

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE WAR WITH AUSTRIA.

NAPOLEON, in ill-humor, was pacing his cabinet, while Minister Champagny was standing at the large desk, covered with papers and maps, where he was engaged in folding and arranging several documents.

"They are bent on having war, those insolent Austrians," said Napoleon, after a pause, "and they want it now, because they believe that I am not prepared for it. What an unheard-of presumption, to arrest my couriers, and take their papers from them! And now that I am taking reprisals—that I on my part have issued orders to arrest their couriers on all highways, and in all cities, and to take their papers from them, the Austrians are raising a hue-and-cry about the violation of international law; and if war should break out, the blame, as usual, will be laid at my door!" He paused, but added immediately:

"I wished to remain at peace with Germany for the present, for I have enough to do with those wretched Spaniards, who are rising against my troops like a vast band of guerillas. But that is just what is giving the Austrians courage. They believe me to be weakened, isolated, and unable to wage war with any other power, and hence the cowards take heart, and think they can obtain spoils from the lion. But, patience! the lion retains his former strength and vigor, and will finally destroy his enemies. Champagny, I suppose you have already sent the Austrian ambassador his passports?"

"Yes, sire, Count Metternich has departed with all the members of his legation."

"Very well; let him go to Vienna and announce my speedy arrival to the Emperor Francis," exclaimed Napoleon, impatiently.

"Sire, Count Metternich will meet the emperor no longer in Vienna," said Champagny calmly.

"No longer in Vienna!" exclaimed Napoleon, laughing scornfully. "Does Francis II. suspect already that I am about to come, and has he taken to his heels even before I have left Paris?"

"No, sire; it seems, on the contrary, that the Emperor Francis intends to put himself at the head of his troops."

Napoleon burst into a loud laugh. "The Austrians, then, believe my soldiers to be sparrows, and think they can drive them out by setting up a scarecrow! If the Emperor Francis himself intends to command, he will command the army only to retreat, for the word 'forward' is not to be found in his dictionary. Have you looked over the dispatches from Germany, and can you report to me what they contain?"

"I am ready, sire," said Champagny, glancing at the papers.

"Then commence," ordered the emperor, sitting down, and taking from the table a penknife, with which he whittled the back of the chair.

"The four corps of the Austrian army, with the two reserve corps, moved on the first of April toward the frontier of Bavaria," said Champagny.

"As soon as they cross the Inn and enter the territory of my ally, war will break out," exclaimed Napoleon. "Proceed!"

"On the evening of the 9th of April, the Archduke Charles and his brother, the emperor, arrived with the army at Linz. Thence he sent one of his adjutants to the King of Bavaria, to whom was to be delivered an autograph letter, in which the archduke announced to the king that he had received orders to advance, and would regard and treat as enemies all that would resist his progress, no matter whether they were German or foreign troops."

"Why, that is a regular declaration of war," said the emperor, piercing the velvet cushion of the chair with his penknife.

"Yes, sire, it is," said Champagny, taking up another paper. "We have received, moreover, a copy of the war manifesto which the Emperor of Austria has published in the *Vienna Court Gazette*, and which was drawn up by Gentz, the well-known pamphleteer."

"Gentz!" ejaculated Napoleon. "Do not those warlike Austrians see that that is their death-knell, and that it is a

bad omen for them that Gentz had to blow the war-trumpet? Is it not the same Gentz who drew up the high-sounding manifesto for the King of Prussia, previous to the battle of Jena?"

"Yes, sire, the same."

"Well, that was in 1806; the six has been transformed into a nine—that is all the difference," exclaimed Napoleon. "Every thing else has remained unchanged. I suppose the same language of self-reliance, of a wounded sense of honor, and of noble patriotism, is to be found in the manifesto of 1809 as in that of 1806? Oh, I know it! Those Germans ever remain the same; they always believe their cause just; they always want peace, and find war, without any fault of theirs. Those Austrians have irritated me for about a year past; they have secretly armed during that time. The busier they believed me to be in Spain, the more energetically they continued their preparations; and whenever I had them questioned about their motives and objects, they made evasive and unsatisfactory replies. The natural consequence of all this was, that I moved my troops toward the German frontier; that Davoust, Lannes, and Massena, with three corps, had to approach Austria, and hold themselves in readiness to cross its boundaries when the Austrians enter Bavarian territory; and that, finally, I issued orders to the princes of the Confederation of the Rhine to place their federal quota on a war-footing, and prepare for the outbreak of hostilities. No sooner had this been done, than the Austrians arrested my courier contrary to international law, and compelled me to retaliate. Nevertheless, I suppose, they are entirely innocent now, and the manifesto of the Emperor Francis proves clearly that France, by her incessant insults and encroachments, by her insatiable thirst after new territories, and by her boundless ambition, compelled Austria to take up arms. Is it not so?"

"Yes, sire, it is so. There are at the conclusion of this manifesto words and ideas that are almost identical with those your majesty uttered just now."

"Read this conclusion," said Napoleon, leaning back in his chair.

Champagny read: "The Emperor Francis will never deem himself authorized to meddle with the domestic affairs of foreign states, or to arrogate to himself a controlling influence on their system of government, on their legislative and ad-

ministrative affairs, or on the development of their military strength. He demands a just reciprocity. Far from being actuated by motives of ambition or jealousy, the emperor will envy no other sovereign his greatness, his glory, his legitimate influence; the exclusive assumption of such advantages alone is the source of general apprehensions and the germ of everlasting wars. Not France, in the preservation and welfare of which his majesty will always take the liveliest interest, but the uninterrupted extension of a system which, under the name of the French Empire, acknowledges no other law in Europe than its own, has brought about the present confusion; it will be removed, and all the wishes of his majesty will be fulfilled, when that exclusive system will be replaced by one of moderation, self-restraint, the reciprocal independence of all the states, respect for the rights of every power, the sacred observance of treaties, and the supremacy of peace. Then alone can the Austrian monarchy and the whole political fabric of Europe be maintained in a prosperous condition."

"Enough!" exclaimed Napoleon, rising from his chair, and throwing the penknife into a distant corner of the room. "I shall pay Austria for this insolence, and there will be a day when the Emperor Francis and his scribbler Gentz will repent of this miserable pamphlet! I will have to treat the former as I have treated the kings of Naples and Spain. The house of the Hapsburgs must cease to reign: Or, if in my patience, I should allow the imperial throne of Austria to exist further under their rule, it shall not be occupied by this dull and obstinate man, but by his brother, the Elector of Würzburg!* But woe to this M. Gentz, who has dared to irritate me anew! Once already I gave orders to arrest and punish him. He succeeded in making his escape. My police will be more cautious this time. When I have made my entry into Vienna, I shall remember M. Gentz! Ah, somebody is coming!"

The door opened, and one of the imperial adjutants entered.

"Sire," he said, handing a sealed letter to Napoleon, "the director of the Paris telegraph-office has just brought this."

"At last!" exclaimed Napoleon, seizing the letter, and then motioning him to leave the room.

"At last!" he repeated, breaking the seal. His eyes passed over the paper with an expression of uncontrollable impatience. His countenance brightened, and a faint blush

* After Napoleon had made his entry into Vienna, he really requested the Emperor Francis to abdicate in favor of the latter's brother. The battle of Aspern prevented this plan from being carried into effect.

came to his cheeks. He raised his eyes toward the minister. "Champagny," he said, in a joyful voice, "war has commenced; the Austrians have crossed the Inn and invaded the states of my ally the King of Bavaria. The decisive moment is at hand. I shall set out this very night. To-day is the 12th of April; on the 17th I shall be at Donauwörth and put myself at the head of my army. Now let us go to work and make our dispositions.—What is the matter now?"

The door opened again, and the court-marshal appeared on the threshold to announce dinner.

Napoleon cast a hasty glance at the clock. "Indeed, it is six o'clock!" he exclaimed. "But I cannot go yet. Have every thing kept in readiness. Tell the empress I wish she would wait for me in the dining-room. I will soon be with her. Send for the Prince de Benevento and the Duke d'Otranto. I want to see them immediately. Now come, Champagny," he said, when the court-marshal had withdrawn; "let us go to work. We have a great many things to attend to, and there is but little time left, for, as I told you before, I will set out this very night."

Fifteen minutes afterward Talleyrand and Fouché entered the cabinet agreeably to the emperor's orders. They found him amid his maps, on which he marched the various armies by means of the colored pins which Champagny handed to him.

"Gentlemen," exclaimed Napoleon, saluting the newcomers, "the Austrians have commenced war; come hither and see!"

In the mean time the empress, according to the wishes of her consort, had repaired with her ladies of honor to the dining-room, and waited for the arrival of Napoleon. The dishes had already been served up; for, owing to the hasty manner in which the emperor liked to dine, the various courses could not successively be brought from the kitchen, but had to be placed on the table before dinner commenced. A number of silver warming-vessels, filled with hot water, always stood on the imperial table. Only the roast chicken, which every day made the last course, and was one of the emperor's favorite dishes, had remained in the kitchen; it was still turning on the spit, and waiting for the moment when it was to be carried up. But this moment was delayed an unusually long time to-day. The first chicken had long ago been replaced by a second, a third, and a fourth, and this one had been roasting so much that it was tough and juiceless. It had not yet been

called for. The waiters returned from time to time into the kitchen for boiling water, to fill anew the silver vessels on which the dishes were kept warm.

"If that goes on in the same manner we shall depopulate the whole poultry-yard," grumbled the chief cook, ordering a fresh half-dozen of young chickens to be brought in and prepared for roasting.

The emperor did not come. The clock struck seven, eight, nine, and ten, and Napoleon had not yet made his appearance in the dining-room. But this long delay did not cause the least impatience or anger to appear on the face of the empress; not for a single moment did she lose her temper. Graceful and gay, she conversed with her cavaliers and ladies of honor, and her eyes but occasionally glanced at the door by which Napoleon had to enter.

At last the emperor appeared. He walked toward the empress with a hasty nod, and offering her his hand to conduct her to the table, he said: "I believe it is a little late. I have kept you waiting, I suppose?"

Josephine laughed. "The question is rather *naïve*, my friend," she said; "I have been waiting ever since six o'clock, and it is now past eleven."

"Ah, that is late, indeed," said the emperor abstractedly. "I thought I had already dined; Champagny, however, reminded me that this was not the case. Well, Josephine, let us eat!" And he commenced eating the soup which the grand-marshal placed before him.

Thanks to the warming-vessels, the dishes had remained palatable; but the chief cook, when the gratifying announcement was made that the emperor had at length made his appearance, had just ordered the twenty-third chicken to be put on the spit for the purpose of having a juicy and freshly-roasted wing in readiness.

The emperor, who was very reticent and abstracted, took his dinner even more rapidly than usual, and no sooner had he finished than he rose impetuously from his chair and left the table. Without addressing a word to the empress, he walked across the room.

Josephine gazed after him with a long and mournful look, and her face was sad. "He is cruel," she muttered to herself. "After waiting so many hours, he has scarcely a word for me, and leaves me without salutation!"

But when Napoleon was near the door, he turned round

and walked hastily toward the empress. "Good-night, my dear Josephine," he said, giving his hand to her. "It is already late—near midnight—retire. We shall not meet again to-day; farewell, and *au revoir!*"

He nodded to her, and then left the room for his cabinet. On arriving there, he bolted the small door leading into the corridor, and thence into the apartments of the empress, calling in a loud voice, "Constant!" The *valet de chambre* entered immediately. "Constant!" said the emperor, "come hither close to me, and listen. You will quickly set in order my travelling-coach, so that I shall be able to set out in an hour. Roustan and you will accompany me—no one else. But you must not say a word about my departure. I want it to be known at the Tuileries, as well as in Paris, to-morrow only, that I have left the capital, and it is of the highest importance that it should remain a secret until then. Do you understand me? And now make haste! In an hour every thing must be ready!"

Constant bowed in silence and withdrew. "Yes, yes," he murmured, while hastily passing on, "I understood the emperor very well. His departure is to remain a secret; that is to say, especially for the empress. Ah! the poor, good empress! How she will weep when she hears to-morrow that the emperor has again set out without her! Formerly he always took her with him; she had to share the triumphs and troubles of the journey; but now she must stay at home. Poor Josephine! she is so good, and loves him intensely! But I must obey the emperor's order. I cannot tell her any thing! I cannot, but it would be no fault of mine if some one else should! Ah! a good idea strikes me! The empress had the gold travelling-case of the emperor brought to her yesterday in order to have one like it made for the viceroy of Italy. I must go immediately and get it from her maid, and she is fortunately tenderly devoted to the empress!"

CHAPTER XLV.

JOSEPHINE'S FAREWELL.

THE empress in the mean time had returned to her rooms, sad and absorbed in her reflections. She had dismissed her ladies of honor; only her mistress of ceremonies, Madame de

Rémusat, was still with her, and her maids were in the adjoining room to await her orders until she retired.

No sooner had Josephine reached her room than she sat down slowly and abstractedly, and, throwing back her head, fixed her eyes on the ceiling. An expression of profound grief was visible in her features, and darkened the shade with which age was veiling her countenance. When smiling, Josephine was still a graceful and fascinating woman, but when melancholy it was but too plainly to be seen that her charms were fading, and neither the flattering rouge nor the skill of the artist could conceal this fact.

Josephine's brow was now often clouded, and her youthful beauty was fast losing its charms. Gloomy forebodings were constantly passing over her heart; she felt that she was standing as on the brink of a precipice, and that the days of her happiness were numbered. She awoke every morning in terror, for before the evening she might be cast into an abyss of sorrow—removed from the Tuileries and the side of her husband—replaced by another, a younger woman, the daughter of an ancient sovereign house, who was to become the wife of Napoleon and the mother of his sons. Josephine knew that the brothers and sisters of the emperor were constantly importuning him to disown his childless wife, and to secure his throne and dynasty, as well as their own, by choosing another consort giving an heir to his crown. She knew that Talleyrand was representing this to him daily as a political necessity, without which his empire and his greatness would be endangered. She knew also that Napoleon no longer, as formerly, closed his ears against these insinuations, but, eagerly listening, held them in serious consideration.

Josephine was aware of all this, and sat in her room a prey to well-grounded suspicion and sorrowful presentiments.

Madame de Rémusat looked at her awhile, sighing and in silence; she now softly approached the empress, and, taking her hand, said in an affectionate voice, "Your majesty ought to retire! You need sleep; it is long past midnight, and your eyes are weary."

"Not from waking—from weeping, my dear Rémusat," said the empress, pressing the hand of her confidante. "But you are right, I will retire. In sleep we forget our grief. Rémusat, in my dreams I always see Napoleon as affectionate, as loving as he ever was—in my dreams he loves me still and looks at me, not with the stern eyes of the emperor, but of a tender