

his features became milder, and his gloomy eye more cheerful. With a wave of his hand he called Hardenberg to his side; looking again at the portrait, and saluting it with a gentle nod, he said, "She overcame her feelings, and went to Tilsit, because she believed it necessary, for the welfare of Prussia, to pacify the wrath of Napoleon. I will follow the example of my beloved Louisa. I will conquer myself, and go to Dresden. But you, Hardenberg, must accompany me."

## CHAPTER II.

### THE WHITE LADY.

GREAT commotion reigned at the palace of Baireuth. Servants hurried through the brilliantly-decorated rooms, spreading out here and there an additional carpet, placing everywhere vases filled with fragrant flowers, or dusting the finely-polished furniture. It was a great and important day for Baireuth. All felt it, and excitement and curiosity drove the inhabitants into the streets. No one cared to stay at home, or be absent at that historic hour which was to shed upon Baireuth a ray of her ancient glory.

The man at whose feet the world was prostrate, to whom kings and princes were bowing, before whom empires trembled and thrones passed away, who had only to stretch out his hand to establish new dynasties, and whom the world admired while it hated—Napoleon—was to arrive at Baireuth. The quartermasters had arrived already early in the morning, and ordered in the name of the emperor that the rooms at the palace should be put in readiness, because he intended to reach Baireuth in the afternoon of the 14th of May, and stop overnight.

The whole population seemed to be in the streets. The windows of the houses along the route of the emperor were open, crowded with the most distinguished ladies of the city; they were dressed in their most beautiful toilets, and held in their hands bouquets, with which they intended to salute Napoleon. But the greatest commotion, as we have remarked, reigned at the new palace, for the emperor had given express orders that apartments should be prepared for him there, and not at the old palace of the Margraves of Brandenburg.

Count Munster, intendant of the palaces, had, of course, complied with these orders, and four brilliant rooms were ready for the reception of Napoleon. All the arrangements were completed, and the intendant, followed by the castellan, walked for the last time through the imperial rooms to satisfy himself that every thing was in good order.

"No, nothing has been left undone," said the count, when he stepped into the bedchamber destined for the emperor. "Every thing is as comfortable as it is splendid; the arrangement reflects a great deal of credit upon you, my dear Schluter, and will, doubtless, procure you a liberal reward from the emperor, who is said to be very munificent."

"I do not wish to accept any presents at the tyrant's hands," growled the castellan, with a gloomy face; "I do not want to stain my hands with the plunder which he brings from foreign lands, and which is accompanied with a curse rather than a blessing."

"You are a fool, my dear Schluter," exclaimed the count, laughing. "You see at least that curses do not incommode the emperor, for his power and authority are constantly on the increase. He is now going to Dresden, to see at his feet all the princes of Germany; and he will then hasten northward, to gain new victories and humiliate the only man in the world who still dares to defy him, the Emperor Alexander of Russia."

"I know some one else who will not bow to him, and whom he will not humiliate," said the castellan, contemptuously shrugging his shoulders.

"Well, and who is that?" asked Count Munster, quickly.

"It is the White Lady!" exclaimed the castellan, solemnly and loudly.

Count Munster shuddered and glanced around in evident terror. "For Heaven's sake, hush!" he said, hastily. "Pray forget these foolish hallucinations, and, above all, do not venture to talk about them at the present time."

The castellan shook his head slowly. "You ought not to talk of hallucinations, count," he said, solemnly. "The White Lady is awake and walking, and she knows that the enemy of her house, the house of Brandenburg, will spend the coming night at this palace. I repeat it to your excellency, she is walking, and her eyes are filled with wrath, and there is a curse on her lips against the enemy of the Hohenzollerns. I would not be surprised if she should shout to-night into the

ears of the tyrant, and, by her words, awaken him from his slumber."

"Gracious Heaven, Schluter, do not talk so audaciously!" exclaimed the count, anxiously. "If one of the attendants of the emperor overhear your words, you would perish. Napoleon is said to be somewhat superstitious; he, who otherwise is afraid of nothing in the world, is said to be easily terrified by ghosts, and to believe in all sorts of omens and prophecies. He has already heard of the White Lady of Baireuth, and therefore given express orders that apartments should be prepared for him at the new palace, and not at the old one, and rooms selected in which she was not in the habit of walking.\* I hope that you have punctually carried out this order, and that these rooms are exempt from the visits of the apparition?"

"Who has the power to give orders to spirits, and command them, 'So far and no farther?'" asked the castellan, almost scornfully. "She goes whither she desires, and the doors closed against her she opens by a breath. The walls disappear before her, and where you expect her least of all, there you suddenly meet her tall, majestic form in the white dress, her head covered with a black veil, under which her large angry eyes are flashing."

"Hush, Schluter!" exclaimed the count, anxiously, "I know the portrait of the White Lady, which hangs in the cabinet adjoining the audience-hall, and it is, therefore, unnecessary for you to describe her appearance to me."

"Your excellency knows that we have two portraits of the White Lady," said the castellan, laconically.

"Yes, the one with the white dress is at the hermitage; the other, representing her in a dark dress, is here at the palace. Thank Heaven! there is but one portrait of her here, and I hope it is in the other wing of the building."

"That is to say, I saw the portrait there this afternoon, but who knows whether it is still there?"

"How so? Who knows?" asked the count impatiently. "What do you mean?"

"I mean, count, that it is in fact no portrait, but only the bed in which the White Lady sleeps until it pleases her to walk, and that, while she is walking, it will certainly not be found at its place. Did I not report to your excellency six months since that the portrait had again broken the nail and fallen? It was an entirely new nail, count, so firm and

\* Historical.—Vide Minutoli, "The White Lady," p. 17.

strong, that half a regiment of French soldiers might have been hung upon it at the same time; I had had the nail made by the blacksmith, and the mason fixed it. I myself hung up the portrait, and it seemed as firm as though it had grown in the wall. But that very night a noise like a thunder-clap rolling over my head awakened me, and when I opened my eyes, the White Lady stood at my bedside; her right hand raised menacingly, her black veil thrown back, she stared at me with a face flashing with anger. I uttered a cry, and shut my eyes. When I opened them again, she had disappeared. In the morning I went into the hall to look after the portrait. It was gone. Where the nail had been fixed nothing but a blood-red stain was to be seen; the nail itself, broken into small pieces, lay on the floor. The portrait had walked to the small cabinet adjoining the hall, and was quietly leaning there against the wall as though nothing had happened."

"And I told you to let it stand there, and not try again to hang it up. The large painting is too heavy."

"If the large painting wanted to hang on the wall it would allow the smallest nail to hold it," said Schluter, shaking his head. "But the White Lady wishes to stand on her own feet, and no human power is able to prevent her."

"Schluter, I repeat to you, you are a dreamer," exclaimed the count, impatiently. "Let us speak no more of the apparition. It makes one feel quite curious. Tell me now whether you have really removed the portrait far enough that it cannot be seen by the emperor?"

"When I was an hour ago at the cabinet adjoining the audience-hall, the portrait was still there. But who knows what may have happened since then?"

"Well, it is a fixed idea of yours," said the count, shrugging his shoulders. "I do not wish to hear any more of it. These rooms are finely arranged, and I have no fault to find with them. Now lock the entrance-door, and let us go out through the Gallery of Palms, by which the emperor will have to enter."

"Pray, your excellency, lead the way; I shall lock the door and immediately follow you," said the castellan, walking hastily through the opened rooms.

Count Munster slowly walked on, thoughtfully looking down, and shuddering inwardly at the immovable superstition of the castellan, whom his reason vainly endeavored to deride.

"And still it is folly, nothing but folly," he muttered to

himself, while opening the high hall-door, and stepping into the anteroom, to which, on account of its length and narrowness, and the fresco paintings of tropical plants on the walls, the name of the "Gallery of Palms" had been given.

All was silent in this gallery; the setting sun shed its beams through the windows, covered with dark curtains, and drew trembling shining lines across the high room. The footsteps of the count resounded so loudly that he himself was frightened, and glanced anxiously around. Suddenly he started in dismay, and quickly advanced several steps. He had seen something moving at the lower end of the gallery, and it seemed to him as though he had heard approaching footsteps. Yes, he was not mistaken; now he saw it quite distinctly! A lady approached. The sun illuminated her tall form, and shed a golden light over the white dress falling down in ample folds over her feet. She approached with slow steps, quite regardless of the count, who at first looked at her in surprise, and then turned with an angry face toward the castellan, who just then entered.

"You did not comply, then, with my orders, Schluter?" exclaimed the count, vehemently. "I told you expressly to keep the rooms shut until the emperor's arrival, and not to admit any one. How could you dare disobey my instructions?"

"But, your excellency, I did obey them," answered Schluter. "Not a human being besides the footmen has been permitted to enter here, and even those I drove out two hours ago, and shut the doors."

"If that be true, how does it happen that there is a lady here in the gallery," asked Count Munster, stretching out his arm toward the lower end of the apartment.

"A lady?" asked Schluter, greatly amazed. "Where is she, your excellency?"

The count fixed his eyes searchingly on the large arched window, in the bright light of which he had distinctly seen the lady. She was gone—the gallery was empty. "You forgot to shut the lower door, and while I turned and scolded you, the lady escaped!" he exclaimed. He hastily rushed forward, and tried to open the door leading into the corridor: but this was locked. The count vainly shook the lock. "That is strange," he muttered, dropping his hand. "I know I saw her distinctly; it is impossible that I could have been mistaken. Where can she be? What has become of her? Where has she concealed herself?"

"What becomes of the last sigh of a dying person, your excellency," asked Schluter, solemnly. "Where does the soul conceal itself after escaping from the body?"

"Ah, nonsense!" ejaculated Count Munster. "It could not have been a spectre. Why, it is not a spectre's hour, and, besides, I certainly saw the lady plainly; it was a decidedly earthly figure. Her face was pale and grave, but there was nothing spectral about it. She wore a black veil thrown back from her face; the upper part of her body was covered with—"

"A dark pelisse trimmed with fur," interrupted Schluter, composedly. "Below this dark pelisse protruded a white silk dress, falling to the ground in full folds."

"Yes, yes, that was the costume," exclaimed the count. "But how do you know it without having seen her?"

"It is the costume of the White Lady, your excellency," said Schluter, "and it was she who just walked through the gallery. Pray, count, go with me to the other wing of the palace and look at her portrait; your excellency will then be convinced that I tell the truth."

"No, no, I do not wish to see it," replied Count Munster, whose cheeks turned pale, and who felt his heart frozen with terror. "Unlock the door, Schluter! The air here is sultry and very oppressive! Quick! quick! open the door!" The castellan obeyed, and the count rushed out into the corridor, where he opened a window and inhaled the fresh air in eager draughts.

At this moment shouts were heard at a distance, and at the same time the count's footman rushed breathlessly down the corridor. "Your excellency, the emperor is coming. He has already passed through the gate, and the people are loudly cheering him. I have run as fast as I could, in order to inform your excellency."

"I am coming," said the count, advancing rapidly. But, having proceeded a few steps, he turned again and beckoned the castellan to his side. "Schluter," he whispered to him, "if you love your life, do not say a word about what has just happened here. It must remain a secret."

"A secret!" muttered Schluter to himself, gazing after the count, who hurried away. "The White Lady will manage the affair in such a manner that he at least will hear of the secret, and the bloodthirsty tyrant will not sleep well in the palace of the Margraves of Brandenburg." He violently closed the

door and stepped out into the large staircase-hall, the doors of which opened upon the street. Uttering incoherent words of indignation in an undertone, the castellan pushed open one of the windows and looked gloomily down on the street. An immense crowd were in front of the palace; all eyes were turned to the side from which the emperor was to approach. Breathless with curiosity, the people waited for the arrival of the hero who had conquered nearly all the world.

"How those fools are gaping!" growled Schluter. "Idle and lazy as usual; they like to complain and lament, but they never think of doing anything. If only each one would take up a single stone from the pavement and throw it as a greeting at the tyrant's iron head, all this distress and wretchedness would be at an end. But no one thinks of that, and I should not wonder if those fellows, instead of cursing him, should enthusiastically cheer him."

The shouts drew nearer at this moment, as the crowd rushed from the lower part of the street, their acclamations growing constantly more deafening. French lancers galloped up to keep the people back, and several carriages, preceded by a plain calash, came in view. A negro, dressed in a richly-embroidered livery, sat on the box by the side of the coachman; two plainly-dressed gentlemen occupied the inside of the carriage.

"That is he!" growled Schluter. The Evil One brings him hither—he is his best friend. Yes, that is he, and he looks pale, grave, and incensed, as though he would like to wither by a single glance the whole miserable rabble staring at him."

"That is he!" shouted the people. "Long live Napoleon! Long live the emperor!"

Napoleon gazed coldly and impassively upon the crowd, whose cheers came to him as a sound to which he had long been accustomed, and which was by no means agreeable. It was not worth while for him to smile on these inhabitants of a small city; a cold, quick nod was a sufficient acknowledgment. "Long live Napoleon!" shouted the crowd again, when the emperor, having left the carriage, now turned again in front of the palace-gate, and gazed long and indifferently upon the spectators.

The castellan closed his window. "Ah!" he said, "he dares to enter this palace. The White Lady will bid him welcome, and know how to hasten the flight of this arrogant tyrant. Napoleon is coming! Do you hear that, White

Lady? Napoleon is coming!" He burst into laughter, and, opening the door of the corridor, took a position at the one leading into the Gallery of Palms.

Footsteps resounded on the staircase, and various persons appeared. Generals, adjutants, and lackeys hurried in and formed on both sides, as it were, in line of battle: The emperor then entered the lower end of the corridor; Count Munster walked by his side in the most respectful and submissive manner. All bowed their heads reverentially, but the emperor took no notice of them, and slowly passed the saluting officers and servants.

"I hope you have punctually fulfilled my orders, count?" he asked, in his sonorous voice. "This is the new palace, is it not?"

"It is, sire. And this man will testify that no one has set foot into the imperial rooms," said Count Munster, pointing with a smile to the castellan, who, holding his bunch of keys in his uplifted arm, stood at the entrance of the Gallery of Palms.

"Who is it?" asked Napoleon, whose eagle eye was fixed upon Schluter.

"Sire, it is the castellan of this palace, a faithful, reliable man, who has been on service here for more than thirty years. He has guarded and locked the rooms, and they open now only to your majesty's orders."

"Open," ordered the emperor, with a quick wave of his hand. The castellan obeyed, and Napoleon entered. Count Munster followed, and the attendants crowded in after them. Advancing quickly into the middle of the gallery, the emperor stood directly in front of the arched window in which Count Munster had before seen the strange apparition.

"The White Lady, then, never appears in this wing of the palace?" asked Napoleon, abruptly.

"No, sire—never," said Count Munster, solemnly. "On the whole, sire, no one here believes in the absurd old story, and I am sure no one knows of the White Lady otherwise than from hearsay."

The emperor nodded, and passed on. "Let us soon have supper; you will be my guest," he said, turning on the threshold to Count Munster and dismissing the gentlemen of his suite.

The door closed. He was now a guest at the palace of the ancestors of the royal family of Prussia, the Margraves of Brandenburg.