

waves, as I had said to the clouds: 'Take me with you, wandering fools! I am suffocating in my captivity! I must leave this small town; it is a prison—an open grave!' At this moment, the oak above me shook its foliage; a wind drove the waves faster, until they broke on the shore; and a sheet of paper, which some wanderer might have lost, was blown toward me. I took it, and suddenly the wind was silent as though it had accomplished its mission; the oak stirred no more, the lake was tranquil, and even the clouds seemed to pause and look on while I unfolded and read the paper."

"Oh, I imagine what it was! exclaimed Hardenberg. "A love-letter from one of your admirers, who knew that the beautiful nymph of the lake had selected that spot for her sanctuary."

"Ah, you do not imagine very well, your excellency. It was no love-letter, but a newspaper! It was a copy of your dear, venerable *Vossische Zeitung*.\* I read it at first very carelessly, but suddenly I noticed an article from Berlin, which excited my liveliest attention. It alluded to the strange cures performed by Doctor Binder, a magnetizer. It related that many sufferers came to Berlin from distant cities to be cured by the doctor, whose whole treatment consisted of laying his hands and fixing his eyes on his patients. It dwelt especially upon the adventures of a young woman whose strange disease had riveted the attention of all Berlin, and who, in consequence of the doctor's treatment, had become a clairvoyante. It said that the truly wonderful sayings and predictions of the young woman were creating the greatest sensation, and that even ministers and distinguished functionaries were visiting Doctor Binder's 'Hall of Crises,' in order to listen and put questions to the clairvoyante."

"Ah, that was little Henrietta Meyer, who died a few months ago," said Hardenberg.

"Yes, she was so accommodating as to die and make room for me," exclaimed Frederica, smiling. "When I had read this article about her, it seemed to me as though a veil dropped from my eyes, and I were only now able to descry my future distinctly. I jumped up and uttered a single loud cry that sped over the lake like a storm-bird, and was repeated many times by the distant echo. Thereupon I ran back to town, as if carried on the wings of the wind. The men on the streets,

\*The *Vossische Zeitung*, one of the oldest Berlin newspapers, is still published.

who saw me running past, gazed wonderingly after me. Some of them hailed and tried to speak to me, but I took no notice of them, ran on, reached at last the humble dwelling of my parents, and there I fell panting and senseless. They lifted me up, and carried me to my bed. I lay on it motionless, and with dilated eyes. No one knew my thoughts, or heard the voices whispering in my breast and ominously laughing. I stared upward, and matured my plan of operations. My poor father sat all night long at my bedside, weeping and imploring me to look at him, and tell him only by a single word, a single syllable, that I recognized him. My tongue remained silent, but my eyes were able to glance at and greet the poor man. But why tell you all the particulars of my wonderful disease? In short, all my limbs were paralyzed, and even my mind seemed affected and confused. I could eat and sleep, but I was unable to rise, and could not utter a word. The physicians of our small town tried all the remedies of their science to cure me. In vain! I remained dumb. Only once, four weeks afterward, I recovered the power of speech. It was in the night-time, and no one was with me but my poor father, who passed nearly every night at my bedside, always hoping for a moment when I might get better—when the spell would leave my tongue, and the power of speech be restored. This moment had come now; I intimated it to my father with my eyes, stared at him, and said in a slow and solemn voice, 'Doctor Binder, at Berlin, is alone able to cure me!'"

"Ah," exclaimed Hardenberg, drawing a deep breath, "I give you permission to laugh at me. I was just as foolish as your father was. Up to this time I believed in the reality of your sickness, and felt quite anxious and alarmed. The words you uttered during that night quiet me again, and illuminate the gloom, like a welcome miner's lamp in a deep shaft. I hope, however, that they did not exert the same effect upon your father."

"No, your excellency, fortunately they did not, and the proof of it is that I rode, a week afterward—in a comfortable carriage, and accompanied by my father—to Berlin, to place myself under the treatment of Doctor Binder."

"Did the doctor promise to cure you?"

"He gave me hopes at least that he would be able to do so, and, after accepting three months' pay in advance, received me into his house, and the cure commenced. I willingly sub-

mitted to his piercing glances and to his laying-on of hands. I was so obliging as to fall asleep, and scarcely three days elapsed when I began already to become slightly clairvoyant. The doctor was himself surprised at the rapid effect of his cure; he informed some of his distinguished patrons of the presence of a new clairvoyante at his house, and invited them to witness my next awakening. Among these patrons were some influential courtiers, Prince Hatzfeld and Field-Marshal Kalkreuth. I had been told that these gentlemen were the most zealous adherents of the French alliance, and the most ardent admirers of Napoleon. It was but natural, therefore, that when I became clairvoyant on that day, in the presence of these gentlemen, I was the enraptured prophetess of a golden future for Prussia, provided we maintained the alliance with France. The two courtiers were visibly surprised and delighted at my prophecies; and when the doctor had left the room for a moment, I heard Prince Hatzfeld say to Field-Marshal Kalkreuth, 'Ah, I wish Hardenberg were here, and heard the predictions of this wonderful girl! He believes in clairvoyance, and her words, therefore, would make a profound impression upon him!' 'We must try to have him brought hither,' said Field-Marshal Kalkreuth; 'we must try to influence the stubborn fellow in this way.'

"That was a very clever idea," said Hardenberg, smiling; "I almost envy those gentlemen their very pretty intrigue. They then made offers to you, did they not?"

"No, I made offers to them."

"How so?"

"Listen to me. When the gentlemen left, and I was again alone with the doctor, I suddenly awoke from my trance; rising from my couch, I stepped up to him, and made him a respectful obeisance. He looked at me in dismay, and seemed paralyzed with stupefaction, for you know all my limbs were palsied, and I could only move my tongue. 'My dear doctor,' I said, very calmly, 'I hope I have proved to you now that I am possessed of considerable talent as an actress, and that I am as well versed in playing my part as you are in yours. Both of us try to obtain fame and wealth, you as a magnetizer, I as a clairvoyante, and we stand mutually in need of each other. You are the stage-manager, and possessed of a theatre that suits me, and I am the leading actress, without whom you would be unable to perform your play in a satisfactory manner. Let us, therefore, come to an under-

standing and make an agreement.' *Eh bien*, your excellency, we did come to an understanding; we did make an agreement. With a view to a better position that soon would be accessible to me, I remained temporarily the first actress, and, thanks to my performances, I attracted an audience as distinguished as it was munificent."

"Now I comprehend every thing. You must permit me, however, another question. Are Prince Hatzfeld and Field-Marshal Kalkreuth aware that you are nothing but an—actress?"

"By no means, your excellency. They are so kind as to take me for a *bona fide* clairvoyante. The doctor told them that, by my spiritual connection with him, I was compelled to say, think, and do whatever he wanted and commanded me, and that, if he gave me my instructions while I was awake, I had to act and speak in my clairvoyant state in strict accordance with them. In this way it happened, your excellency, that I was used as the fox-tail with which the electrical machine is set in motion—to make an impression upon you, and to cure you of your hostility to France. The doctor became the confidant of these gentlemen, who desired to cure you. They surrounded your excellency with spies, a minute diary was kept of your movements, and this diary was brought early every morning to the doctor, who read it to me, and we agreed then as to the manner in which I should avail myself of the information."

"And dupe me!" exclaimed Hardenberg, laughing. "Fortunately, I did not allow myself to be thus dealt with, but penetrated the handsome little swindle at the outset; yet I made up my mind to continue playing the farce for some time, because it afforded me an opportunity to discover and foil the intentions, wishes, and schemes of my adversaries. But tell me now, my pretty young lady, what would have happened if I had not allowed you to perceive to-day that I was aware of the whole trick?"

"In that case I myself would have disclosed the intrigue to your excellency. Did I not send my young nurse twice to your house yesterday, in order to pray you to come to me, if possible, last night, because I had important news to communicate to you? Did I not write to you that the doctor would not be at home during the whole evening, and that I might, therefore, communicate an important secret to you without being disturbed?"

"Unfortunately, I was not at home, and the supper at Marshal Angereau's, which you used so skilfully during your pretended trance, deprived me of an hour of important disclosures! But suppose I had come, and met you alone; what would you have told me then?"

"Precisely what I tell you now. I would have fallen down before you as I do now, and, clasping your knees in this manner, would have said what I say now: 'Mercy, my lord and master, mercy! I can lie and dissimulate no longer before your noble face; your eyes embarrass me; your smile overwhelms me with shame; the farce is at an end, and the truth commences. The truth, however, is that I adore you; that I will no longer unite with your adversaries against you; that I will serve you and none but you, and devote to you my whole life and every pulsation of my heart!'" She attempted to conceal her face, bathed in a flood of tears; but Hardenberg softly laid his hands upon her cheeks, and, gently raising her head, gazed at her long and smilingly.

"What talent!" he said; "in truth, I admire you! It was a charming performance. True love and passion could express themselves no better, or surpass your imitation."

She arose from her knees and looked at him with eyes flashing with anger. "You do not believe me?" she asked, almost menacingly. "You suspect me, although I have revealed my heart to you as sincerely as I have ever revealed it to Heaven itself."

"Foolish girl, how can I believe you?" he asked. "Have you not gone out into the world to plunge into adventures, and to seek your fortune? Have you not dived into the sea to find pearls? Can you wish me to play the agreeable part of your safety-rope—that is all!"

"No, no!" she exclaimed, wildly stamping with her feet; "that is a vile slander! Why should I choose precisely you for my safety-rope?—why reveal my soul to you? Do you not believe that those gentlemen who are using me against you, who worship and admire me, would not be ready to assist me? But I have rejected their homage and their offers; I despise and abhor them all, for they are your enemies. I hate France, I detest Napoleon, for you are opposed to the French alliance, and you have been reviled by Napoleon; I am longing for an alliance with Russia, for I know this to be your wish, and I have no wishes but yours, no will but your will!"

"Ah!" exclaimed Hardenberg, laughing, "this is the

strangest political declaration of love which woman ever made to man!"

"Great Heaven! you are laughing!" she cried angrily. "You do not believe me, then? How shall I be able to convince you?"

"I will show you a way to do so," said Hardenberg, suddenly growing very grave.

"Tell me, and I swear to you that I will try it!"

"Serve *me* in the same manner as you have hitherto served my enemies. Become the prophetess of my policy, as you have been the prophetess of the policy of my opponents. Permit me to become the prompter of the clever clairvoyante, and play now as inimitably against my adversaries as you have played for them."

Frederica Hahn burst into loud laughter. "In truth, that is a splendid idea," she said, "a revenge which your excellency has devised against the other gentlemen. Here is my hand. I swear to serve and to be faithful to you as long as I live. Do you now believe in the truth of my love?"

"Let me first see the actions inspired by this love," said Hardenberg, smiling. "I will prove to you immediately that I confide in your head, although I am not vain enough to believe in your heart. Listen to me, then! It is my most ardent desire that the king should leave Berlin, and be withdrawn from the influence of the French. Prince Hatzfeld and old Field-Marshal Kalkreuth, however, insist that he remain at Berlin, and thereby manifest the adhesion of Prussia to the alliance with France. I suspect, nay, I might say, I know, that the king is in danger, and that, as soon as he utters a free and bold word, the French will use it as a pretext to seize his person and imprison him, as they have done Charles and Ferdinand of Spain. Caution, therefore, the sanguine and credulous gentlemen; point out to them the dangers menacing the king here; tell them that it is the bounden duty of his majesty to save himself for his people; shout with your inspired and enthusiastic voice: 'Go! Destruction will overwhelm you at Berlin! Save the king! Convey him to Breslau!'"

"I will play my part so skilfully that even the boldest will be filled with dismay," cried Frederica, with flaming eyes, "and that dear old Field-Marshal Kalkreuth will implore the king on his knees to leave Berlin, and go to Breslau. But, when I have played this part for you—when you have attained

your object, and I have given you proofs of my fidelity and obedience—will you then believe that I love you?"

"We shall see," he said, smiling. "I am, perhaps, not as wise as Ulysses, and shall not fill my ears with wax, but listen to the song of the siren, even at the risk of perishing in the whirlpool of passion. Let us not impose upon ourselves any promises concerning the destiny of our hearts; but your position in the world is an entirely different question. As to this, I must make you promises, and swear that I shall fulfil them. You promise that you will serve me, enter into my plans, and support my policy?"

"Yes, your excellency, I swear to you that your opponents themselves shall beseech the king to leave Berlin, and renounce France."

"Well, then, on the day the king arrives safely at Breslau, you will receive from me a document securing you an annuity on which you will be able to live independently here at Berlin."

"And is that all?" she asked, in a contemptuous tone. "You promise me nothing but money to keep me from starvation?"

"No," said Hardenberg, smiling, "I promise you more than that. I promise that little Frederica Hahn, the watchmaker's daughter, shall be transformed into an aristocratic lady, and that I will procure you a husband, who will give you so distinguished a name that the daughter of the Marquise de Barbasson need not be ashamed of it. Are you content with that, my beauty?"

"Would it be necessary for me to love and honor the husband whom your excellency will give me?" asked Frederica, after a pause.

"Suppose I reply in the affirmative?" asked Hardenberg.

"Then I answer: I prefer remaining Frederica Hahn, for then I shall at least have the right to sit at your feet and worship you, and no troublesome husband will be able to prevent my doing so."

"Well, then, my charming little fool, I shall select for you a husband who will, like a *deus ex machina*, appear only in order to confer his name upon you at the altar, and who will then disappear again. Do you consent to that?"

"Your excellency, that would be precisely such a husband as I would like to have, and as my imagination has dreamed of—a husband *sans conséquence*—not a man, but a manikin!"

"I shall, however, see to it that this manikin, besides his name, will lay at your feet another splendid wedding-gift, and a *corbeille de noce*, which will be worthy of you. You accept my offers, then, my friend?"

"No, unless you add something to them."

"What is it, Frederica?"

"Your love, your confidence, your belief in my love!" she exclaimed, sinking down at his feet.

"Ah," said Hardenberg, "let us not be so audacious as to attempt to raise the veil that may perhaps conceal a magnificent future from our eyes!"\*

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE TWO DIPLOMATISTS.

THE royal family celebrated an important festival at Potsdam on the 20th of January. Crown-Prince Frederick William had been confirmed at the palace church. In the presence of the whole royal family, of all high officers and foreign ambassadors, the prince, who was now seventeen years of age, had made his confession of faith and taken an oath to the venerable and noble Counsellor Sack that he would faithfully adhere to God's Word, and worship Him in times of weal and woe. After the ceremonies at church were over, a gala-dinner was to take place at court, and invitations had been issued not only to the members of the royal family, but to the dignitaries and functionaries, as well as the ambassadors, who had come over from Berlin. This dinner, however, was suddenly postponed. The king was said to have been unexpectedly taken ill. It was asserted that the excitement which he had undergone at church had greatly affected his nerves, bringing on a bleeding at the nose, which had already lasted several hours, and which even the most energetic remedies were unable to relieve.

The ambassadors repaired to the palace in order to ascertain more about the health of the king, and the principal physician of his majesty was able at least to assure them that his majesty's condition was not by any means alarming or dangerous, but that the king needed repose, and could not, accord-

\* This scene is not fictitious, but based upon the verbal statements and disclosures of the lady who played so prominent a part in it.—L. M.