

so skilful a flattery. The two sovereigns then walked hand in hand to the doors of the pavilion.

"To-morrow, then," said Napoleon, with a gentle nod.

"To-morrow, I and the King of Prussia will be here," said Alexander, with a smile.

Both emerged from the pavilion. The guards and the people received them again with shouts in which the bands joined. Alexander turned to the Grand-duke Constantine, his brother, and seizing his hand to introduce him to Napoleon, he exclaimed enthusiastically, "What a man! what a genius! Ah, my brother, had I but known him sooner, how many blunders he might have spared me! What great things we might have accomplished together!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

QUEEN LOUISA.

WHILE Frederick William repaired with Alexander to the headquarters of the army, the queen and her faithful attendants remained at Memel. There she received the news of the battle of Friedland, and bewailed the misfortunes and disgrace of Prussia. The king was not with her, to comfort her; he was still at the mill of Puktupöhnen, where, after the disastrous battle, he and the Emperor Alexander had retired. Alexander had left for Tilsit. The king had refused to accompany him, preferring to remain at his humble lodgings, far from the proud conqueror. While Alexander was the perpetual companion of Napoleon, a daily guest at his table, without returning this hospitality, indulging with him in fantastic dreams about the future political system of the world, Frederick William pursued his lonely path gravely and silently, only looking for means to relieve as much as possible the sufferings his subjects were undergoing, and, by remonstrances and arguments, trying to protect his monarchy from utter destruction.

Never did Frederick William stoop to flatter his enemy—never did he bow to him in hypocritical submission. He could not help treating him as the conqueror of his states, but he refused to degrade himself by base servility. His first interview with Napoleon was short, and not very pleasant. Frederick William tried to prove to his adversary that it was

he who had brought about the war by invading the territory of Anspach, and thereby compelling Prussia to declare war. Napoleon listened to this charge, shrugged his shoulders, and merely replied that the cabinet of Berlin, often warned to beware of the intrigues of England, had committed the fault of not listening to his friendly counsel, and that to this cause alone were to be ascribed the disasters of Prussia. Since then, Frederick William, like Alexander, was a daily guest at Napoleon's table, but he sat there in silence, sad, and absorbed in his reflections, taking but little part in the conversation, and, when he did so, assuming a cold, formal manner, while Alexander and Napoleon chatted unreservedly and pleasantly.

The king had also been constantly at the side of the two emperors in their long rides, and at the reviews, but always as an ominous shadow in the light of their new friendship—always as the mournful and warning spirit of memories which Alexander would have forgotten, because now they were a reproach and an accusation against him. And Frederick William took no pains to palliate this reproach, or to disguise his sadness with a veil of politeness. Abrupt in his whole bearing, he did not condescend for a moment to play the part of courtier. Accompanying the emperors, the king was by no means ready to comply with their whims; if they wished to ride at a full gallop, he moved only at a quick trot, and politeness compelled them to remain with him. When they returned from their excursions, Napoleon and Alexander vaulted quickly from their horses, and walked hand-in-hand toward the door, but Frederick William alighted slowly, and thus obliged Napoleon, whose guest he was, to wait for him. The king frequently made his crowned companions stand, regardless of the rain; and it happened more than once that the emperors, while waiting for him, were thoroughly drenched. When he was conferring with Napoleon as to the future frontiers of his states, Frederick William did not assume a suppliant tone, but spoke with the bearing of an incensed and insulted sovereign, whom his adversary was robbing of his rights, and who scarcely succeeded in restraining his indignation.

And the king had sufficient reasons to be sad and irritable. He saw that the storm which had so long cast its bolts upon Prussia, would utterly destroy her. Napoleon was about to revenge himself for the unpleasant hours she had latterly

caused him. He was willing, indeed, as he had pledged himself to Alexander, to leave Frederick William his crown, but he did not intend to restore him his states. He needed Prussia for the new kingdom of Westphalia, and for rewarding his friends and allies. The king was to retain nothing but a small part of the province of Prussia, and Königsberg was to be his capital.

Frederick William, stricken by this new and terrible humiliation menacing him, looked anxiously around for assistance. He felt lonely, deserted, and betrayed; he felt as though there was no comfort, no hope for him. His soul turned with unutterable yearning toward the queen; she was the pillar against which he desired to lean, that he might not sink to the ground; she was his energy, his strength, his determination, and when she was at his side, he felt strong enough to brave any calamity. His love longed for her, and political considerations soon required her presence.

"Beseech the queen to come hither," said Alexander to him; "she alone is able now to do something for Prussia. Her beauty, her eloquence, her amiability, and her understanding, will be more likely to obtain concessions from Napoleon than any thing else. It will touch his magnanimity that the noble queen, whom he has so often reviled, condescends to come to him to implore his mercy. This high-minded resolution will make a deep impression upon his generosity, and he will grant twenty times more than I am able to obtain by my daily and most urgent solicitations."

The king still hesitated. Owing to his sense of honor and his conscientiousness, he shrank from doing what his heart so intensely desired; and, before making up his mind, he wished to hear the views of his friends, General von Köckeritz and Field-Marshal Kalkreuth, who were carrying on the peace negotiations with Talleyrand. Both of them shared the opinion of the Emperor Alexander; both of them exclaimed: "The queen is our last hope! She alone is able to make an impression upon the inexorable conqueror, and Napoleon possibly may not refuse her what he declined granting to your majesty and to us. It is necessary for the welfare of Prussia that her majesty should come hither."

The king delayed no longer. He wrote to the queen, and requested her to come to his headquarters at Puktupöhnen. He told her it was her sacred duty to make a last effort for the preservation of Prussia—that every thing would be lost if

she failed to move Napoleon by her supplications and remonstrances. A courier hastened immediately with the letter to Memel. When Louisa read it, a pallor overspread her features. Uttering a cry of excruciating anguish, she dropped the paper into her lap, and buried her face in her hands.

Madame von Berg, who had heard the loud sobs of the queen in the adjoining room, hastened to console or weep with her. Louisa did not hear her come; she was still absorbed in grief; only incoherent lamentations fell from her lips, and her tears fell on the letter lying in her lap. Madame von Berg knelt, and implored her with the eloquence of devotedness and affection to let her share her queen's grief—to tell her what new calamity had occurred.

Louisa looked with sorrowful eyes at the friend kneeling before her. "You ask me what calamity has befallen me! Read and know!" she said, handing the letter to her lady of honor, and, at the same time, raising her from her knees.

While Madame von Berg was reading, the queen rose; and with her head thrown back, and her eyes turned upward, she commenced slowly pacing the room. "Well?" she asked, when Madame von Berg, with a deep sigh, had laid the letter on the table. "Did you read it? And do you comprehend my grief now?"

"I do, your majesty," she said, mournfully.

"Caroline," exclaimed the queen, in an outburst of despair, "I am to bow to this man, who has insulted me so infamously! I am to step like a beggar before him who has slandered my honor before the whole world, who has crushed my heart, and wounded my soul in such a manner that it can never, never recover! I tell you, he will be the cause of my death! On the day when I read those calumnies which he contrived to have printed about me—on that day I felt a pang in my heart as if a dagger had been plunged into it! Ah, would I could die this hour, before sinking into this new humiliation! Ah, my soul is willing to bow to the great, the beautiful, the sublime—but not to him—not to that proud man who is trampling mankind in the dust; who has rendered King Frederick William so wretched, robbing him of his states and of his majesty, slandering his queen, and oppressing his people. Caroline, think of it! I am to meet politely him who has robbed my children of their inheritance, and caused me so many sleepless nights, so many tears, so many pangs! With a smile I am to conceal my anguish; and, under a mag-

nificent costume, my wounded heart! As it behooves every lady, though no queen, I am not to wait for him to come to me, but I am to go to him! I am to force my visit on him—I am to court his favor! Ah, it is too much—too cruel!”

Raising her arms impetuously to heaven, she exclaimed in the energy of her grief, “Wilt Thou have no mercy upon me, my God? Ah, let me die! Let me die, to escape this new disgrace menacing me! I am a poor, tormented woman! I ask nothing of Thee but death! Wilt Thou refuse me this only wish?” She sank on her knees, her arms and eyes still raised toward heaven, as if she expected that her prayer would be granted. She slowly dropped her arms, and hung her head with a groan. Madame von Berg, in tears and with folded hands, was praying in a low voice.

A long pause ensued. The queen rose from her knees; her face was calm and her tears had gone! but around her eyes a quiver was still seen, and at times a sigh escaped her breast. “It is over now,” she said in a low voice, “the struggle is over! Pardon my impassioned grief, Caroline; my poor heart sometimes refuses to submit to the bridle of affliction. But I must be docile and patient, and learn to obey without a murmur.”

There was something so touching in the tone and manner in which the queen uttered these words, in the glance with which she gave her hand to her friend, that Madame von Berg was unable to conceal her tears. She took Louisa’s hand and pressed it to her lips.

“Do not weep, Caroline,” said the queen. “I have paid my tribute to human nature; I have wept, but now I will be strong and do my duty. Stand by me, and console me by your calmness and fortitude. I must set out in an hour; let us reflect, therefore, what preparations ought to be made.”

“Then you will really go, your majesty?” asked Madame von Berg, sadly.

“Majesty!” ejaculated the queen, almost indignantly. “Is this reverence intended to deride me? Where is my majesty?”

“In your sovereign eyes, Louisa,” said Madame von Berg—“in your great and noble heart, which masters its grief and submits to duty. It beams gloriously around your head, which, though it may bow to your adversary, will never be humbled by him. But, consider, are you not about to impose upon yourself, in your generous devotedness, a sacrifice which is greater, it may be, than the reward? Napoleon is

not a magnanimous man; he lacks true chivalry, and he would delight, perhaps, to scorn the august lady who humbles herself so painfully, and who thereby affords him a triumph. There is a voice in my heart, warning me against this plan; it is repugnant to my womanly feelings that my noble queen is suddenly to descend into the petty affairs of politics. I am afraid your beauty, your understanding, your grace, are to be abused to fascinate your enemy, and to wrest from him by persuasion what is the sacred right and property of your king and of your children, and what I believe cannot be wrested from the conqueror through intercession, but by the king and his ally, the Emperor Alexander, by means of negotiations, or, if they should fail, by force and conquest.”

“Hush, hush, Caroline,” exclaimed the queen anxiously. “Do not repeat to me my own thoughts; do not give expression to my doubts and fears! I think and feel like you. But I must go nevertheless; I must do what my king and husband asks me to do. He wrote me that it is my sacred duty to control my feelings, and come to him—that every thing is lost if I do not succeed in influencing Napoleon by my remonstrances. It shall not be said that I neglected my duty, and refused to yield, when the welfare of my children and of my husband was at stake. It is a trial imposed upon me now, and I am accustomed to make sacrifices. God may reward my children for the sufferings I am now undergoing, the tears of their mother may remove adversity from them when I am no more. Oh, my children and my husband, if you are only happy, I shall never regret having suffered and wept! And who knows,” she added, “whether God may not have mercy upon me, and whether, by the humiliation I am about to make, I may not really promote the welfare of my king, my children, and my beloved people? Oh, Caroline, I feel a joyful foreboding that it will be so! It will touch the proud conqueror to see a lady, a wife, a mother, who was once a queen, and is now but a sad, afflicted woman, appear before him and humbly ask him to have mercy on her children and her country. Even though he should feel no generosity, he will feign it, and, in his ambition to be admired by the world, he will grant me what he would have refused under other circumstances. The hearts of men rest in the hands of God. He will move this man’s heart!”

Scarcely touching the floor with her feet, Louisa glided across the room to the piano. She slowly touched the keys,

and with upturned glances she indicated her thoughts, singing in a joyful voice the hymn commencing with the words:

In all thy ways—in grief, in fear,
O troubled heart! rely
On that all-faithful, ceaseless care
Of Him who rules the sky.*

CHAPTER XXIX.

BAD TIDINGS.

FREDERICK WILLIAM and Louisa sat hand in hand in the small, wretched room of the mill at Puktupöhnen. They were not a royal couple, but a pair of lovers, thanking God that they were again united, and could read in each other's eyes the love and constancy that animated them. The king, generally taciturn and laconic, found words at this hour; his happiness made him eloquent, and he unbosomed himself unreservedly, telling of his apprehensions and forebodings. "But now," he said, pressing Louisa's hand to his lips, "now you are here, and affairs will assume a more hopeful aspect. Your eyes will strengthen and your voice will encourage me. Alas! I stand greatly in need of your presence, for my soul is well-nigh crushed. I have no longer sufficient strength to withstand my misfortunes and humiliations—they oppress my life day and night, leaving me no rest. At times, when I sat at the dinner-table between the two emperors, and gazed at the sombre features of Napoleon, in contrast with the good-natured face of Alexander, and listened to their jests, I felt as though I ought to interrupt them by an expression of anger, and say to them, 'It is a shame for you to laugh when misfortune is in your company, and seated by your side.' But I suppressed my feelings. Oh, Louisa, I was all alone in my agony. Now you are here, I am no longer alone!" He threw his arms around the queen's neck, and pressed her against his heart, as though afraid she might also be wrested from him. "Oh, beloved Louisa," he whispered, "you are my consolation and my hope; do not desert me—do not give me up—now that the whole world seems to desert me!"

* Befiehl Du Deine Wege
Und was Dein Herze Kränkt,
Der allertreu'sten Pflege
Dess, der den Himmel lenkt.

* * * * *

PAUL GERHARD.

The queen encircled his neck in her arms and kissed him. "I shall always stay with you," she said, smiling in her tears; "so long as my heart throbs it belongs to you, my king, my beloved husband!" They remained locked in an embrace. Their thoughts were prayers, and their prayers love.

A carriage rapidly driving up to the door, and rattling the windows, roused them. "It is Alexander, who comes to pay you a visit," said the king, rising. "I will meet him."

But before he had reached the door, it opened, and the Emperor Alexander appeared. "Ah, I succeeded in surprising both of you," he said, with a good-humored smile. Bowing respectfully to the queen, he added: "I trust your majesty will forgive my entering without announcement, but I longed to see my noble friend Frederick William. God and His saints be praised that the sun has at length risen on us, and that your majesty has arrived!"

"Yes, sire, I have arrived," said Louisa, mournfully; "however, I do not bring the sun with me. Night surrounds us, and it seems to me I cannot see a single star in the darkness."

Alexander became grave; he gazed long and searchingly at the pale face of the queen, and a sigh escaped his breast. "Sire," he said, turning to the king, "can we really make peace with the man who, in the course of a few weeks, changed into the lily the red rose that once adorned the face of the noblest and most beautiful lady? Can we really forgive him for wringing tears from our august queen?"

"Fate does not ask us whether we can," said the king, gloomily. "It tells us only that we must. In my heart I shall never make peace with the man who, although a great captain, is no great man; else he would be less cruel. But God has given him the power, and we must all bow to him."

"But it is not necessary to humble ourselves before him," exclaimed the queen. "Amid our misfortunes we must keep ourselves erect; and if we perish, we ought to do so with unsullied honor."

"But why perish?" said Alexander. "We are shipwrecked, it is true, and we are now drifting on the waves, but we must save ourselves. Every one must try, to the best of his ability, to do so; he must grasp at the first thing that falls into his hands—at a plank, at a straw. Some fortunate rope may at last save us, and draw us to the shore. We shall then build