

children.' Your majesty," said Major Thile, closing his memorandum-book, "that was the whole speech."

"And what did the officers reply to it?" asked the king. "Mind! the truth!—I want to know the truth!"

"And I am courageous enough to tell you the truth, although I am afraid that your majesty will be displeased. All the officers received the general's speech with unbounded transports and with tears of joy. They shook hands, they embraced, and greeted each other, as if they had suddenly returned from a foreign country to their beloved fatherland; as if their tongues had suddenly been loosened, and liberty to use the language of their country had been restored to them. No one thought of remaining with the French; every one was animated with enthusiasm at the thought that he should at length risk his life for the cause of his country and his king; every one had in his heart, and on his lips, a fervent prayer for the new sacred cause which he was to serve again, and an imprecation for that which he had been obliged to serve. When the general exclaimed, in a ringing voice, 'Let us then, with the assistance of Providence, enter upon and achieve the task of liberation,' all shouted 'Amen! We will die rather than serve the enemy longer!' Your majesty, I have now told you nothing but the whole truth. If the general deserves punishment, all the officers of his corps deserve it. He called upon us to part with him if we did not share his convictions. But none of us did so, for his convictions were ours, and we are ready to share his punishment, too, if your majesty should punish York for what he did, as a noble and devoted patriot!"

"Your remarks are impertinent, major," said the king, sternly. "I will not allow myself to be dazzled by your tirades. Go! You need repose. Report to me early in the morning. You will then return with dispatches to the army. Good-by!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE WARNING.

"WELL, M. Chancellor," said the king, when Thile had left the room, "tell me your opinion—the best way by which we may counteract this senseless and rash step, and succeed in preserving our country from the disastrous consequences."

"Your majesty, then, is not willing to approve of the bold act York has taken?" asked Hardenberg.

"I hope you did not indulge for a moment in such a belief," exclaimed the king. "York was perhaps justified in preserving his troops from being needlessly sacrificed; but he should have based his conduct solely on this idea, and from it have explained his action. Instead of doing so, he justifies it by political motives, and thereby compromises and endangers my own position. Now, I am myself entirely at the mercy of France, and utterly destitute of means to brave the anger of Napoleon."*

"No," said Hardenberg, "your majesty is not entirely at the mercy of France, and Napoleon's anger must no longer be allowed to terrify Prussia. You have only to raise your voice and call out your faithful subjects, and the whole nation will rise as one man; thousands will rally round their king, and you will enter with an invincible army upon the holy war of liberation. It will not be with a visible army only that you will take the field—an invisible army will accompany you—the army of minds and hearts, the grand army whose chief-tain is public opinion, whose soldier is every beggar on the street, whose cannon is every word that is uttered, every love-greeting and every blessing. Oh, your majesty, this 'grand army' will pave the way for you, and will enlist everywhere new recruits, fill your military chests, clothe and feed your soldiers, and, under your colors, fight the enemy whom all Germany—all Europe hates intensely, and whose yoke every one feels weighing upon his neck. Oh, let me assure your majesty that it is only for you to be willing, and all Prussia will rally round you for the war of liberation!"

"But I must not be willing," said the king; "it is contrary to my honor and my conscience. I pledged my word to the Emperor Napoleon; I am his ally; I am deeply impressed with the sanctity of my existing treaties with France, and feel, as every man of honor would, that the obligation to maintain them inviolate is only rendered the more sacred by the disasters which have overwhelmed the imperial armies. Besides, you look at things in a light by far too partial and rose-colored. Do not confound your enthusiastic hopes with stern reality. The 'grand army of public opinion,' to which you refer, is an ally which cannot be depended upon—it is fickle, turning with every wind—it is an ally prodigal of

*The king's words.—Vide Droysen, vol. i., p. 488.

words, but not of deeds. If my soldiers were to be clothed and fed by public opinion, they would likely go naked and die of hunger. If my military chests wait for public opinion to fill them, they would remain empty. Public opinion, by the way, has always been on my side and against Napoleon; it has, for six years past, disapproved—nay, indignantly condemned his course toward Prussia, and still it has permitted Napoleon to halve my states; to take much more than he was entitled to by the treaty of Tilsit; to leave his troops in my states, in spite of the express stipulations of the treaties; to impose contributions on Prussia and extort their payment. Public opinion deplored it as a terrible calamity that I should be, as it were, a prisoner here in the capital of my own monarchy, and at the palace of my ancestors, and live under the cannon of Spandau, a fortress unlawfully occupied by the French. Public opinion, I say, deplored my fate, but it did not come to my assistance; it did not preserve me from the humiliations which, at Dresden, I had to endure, not only at the hands of Napoleon, but of all the German princes. Do not, therefore, allude again to your 'grand army of public opinion;' I despise it, and know its fickle and faithless character. By virtue of the existing treaties, I made my troops participate in Napoleon's campaign against Russia. More than one-half of my soldiers have been devoured by wolves on the fields of Russia; the other half are now in open insurrection. And these are the troops with whom I am to conquer!—conquer that powerful France which is able to call up fresh armies as from the ground, and into the treasury of which her unlimited resources are pouring millions! No, no; I will not plunge into so hazardous an enterprise. I will not, for the sake of a chimera, risk my last provinces, the inheritance of my children; I could joyously give up my life in order to bring about a change of our present deplorable situation, but I am not at liberty to endanger my crown—the crown of my successor. Prussia must not be blotted from the map of nations; she shall not be swallowed by France, and I am therefore obliged patiently to bear the burden of these times and submit to circumstances. Hence, I am not at liberty to pardon General York's crime, but must punish him for his conduct in accordance with the laws of war. I must give satisfaction to the Emperor of France for the unheard-of conduct of my general, and he shall have it! General von York shall be superseded in his command, cashiered, and put on his trial

before a military commission. General Kleist will take command of the troops in his place."

"And will your majesty cashier likewise all the officers who received the announcement of the bold resolution of their general with enthusiastic cheers?" asked Hardenberg. "Will your majesty likewise put on trial the spirit of resistance pervading the whole Prussian corps? I beseech you again, in the name of your army and your people—in the name of the magnanimous queen whose inspiring eyes are gazing upon us from yonder portrait—take a bold and sublime stand! Risk every thing in order to win every thing! Approve York's step, place yourself at the head of the army, call upon the Prussians—the Germans—to rally round your flag! Oh, your majesty, believe me, Germany is only waiting for your war-cry. Every thing is prepared, all are armed—all weapons, all hands are ready—all eyes are fixed upon your majesty! Oh, do not hesitate longer; make our night end, and the new day commence. Declare war against France—leave her to her destiny!"

The king walked with rapid steps and in visible agitation; and, whenever he passed the queen's portrait, he raised his eyes toward it with an anxious expression. Standing in front of Hardenberg, and laying his hand on his shoulder, he looked gravely into his pale, quivering face. "Hardenberg," he said at last, in an undertone, "I cannot allow General York to remain unpunished; I am not at liberty to approve his course, even—well, yes, even though I should wish to do so. As commander-in-chief of my army it is above all incumbent on me to maintain discipline. York acted without regard to his instructions, and without having received any orders from me to enter into so dangerous a course, and I ought not afterward to approve what one of my generals has done in so reckless and arbitrary a manner. That would be rendering obedience dependent on the whims and inclinations of every officer of my army. Unconditional obedience, entire subordination of the individual will—that is the bond which keeps armies together, and I cannot loosen it. Where sacred and necessary principles are at stake, I must not listen to the voice of my heart!"

"But still you ought to listen to the voice of prudence, your majesty," exclaimed Hardenberg, emphatically. "Now, prudence renders it necessary for you to fight at this juncture against the perfidious enemy, who never fulfilled his treaties, never kept his word, and is even now plotting mischief."

"What do you mean?" asked the king, hastily.

"I mean that your majesty is every day in danger of being arrested at the slightest symptom that may appear suspicious to the French gentlemen, and of being secretly conveyed to France. I mean that the French are anxious that you should give them such a pretext, so that they might charge you with secret machinations, send you to France, and appropriate the whole of Prussia. Little King Jerome is tired of his improvised kingdom of Westphalia. He longs for a more exalted throne, the existence of which has already been consecrated by centuries, and for a crown which need not, like his present one, be specially created for him. Napoleon has promised his brother the crown and throne of Prussia in case your majesty should give him the slightest ground for complaint. He has therefore here in Berlin a host of spies charged with watching every word, movement, and step of your majesty. Oh, believe me, you are at all hours in danger of seizure and secret removal. I am familiar with the whole plot; by means of bribery, dissimulation, and cunning, I have wormed myself into the confidence of, and gained over to my side, some of these spies. They have informed me that every day, shortly before nightfall, a closed carriage drives up to the royal palace, and waits there all the night long; that, at a short distance from it, soldiers are posted in isolated groups behind the trees, on the opera place, and the corners of the streets intersecting the Linden; that the royal palace is surrounded constantly by a number of agents of the French police, and that some of these men always find means to slip into the palace, where they conceal themselves in dark corners and in the garden, or the yard, in order to watch every movement of your majesty. What should be the object of all these proceedings, but, on the first occasion, at the slightest symptom of your defection, to seize the sacred person of your majesty, to carry into effect Jerome's ambitious schemes, and transform the theatre king into a real king?"

Frederick William's face grew pale and gloomy; he compressed his lips as he used to do when any thing displeasing was communicated to him. "You have told me one of the absurd stories with which nurses try to frighten their children," he said, harshly. "But I do not believe it, nor shall I allow myself to be frightened and take imprudent steps. No one will dare attack or arrest me. I am the faithful ally of France, and have proved by my actions that I am animated

with honest intentions toward her, and stand sincerely by the alliance which I have pledged my word to maintain."

"But suppose France should look upon this defection of General York as brought about by the secret orders of your majesty? Suppose Napoleon, in his incessant distrust, and Jerome, in his ardent desire for the possession of Prussia, should, notwithstanding all protestations of your majesty to the contrary, believe in an understanding between York and his king, and therein find a welcome pretext for carrying into effect their infamous schemes, seizing your majesty, and annihilating Prussia?"

"I shall give them such convincing proofs of my sentiments that it will be impossible for them to believe in an understanding between myself and York," exclaimed the king. "Enough! I adhere to my resolution. York must be removed from his command, and General Kleist will be his successor. I shall, besides, address an autograph letter to Murat, the emperor's lieutenant at the head of the army, and express to him my profound indignation at what has occurred, and inform him of the penalty which I am about to inflict on York."

"Very well," said Hardenberg, sighing, "if your majesty so resolves, it must be done; but it should be done in haste—this very hour. Count St. Marsan is waiting for me at his residence, to learn from me the decisions of your majesty before sending off his couriers to the Emperor Napoleon. It will be necessary for us to lay before him the letter which your majesty intends to write to the King of Naples, as well as the formal order in regard to the removal of General York. You ought also at once to name the courier who is to convey your majesty's orders and letters to the two camps in Old Prussia."

"You are right; all this must be done immediately," said the king, seizing his silver bell and ringing. The door opened, and Timm the chamberlain entered. "Go to my aide-de-camp, Major Natzmer," said the king to him. "Inform him that he is to set out immediately on a journey, and should, therefore, quickly prepare. In four hours every thing must be done, and Major Natzmer must then be in my ante-room. Go yourself to him, Timm, and inform him of my orders. This one courier will be sufficient," said the king, turning again to Hardenberg, after Timm had left the room. "Natzmer will first repair to the headquarters of the King of Naples, deliver my letter to him, show him the orders in-

tended for Kleist and York, and then go to the Russian camp in order to deliver these orders to my generals."

"Will your majesty not write also a letter to the Emperor Alexander, begging him to spare your troops, whom Wittgenstein henceforth will consider enemies, and to address a word of consolation and encouragement to the emperor, whose magnanimous heart will bitterly feel this new disappointment?"

"Very well," said the king, after a brief reflection, "I will write such a letter to Alexander, and Natzmer shall himself take it after previously seeing Murat, Wittgenstein, and York."

An hour afterward the king wrote his letters, and Hardenberg drew up the decree removing York from the command of the army. The chancellor of state then left the king's cabinet to repair to the residence of the French ambassador, and inform him of the resolutions of his majesty. The king looked after him long and musingly, and, folding his hands behind him, paced his room. A profound silence reigned around him; the storm of the cold January night swept dense masses of snow against the windows, making them rattle as if spectral hands were tapping at the panes; the wax-tapers on the silver candelabra, standing on the king's desk, had burned low, and their flickering light flashed on the noble portrait of the queen. The king noticed the fitfully illuminated face gazing upon him, as it were, with a quick and repeated greeting; he could not help gently nodding, as if to return the salutation, and then approached the portrait with slow steps.

"Louisa," he said, in a loud, solemn voice, "God has counted your tears, and taken upon Himself the revenge of your wrongs. It was at Piktupöhnen where you first met Napoleon, and where the overbearing man bowed your noble head in the dust. At Piktupöhnen the Queen of Prussia implored the emperor of the French to spare her country, and grant her lenient terms of peace. It was France now that was waiting for Prussia at the same place, asking Prussia for assistance, and Prussia refused it. Where the disgraceful alliance commenced has been seen its bitter end. God is just; He has counted your tears, and He is preparing your revenge. It began at Piktupöhnen."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DIPLOMATIST.

DURING an hour Chancellor von Hardenberg, in the cabinet of the French ambassador, Count St. Marsan, conferred in an animated and grave manner as to Prussia's new position, and the guaranties she offered to France for the sincerity of her alliance. Count St. Marsan felt entirely satisfied, after reading the letter which King Frederick William had written to the King of Naples, and the decree removing York from his command. He cordially shook hands with the chancellor, and assured him that this disagreeable affair would not leave the least vestige of distrust; that his august emperor would also feel entirely satisfied of the sincerity of the king's sentiments.

"And you may add that this will also satisfy the emperor of the sincerity of my sentiments toward him," said Hardenberg, smiling. "I know that Napoleon has unfortunately often distrusted me, and has believed me to be animated with feelings hostile to his greatness. Henceforth, however, his majesty will have to admit that I am one of his most reliable and faithful adherents. It was I who prevailed upon the king to stand by France so firmly and constantly. You are aware of it, and I need not conceal it from you, that King Frederick William loves the Emperor Alexander, and would be happy, if circumstances enabled him, to renew his alliance with his friend Alexander. The Emperor of Russia has already stretched out his hand toward him, and is only waiting for Frederick William to grasp it. York's defection was carefully prepared on the part of Russia; it was to be the impulse which should cause the king to take Alexander's hand. And let me tell you, confidentially, he was not only greatly inclined to do so, but even the enthusiasm of those gentlemen of his suite, who, heretofore, had always been ardent adherents of the Emperor of the French, had cooled down since the disasters of the grand army in Russia, and they believed it to be incumbent on them to advise the king to join Russia. But I—I have obtained a victory over them all, and, by my zeal and eloquence, have succeeded in convincing Frederick William that just now a firm maintenance of the alliance with France is most advantageous both to the honor and welfare of