

my grief, but I will never learn to forget. At the present time I am thinking of my Louisa with redoubled longing. How her heart would have rejoiced over the renewal of an alliance which she so fervently desired, and how the noble spirit of the nation would have delighted and inspired her!"

"The noble queen, I believe, was also a warm friend of General Blucher, was she not?" asked the emperor, after a pause. "I believe she belonged to those who expected a great deal from him, and thought him a hero and a powerful enemy of Napoleon? Is it not so, sire?"

"Yes," said the king, thoughtfully, "the queen had a great regard for Blucher, and considered him a brave and faithful patriot."

"And what did she think of Field-Marshal Kalkreuth?" asked Alexander, with seeming carelessness. "Did he belong to those, too, in whom the queen confided, and from whom she expected the salvation of the fatherland?"

The king quickly looked up and met for a moment the searching gaze which the emperor fixed on him. Frederick William smiled, and inclined his head, as if he well understood the emperor's question. "No," he said, "Queen Louisa rarely approved of the views of the field-marshal, and although she felt high esteem for the general who had already shown himself a brave man under the great Frederick, she did not agree with the predilection he manifested for the Emperor Napoleon and his *invincible* armies."

"A predilection," exclaimed Alexander, smiling, "which I believe the field-marshal has not yet got rid of, notwithstanding the experience which Napoleon gained on the battle-fields of Russia."

"On the same battle-fields on which your majesty gathered new laurels," said the king, bowing slightly.

"And now there will spring up real laurel-woods for your majesty here in Germany!" exclaimed the emperor. "The only question for us now is, to find the right sort of gardener who knows how to cultivate them. But, I repeat, our thoughts are not suitable to this festival. Come, sire, permit me to offer you my arm as your cavalier, and to conduct you to the buffet, for how exalted soever our position may be, we must not forget that we are men, and that our stomachs sometimes need food."

He offered his arm to the king, and conducted him to the small supper-hall adjoining the audience-room. The gentle-

men who were present followed them, and the chamberlains hurried to the sideboard to have supper served up to the two sovereigns.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE APPOINTMENT.

ALEXANDER took a seat by the king's side at the small table, loaded with a heavy gold service, set for them alone near the door, which was covered with a heavy *portière*, and led into the large supper-hall. The emperor and the king had just put upon their plates some of the appetizing *pâté de foie gras* which the master of ceremonies himself had served up, and were proceeding like other mortals to consume them with great relish. The cavaliers, improving the opportune moment of silence, stood about the room and partook of the viands taken from the sideboard. Suddenly this silence was interrupted by a voice which was not uttered in the room itself, but swept through it like the blast of a trumpet: "If this hesitation and vacillation continue, all is lost; and it would then be better for us to throw ourselves immediately at the feet of Bonaparte, and crave quarter, than unnecessarily spill the precious blood of the people, and at last submit. He who does not advance goes backward without noticing it, and he who is not courageous enough to attack, is vanquished even before his adversary has forced him to battle."

"Why," exclaimed Alexander, smiling, "these are sentences that remind me of General Blucher."

"Your majesty is right, it is his voice," said the king; "he will give vent to his indignation, and, perhaps, at our expense. Let us not listen to him."

"On the contrary, I beg your majesty's kind permission to listen," said Alexander, pleasantly. "There is in the words of the general something that is as refreshing as a pure wind dispelling unhealthy vapors. Ah, hear him, sire; his tones are roaring like a hurricane."

In fact, the voice in the adjoining room had grown more violent, and the Emperor Alexander was seated in such a manner that he could distinctly hear every word uttered:

"What! you really believe it to be possible that they will appoint Field-Marshal Kalkreuth general-in-chief, and intrust

our young and splendid army to him? Great Heaven! do they not know, then, that Kalkreuth, however excellent a man and brave a soldier he may be, is not fit to confront Napoleon? Is it not a matter of notoriety that the field-marshal loves and admires Bonaparte, and that he considers a rupture with France a great calamity for Prussia? How could he ever win a battle who could never look straight forward at the battle-field, but would squint sideways to see what faces Napoleon would make, and whether he would not frown at the audacity of the Prussians, who dare try to defeat the great Napoleon? We need a man with a direct look—one who fixes both his eyes on the object. We do not want any *schielwippen*! They may all go to the mischief, for one never knows what they are about! I repeat, we need a man with a straight look!"

"What is that? *schielwippen*?" inquired the emperor, smiling. "I thought I had learned the German language pretty thoroughly from my mother and my wife, both of whom have the honor of being natives of Germany, but I have never heard this word from them. Pray, sire, tell me what it means."

"I must confess that I do not understand it either," said the king, shrugging his shoulders.

"General Scharnhorst!" cried the emperor. "Pray can you tell us what *schielwippen* means?"

"Sire," said Scharnhorst, laughing, "it is a slang term for a man who squints. General Blucher likes to use the language of the people."

"Well, the Prussian people have recently used such grand and magnificent language," said Alexander, "that we may say with heart-felt conviction, '*Vox populi vox Dei!*' and that it reflects great credit on Blucher, if it is true that he speaks like the people. But, hush! what does he say now?"

"The cowards have brought all our misfortunes upon us!" thundered Blucher's powerful voice. "The hesitating men who always wish to patch up and stop the holes, instead of tearing down the old ruin and building a new house, are our curse, and have always involved Prussia in untold calamities. When I think of them I would like to have them here, to treat them as Jahn treated the other day one of the Turners at Berlin. Do you know the story?"

"No," shouted several voices, "we unfortunately do not."

"Well, I will tell it to you. Jahn went with his pupils down the Linden to the Brandenburg gate to perform the

usual gymnastic exercises on the drill-grounds outside the city. On the way he happened to cast his eyes on the gate, where the Victoria formerly stood, and which the French stole and carried off to Paris. Jahn, like every honest man who looks at the gate, felt his heart swell with anger. He turned to the boy who was marching by his side and asked him, 'What stood formerly over the pillars of the gate?'—'The Victoria,' said the boy.—'Where is it now?' inquired Jahn.—'It is in Paris, where the French carried it.' Jahn asked again, 'What do you think when looking up to the vacant place on the top of the gate?'—'Well,' said the boy, with great composure, 'what should I think? I think it is a pity that the Victoria is no longer there.' And when he said so, Jahn lifted up his hand and slapped the boy's face. 'You should think that we will fetch back the Victoria, you monkey!' he shouted. That is the whole story, but I remember it whenever I see these dear tame men who merely say, 'It is a pity that we have been so unfortunate!' and whose hearts feel only a mild regret instead of the most ardent revenge. And then my hand itches, and I would like to lift it up, like Jahn, and slap their faces."

"Your Blucher is a splendid hussar," said Alexander, looking at the king. "I believe it is dangerous to stand before him when his hand is itching."

"Yes, his hand has been itching from the days of Jena," exclaimed the king, smiling. "He has been anxious to fight ever since. For this reason I gave him the estate of Kunzendorf, and sent him thither. I thought he would there quietly cure himself; but it seems it was in vain; my expectations have been disappointed. I believe his hand is incurable."

"Your majesty, therefore, had better yield to him, and allow him to fight," said Alexander, almost entreatingly. "The opportunity is excellent at the present time. If you place him at the head of the Silesian army, he will no longer slap the faces of his friends and neighbors on the right and left, but will rush forward and stretch out his itching hand to deal the French terrible blows."

"I am only afraid he would be too rash in his wild hussar spirit," said the king, "and spoil every thing by trying to tear down all barriers."

"A man should be placed by his side who knows how to check his boldness," exclaimed Alexander—"a man who does not stifle Blucher's ardor, but gives it the true direction."

"But where shall we find such a one?"

"I believe your majesty may find him close by," said Alexander, pointing to Scharnhorst, who was leaning against the *portière*.

"Ah, sire," cried the king, almost merrily, "I believe you are a magician, and understand my most secret thoughts. Scharnhorst has a great mind, and I owe him much. If he would take upon himself that difficult and ungrateful part by the side of Blucher, I believe the general's impetuosity would be less dangerous."

"Your majesty, please ask him whether he will or not," said Alexander.

The king called Scharnhorst to his side. "You have influence over General Blucher, have you not?" he asked, hastily.

"I may say, at least, your majesty, that General Blucher is convinced of my love and devotion, and that he confides a little in me."

"Could you make up your mind to occupy a secondary position by his side, and, if I should appoint Blucher general-in-chief of the Silesian army, become his chief of staff?"

"Your majesty," exclaimed Scharnhorst, "I would deem it a great honor to serve under the heroic old man, and I am certain that with him I would enter upon a glorious career, particularly if your majesty should grant me a request."

"What is it? Speak!"

"If your majesty should condescend to place General Gneisenau, who will arrive to-morrow, as quartermaster-general."

The king nodded. "You have selected a noble companion," he said, smiling.

"It will be a splendid trefoil, it seems to me," cried the emperor. "Blucher, Scharnhorst, and Gneisenau! They are three well-sounding names! But listen, sire, Blucher is still thundering. There is a way to calm this tempest."

"What is it?" asked the king, smiling.

"Your majesty ought to be so gracious as to send for General Blucher, and tell him that you wish to confer upon him the command-in-chief of the Silesian army."

"You advise me to do so, sire?" inquired the king. "Your majesty, in counselling this, gives up no wish?"

"Yes, I do," said Alexander, smiling. "I should wish to see General Taentzien appointed commander-in-chief, just as your majesty probably would prefer to bestow this position on Field-Marshal Kalkreuth. Let us both, therefore, sacrifice

our wishes to the great object for which I now believe Blucher to be the proper instrument."

"So let it be, your majesty," exclaimed the king. "I will send for Blucher." He beckoned to Scharnhorst to approach again. "Pray go and fetch your friend, General Blucher," said the king, rising, like the emperor, from the table.

"And I beg leave, while the general goes into the hall, to cast a glance into the next room, to see what Blucher is doing," said the emperor. "Now draw the *portière* back, General Scharnhorst, and stand there. In this way I am able to survey the whole hall."

Scharnhorst, in accordance with the emperor's order, opened the *portière* and stood in it; by his side, shaded by the curtain, stood the emperor and the king. Both gazed into the supper-hall, which presented a highly animated spectacle. At all the small tables sat the guests in attractive groups, the ladies in their rich toilets, the gentlemen in their brilliant uniforms. All were merry and loquacious; the choice delicacies had put every one in good spirits; the fiery wine had loosened all tongues. Even the eyes of the ladies were sparkling with a higher lustre, and a deeper crimson burned on their cheeks. But all those merry faces turned frequently toward the small table on one side of the hall near the *portière*. There sat General Blucher with his wife; several gentlemen were seated near him. On the table stood one of the crystal bowls that had previously adorned the handsome sideboard, and from this bowl, filled with an amber-colored liquid, arose a delightful perfume. Blucher seemed to inhale the fragrance with pleasure, for an expression of infinite comfort beamed from his features, and whenever he emptied his glass he seized the silver ladle that lay in the bowl, and then drew his white mustache with a smile of gratification through his fingers, while his eyes surveyed the whole company with a flashing glance. Then a shadow passed across his brow. "We are highly elated to-day, because we are at length to take up arms against our foe," he said; "we are overjoyed because we are to take our revenge. And suppose every thing should again turn out wrong; suppose the cowards and the *schielwippen* should, after all, remain at the helm? Great Heaven! the very idea maddens me! For I know them! I know that they will ruin every thing. At the decisive moment they are vacillating, and, in order to dishearten others, too, they exaggerate the strength of the enemy a hundred-fold, and belittle our own

resources in the same proportion. Would that Heaven were to decree, 'Blucher shall command the Prussians!' Good Lord, I pledge Thee my head that I would expel Bonaparte with all his French from Germany, though I had but thirty thousand soldiers behind me!"*

"Now call him in, general," whispered Alexander. Scharnhorst stepped into the hall. The king and the emperor left the supper-hall and returned into the audience-room.

A few minutes afterward Blucher entered, followed by Scharnhorst, who remained at the door, while Blucher advanced boldly toward the two sovereigns.

"Your majesty was so gracious as to send for me," he said, bowing to the king.

"Yes," said the king, gravely. "I wish to ask you whether you belong to the vacillating cowards, or whether you are a whole man?"

"And I," exclaimed Alexander, pathetically—"I wish to request you to confess whether you are also a *schielwippe*?"

Blucher looked at the two sovereigns with a gloomy, inquiring glance. But suddenly his face brightened, and a smile played round his lips. "Ah," he cried, "I understand! Your majesties have overheard my prattle, and have sent for me to order me to be silent. But I cannot, your majesties; I cannot! I must give vent to my wrath, my vexation, and grief! I must be allowed to scold, for if I did not I would be obliged to weep, and it would be a disgrace for Blucher to act like an old woman! Let me scold, then, your majesties; it relieves my heart a little, and my anger teaches me to forget my grief."

"You grieve, then, general?" inquired Frederick William, smiling.

"Yes, my lord and king, I do grieve intensely. I should like to lay my complaint before your majesty, and I will do so, too. I—"

"Hush!" interposed the king,—"hush, my firebrand of seventy-one years! First reply to this question: would you like to be appointed general-in-chief of the Silesian army?"

"Would I like to be appointed general-in-chief?" cried Blucher, his eyes sparkling with joy. "Your majesty, that is just as though you ask me whether I like to live any longer. For I tell your majesty I will die at once rather than let any one else have that position."

*Blucher's words.—Vide Varnhagen, "Life of Blucher," p. 136.



FIELD-MARSHAL G. L. VON BLÜCHER.

After a painting by Dahling.

"Well, then," said the king, in a grave and dignified tone, "I appoint you general-in-chief of the Silesian army. Do you accept the position?"

Blucher uttered a cry, and his face brightened as if lit up by a sunbeam. "I accept it," he exclaimed, "and here I swear to your majesty that I shall not lay down my command before Prussia is again what she was prior to the battle of Jena, and that I shall not sheathe my sword before we have driven Napoleon beyond the Rhine, and have made him so humble that he will never again dare to cross it. I swear to your majesty, upon my honor, that I will hurl Bonaparte from his throne—that I will not rest before the crown has fallen from his head! God has spared me that I may chastise Napoleon; He has told me every night in my dreams, 'Do not despond, do not lose heart! Keep up thy courage and thy confidence, for I shall soon need thee! Thou shalt soon cut Napoleon down from his power, and throw him into the dust whence he sprang.' And I have answered, 'I am on hand, and wait only for the struggle to begin.' Now I say to your majesty what I then said, 'I am on hand, and the struggle is to begin!' I have sworn every day to chastise Bonaparte, and while I live I shall thank your majesty for giving me an opportunity. I am, then, general-in-chief of the Silesian army?"

"Yes, I appoint you, and his majesty the emperor approves my selection," said the king. "All necessary directions, instructions, and orders, you will receive to-morrow in writing. You will immediately enter upon your office, and place yourself at the head of the troops. Do you wish to prefer requests and impose conditions?"

"Yes, your majesty, I must impose two conditions. In the first place, General Scharnhorst must be my chief of staff, for Blucher is only half a man when Scharnhorst is not with him. I have the arm, he has the head; therefore we must be together."

"Your request is granted, and Scharnhorst has already accepted the position," said the king, smiling.

"Secondly, I must impose the condition that I be allowed to leave Breslau to-morrow with my Prussians, and advance toward Saxony."

"What! You intend to start at once?" cried Alexander and Frederick William, in amazement.

"Yes, at once," said Blucher, with a joyful air. "The

years of waiting are past, and now comes the day of vengeance. Like a thunderstorm we must burst upon the French. Before they expect us we must expel what troops of theirs remain in Germany, dissolve the Confederation of the Rhine, and by our bold exploits stir up all Germany that she may rally round our flag, and form an enormous army before Napoleon has concentrated his newly-organized forces. That is our task, and, if it pleases God, we will fulfil it."

CHAPTER XXXI.

AFTER THE BATTLE OF BAUTZEN.

FOR two days the battle had been raging, and even now, in the afternoon of the 22d of May, the struggle was undecided. Blucher, who, with his Prussians, occupied the heights of Kreckwitz, near Bautzen, still hoped to achieve a victory. For two days the Prussians and Russians fought like lions along the extended line of battle; they engaged the hostile legions with undaunted courage and joyful enthusiasm, regardless of the scorching heat, hunger, thirst, and exhaustion. During these days Blucher was constantly in the midst of his troops. Where the shower of bullets was thickest, where the danger was most imminent, his voice was heard inciting the soldiers; where the enemy approached with his most formidable columns, Blucher stood with his faithful companion Gneisenau at the head of his Prussians, brandishing his sword, advancing with exulting cheers upon the enemy, and causing him to retreat.

The heights of Kreckwitz had to be held till General Barclay de Tolly, with his Russians, would arrive, and Generals York and Kleist, with their Prussians, to cover Blucher's left flank, which was threatened by Marshal Ney. The booming of cannon was incessant. The Russians stood like a wall, and when the front ranks were swept down, others took their places; the living stepped over the dying, undaunted, and remembering only one thing—that they had to take revenge for the lost battle of Lutzen.*

"Boys," shouted Blucher to his soldiers, just as the balls of

* Fought May 2, 1813. The French call this battle that of Lutzen; the Germans generally that of Gross-Görschen. Both sides claimed a victory. But the latest German historians, especially Beitzke, admit that the Germans were defeated.

the enemy struck down whole ranks, "boys, remember that we have resolved to sabre the French. They have exhausted the soil of Germany, we must fertilize it with French corpses. Remember Gross-Görschen, where they wounded our General Scharnhorst. We must chastise them for that, and capture a few French generals.* We must get at least four of their marshals in return for General Scharnhorst, for the fellows are light, and four of them do not weigh as much as one Scharnhorst. Now, tell me, shall we get those four French marshals?"

"Yes, Father Blucher, yes!" shouted the Prussians, jubilantly. "Long live Father Blucher!"

"Only a little longer, and the day is ours!" cried Gneisenau, in a ringing voice. "The legions of Marshal Ney are charging again, but General Barclay, with his Russians, has occupied the Windmill-knoll, near Gleime, and will repulse him as we shall Napoleon's columns. The heights of Kreckwitz are the Thermopylæ of the Prussians, and we will fall to a man rather than surrender!"

"Yes, that we will do!" cried the officers, enthusiastically, and the soldiers echoed their shouts.

At this moment a terrific cannonade resounded on the right wing of the Prussian troops. "There are the French!" exclaimed Blucher. "Boys, now bring in those marshals!" The cannon roared, the muskets rattled, and, as though heaven desired to participate in this struggle of the nations, the thunder rolled, and flashes of lightning darted into the clouds of battle-smoke.

But who was galloping up suddenly on a charger covered with foam, his hair fluttering in the breeze, and his face pale and terrified? It was a Prussian colonel, and still he does not join in the exultation of his countrymen. He approached Generals Blucher and Gneisenau.

"Halloo! Lieutenant-Colonel von Müffling," shouted Blucher, "are you back? Do you bring us greetings from Barclay de Tolly? Has he finished the French? Well, we are just about to recommence our work here—the last work for to-day."

"General," cried Müffling, anxiously, "the French will soon have finished Barclay de Tolly, and defeated us! For he is

* General Scharnhorst was wounded at the battle of Gross-Görschen by Blucher's side. He believed his wound was not dangerous, but he left the headquarters to be cured. He went at first to Altenburg, and then to Prague, to attend the peace congress. His wound reopened, and he died at Prague on the 20th of June, 1813.