

"I love you," said Napoleon, with a proud and confident air. "Proceed."

"I have finished," she said. "My trusty lady's maid prepared every thing for my escape, and four days ago, when my husband believed me at church, I and my maid entered a travelling-coach and continued our journey day and night until we arrived at Castle Finkenstein."

"And this disguise?" asked Napoleon, pointing at the costume she was wearing.

Mary blushed and smiled. "I had it made by a tailor at Warsaw, who prepared the suits the imperial pages wore at that ball. I had not sufficient courage to enter this castle as a lady, only men living in it at the present time. I desired to enter your room without recognition or insult. I left my carriage at the neighboring village, and walked hither on foot. At the castle-gate, I inquired for Constant, your *valet de chambre*, and requested the servants to call him. I confided my secret to him, and he conducted me to this room. And thus, my beloved friend, I am here; I am lying at your feet, and imploring you to kill me if you do not love me, for I cannot live without your love!" She glided from the divan to the floor, and looked up to the emperor with clasped hands and imploring eyes.

Napoleon bent over her and drew her smilingly into his arms. "You shall live," he said, "for I love you and pledge you my imperial word that I will never desert you!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DANTZIC CHOCOLATE.

ON the following day the emperor's face did not retain a trace of the gloom which had filled his marshals with so much uneasiness. His features were radiant with happiness, and a strange fire was burning in his dark-blue eyes. He ordered his guard to be drawn up in line in the castle-yard, and to the delight of the soldiers it was announced that Napoleon himself would command at the parade. Loud cheers and the constantly-repeated shout of "*Vive l'empereur!*" received him when, surrounded by his marshals, and with a smiling face, he walked down the broad steps of the palace.

"These soldiers are foolish children," said he, turning to

Marshal Lannes. "Why are they cheering incessantly, as if they had not seen me for a year? Have I not been among them every day?"

"No, sire," said the marshal, who had regained his former good-humor and merry face, "no, sire; those brave boys really have not seen your majesty for a long while, and they are perfectly right to manifest their joy. The great Napoleon, whose face was our sun in so many battles and in so many countries, and whose smile, when we were hungry and thirsty, often satisfied our hunger and quenched our thirst, really was not here. In his place we have had during the last few weeks a grave and taciturn emperor, whom every one feared."

Napoleon laughed. "Were you also afraid, my old comrade?" he asked.

"I cannot say that I was," said Lannes, gayly, "but, nevertheless, I feel to-day as though a heavy burden had been removed from my heart. I can breathe more freely, inasmuch as I have back my excellent Napoleon in place of that morose emperor. The sun has risen once more for all of us!"

"Was I really as you pretend?" asked Napoleon, who was always delighted at the unceremonious words of his old comrade, and who permitted to Lannes that bluntness which he would not have tolerated in another.

The marshal bent closer to the emperor's ear. "Sire, your majesty will permit me to tell you that you were shockingly morose and surly. We were beginning to feel anxious and weary. But it is all over now, and when I look at you to-day my heart is as glad as that of a lover who sees his sweetheart after a long separation. I should like to know what miracle has happened since yesterday, and what magician has arrived to dispel your discontent. I should be exceedingly grateful to your majesty if you would show him to me!"

"What an inquisitive fellow!" said the emperor, turning his eyes involuntarily to the window of the castle. He nodded almost imperceptibly, and laid his hand on his heart for a moment. The marshal's eyes had followed the glances of his master, and he beheld a strange object at one of the windows of the emperor's rooms. The curtain was cautiously drawn aside, and the beautiful head of a young lady was seen behind it.

"*Mort de ma vie!*" ejaculated Lannes, loudly and impetuously.

"Well, what is the matter?" asked Napoleon, turning hastily to him.

Lannes was still staring up at the window; but the charming person had already disappeared, and the curtains were closed again.

"Sire," faltered Lannes, in confusion, "sire, I believe I myself am bewitched; I beheld an apparition just now."

"Did your good wife appear to you?" asked Napoleon, laughing.

"Would she were such a fair-haired angel!" exclaimed Lannes, heaving a sigh. "But in that case, sire, I should very earnestly oppose her appearance at the windows of the imperial rooms—"

"Hush, you old babbler!" said Napoleon, laughing; "is it necessary, then, to confess every thing one has dreamed?" And, as he liked to do when in good-humor, he pulled the marshal's ear so violently that Lannes made a very wry face.

The emperor turned with a grave bearing to his soldiers, and the parade commenced. After it was over, he repaired to the castle, to work with his adjutant-general in his cabinet. Before doing so, however, he said to Marshal Lannes: "I wish you to dine with me to-day, and to-night I will play a game of *vingt-et-un* with you, Talleyrand, and Duroc; I must get even with you for yesterday. Do not forget, marshal—we shall dine together to-day!"

"Sire," said Lannes, joyfully, "were you to place a dish of the boiled ears of the Russians before me, I would eat them with great relish if you look at me as kindly as you are doing now!"

Napoleon laughed and ascended the palace staircase. An hour later a dusty carriage rolled into the yard of Castle Finkenstein. It was Marshal Lefebvre, who, agreeably to the emperor's invitation, had arrived. The marshal felt somewhat embarrassed and anxious. This order of Napoleon to set out immediately on receipt of the dispatch, and repair to his headquarters at Finkenstein, had filled the conqueror of Dantzic with some apprehension, lest the emperor had summoned him to rebuke him for having granted such honorable terms to the Prussian garrison, and for permitting them to march out with their arms, instead of making them prisoners of war. The marshal therefore entered the anteroom with a face somewhat pale, and requested the officer in waiting to announce him.

"His majesty is at work in his cabinet," said the officer. "On such occasions no one is permitted to disturb him, unless he be a bearer of important dispatches."

"The emperor ordered me to report to him immediately on my arrival. Go, therefore, and announce me." The officer obeyed hesitatingly.

Napoleon was seated at a desk covered with maps and papers. Pointing at a map spread out on the table, he was just turning eagerly to his adjutant-general, Marshal Berthier. "Here—this is the point whither we have to drive the Russians; and there, on the banks of the Alle, they shall fearfully atone for the battle of Eylau. Well," he said, turning to the officer who had just entered, "what do you want?"

"Sire, Marshal Lefebvre asks your majesty to grant him an audience. He says your majesty summoned him here from Dantzic."

"He is right," said Napoleon, "and I am glad that the duke does not keep me in waiting. Tell the Duke of Dantzic that he is to dine with me."

"Sire," said the officer, "it is not a Duke of Dantzic, but Marshal Lefebvre, who applies for an audience."

The emperor darted one of his withering glances at him. "It seems, sir," he said gravely, "that you deem me incapable of creating a duke. Go," he added, "and inform the duke of my invitation. In fifteen minutes we shall dine."

The officer returned to the anteroom. "Well?" asked Lefebvre, quickly. "Does the emperor await me? May I enter?"

"Duke, his majesty invites you to dine with him, and requests you to wait only fifteen minutes."

Lefebvre, in his confusion, had not heard the title by which he was addressed. His mind was absorbed in the single thought whether or not the emperor was angry with him. He wished these fifteen minutes to pass quickly, and yet his heart trembled at what might be in store for him. Precisely at the time appointed Grand Marshal Duroc entered to conduct Marshal Lefebvre to the dining-room. Lefebvre followed in silence. The heart of the brave soldier beat more violently than it had ever done in the battle-field.

The emperor had already taken his seat when Duroc and Lefebvre entered. Near him, behind their chairs, stood Marshal Lannes, the Prince de Benevento, and Marshal Berthier. Napoleon greeted Lefebvre with a friendly wave

of his hand. "Welcome, duke," he exclaimed, "sit down here at my side!"

Lefebvre advanced and took the seat his majesty designated. The others sat down also. Dinner commenced: Napoleon ate his soup in silence, as he always did. Fixing his eyes with a smiling expression on a large pie, in the shape of a fortress, that was standing before him, "Do you recognize this, Duke of Dantzic?" he asked.

Lefebvre heard the ducal title this time, and looked bewildered at the emperor, whose anger he still feared. "Did your majesty speak to me?" he asked, bashfully.

"To be sure; did I not address you with the title of Duke of Dantzic?" replied Napoleon, laughing. "Well, tell me, now, do you know the fortress which this pie is intended to represent?"

"I believe," said the new duke, "the fortress of Dantzic."

"See, gentlemen, how familiar the duke is with his dear Dantzic," exclaimed Napoleon. "It is true, he ought to know it, for he had to take extraordinary pains to reduce it. Now let us eat little Dantzic as Lefebvre ate big Dantzic a few days ago."

The steward took the pie and presented it to the emperor. "Oh, no," said Napoleon, with a pleasant smile; "Duke of Dantzic, it behooves you to carve it, for it is your conquest."

Lefebvre's face beamed with joy, and he thanked the emperor with a grateful look. "Sire," he said, almost solemnly, plunging his knife into the pie, "I should like to be commissioned soon by your majesty to take another fortress. I should then remember this hour, and take it by assault or die!"

"Ah, you will not die so soon," exclaimed Napoleon; "let us take this fortress by assault. The Duke of Dantzic having opened the first breach, we will boldly follow." Turning to Lefebvre: "Do you like to eat chocolate, duke?" he asked.

Lefebvre looked at him, amazed at the strange question. "I do not know," he faltered, "I believe I like it."

"Well, then, I will give you a pound of Dantzic chocolate," said the emperor, smiling, "for as you took that city it is but equitable that you should receive a little souvenir of it. Roustan, bring me the small package lying on my desk."

Roustan, who at dinner always stood behind the emperor's chair, soon returned with a small oblong package. Napoleon

took it, and, handing it to Lefebvre, said, "Take this, duke—small gifts keep up friendly feelings."

Lefebvre took the package, and, warmly thanking the emperor, put it into his pocket. A few minutes afterward Napoleon rose from the table.

"Sire," said Marshal Lannes, approaching him, "your majesty, perhaps, does not know all my failings. You are not aware that I am very inquisitive, and withal very fond of sweet things. Now I am anxious to know whether Dantzic chocolate is as good as Paris chocolate—I should like to taste it. Will not your majesty be so kind as to order the Duke of Dantzic to open his package of chocolate and let us taste it?"

Napoleon laughed. "Why, I cannot order him to give away what I have just given him," he said. "But a glance at the outside may show you whether it is good or not. If he will open it and let you see it, I have no objection."

The duke took the package from his pocket; he himself was desirous to discover what it contained; Lannes, Duroc, Talleyrand, and Berthier, surrounded him. The emperor stood at some distance, and looked smilingly at the group. Lefebvre broke the string and unfolded the wrapper. It contained nothing but a number of small printed papers; but these were valuable, being bank-notes to the amount of a hundred thousand dollars. Lefebvre, overjoyed, looked at the emperor. Duroc and Talleyrand smiled also, but Lannes exclaimed in a loud voice, "Forsooth, I should also like to have a pound of this Dantzic chocolate!* Sire, is there not somewhere another Prussian fortress manufacturing such an excellent article? Send me thither, and, I pledge you my word, I shall get my chocolate!"

Napoleon shrugged his shoulders. "No," he said, "there are really no Prussian fortresses that we can take; all are in our hands; only Colberg and Graudenz are holding out, and who knows how soon they will surrender? You will have no chance to obtain your chocolate in Prussia, Lannes, but I will give you and all my marshals an opportunity, I hope, on the battle-field."

"Ah," they exclaimed in joyful chorus, "then there will be a battle soon?"

"Yes," said Napoleon, gravely. "Let the fall of Dantzic

*This scene is strictly historical. The army knew in what manner the emperor had rewarded Marshal Lefebvre, and it became a cant-phrase for soldiers who wished to borrow money of their comrades: "Have you any Dantzic chocolate?"

be only a signal of fresh victories for us! The time of inaction is past. Let us invite the Emperor of Russia to a waltz on the territory of his ally the King of Prussia. Possibly, the beautiful queen may take part in it, for she is said to be a fine dancer, and to have delighted the young officers of the guard at the balls given in the palace of Berlin. She is, moreover, a heroine, who, when her king had an army, witnessed the parade of the troops in the costume of an Amazon. I am, indeed, inquisitive, like Marshal Lannes—not, however, as to the quality of the chocolate, but as to this queen, who is said to be the most beautiful and amiable woman of all Germany. I am desirous to find out whether the rumor is true, and to see her face to face. But in order to do so a battle—a victory is necessary. Afterward I shall invite her to meet me, and I suppose she will bow to the conqueror of her country, notwithstanding her pride, and accept the invitation. Ah, she shall accustom herself to recognize me, whom she calls a usurper, as emperor, and peer of other sovereigns. Gentlemen, I count on your active co-operation. You, marshals, and my brave army, are to be the *postillons d'amour*, to conquer for me an interview with the beautiful queen! You are to wake up the Russians from their winter sleep, and bring them our morning greeting with cannon! All the preparations are completed. The Confederation of the Rhine, Italy, Spain, and France, have furnished us with troops, and we have now two hundred thousand enthusiastic and invincible soldiers, while Russia and Prussia together are scarcely possessed of half as many. They are, moreover, exhausted and demoralized. Let us renew the struggle; and when I say struggle, it means *victory!*”

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XXVII.

TILSIT.—NAPOLEON AND ALEXANDER.

A CRY of dismay resounded in the camp of the Prussians and Russians—of exultation in that of the French. Another battle had been fought, and Napoleon had won a brilliant victory. On the 14th of June, 1807, a decisive action had taken place between the French and the united army—the battle of Friedland had gained Napoleon a new laurel-wreath, and brought an overwhelming defeat upon unhappy Prussia. The Russians, enraged at the loss of the battle, furiously denounced Prussia, for the sake of which Russia had been involved in this war; they asked the Emperor Alexander to put an end to the disastrous and self-sacrificing war by making peace with France.

The same measure was urged by the adherents of the French party in the camp and in the suite of King Frederick William. They asserted that only unconditional submission, however humiliating it might be, could save what was still to be saved; that the king ought to throw himself at the feet of the victor of Friedland and implore him to restore his crown. Such was the advice of the discouraged and despairing—of those who always had regarded the war against France as a fatal mistake, and who now, amidst the general consternation, were overjoyed that their predictions had been fulfilled.

“Peace! peace with France!” was the cry resounding in the ears of the Emperor Alexander and of King Frederick William. Alexander promised that he would comply with the request. Frederick William listened to it in sullen silence. The queen, who had remained at Memel, and was no longer with her husband, veiled her head and wept.

But Napoleon triumphantly thanked his army for this new and decisive victory.

“Soldiers,” he said, “we are victorious. On the 5th of