly from one to another. He apparently wished to greet them all, and to read the innermost recesses of their hearts. Then he said, in a loud voice, "The restoration of Poland requires blood—blood, and again, *blood!*"

"Sire, we are joyously ready to shed ours for the sacred cause of the fatherland," exclaimed Count Raczinsky. "We wish to know only, or at least hope, that it will not be in vain. Sire, Poland is extending her arms toward you; she is beckoning you with a passionate love; she is longingly calling to you, 'Great Cæsar, come to my aid, that the sun may once more beam upon me—that you may disperse the long night of my torture, and that a happy day may again dawn for me!' Oh, sire, will you listen to the supplications of Poland?—will you come to her and break her chains?"

"No," said Napoleon, "I will not go to weeping Poland, shaking her chains, and only wailing and complaining instead of acting, but I will go to the men and heroes of Poland, who have thrown off their fetters, and shed their blood for their country! Go home and tell this to your countrymen, and ask *them* when I shall come!"

"Sire, they will say as we say now, 'God save Cæsar! We clash our swords, and dance the sacred war-dance, that he may come and let us see his face!'"

"As soon as it is time," said Napoleon, significantly. "Go, my friends, and tell your countrymen so. The time for weep-

ing is past—that for action has come. Improve it, and be wise. Return home as fast as you can, for I should like to be with you before the present year has expired. Farewell!"

He greeted them in so winning a manner that, charmed with his affability, they again enthusiastically shouted, "Long live Napoleon the Great, the liberator of nations!" Amid the cheers of the sanguine Poles, Napoleon returned to the small reception-room, accompanied by Talleyrand, whom he had beckoned to follow.

"Well," asked he when they were alone, "what do you think of it? Will the Poles rise?"

"I am convinced of it, sire! Your words were like the steel striking the flint, and kindling the tinder of their national ardor. It will burn, sire—burn so brightly that Russia, Austria, and Prussia, may be badly injured in their Polish provinces."

"Certainly not Austria," said Napoleon, quickly; "for the rest, we shall know how to extinguish the fire as soon as it burns too extensively. Forward your dispatch to our ambassador in Vienna to-day. He is to assure the Emperor of Austria in the most emphatic manner that I do not intend permitting the Polish insurrection to spread too far, and that his Galician provinces, at all events, shall not be endangered.—Well, Duroc, what do you bring?" continued he, when the door opened, and the grand marshal entered with a letter in his hand.

"Sire, I bring two messages at the same time. In the first place, a new envoy of the King of Prussia has just arrived; he is the bearer of this letter which the king, who is now at Graudenz, has addressed to your majesty."

"Ah," exclaimed Napoleon, "he is at Graudenz, which is still closer to the boundary of his states. But I will drive him to the last town on the frontier. The queen must learn what it is to provoke a war!" He took the letter, which Duroc handed to him, and opened it hastily.

"Sire," said Duroc, "the bearer of that letter, Major von Rauch, asks the favor of an audience, in order to lay before your majesty the wishes and requests of his king, who has orally communicated them to him."

Napoleon turned to Talleyrand. "Receive him first," he said; "then report to me, and we shall see whether I can grant him an interview. But, wait a moment! Let us first see what is in the king's letter." He broke the seal and un-



folded the paper. When about to read it, he raised his eyes toward Duroc.

"Sire, Prince Augustus of Prussia has just arrived as a prisoner of war, escorted by a detachment of our soldiers. The Grand-duke of Berg sends him to your majesty as a trophy of your victory. Colonel de Gerard accompanies him."

"Did the prince behave as a brave soldier?" asked Napoleon.

"Sir, Colonel de Gerard states that even our own men admire his heroism. The prince had separated himself with a battalion of grenadiers from the corps of the Prince von Hohenlohe, and was marching along the Uker. Our dragoons were pursuing him, but he repulsed them repeatedly, and would have succeeded in escaping, with his soldiers, if the impassable character of the ground had not detained him. He got into a marshy country, intersected by many small canals, which greatly impeded him. The horses sank into the mud, and their riders had to alight and lead them. The prince also was compelled to wade through on foot. He was leading his charger by the bridle, and just as he felt firm ground under him, and was about mounting, the horse broke from him and plunged into the Uker to save its own life. Our dragoons succeeded then in overtaking and capturing the prince; and the Prussians, seeing that their leader was taken, also surrendered. The grand-duke reports this affair at length to your majesty, because he knows that you honor bravery in an enemy, and because this living trophy would no doubt assume a higher value in your eyes."

"Where is the prince?" asked Napoleon, quickly.

"Sire, he is in the anteroom, and awaits whatever disposition your majesty may make of him. Sire, he humbly requests your majesty to permit him to repair to his parents, to recover from his wounds."

"I will see him. Admit him at once."

"Sire, would not your majesty graciously permit him to arrange his toilet a little?" asked Duroc. "The prince is not dressed sufficiently well to appear before your majesty."

"No matter," said Napoleon. "Bring him in immediately." He waved his hand to Duroc, and then looked again at the letter which he still held in his hand.

Talleyrand, who was standing near him, fixed his subtle eyes on the emperor's face. He saw that it brightened up

with proud satisfaction, and that gradually a cold, disdainful smile played on his lips.

"I shall be able to impose very rigorous conditions upon the new Prussian envoys," said Talleyrand to himself; "the king seems to submit very humbly, for the pride of a *triumphator* is beaming on the emperor's forehead."

Just then Napoleon threw the letter impetuously on the table. "Read it, Talleyrand," he said, carelessly. "It is always instructive to see how small these men are in adversity, and how overbearing in prosperity. And such men desire to be sovereign princes, and wear a crown!"

Talleyrand was extending his hand toward the letter when the door opened, and the grand marshal entered.

"Sire," he exclaimed, "Prince Augustus of Prussia."

"Let him come in," said Napoleon, sitting down slowly and carelessly in the easy-chair, covered with purple velvet, which was standing in the middle of the room. He beckoned Talleyrand to come to him.

At this moment there appeared on the threshold the tall, slender form of Prince Augustus of Prussia. Duroc was right; the prince was not in very courtly trim to appear before the emperor. His uniform was torn and bespattered; he had but one boot, and that covered with mire; the other had stuck in the marshy ground near Schönemark, and he had replaced it by a heavy wooden shoe, such as those worn by German peasants; his right arm was in a linen bandage, flecked with blood, and an oblique wound, covered with a broad black plaster, was on his forehead. Such was the miserable condition in which the nephew of Frederick the Great appeared in the brilliant halls of the royal palace of Prussia before the conqueror of his country and of his house, who received him, seated, and scarcely nodded in return to the stiff military salutation of the prince. Napoleon looked sternly at the prisoner, and his lips betrayed the anger seething in his breast. The prince, however, apparently did not notice this, nor feel uneasy and irritated at the singular situation in which he found himself; his eyes met those of the emperor calmly and fearlessly; he did not bow his head, but carried it erect; not a trace of fear or sorrow was to be seen in his youthful countenance; a faint smile indeed was playing on his red, full lips when he glanced over the room, and again at Napoleon, behind whom Talleyrand and Duroc were standing in a most respectful attitude.



"You are a brother of Prince Louis Ferdinand, who was killed at Saalfeld?" asked the conqueror, in a harsh voice.

"Yes, sire, I am a son of Prince Ferdinand of Prussia," was the grave reply.

"A nephew of Frederick II.," exclaimed Napoleon. "A nephew of the heroic king who loved France so well, that his heart and opinions were those of a Frenchman."

"Sire," said the prince, calmly, "history teaches, however, that the great king was not always the friend of that country, and that his love for it did not prevent him from waging war against it. His enmity against France gained him no less glory than his friendships for its poets and *savants*."

"Ah, you refer to Rossbach," said Napoleon, shrugging his shoulders. "We have expunged that name with the names of Jena and Auerstadt, and the monument that once stood on the battle-field of Rossbach is now on the way to Paris—a trophy of our victorious army."\*

The prince bent his head a little. "It is true," he said, "the goddess of victory is very fickle. The future therefore consoles those who have succumbed in the present."

The emperor cast an angry glance on the prince, who met it with a bold, unflinching air.

"I see you are, both by birth and sentiment, a brother of Prince Louis Ferdinand," said Napoleon. "Like him, you belonged to the hot-headed young men who would have war at any price. Hard blows were required to moderate your war-fever. I hope you are cured of it now. Your brother has expiated his mad arrogance on the battle-field of Saalfeld. It is your fate to return as a prisoner of war in the most pitiful plight to the capital of Prussia, which you left a few weeks since with such foolish hopes of victory. You ought to have listened in time to reason, and not to the siren voice of the queen, who, in a manner so disastrous to Prussia, inveigled all the young men to plunge into the Charybdis of war, and—"

\* On the day after the battle of Jena, the emperor said to General Savary, while riding across the battle-field of Rossbach, between Halle and Merseburg: "Gallop to the left in this direction; about half a mile from here you will find the column erected by the Prussians in memory of that battle." Savary advanced in the direction indicated, and found the small column in the middle of a corn-field. Waving his handkerchief, General Savary made a sign that he had succeeded in discovering the monument, and Napoleon galloped with his suite across the plain to contemplate it. The storms of half a century had beaten upon it, and it was difficult to decipher the numerous inscriptions with which it was covered. The division of General Suchet just passing the spot, the emperor ordered them to have the monument removed and sent to Paris. The pieces were put into a caisson, and the orders executed.—"Mémoires du Duc de Rovigo," vol. ii., p. 293.

"Sire," said the prince, interrupting him in an almost threatening voice—"sire, no reflections on the queen, if you please! Having conquered us, you are at liberty to humiliate and abuse the vanquished, if your majesty derive pleasure from such a triumph, but the noble and unhappy queen should not be dragged into a quarrel of men. We do not claim the excuse of having been inveigled by her, and her exalted virtue does not deserve that charge."

"Ah," exclaimed Napoleon, scornfully, "like all young men, you seem to belong to the enthusiastic admirers of the queen."

"Sire, that proves that the young men of Prussia are still imbued with respect for virtue. It is true we all adore the queen as our tutelary saint; she is the radiant pattern of our mothers, our wives, and daughters; she is the ideal of all—and those who have once been so happy as to have seen and spoken with her, bow to her in love and admiration."

"Had all of you bowed less to her, Prussia would not now lie humiliated in the dust," said the emperor, harshly. "Prussia and France are destined by Nature to be friends, and I, who never have sought war, but always regarded it only as a deplorable necessity, was greatly inclined to offer my hand to Prussia in peace and friendship. But your queen and your officers of the guard were bent on having war, and believed they would win laurels by waging it. Now you have it with all its terrors. What has it brought upon you? You have lost a brother by it, and you yourself had to lay down your arms at Prenzlau."

"Sire," said the prince, in generous pride, "I request your majesty not to confound me with those who concluded the capitulation of Prenzlau. I did not capitulate; I was taken prisoner, sword in hand, but I did not surrender it voluntarily."

"Young man," said Napoleon, in grave, cold calmness, "beware of being plunged into deeper distress by your haughty spirit. The Prussian princes are not now in a position to utter high-sounding words. Your king is fully aware of this. Listen attentively to what I tell you: he has begged me for peace in the most submissive manner; he is imploring me to grant him my friendship, and calls himself happy because I am dwelling in his palaces."

"Sire, that is impossible," exclaimed the prince, carried away by his impulsive temper.



Napoleon shrugged his shoulders, and then turned his head a little aside toward his minister. "M. Talleyrand, please read to us the letter," he said; "I merely glanced over it.—Owing to the portentous events of the last days, you are, prince, without direct news from the king. You may, then, derive from this letter some information concerning his situation and sentiments. Read, M. Minister! And you, prince, take a seat."

He pointed to one of the chairs standing near the door. Prince Augustus, however, did not accept this gracious invitation. He bowed, and said, smiling, "Your majesty will permit me to stand, for my costume is hardly in harmony with gilt chairs, and I believe it behooves a poor vagabond like myself to stand humbly at the door. Moreover, Prussian etiquette requires us to stand in listening to the words of our sovereign."

"Read, Talleyrand," said the emperor, and leaning back carelessly, he tried to discover in the prince's face the impression which the king's letter would make upon him. Talleyrand read as follows:

"*Monsieur mon Frère*: When I begged your imperial majesty to grant me peace, I consulted my reason, but I have now consulted my heart. In spite of the terrible sacrifices which you have imposed on me, sire, I desire most anxiously that the treaty, which has already been secured by the approval of the main points, will entitle me soon to resume my amicable relations with your imperial majesty, which the war interrupted for a moment. It is an agreeable duty for me, *monsieur mon frère*, to manifest, by a proof of confidence, my sincere desire to cultivate your friendship; and I believe I do this by stopping the further advance of the Russian troops, without waiting for the definitive conclusion of peace.

"I was anxious that your majesty should be received and treated at my palaces in a manner agreeable to you. I have zealously taken such steps as were necessary for that purpose, and, according to my power, in the situation in which I am now, I hope my endeavors have been successful. In return, your majesty will permit me to recommend my capital and the province of Brandenburg to your generosity. This province, so little favored by Nature, is, as it were, a creation of my immortal ancestor. I hope, sire, you will regard it as a monument he erected to himself; and the numerous points in which your majesty resembles that great man, I trust, will be

an additional inducement for you to order his work to be treated in a magnanimous manner.

"Besides, I should like to request your majesty kindly to exempt the district of Halberstadt and the duchy of Magdeburg from the cruel losses you are imposing on me. Such an order I should regard as a precious guaranty of your personal feelings toward me, and you may depend upon it, sire, I should zealously strive to reciprocate these feelings in the most cordial manner. I pray God to take you in his Holy keeping, and remain, *monsieur mon frère*,

"Your majesty's obedient servant,

"FREDERICK WILLIAM."

While the letter was being read, Napoleon did not avert his eyes for a single moment from the countenance of the prince. He saw that he blushed with indignation at first, and that gradually a profound grief overshadowed his noble features.

"Well, was I not right?" asked Napoleon, when Talleyrand had concluded. "Does not your king submit to all my conditions? Does he not bid me welcome to his palaces?"

"Sire," said the prince, mournfully, "it does not behoove me to censure the words of my king. When he has spoken, I must be silent. I only dare to observe that your majesty may see from this letter that the queen does not meddle with government affairs. Had she done so, your majesty, no doubt, would not have received this letter of Count Haugwitz."

"Of Count Haugwitz?" asked Napoleon. "Of the king, you mean?"

"Sire, the king lent to this letter only his name and handwriting; Count Haugwitz furnished the words and the spirit it breathes."

"Then you believe that the queen does not share the views of her husband?" asked the emperor, hastily. "You believe she would still insist on the further continuation of the war if her opinion were consulted?"

"Sire, I only take the liberty to state that she would not have written such a letter."

"I know it very well!" exclaimed Napoleon. "Your queen hates me; she would die rather than beg my friendship; she would bury herself under the ruins of her throne rather than put an end to this war and call me her brother. But I will bend that haughty soul—I will crush her heart, and make her repent of what she is doing. I will—but," he suddenly inter-



rupted himself, "what is the matter with you! You turn pale! You are tottering, prince!"

The emperor arose and advanced a few steps; but the prince motioned him back. "It is nothing," he said faintly, "only a momentary weakness—that is all. I have not taken rest for several days and nights, and loss of blood has exhausted my strength. Besides—why should I shrink from confessing it—I am hungry, sire; I have eaten nothing for the last twenty-four hours."

"Poor young man," said Napoleon, compassionately, as he approached the prince, "I deplore your misfortunes. Personally you have not deserved them, for I know you have fought bravely, and are worthy of a better fate than that of a prisoner of war; but will you give me your word of honor that you will not attempt to escape or participate again in this war against me?"

"Sire," said the prince, pointing at his wounded right arm, "sire, I believe I must give you my word of honor. I am your prisoner, and shall not attempt to escape."

"Then go to your parents. I permit you to remain at the house of Prince Ferdinand until you have recovered from your wounds. I will not deprive your mother any longer of the pleasure of embracing her brave son. Go, then, to her!" The prince bowed and was about to withdraw.

"Well, prince, have you not a word of thanks for me?" asked Napoleon, kindly.

The prince smiled mournfully. "Sire," he said, bowing deeply, "sire, I thank you for treating me so leniently."

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE VICTORIA OF THE BRANDENBURG GATE.

WITHOUT waiting for further permission to withdraw, the prince hastily opened the door and went out. For a moment he sat down in the anteroom, for his feet were trembling so as to be scarcely able to support him, and such a pallor overspread his cheeks that Colonel Gerard, who had been waiting, hastened to him in dismay, and asked whether he would permit him to call a physician. Prince Augustus smilingly shook his head. "The physician of whom I stand in need is in my mother's kitchen," he said, "and your emperor has

permitted me to seek him." Just then the grand marshal entered the room, and, making a sign to Gerard, whispered a few words into his ear.

"Your royal highness is delivered from the burden of my company," said the colonel to the prince when Duroc had withdrawn. "Permit me, however, to conduct you to the carriage that is to convey you to the palace of Prince Ferdinand."

In the court-yard below, an imperial carriage was waiting, and Colonel Gerard himself hastened to open the door to assist the prince in entering. But the latter waved his hand deprecatingly, and stepped back. "I am unworthy of entering the imperial carriage," he said. "See, even the coachman, in his livery, looks elegant compared with me; and all Berlin would laugh, if it should see me ride in the emperor's magnificent coach. Let me, therefore, walk off quite humbly and modestly and enter the first conveyance I meet. Farewell, colonel, and accept my thanks for the great attention and kindness you have manifested toward me."

The prince kindly shook hands with him and then hastily walked across the court-yard of the palace toward the place in front of it—the so-called *Lustgarten*. He crossed this place and the wide bridge, built across an arm of the Spree, without meeting with any vehicle. But the fresh air, and the sense that he was free, agreed with him so well that he felt strong enough to proceed on foot to his father's palace.

"No one recognizes me in this miserable costume," he said, smiling—"no notice will be taken of me, and I will be able to reach my home without being detained." And he walked vigorously across the Opera Place toward the Linden. This neighborhood, generally so lively and frequented, was strangely deserted—no promenaders—none of the contented and happy faces, formerly to be met with on the Opera Place and under the Linden, were to be seen to-day. Only a few old women were mournfully creeping along here and there; and, when the prince passed the guard-house, he saw French soldiers standing in the front, who looked arrogantly and scornfully at the Prussian officer, and did not think of saluting him.

"Ah, my brother," muttered Prince Augustus to himself, "your prophecy has been quickly fulfilled! The drums are no longer beaten when we ride out of the gate and pass the guard-house. Well, I do not care. I would gladly do without such honors, if Prussia herself only were honored—if—"