

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

June we were attacked in our cantonments by the Russian army. The enemy had mistaken our inactivity. He perceived too late that our repose was that of the lion: he repents of having disturbed it. In the battles of Guttstadt and Heilsberg, and in that ever-memorable one of Friedland, in a campaign of ten days, we have taken one hundred and twenty pieces of cannon, and seven colors. The killed, wounded, or made prisoners, are sixty thousand Russians. We have taken all the magazines, hospitals, ambulances, the fortress of Königsberg, the three hundred vessels which were in that port, laden with military stores, and one hundred and sixty thousand muskets, which England had sent to arm our enemies.

"From the Vistula to the Niemen we have come with the flight of the eagle. You celebrated at Austerlitz the anniversary of the coronation; this year, you celebrate that of the battle of Marengo, which put an end to the war of the second coalition.

"Frenchmen, you have been worthy of yourselves and of me. You will return to France crowned with laurels, and, after obtaining a glorious peace, which carries with it the guaranty of its duration, it is high time for our country to repose, protected from the malignant influence of England. My bounties shall prove to you my gratitude, and the extent of the love I feel for you."

Napoleon thus promised peace to his army, while thanking it for the new victory. And he had a right to do so, for peace and its conditions were now in his grasp. Alexander and Frederick William felt this, and hence they were under the necessity of making advances to the conqueror; they were obliged to sacrifice their pride and to conciliate their powerful enemy. Frederick William was still hesitating. The tears of his wife, the prayers and remonstrances of Hardenberg restrained him; he was unwilling to listen to the urgent appeals of Generals von Köckeritz and Zastrow, and of Field-Marshal von Kalkreuth, who, now that Dantzic had fallen, believed unconditional submission to be the only means of safety.

Alexander determined first on taking a decisive step. On the 24th of June he sent Prince Labanoff to the victor of Friedland, and expressed his desire for an interview with him. Napoleon complied with this request, and sent Grand-Marshal Duroc to the Emperor Alexander to inform him that

he would meet him on the following day, the 25th of June, at noon. But the two emperors did not wish to see each other on a soil red with the blood of their soldiers, nor were the peace negotiations to be held on a territory hostile to the Emperor of the French. A river, whose waves buried in their depths the reminiscences of the past, was to be the neutral place of their meeting.

It was a clear midsummer-day; the earth was clad in the freshest verdure; not a cloud floated in the sky; not a breath of wind stirred the air, or ruffled the limpid waters of the Niemen. The river was silent, as though it was conscious of its importance, and felt that a great historical event was to take place on its tranquil surface. A large raft was moored by General Lariboissière, of the artillery, equidistant from and within sight of both banks. A pavilion was constructed with all the rich stuffs to be procured in the little town of Tilsit, for the reception of the two monarchs. This gorgeous pavilion seemed a palace descended from some fairy realm, and thousands of spectators gazed at it in surprise.

The two armies were ranged along the Niemen, their arms and uniforms flashing in the sun. On one bank were the life-guards of Alexander, with their bearded faces and savage features; on the other, the guards of Napoleon, with their scarred faces, telling the story of many a victory. In the rear of the soldiers were thousands more, who had hastened to the banks of the Niemen to witness the interview of the two emperors. Shouts, laughter, and songs, resounded on both sides; the air was filled with a humming sound as from two immense swarms of bees. At times, greetings were sent across the river in a language mutually unintelligible. Suddenly, all this noise died away; the guards on both sides presented arms; the drums were beaten, and the bands played the national hymns of Russia and France. Amidst these jubilant notes the two emperors with their brilliant suites approached.

That small, vigorous man, whose delicate hand is holding firmly the bridle of his spirited white charger—he with the pale face and expansive forehead, crowned with light-brown hair; with impenetrable features, a cold, compressed mouth, and large, gloomy eyes—that man is Napoleon, Emperor of the French. Duroc, Berthier, Bessières, and Caulaincourt, form his suite, and follow him at a full gallop to the bank of the river.

That slender young man on the richly caparisoned black

horse—that tall figure with smiling and handsome face, full of vigor, health, and vivacity—with soft, restless features; blue eyes radiant with enthusiasm, and crimson lips—is Alexander, Emperor of Russia. The Grand-duke Constantine, Generals Benningsen and Ouwaroff, Prince Labanoff, and Count Lieven, accompany him.

The two emperors dismount at the same time, and embark with their suites in the gondolas that are to convey them to the pavilion. The oarsmen keep time with their oars and the boats approach each other, reaching simultaneously the two staircases leading from the platform to the water. The two monarchs disembark at the same moment. Alexander and Napoleon stand face to face. For a moment they look at each other with inquiring glances, and then embrace in the most cordial manner.

This testimony of a frank reconciliation excited vehement applause among the spectators who lined the river; the French as well as the Russians stretched out their arms toward their newly-won friends on the other bank. "Peace!" shouted thousands. "Hail, ye friends and brethren! our enmity is over; our emperors have affectionately embraced each other, and like them their subjects will meet in love and peace! No more shedding of blood! Peace! peace!" The music joined with the exultant cries of the two nations, and the emperors stepped, keeping time with the bands, through the doors leading into the pavilion. They were alone. Only the eye of God could behold them. For a few moments they stood face to face, silent, and undecided which of them was to speak first, while the echoes of the music penetrated the heavily-curtained walls of the pavilion. Each of them seemed to be anxious to read the thoughts of the other in his face, and to look into the depths of his soul.

Napoleon's sonorous voice was the first to break the silence. "Why are we at war?" he asked with an inimitable smile, offering his hand to Alexander.

"It is true," exclaimed Alexander, as if awaking from a dream; "why are we at war? If your grudge is against England, and against her alone—if your majesty hates me only because I am the friend of that country, I can sever the alliance, and we shall easily agree, for I have as much reason to complain of her as you have, and shall readily support you in every thing your majesty may decide upon undertaking against her."

"In that case," said Napoleon, quickly, "every thing can be arranged, and peace is a matter of certainty. England alone stood between us—perfidious, egotistic England, that is always interested only for herself, and is ready at any time to sacrifice her faithful and generous allies!"

"I have allowed England to deceive me a long while," exclaimed Alexander, vehemently; "for I once regarded that nation of traders as a nation of men, heroes, and profound diplomatists. But I was terribly undeceived. Those selfish shop-keepers amused me with fair but false promises; they care neither for my welfare nor for that of Europe, but only for their commerce. The egotism of Great Britain is equalled only by her narrow-minded avarice. I asked the British cabinet to guarantee a Russian loan, and they were impudent enough to refuse me, although they knew very well that I wished to negotiate it for the sole purpose of equipping an army, with which I intended to take the field more in the interest of England and Prussia, than in that of Russia. Faithful to my word, and to the treaties I had concluded, I nevertheless equipped my army and marched it into the field in order to join them. But where were my allies? Prussia could not add to my forces a single army, but a few corps, utterly demoralized by their misfortunes, and the assistance promised by England came so late that it failed in saving Dantzic. The English had taken their own time in appearing before that fortress; they had other matters to attend to in the Baltic; they had to make money by hunting up the merchant-vessels of other nations, and, in their brutality and avarice, they did not shrink from laying their rapacious hands even upon Russian ships! But while the English were taking unarmed vessels, and calculating their profits, and the Prussians were bewailing their misfortunes and dressing their wounds, I alone had to wage war and ingloriously to shed the blood of my poor soldiers for a cause that was hardly the cause of Russia. Ah, sire, I shall never forgive England for deserting me in the hour of danger, and for basely deceiving me by false promises!"

While Alexander was speaking, Napoleon had steadfastly fixed his eyes on him; he had looked through the restless, quivering face of the youthful emperor, into the recesses of his heart; and while Alexander, wholly absorbed in his wrongs, and alternately blushing and turning pale with indignation and grief, was uttering his reproaches, Napoleon

said to himself, "Two sentiments of the speaker are predominant, and ought, therefore, to be flattered: spleen against allies, burdensome like Prussia, or selfish like England; and a very sensitive and deeply mortified pride. I must profit by them."

As soon as Alexander paused, Napoleon said in a mournful voice: "Your allies have taken advantage of your magnanimity, sire! They knew very well that the heir of Peter the Great was also the heir of his fiery spirit, and that it was only necessary to talk of a field of battle, and let him hear a war-like flourish, to make him draw the sword. Ah, sire, why was I not so fortunate as to be at your side? Why did we not take the field together! What heroic deeds would you have already performed! What laurels would not now adorn a head designed by Providence to wear them! It was your majesty's misfortune that you were united with allies who duped you for their own purposes—they were a king without a country and without soldiers, and a nation composed of greedy traders and stock-brokers, calculating whether glory would be profitable to them in pounds, shillings, and pence; and whether stocks would not fall if they fulfilled their engagements. Your majesty alone displayed nobleness, energy, and courage, in this triumvirate; but your friends were unworthy of your honorable conduct. Your majesty's mistake is to be solely attributed to generous sentiments carried to excess, and to misconceptions to which ministers, incompetent and bribed, have given rise. You were wrong to persist in patronizing ungrateful and jealous neighbors like the Germans; or in serving the interests of mere traders, like the English. God and history have intrusted a much more exalted task to you, and for this purpose such large and warlike forces have been given you. I and my marshals, I can assure you, are filled with admiration at the bravery of your soldiers, every one of whom fought like a hero."

"Ah," exclaimed Alexander, "this praise uttered by you, sire, is a balm for my wounds!"

Napoleon laid his hand softly on the shoulder of the young emperor, and looked him full in the face. "Sire," he said, "if we were to unite these two armies, which fought so valiantly against one another at Austerlitz, at Eylau, at Friedland, but who behaved like giants fighting blindfold—if we were to take the field hand in hand at their head, we might divide the world between us, for its own peace and

welfare. By waging war with France, Russia is spending her strength without any possible compensation; whereas, if the two unite in subjecting the East and the West, on land and sea, she would gain as much glory, and certainly more profit. Yes, sire, you would attain the glory which you have hitherto been vainly seeking with those who led you into a path in which you have met with nothing but defeats and disappointments. Heaven intended, perhaps, that you should pass through a school of suffering to make you see your false friends in their true character, and then cause you to turn to new friendships with the whole strength of your heroic soul. Sire, I offer you my hand, and, if you will accept it, I will lead you into a career as brilliant as the star-spangled firmament, and as fragrant as the laurels of the south. You shall see at least half the world at your feet. Sire, will you follow me?"

He fixed his fascinating glance on Alexander, and an unearthly radiance seemed to beam from his countenance. Alexander, dazzled by his aspect—carried away by the vigor of his language, and flattered also by hearing Napoleon give utterance to reflections on his allies which so well agreed with his own secret thoughts, extended his hands toward Napoleon.

"Here I am," he exclaimed, "lead me! Show me the career I am to pursue!"

Napoleon hastily seized the proffered hands, and, shaking them cordially, said with an energy which caused Alexander's heart to flutter, "Come, the world is ours!" He conducted Alexander quickly and silently to the round-table in the middle of the pavilion, on which several rolls of paper were lying. Unfolding the largest, and spreading it on the table, he said, "Sire, look here. This is a map of the world. There is Asia, which is placed at the side of Russia, like a pillow on which to rest your head; there is Persia, with her treasures; the vast Chinese empire, with its industry and commerce; there is Hindostan, with her immense wealth, and a population sighing for deliverance from the British yoke. Here below you behold Africa, with her dreary deserts, and the three Barbary states, which lately again plundered French vessels, and upon which I have sworn to inflict summary punishment. I shall not now speak of America and Australia. That is a world which has first to pass through the children's disease of republicanism; after it has recovered from it, both of us will be ready to inoculate it with monarchical prin-

ciples. But here is Europe! Your majesty, look at this motley chaos of colors and states, of big and little thrones, lying between France and Russia. We are their bulwarks on the east and west; why should we not rule over them? We are able to do so by joining hands over the heads of all these states. If Russia desires to be the sincere ally of France, nothing will be more easy; we shall change the face of this part of Europe; we shall break the chains separating these states and nations from each other in the east as well as in the west. There will be but one shepherd and one flock, and the Emperor of the Occident and the Emperor of the Orient will give laws to the world!"

"Ah," exclaimed Alexander, enthusiastically, "the will of my ancestor, Peter the Great, revives in the mouth of Napoleon the Great!"

Napoleon smiled. "And what Catharine the Great planned," he said, "will be accomplished by Alexander the Great—the consolidation of the empire of the East! Sire, a courier brought me important news this morning. My ally and friend, Sultan Selim, has been hurled from his throne by the daggers of conspirators. His overthrow has just set me at liberty in regard to my alliance with the Porte."

"I also heard this intelligence to-day," said Alexander, smiling; "the sultan's throne is vacant; Turkey awaits a new sovereign."

"Yes," exclaimed Napoleon, "but it is not necessary that this sovereign should be a Mussulman. The crescent on St. Sophia's accuses the Christian powers of cowardice and perfidy, and it is time to reestablish the cross on it. I did think that one might make something of those Turks, restore to them some energy, teach them to make use of their national courage; but it was an illusion. It is time to put an end to an empire which can no longer hold together, and to prevent its spoils from contributing to increase the power of England. I ask but a small part of Turkey for myself; she is too remote from France, she does not belong to the empire of the Occident. But I remember that Catharine the Great had placed her on the map of the new world she was constructing, and I read in the eyes of your majesty that you have not forgotten that map!"

"Sire, you not only read in my eyes, but you look also into my heart!" exclaimed Alexander; "like a magician, you lay your hands on the secrets of my thoughts, that never found

words; you teach them to assume a definite shape, and impart the faculty of speech to them."

"I show you the way of glory, which your allies had taken pains to conceal," said Napoleon, smiling. "Your majesty anxiously desires to see it, and those perfidious men tried to mislead you. The portal opens to you now, sire, and I already behold the noble Alexander entering it."

"Oh," murmured Alexander, placing his hands on his head, "my brain turns dizzy; it seems to me as though it were on fire."

"Sire," exclaimed Napoleon, in a powerful voice, "we are destined to give everlasting peace to the world, and woe to those who try to hinder us! England would like to do so as to myself, and Turkey desires as much in regard to you. Sire, let us unite, therefore, against these two enemies, and give efficiency to our alliance. We must enlarge our territory. I see in the north an obstacle to your progress; Sweden is watching your majesty with a jealous eye, and will regard an alliance with me as a declaration of war. Well, then, wage war against Sweden!"

"Sire," said Alexander, in dismay, and confused by those novel ideas passing so brilliantly before him, "the King of Sweden is my brother-in-law and ally!"

"For that reason, let him follow the changes of your policy," replied Napoleon; "or let him take the consequences. Sweden may be an ally for the moment, but she is your geographical enemy. St. Petersburg is too near the frontiers of Finland. The fair Russians of St. Petersburg must not again hear from their palaces the cannon of the Swedes. Proclaim war against the Swedish king, and take Finland as a compensation. And as you must be strong in the south as well as in the north, take also at once some portion of the provinces of the Danube. However, as it is probable that the Turks will not give up any thing, let us wage war against them. I will assist you, and afterward the partition will take place. Look here," added Napoleon, quickly, drawing with his finger a line across the map, "this is the inheritance that Turkey will leave us. You take Bessarabia, Moldavia, Wallachia, and Bulgaria, as far as the Balkan. I should naturally wish for the maritime provinces, such as Albania, Thessaly, Morea, and Candia. It is true Austria would object to such an arrangement, but we should offer her indemnities in Bosnia and Servia, to be made the appanage of one of her archdukes. I

have thus laid before you a rapid sketch of our new world, sire; the question now is whether you like it—what you think of it.”

“Your majesty,” exclaimed Alexander, enthusiastically, “I feel like a man who has looked at the sun, and whose eyes are dazzled. But I shall become accustomed to this brilliant light, and then be able to look more reasonably at the wonderful picture which your majesty has unrolled. But, then, I shall need your explanations and assistance, and I therefore request you not to let to-day’s interview be the last, but rather the commencement of many happy hours!”

“We have to settle many things yet,” said Napoleon, gravely; “it is, therefore, my heart-felt desire that we see each other as often as possible; hence, I should like to ask a favor of your majesty.”

“Ah, sire, then you will overwhelm me with kindness,” exclaimed Alexander; “will you permit me, your vanquished foe, to confer a favor upon you?”

“I should like to request your majesty to leave the miserable hamlet where you are now living, and establish yourself in the little town of Tilsit. It is true I am residing there, and I am said to be your enemy; but we may neutralize the town, that your majesty may be there also, and that I may be so happy as to see you every day.”

“Sire, I shall transfer my quarters to Tilsit in the course of the day,” replied Alexander, joyfully.

“But I have made only half my request. It is not enough for you to reside at Tilsit; you must also *live* there. I have been informed that your household is not with you. I, therefore, ask your majesty to let me be your host, and to permit me to receive you as a guest at my table.”

“I accept your hospitality,” said Alexander, smiling. “I hope it will be the beginning of a true and lasting friendship. But,” he added, in an embarrassed manner, “I have to ask a favor of you. Sire, when I accept your generous hospitality, it must extend to the unfortunate King of Prussia. He is my ally; in an hour of rashness and sentimental enthusiasm, perhaps, I swore faithful and lasting friendship to him.”

“At the tomb of Frederick the Great, in presence of the beautiful queen,” said Napoleon, shrugging his shoulders. “It was the dream of a generous heart, sire.”

“But I must realize at least a part of this dream, sire. The King of Prussia is with me at my headquarters; he is waiting for the decision of his fate.”

“He has brought it upon himself; let him bear it now,” exclaimed Napoleon, sternly. “I do not expect, hope, or ask any thing of him. He is able neither to help nor to injure me. The waves of his destiny are rolling over him; they will engulf him, and I do not mean to save him.”

“But I do,” exclaimed Alexander; “I must, for my honor is at stake. I cannot allow the king to be utterly ruined without dishonoring myself. Before passing from one system of politics to another, it is incumbent upon me to secure my ally and to protect his crown.”

“His estates belong to me; as to his crown, I will leave it to him,” said Napoleon, carelessly. “Let him reside at Memel and review there his fifteen thousand soldiers. But I comprehend why you in your generosity intercede for him, and refuse to abandon him. Tell me, therefore, your majesty, what I am to do for the King of Prussia.”

“Above all, sire, I request you to receive him, and to let him lay his wishes and demands before you.”

“Well, then,” said Napoleon, “I request your majesty to appear with the King of Prussia here in this pavilion tomorrow. Let him participate in our interview. Although he has so long been an implacable enemy of mine, I shall willingly yield him as much as possible, but I do so only for your majesty’s sake; it is a sacrifice I make to your honor and magnanimity. Be kind enough to remember this. Sire, I might dissolve Prussia, and cause her to disappear forever. I shall permit her to remain a state, because your majesty desires me. But it is true I cannot grant her the old frontiers; she will have to sacrifice much in order to retain something.”

“She will be content with this something,” exclaimed Alexander. “Your majesty will confer with the king himself as to the extent of his future states.”

“You wish me to do so. The King of Prussia, therefore, may have a part in our negotiations,” said Napoleon. “That is to say, in the official negotiations, but not in our confidential interviews.—You and I,” he added, “can understand each other better if we treat directly than by employing our ministers, who frequently deceive or misunderstand us; and we shall advance business more in an hour than our negotiators in days. Between you and me there must be no third person, if we are to accomplish our purpose.”

“No one shall be between us,” said Alexander, delighted at