

my ultimate decision. Hence I wished to manifest my true spirit by coming myself to you instead of sending a delegate. Now, you have heard my political confession. Are you content with it, and may I participate in your deliberations?" And the crown prince of Sweden, uttering the last words, turned with a winning smile to Count Munster, and sank his head as a prisoner waiting for sentence.

"I pray your royal highness, in the name of my friends present, to remain and participate in our discussions," said Count Munster. "We are now waiting for no further arrivals—all the invited guests have come. Let us take our seats. Let the conference commence. But first permit me to introduce the gentlemen to each other."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EUROPEAN CONSPIRACY.

THE six gentlemen sat down on chairs placed around the table standing in the middle of the room. Count Munster bowed to them. "As it was I who invited you to attend this conference," he said, "I must take the liberty of addressing you first. I must justify myself for having called upon you in the name of Germany, in the name of Europe, to come hither notwithstanding the dangers and hardships of the journey. Yes, gentlemen, Germany stands in need of our assistance. But not only Germany—Spain, drenched in the blood of her patriots; poor, enslaved Italy; Holland, ruthlessly annexed to France; in short, all the states that are groaning under the tyrant's yoke; yea, France herself!—all are crying for deliverance from slavery. But whence is help to come when every one shuts his eyes against the despairing wail of Europe; when every one idly folds his hands and waits for some one else to be bold enough to call upon the people to take up arms? Every individual must be animated with this courage; must regard himself as chosen by Providence to commence the task of liberation. Each one must act as though it were he who is to set the world in motion, and were the head of the great and holy conspiracy by which mankind is to be delivered from the tyrant. I told myself so when I saw all Germany sinking; I repeat it to myself every day, and it is my excuse now for having ventured to invite thither men who are my superiors

in every respect. But to Germany alone we shall give an account of what we have hitherto done for her liberation; for her let us deliberate as to what we further ought to do, and what plans we should pursue. The world lies prostrate, but we must raise it again; the nations are manacled, but we must be the files that imperceptibly cut through the fetters, and we must then tell the people that it is easy for them to gain their independence; that it is only necessary to take the sword, and prove by deeds that they feel themselves free—then they will be free. This is our task—the task of all generous patriots. Every one has been conscious of this, but also, that there should be a bond connecting all the members of this secret league, to which every patriot belongs. That was the idea which caused several friends and myself to unite our efforts. We did so, and this union made us feel doubly strong; we conferred as to our duties and schemes, and by doing so they became clearer to us, and better matured. We made ourselves emissaries of the sacred cause of the fatherland, and went into the world to enlist soldiers, to create a new nation, awaken the sleepers, enlighten the ignorant, bring back the faithless, undeceive the deceived, and console the despairing. For this purpose I have struggled for years, and so have all my friends, and so do all good and faithful patriots, without perhaps being fully conscious of it. But it is necessary, too, that those who, like us, are fully alive to their duty, should from time to time give each other an account of what they have accomplished, that they may agree upon new plans for the future. I, therefore, requested my friends Count Nugent and General Gneisenau, to come hither; I wrote to Minister von Stein, who is now at Prague, either to come himself, or send a reliable representative, and I requested another in Northern Germany to send one of his intimate friends. Four months ago I dispatched my invitations; the meeting was to take place to-day, and we have all promptly responded to the call. My friend in Northern Germany induced the noblest and most faithful soldier of the fatherland, Duke Frederick William of Brunswick, to go to Helgoland. Minister von Stein, who, in the mean time, was obliged to go to Russia, sends us a noble representative in the person of Justus Gruner, and the magnanimous crown prince of Sweden offers us, by his voluntary appearance in our midst, a new guaranty for the success of our schemes. We know now what has called us hither. Let us communicate to each other what we have hitherto done,

in order to attain the object for which we are striving, and what plans we shall adopt. In this respect, the two noble princes now in our midst are especially able to make valuable suggestions, and it is to them principally that we shall apply. The former question, however, concerns chiefly ourselves, who have for years been members of the league, and have jointly tried to promote its objects. In order to know what we should do, we must be informed exactly of what we have already done. To be able to conceive plans for the future, we must carefully weigh, and render ourselves perfectly familiar with, the present political situation, and communicate our observations and adventures to each other. Let us do so now. Let the gentleman who arrived last speak first. General Gneisenau, tell us, therefore, what hopes do you entertain in regard to Prussia? What are the sentiments of the king? What has Germany or Prussia to hope from the ministers of Frederick William? What is the spirit of the people and the soldiers?"

"You ask a great deal," said Gneisenau, sighing, "and I have but little to reply. I have no hopes whatever in regard to Prussia. That is the result of the observations during my present journey. Every thing is in about the same condition as it was in 1811; the same men are still ruling, and the same state of affairs, on account of which I left the Prussian service at that time, is still prevailing. The king is the noblest and best-meaning man, but his indecision and distrust in his own abilities are his own curse, as well as that of his country. When, in 1808, we heard at Königsberg the news of the events of Bayonne, the king said, 'Bonaparte will assuredly not catch me in such a manner!' and now he has delivered himself into the hands of his most relentless enemy, who, if Russia should be defeated, would dethrone him, or, if Bonaparte should not be successful, keep him as a hostage.* The friends of the French, the timid, and the cowards, are still besieging the king's ears, and enjoying his confidence to a greater extent than Hardenberg does. Hardenberg is all right, but he intends, after the fashion of diplomatists, to attain the great object slowly and cautiously, instead of struggling for it boldly, and sword in hand. He is secretly on our side; he hates Napoleon and curses the chains that are fettering Prussia; he is always planning as to the best means of breaking them, but publicly he negotiates with the diplo-

*Gneisenau's own words.—Vide "Lebensbilder," vol. i., p. 261.

matists of Napoleon to bring about a marriage between the crown prince and one of Napoleon's nieces. There can be no question of any army in Prussia, for the forty thousand men whom Napoleon permitted the King of Prussia still to retain under arms, had either to accompany the French army to Russia, or are at least stationed, as Napoleon's reserves, on the extreme frontiers. Berlin, as well as all larger cities, and the fortresses, are garrisoned by French troops, keeping down the national spirit of the population, and rendering any attempt at insurrection an utter impossibility, even though the people should intend to strike. But they think no longer of rising. They are exhausted in their misery, and have lost their energy. They feel only that they are suffering, but they inquire no more for the cause. And thus Prussia will perish, unless some powerful impetus from abroad, some dispensation of Providence, should arouse her from her lethargy, and restore her to the consciousness of her disgrace and her strength. I hope that this will occur; for only this and England's energy will be able to save us. But other hopes I do not entertain. I, therefore, shall leave Prussia again and accompany you to England, Count Munster, when you return thither."

"I shall set out for England this day, as soon as our conference is at an end," said Count Munster, "and you will be a most welcome and agreeable companion. It is only now that I perceive how necessary a personal interview was, and how good it is that we are here assembled. Many things, which cannot be explained in the longest letters, may be perfectly understood after an interview of fifteen minutes. I believe and hope, my friend, that your view of the present state of affairs is by far too gloomy. You are hoping for an impetus from abroad; but that will scarcely be needed to arouse the nations from their lethargy. A new spirit is animating Germany, and it is Spain, with her heroic victories, that has awakened this spirit. The immortal defence of Saragossa has passed like a magic song throughout Europe, and has told the oppressed and enslaved nations that Bonaparte is not invincible, and that a nation which will not suffer itself to be enslaved has the strength to defend itself against the most powerful tyrant. Looking upon Spain, the nations recollect these noble words of Tacitus: 'It is not the tyrants who make nations slaves, but the nations degrading themselves voluntarily to the abject position of slaves make

tyrants.' And the nations will have no more tyrants, but are determined to annihilate him who has put his foot upon their neck. Tell us, Count Nugent—you who, in the service of holy liberty, have been wandering about the world for the last two years—tell us whether I am not justified in asserting that the nations are about to awake?"

"Yes, I believe so," said Count Nugent, joyously. "For the third time during two years I have finished a journey through Europe. From Vienna I went by way of Trieste, Corfu, and Malta, to the British generals in Sicily, Spain, and Portugal, thence to England, and from England I returned to Vienna under an assumed name and all sorts of disguises. During my first two journeys I saw everywhere only that the nations submitted unhesitatingly, as though Bonaparte were the scourge which God Himself had sent to chastise them, and against whom they were not allowed to revolt, although rivers of blood were spilled. But I saw no prince who had the strength or courage, or even the wish to rule as a free and independent sovereign over a free people. The princes were everywhere content with being the vassals of France; they deemed themselves happy to have secured by their humiliation at least a title; they were striving to obtain by base sycophancy additional territories and orders, and betraying their own country and their own people in order to serve the Emperor of France. It was a terrible, heart-rending spectacle presented by Germany during these last years, and which could not but fill the heart of every patriot with shame and despair. And yet this period of degradation was necessary and even salutary, for it blinded Napoleon by the glaring sunshine of his power; it rendered him overbearing and reckless; he dared every thing, because he believed he would succeed in every thing, and that the world had utterly succumbed to his power. He dared all, trampled on every feeling of justice, and thereby finally goaded the nations to resist him. In 1810 he exclaimed triumphantly, 'Three years yet, and I shall be master of the world!' And when he lately took the field against Russia, he said, 'After humiliating Russia and reducing her to an Asiatic power, I shall establish at Paris a universal European court and universal archives!' He believes himself to be the master of the world; he thinks the thunderbolts of heaven are in his hands, and his arrogance will drive him to destruction, for 'the gods first blind him whom they intend to destroy.' And Napoleon is blind, for he does not see

the wrath of the nations; he is deaf, for he does not hear the imprecations which all nations, from the Mediterranean to the North Sea and the Baltic, are uttering against him. Yes, the morning is dawning, and the nations are awaking; Napoleon has already passed the zenith of his glory; his star does not now dazzle mankind; they have commenced to doubt the stability of his power. I saw a curious instance of this last year in Vienna at Metternich's saloon. When the courier who brought the news of the birth of the King of Rome, still exhausted by the rapid ride from Nancy, entered and held up Champagny's letter containing nothing but these words, '*Eh bien, le Roi de Rome est arrivé!*' every one cried, 'Is not the hand of God there? The wonderful man has the son he wished for. Whither will the madmen and demagogues direct their hopes now?' But a courageous and merry native of Vienna exclaimed in the midst of the diplomatists, 'Oh! ten years hence this King of Rome will be a poor little student in this city!'^{*} The diplomatists were silent; the former ambassador of Hanover, however, Count Hardenberg, brother of the chancellor of state, burst into loud laughter. These words were circulated among the people, and the Viennese say now smilingly, though as yet in a low tone, 'The King of Rome will come as a poor student to Vienna.' And the same words are repeated more boldly by the faithful Tyrolese, the guardians of the fires of patriotism. The Italians are whetting their swords, and France herself is preparing for the possibility of a new state of affairs. The military ardor of her marshals is exhausted; like the whole country, they are longing for repose; they begin to curse him whom they have hitherto idolized; they want peace, and are determined to compel Napoleon to comply with their demands."

"And is our friend, Baron von Stein, also of this opinion?" asked Count Munster, turning to Justus Gruner.

"Yes, he is," said Gruner. "When the Emperor Alexander invited him to come to St. Petersburg, he went thither not so much because he needed an asylum, but because he believed he could serve the cause of Germany in a more efficacious manner in Russia than anywhere else, and was convinced that Alexander needed a firm and energetic adviser to fan his hostility to Napoleon, and keep all pacific influences away from him. Nothing but a crushing defeat of Napoleon in Russia can deliver Germany; Stein feels convinced of it, and

^{*} Historical.—Vide "Lebensbilder," vol. i., p. 80.

therefore he stands as an immovable rock by the side of Alexander, and never ceases to influence the emperor by soul-stirring and courageous advice. Here is a letter which Stein requested me to deliver to Count Munster."

Count Munster took the letter and quickly glanced over it. "Ah," he exclaimed, joyously, "Stein, too, believes the day to be at hand when Germany will and must rise; he, too, prophesies that Napoleon will speedily fall. It is, therefore, time for us to think of the future, and agree as to the steps to be taken. And now I take the liberty of asking the crown prince of Sweden what assistance he offers us, and what the nations enslaved by Napoleon may hope from him?"

"All the assistance which I and my country are able to offer," said the crown prince, ardently. "The king has authorized me to take all necessary measures for an active campaign. Already I have chartered transports; the troops which are to participate in the campaign have been concentrated in their camps, and will soon march to the various points of embarkation. When the German powers call me—when it is sure that England entertains honest intentions toward us, and will stand faithfully by us, I shall be ready to embark with my troops and participate in the great struggle, provided that the annexation of Norway to Sweden be guaranteed."

"I am authorized to do so in the name of England," exclaimed Count Munster.

"In that case the Swedes will regard this campaign as a national affair," said Bernadotte, "and will joyously rally round the banner of their crown prince, who, on his part, longs for nothing more than to follow the footsteps of the great Gustavus Adolphus, and give Sweden fresh claims to her ancient glory and the gratitude of the nations.* I am waiting for the call of the allied powers to hasten to the point where I may do good service."

"And so am I," said the Duke of Brunswick, eagerly. "I have nothing to offer to Germany but my hatred against Napoleon, my burning thirst for vengeance, my name, and my sword."

"But those will be the dragon's teeth, from which, in due time, will spring up mail-clad warriors," exclaimed Munster—"warriors who, with the most ardent enthusiasm, will follow the hero whose audacious expedition from the forests of Bohe-

* Bernadotte's own words.—Vide "Mémoires d'un Homme d'État," vol. xi,

mia to the Weser will never be forgotten by the patriots of Germany. Let us prepare every thing as secretly as possible; let us enlist soldiers for the great and holy army; its chieftains are ready; Gneisenau, Frederick William of Brunswick, the crown prince of Sweden, and, in due time, Blucher, Schwarzenberg, and Wellington, will join them."

"Yes, let us prepare for the great task of the future," exclaimed Gneisenau. "I feel now reanimated with hope, patience, and courage. I go to London, but not to brood over my fate; I go to enlist an English legion for Germany; to tell the English ministers that the British government can take no step more conducive to the liberation of the nations and the safety of Great Britain than make Germany the principal seat of war, and transfer thither Wellington, with all the troops in Spain, and those which can be spared from the islands of the United Kingdom. Let them consider me a visionary; the future will, perhaps, prove to them that I was right. Oh, a victory over Napoleon in Germany would loosen the fetters of all governments, throw the most determined efforts of many millions of people into the scales of Great Britain, and deliver us, perhaps forever, from the monster equally terrible in his strength and in his poison."*

"And I go to Vienna to influence, together with my friends, the patriotic impulses of the emperor," said Count Nugent. "I go to Austria to tell the noble Archdukes John and Charles that they ought to hold themselves in readiness, and to inform the Tyrolese that the war of liberation is at hand."

"Baron von Stein has sent me to Germany to enlist there an intellectual army, and set in motion for Germany not only swords but pens," said Justus Gruner, smiling. "Stein says the sword will only do its work when the mind has paved the way for it. The mind and the free word, these are the generals that must precede the sword, and, before raising an army of soldiers, we must raise an army of ideas and minds to take the field. And there can be no better mental chieftain than noble Baron von Stein. He has placed a worthy adjutant at his side; I refer to Ernst Moritz Arndt, whom Stein has called to St. Petersburg, and who is thence to send his patriotic songs into the world, and by his soul-stirring writings kindle the ardor of the Germans. I have brought with me some of Arndt's pamphlets that have been printed in St.

* Gneisenau's own words.—Vide "Lebensbilder," vol. i., p. 274.

Petersburg, and his catechism for German soldiers, which gives instructions as to what a Christian warrior ought to be, and has been circulated, in spite of Napoleon's power, in all the German divisions of his army. To influence public opinion in Germany is the task which Stein and the Emperor Alexander have intrusted to me. I am to report about every thing that takes place in the rear of the French army, and try to obtain correct information concerning its reinforcements and the condition of the fortresses. My principal task, however, will be to direct public opinion, exasperate the people against their oppressors, and the accomplices of the latter, support isolated risings, and organize flying corps for the purpose of intercepting the couriers."*

"That is a plan strictly in accordance with the indomitable spirit of Baron von Stein. However, the influence and power of one person will not suffice to carry it into effect."

"I am, therefore, authorized to enlist agents whom the Emperor of Russia will pay," said Gruner. "Hired observers and spies must be spread all over Germany. I must everywhere have my confidants—my agents and instruments. Such I have already engaged in some forty cities. I furnish them instructions, telling them what to do, in order to participate in the liberation of Germany; they have to send me weekly reports, written of course in cipher and with chemical ink, and, on my part, I address reports to the Emperor Alexander and Baron von Stein, which I forward every week by special couriers to Russia. My agents, as well as myself, will endeavor to hold intercourse with all prominent patriots, and our noble Stein has referred me especially to the eminent gentlemen here assembled. General Scharnhorst, too, is aware of our enterprise; President von Vinke supports it in the most enthusiastic and active manner, and we find everywhere friends, assistance, and advice. Already the net-work is spread over the country; this will every day become more impenetrable—a fatal trap in which, if it please God, we shall one day catch Bonaparte."

"But beware of traitors," exclaimed Count Nugent, anxiously. "All your agents are not reticent, for, to tell you the truth, I have already heard of your bold scheme, and Austria is highly indignant. Count Metternich, a few days since, addressed a complaint to the Prussian cabinet about what he calls your revolutionary intrigues, and the Prussian Minister

*Pertz, "Life of Baron von Stein," vol. iii., p. 117.

von Bülow, who is friendly to France, is greatly exasperated against Justus Gruner and his guerilla warfare. Be on your guard, sir, that, while weaving this net-work of conspiracy, you may not yourself fall into the snares of the insidious police."

"And if I do, what matters it if one dies, provided the cause he served lives?" exclaimed Justus Gruner, enthusiastically. "This sacred cause cannot die; it is strong enough to succeed, even without me. It is spreading everywhere, and will remain, though the little spider that wove it should be crushed. There is but one part of Germany in which my work still lacks the necessary points where I might secure it."

"You allude to Austria, do you not?"

"I do; there my agents are distrustfully turned away from the frontier, and I have so far been unable to enlist special and active allies. I pray you, therefore, give me the names of some reliable, honest, and faithful men to whom I may apply; for I must go to Austria."

"That is to say," exclaimed Count Nugent, "you are going to prison. Let me warn you, do not go to Austria; Metternich's spies have keen eyes, and if they catch you, you are lost."

"I must go to Austria," said Gruner, smiling; "the cause of the fatherland demands it. Dangers will not deter me, and if the Austrian police are on the lookout for me—well, I have been myself a police-officer, and may outwit them. In the first place, however, I shall go to Leipsic, to have the second volume of Arndt's excellent work, 'The Spirit of the Times,' secretly printed, and cause a printing-office to be established on the Saxon frontier for the purpose of issuing the war bulletins which I am to receive from Russia. But then I shall go to Prague and Vienna."

"And may God grant success to your enterprise!" said Count Munster. "We shall all, I am satisfied of it, help in carrying out your schemes wherever we can. We will try to liberate you if you are imprisoned, and avenge you if killed. Shall we not?"

"We shall!" exclaimed Gneisenau and Bernadotte, Nugent, and Frederick William of Brunswick, and all four offered their hands to Gruner.

"Henceforth we all act for one, and one for all," exclaimed the Duke of Brunswick, enthusiastically, "and my noble father is looking down and blessing us. Oh, may the hour of

liberation soon strike! We have our hands on our swords, and wait for Germany to call us."

"We are ready, and wait for our country to call us," they said, shaking hands with determined eyes and smiling lips.

"And now, if the gentlemen have no objection, I will adjourn the conference," said Count Munster, after a pause. "We well know each other, and what we have to do. Here is the cipher in which we may write to each other whenever important communications are to be made. Justus Gruner will see to it that his agents will promptly forward the letters to us."

"I will," said Justus Gruner, "and as long as I am not in prison, or dead, you may be sure that your letters will not fall into the hands of enemies or traitors."*

"And now let us go. God save us and Germany!"

CHAPTER IX.

GEBHARD LEBERECHT BLUCHER.

It was a cold and unpleasant morning in December. The dreary sky hung like a pall over the oppressed world. How beautiful and fragrant had been the summer park of the estate of Kunzendorf! now it was bereft of its flowers, and the cold gray trees were moaning in the winter blasts. How bright had been this large room on the lower floor of the mansion of Kunzendorf, when the summer morning flung its beams into the windows, while a merry company were chatting and laughing there! But, on this day, no guests were assembled in it. It contained but two persons, an old gentleman and lady. The gentleman was sitting at the window and looking out mournfully into the cold; he seemed to count the snow-flakes slowly falling. A large military cloak enveloped his tall, powerful form; his right leg, encased in a heavy cavalry-boot, rested on a cushion; his head was leaning against the high back of the easy-chair on which he sat. His bearing and appearance indicated suffering, age, and disease; he who did not look at his countenance could not but believe that he was in

* The predictions and apprehensions of Count Nugent were fulfilled but too soon. Gruner went as far as Prague, but there he was arrested in the last days of October, at the special request of the Prussian police, deprived of his papers and his funds, and sent to an Austrian fortress. The Emperor of Russia succeeded only nine months afterward in obtaining his release.—Vide Pertz's "Life of Baron von Stein," vol. iii., p. 181.

the presence of a sick and decrepit old man; but when his face turned to the beholder, with its large, fiery blue eyes, high and scarcely-furrowed brow, Roman nose, and florid complexion, he thought he saw the head of a man of about fifty years. It is true, the hair which covered his temples in a few thin tufts was snow-white, and so was the mustache which shaded his mouth and hung down on both sides of it, imparting a vigorous and martial expression to the whole face, and contrasting with his bronzed cheeks and flashing eyes.

Opposite him, in the niche of the other window, sat a lady in a plain, yet elegant toilet. Small brown ringlets, threaded here and there with white, peeped forth from the lace cap, trimmed with blue ribbons, and a gray silk dress, reaching to the neck, enveloped her slender and graceful form. Her countenance, which still showed traces of former beauty, was bent over her embroidery, and her white, tapering fingers, adorned with many rings, busily plied the needle.

The old gentleman blew dense clouds of smoke from his long clay pipe, and nothing broke the silence save the parrot (in a large gilded cage on a marble pedestal in the third window-niche), uttering from time to time a loud scream, or exclaiming in a sharp voice, "Good-morning!" The ticking of the bronze clock on the mantel-piece at the other end of the room could be distinctly heard. Suddenly the old gentleman struck the window-board so violently with his right hand that the panes rattled, the lady gave a start, and the parrot screeched. "Well, now it is all right," he exclaimed savagely,— "it snows so thickly that nothing can be seen at a distance of twenty yards. The roads will be blocked up again, and no one will come to us from Neisse to-day. We shall be left alone, and the time will hang as heavily with us as with a pug-dog in a bandbox. But," he exclaimed, jumping up so hastily that his long clay pipe broke on his knee and fell in small pieces on the floor, "it is all right. If the guests from Neisse do not come to me I will go to them." While uttering these words, he fixed his lustrous eyes on the lady, and seemed to wait for a reply from her; but she remained silent, and seemed to ply her needle even more industriously. "Well," he asked at last, hesitatingly, "what do you say to it, Amelia?"

"Nothing at all, Blucher," she replied, without looking at him; "for you did not ask me about it."

"Why, that is an agreeable addition to this horrible