

They entered the large reception-room, opened only on festive occasions. It contained nothing but some tinselled furniture, a few tables with marble tops, and on the pillars between the windows large Venetian mirrors. Otherwise the walls were bare, except over the sofa, where hung, in a finely-carved and gilded frame, a painting, which however was covered with a large veil of black crape.

Blucher conducted the two to this painting; for a moment he stood still and gazed on it gravely and musingly, and, raising his right hand with a quick jerk, he tore down the mourning-veil.

"Queen Louisa!" exclaimed Scharnhorst, admiring the tall and beautiful lady smiling on him. "Yes," said Blucher, solemnly, "Queen Louisa! The guardian angel of Prussia, whose heart Napoleon broke! This pride and joy of all our women had to depart without hoping even in the possibility that the calamities which ruined her might come to an end. On the day she died I covered her portrait with this veil, and swore not to look again at her adored countenance until able to draw my sword, and, with Prussia's soldiers, avenge her untimely death. The time has come! Louisa, rise again from your grave, open once more your beautiful eyes, for daylight is at hand, and our night is ended. Now, my beautiful queen, listen to the oath of your most faithful servant!" He drew his sword, and, raising it up to the painting, exclaimed: "Here is my sword! When I sheathed it last, I wept, for I was to be an invalid, and should no longer wield it; I was to sit here in idleness, and silently witness the sufferings of my fatherland. But now I shall soon be called into service, and I swear to you, Queen Louisa, that I will not sheathe this sword before I have avenged your death, before Germany and Prussia are free again, and Napoleon has received his punishment. I swear it to you, as sure as I am old Blucher, and have seen the tears which Prussia's disgrace has often wrung from your eyes. May God help me! may He in His mercy spare me until I have fulfilled my oath! Amen!"

"Amen!" repeated Scharnhorst and Amelia, looking up to the portrait.

"Amen!" said Blucher again. "And now, Amelia," he added, quickly, "come and give me a kiss, and, by this kiss, consecrate your warrior, that he may deliver Germany and overthrow Napoleon. For Napoleon must now be hurled from the throne!"

## CHANCELLOR VON HARDENBERG.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### THE INTERRUPTED SUPPER.

It was on the 4th of January, 1813. The brilliant official festivities with which the beginning of a new year had been celebrated, were at an end, and, the ceremonious dinner-parties being over, one was again at liberty to indulge in the enjoyment of familiar suppers, where more attention was paid to the flavor of choice wines and delicacies than to official toasts and political speeches. Marshal Augereau gave at Berlin on this day one of those pleasant little entertainments to his favored friends, to indemnify them, as it were, for the great gala dinner of a hundred covers, given by him on the 1st of January, as official representative of the Emperor Napoleon.

To-day the supper was served in the small, cozy saloon, and and it was but a *petit comité* that assembled round the table in the middle of the room. This *comité* consisted only of five gentlemen, with pleasant, smiling faces, in gorgeous, profusely-embroidered uniforms, on the left sides of which many glittering orders indicated the high rank of the small company. There was, in the first place, Marshal Augereau, governor of Berlin, once so furious a republican that he threatened with death all the members of his division who would address any one with "monsieur," or "madame"—now the most ardent imperialist, and an admirer of the Emperor Napoleon. The gentleman by his side, with the short, corpulent figure and aristocratic countenance, from which a smile never disappeared, was the chancellor of state and prime minister of King Frederick William III., Baron von Hardenberg. He was just engaged in an eager conversation with his neighbor, Count Narbonne, the faithless renegade and former adherent of the Bourbons, who had but lately deserted to Napoleon's camp, and allowed himself to be used by the emperor on



various diplomatic missions. Next to him sat Prince Hatzfeld, the man on whom, in 1807, Napoleon's anger had fallen, and who would have been shot as a "traitor" if the impassioned intercession of his wife had not succeeded in softening the emperor, and thus saving her husband's life. Near him, and closing the circle, sat Count St. Marsan, Napoleon's ambassador at the court of Prussia.

These five gentlemen had already been at the table for several hours, and were now in that comfortable and agreeable mood which epicures feel when they have found the numerous courses palatable and piquant, the Hock sufficiently cold, the Burgundy sufficiently warm, the oysters fresh, and the truffles well-flavored. They had got as far as the roast; the pheasants, with their delicate sauce, filled the room with an appetizing odor, and the corks of the champagne-bottles gave loud reports, as if by way of salute fired in honor of the triumphant entry of Pleasure.

Marshal Augereau raised his glass. "I drink this in honor of our emperor!" he exclaimed, in an enthusiastic tone. The gentlemen touched each other's glasses, and the three representatives of France then emptied theirs at one draught. Prince Hatzfeld followed their example, but Baron von Hardenberg only touched the brim of his glass with his lips, and put it down again.

"Your excellency does not drink?" asked Augereau. "Then you are not in earnest?"

"Yes, marshal, I am in earnest," said Hardenberg, smiling, "but you used a word which prevented me from emptying my glass. You said, 'In honor of *our* emperor! Now, I am the devoted and, I may well say, faithful servant of my master, King Frederick William, and therefore I cannot call the great Napoleon my emperor."

"Oh, I used a wrong expression," exclaimed Augereau, hastily. "Let us fill our glasses anew, and drink this time 'the health of the great emperor Napoleon!'" He touched glasses with the chancellor of state, and then fixed his keen eyes upon the minister.

Baron von Hardenberg raised the glass to his lips, but then withdrew it again, and, bowing smilingly to Marshal Augereau, said: "Permit me, marshal, to add something to your toast. Let us drink 'the health of the great emperor, and a long and prosperous alliance with Prussia!'"

"And a long and prosperous alliance with Prussia," re-

peated the four gentlemen, emptying their glasses, and resuming their chairs.

"We have just drunk to the success of our divulged secret," said Prince Hatzfeld, smiling. "For I suppose, your excellency," turning to Baron von Hardenberg, "this new happy alliance between Prussia and France is now not much of a secret?"

"I hope it will soon be no secret at all," said Hardenberg. "Prussia has received the proposition of France with heartfelt joy, and will hail the marriage of her crown prince Frederick William as the happiest guaranty of an indissoluble union. Only the crown prince is too young as yet to marry, and at the present time, at least, allusions to the happiness of his future should be avoided. His thoughts should belong only to God and religion, for you know, gentlemen, that the crown prince will be solemnly confirmed in the course of a few days. Only after he has pledged his soul to God will it be time for him to pledge his heart to love; only then communications will be made to him as to the brilliant future that is opening for him, and, no doubt, he will, like the king, be ready to bind even more firmly the ties uniting Prussia with France. He will be proud to receive for a consort a princess of the house of Napoleon, for such a marriage will render him a relative of the greatest prince of his century!"

"Of a prince whom Heaven loves above all others, as it lavishes upon him greater prosperity than upon others," exclaimed Prince Hatzfeld, emphatically. "God's love is visibly with him, and protects His favorite. Who but he would have been able to overcome the terrible dangers of the Russian campaign, and, with an eagle's flight, return to France from the snowy deserts of Russia, without losing a single plume of his wings?"

"It is true," responded Augereau, thoughtfully. "Fortune, or, if you prefer, Providence, is with the emperor; it protects him in all dangers, and allows him to issue victoriously from all storms. In Russia he was in danger of ruining his glory and his army, but the battle of Borodino, and still more that on the banks of the Beresina, saved his laurels. The emperor travelled deserted roads, without an escort or protection, through Poland and Germany, in order to return to France. If he had been recognized, perhaps it might have entered the heads of some enthusiasts to attack and capture him on his solitary journey; but the eyes of his enemies seemed to have been blinded. The emperor was not recog-



nized, and appeared suddenly in Paris, where the greatest excitement, consternation, and confusion, were prevailing at that moment. For Paris had just then been profoundly moved by the deplorable conspiracy of General Mallet, and the Parisians were asking each other in dismay whether General Mallet might not have been right after all in announcing that Napoleon was dead, and whether his death was not kept a secret merely from motives of policy. Suddenly Napoleon appeared in the streets of Paris. All rushed out to behold the emperor, or touch his horse, body, hands, or feet, to look into his eyes, to hear his voice, and satisfy themselves that it was really Napoleon—not an apparition. Their cheers rang, and, in their happiness at seeing him again in their midst, they pardoned him for having left their sons and brothers, fathers and husbands, as frozen corpses on the plains of Russia. Never before had Napoleon enjoyed a greater triumph as on the day of his return from the Russian campaign. Fortune is the goddess chained to the emperor's triumphal car, and the nations therefore would act very foolishly if they dared rise against him."

"Happily, they have given up all such schemes," said Hardenberg, smiling, and quietly cutting the pheasant's wing on his silver plate. "They are asking and longing only for peace in order to dress their wounds, cultivate their fields, and peaceably reap the harvest."

"And the word of the Emperor Napoleon is a pledge to nations that they shall be enabled to do so," exclaimed St. Marsan. "He wants peace, and is ready to make every sacrifice to conclude and maintain it."

"The German princes, of course, will joyously offer him their hands for that purpose," said Hardenberg, bowing his head. "In truth, I could not say at what point of Germany war could break out at this juncture. The princes of the German Confederation of the Rhine have long since acknowledged the Emperor of the French as their master, and themselves as his obedient vassals. Powerful Austria has allied herself with France by the ties of a marriage, and the hands of Maria Louisa and Napoleon are stretched out in blessing over the two countries. Poor Prussia has not only proved her fidelity as an ally of France, but is now, forgetful of all her former humiliations, ready to consent to a marriage of her future king with a Napoleonic princess. Whence, then, could come a cause for a new war between France and Ger-

many? We shall have peace, doubtless—a long and durable peace!"

"And that will be very fortunate," said Count Narbonne, "for then it will no longer be necessary for us to allow miserable politics to poison our suppers. 'Politics,' said my great royal patron, King Louis XVI., the worthy uncle of the Emperor Napoleon, 'politics know nothing of the culinary art; they spoil all dishes, and care, therefore, ought to be taken not to allow them to enter the kitchen or the dining-room. One must not admit them even directly after eating, for they interfere with digestion; only during the morning hours should audiences be given to them, for then they may serve as Spanish pepper, imparting a flavor to one's breakfast.' That was a very sagacious remark; I feel it at this moment when you so cruelly sprinkle politics over this splendid pheasant."

"You are right," exclaimed Hardenberg, laughing, "I therefore beg your excellency's pardon; for Spanish pepper, which is very palatable in Cumberland sauce, and a few other dishes, is surely entirely out of place when mixed with French truffles."

"Unhappy man," exclaimed Narbonne, with ludicrous pathos, "you are again talking politics, and moreover of the worst sort!"

"How so?" asked Count St. Marsan. "What displeases you in the remarks of Minister von Hardenberg?"

"Well, did you not notice that his excellency alluded to our unsuccessful efforts in Spain? Spanish pepper, he said, is surely entirely out of place when mixed with French truffles, but very palatable in English sauces. That is to say, Spain and England are good allies, and Spain and France will never be reconciled. And it is true, it is a mortal war which Spain is waging against us, and unfortunately one which offers us but few chances of success. The Spaniards contest every inch of ground with the most dogged obstinacy, and they have found very valuable auxiliaries in Lord Wellington and his English troops. They—"

"Ah, my dear count," exclaimed Marshal Angereau, smiling, "now it is you who talk politics, and it behooves you no longer to accuse us."

"You are right, and I beg your pardon," said Narbonne; "but you see how true the old proverb proves: 'Bad examples spoil good manners.' Let us talk no longer about pepper, but



truffles. Just compare this truffle from Périgord with the Italian truffle at the *entremets*, and you will have to admit that our Périgord truffle is in every respect superior to the latter. It is more savory and piquant. There can be no doubt of it that Périgord furnishes the most palatable fruit to the world."

"What fruit do you allude to?" asked Hardenberg, smiling. "Do you refer to the Périgord truffle, or to the Abbot of Périgord, the great Talleyrand?"

"I see you are lost beyond redemption," said Narbonne, sighing, while the other gentlemen burst into laughter. "Even in the face of a truffle you still dare to amuse yourself with political puns, and confound intentionally an abbot with a truffle! Oh, what a blasphemy against the finest of all fruits—I allude, of course, to the truffle—oh, it is treason committed—"

Just then the door of the saloon was hastily opened, and the first secretary of the French embassy entered the room.

"What, sir!" shouted Count St. Marsan to him, "you come to disturb me here? Some important event, then, has taken place?"

The secretary approached him hurriedly. "Yes, your excellency," he said, "highly important and urgent dispatches have arrived. They come from the army, and an aide-de-camp of Marshal Macdonald is their bearer. He has travelled night and day to reach your excellency at an earlier moment than the courier whom General von York no doubt has sent to the King of Prussia. Here are the dispatches which the aide-de-camp of the marshal has brought for you, and which he says ought immediately to be read by your excellency." He handed the count a large sealed letter, which the latter eagerly accepted and at once opened.

A profound silence now reigned in the small saloon. The faces of the boon companions at the table had grown grave, and all fixed their eyes with an anxious and searching expression upon the countenance of Count St. Marsan. He read the dispatch at first with a calm and indifferent air, but suddenly his features assumed an expression of astonishment—nay, of anger, and a gloomy cloud covered his brow.

"All right," he then said, turning to the secretary. "Return to the legation. I will follow you in a few minutes." The secretary bowed and withdrew. The five gentlemen were again alone.

"Well," asked Marshal Augereau, "were the dispatches really important?"

Count St. Marsan made no immediate reply. He looked slowly around the circle of his companions, and fixed his eyes with a piercing expression on the countenance of Chancellor von Hardenberg. "Yes," he said, "they contain highly important news, and I wonder if his excellency the chancellor of state has not yet received them, for the dispatches concern above all the Prussian army."

"But I pledge your excellency my word of honor that I do not know what you refer to," said Hardenberg, gravely. "I have received no courier and no startling news from the Prussian army."

"Well, then," said St. Marsan, bowing, "permit me to communicate it to you. General York, commander of the Prussian troops belonging to the forces of Marshal Macdonald, has refused to obey the marshal's orders. He has gone even further than that, concluding a treaty with Russia, with the enemy of France and Prussia; and signed at Tauroggen, with the Russian General von Diebitsch, a convention by virtue of which he severs his connection with the French army, and, with the consent of Russia, declares that the Prussian corps henceforth will be neutral."

"But this impossible," exclaimed Hardenberg, "he would not dare any thing of the kind; he would not violate in so flagrant a manner the orders given him by his king!"

"But he *did* so," said Augereau, "and if your excellency should have any doubts as to the truth of what Count St. Marsan said, here is the autograph letter in which General von York informs Marshal Macdonald of his defection; and, besides, another letter in which the commander of the cavalry, General von Massenbach, notifies Marshal Macdonald that he has acceded to York's convention, and henceforth will no longer obey the marshal's orders. Conformably to this convention, the Prussian troops have already left the positions assigned them by Marshal Macdonald, and returned to Prussian territory."

"It is true; there can be no doubt of it," said Hardenberg, with a deep sigh, and handing back to the marshal the papers which he had rapidly glanced over. He then rose from his chair and said: "This is so unparalleled and unexpected an event, that I am at the present moment almost unable to collect my thoughts. You will pardon me, therefore, for leav-



ing you; above all, I have to inform his majesty, the king, of this important intelligence, and receive his orders in regard to it. But then I beg leave to see Count St. Marsan at his residence, to confer with him as to the measures to be taken concerning this terrible event."

"I will await you at whatever hour of the night it may be," said Count St. Marsan; "I am now about to return to my residence."

"And I to the king!" exclaimed Hardenberg, taking leave.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### THE DEFECTION OF GENERAL YORK.

KING FREDERICK WILLIAM had just returned to his cabinet after attending to the last business, which he never neglected to perform on any day of the year; that is to say, he had repaired to the bedrooms of his children, and bidden the little sleepers "good-night" by gently kissing them. In former times he did this by the side of his wife, with a happy heart and a smiling face; it had been, as it were, the last seal both pressed, at the close of every day of their common happiness, upon the foreheads of their sleeping children. But since Louisa had left him, to bid this "good-night" had become, as it were, a sacred pilgrimage to his most precious recollections. When he passed through the silent corridors at night, and entered the rooms of his sons and daughters, he thought of her who had left him three years before, but whom he believed he saw, with her sweet smile and loving eyes. He took pains to remind such of his children as he found awake of their dear departed parent, whispering to them, "Remember your noble mother, whose eyes behold you." And on the lips of those asleep he never failed to press two kisses—one for himself and the other for Louisa.

The king had just returned to his cabinet, and, like a dying glimmer of twilight, a faint smile was illuminating his countenance, which, since the queen's death, had grown grave and sad. He seated himself on the sofa where she had so often sat by his side, and cast a mournful glance upon the vacant place beside him. "Alone! Always alone!" he said in a low voice. "Nothing around me but intrigues, quarrels,

and malice! No one who loves me! Alone!" With a quick motion he turned his head toward the side of the wall where hung over his desk the portrait of Queen Louisa, in her white dress, and a rose on her bosom. "Where are you, then, Louisa!" he exclaimed; "why did you leave me, though you had sworn to bear joy and grief with me? You are not here to share them, and—" Suddenly the king paused and turned his eyes toward the door. It seemed to him as though he heard hasty footsteps, and some one softly rapping at his door. Who, at this unusual hour, could ask for admittance? Who could dare now interrupt his solitude, when it was well understood he desired to be left alone?

The rapping was repeated, louder than before, and a timid, imploring voice asked, "Has his majesty returned to his cabinet?"

"It is Timm, my chamberlain," said the king. "What can he want of me?"

Ordering him in a loud tone to walk in, the door was immediately opened, and the chamberlain appeared on the threshold. "Pardon me, sire," he said, but his excellency Chancellor von Hardenberg is in the anteroom, and urgently requests your majesty to grant him an immediate audience."

"Hardenberg!" exclaimed the king, anxiously. "What has happened; what—" He interrupted himself: "I will see the chancellor. Admit him at once."

The chamberlain withdrew. The king arose and advanced several steps toward the door; then, as if ashamed of his own impatience, he stopped, while his face expressed the agitation of his mind.

Hardenberg entered, and, closing the door rapidly, approached the king. "Your majesty," he said, "I beg pardon for daring to disturb you at so late an hour; but the extraordinary importance of the news I bring to you will be my excuse. I was at the supper-table of Marshal Augereau, in company with the French ambassador, Count St. Marsan, when important dispatches, just arrived from the army, were delivered to the ambassador."

"A battle has been fought, has it not? Has my corps been routed?" asked the king, breathlessly.

"No, your majesty, there has been no battle. A much more extraordinary event has taken place, General von York has concluded a convention with the Russian General Diebitsch, and signed a treaty by which the troops commanded