

CHAPTER XXXIV.

NAPOLEON AND METTERNICH.

THE emperor quickly met the Austrian minister, but, as if restraining himself, he stood in the middle of the room. Metternich approached, making a stiff, solemn bow, and quickly raised his head again, and turning his fine face, from which the smile did not vanish for a moment, toward the emperor, he waited in respectful silence for the latter to address him. Napoleon cast a menacing glance of hatred upon him; but Metternich did not seem to perceive his threat. He fixed his large blue eyes with perfect calmness on the face of the emperor, and awaited the commencement of the conversation.

The emperor felt that it was his province to break this silence. "Well, Metternich," he said, "you are here, then! You are welcome! But answer me, without circumlocution, What do you want?"

"Sire, Austria wishes me to mediate a peace between the Prussian and Russian allies and your majesty."

"Ah, you want peace!" exclaimed Napoleon, sarcastically. "But why so late? We have lost nearly a month, and your mediation, from its long inactivity, has become almost hostile. It appears that it no longer suits your cabinet to guarantee the integrity of the French empire? Be it so; but why had you not the candor to make me acquainted with that determination at an earlier period? It might have modified my plans—perhaps prevented me from continuing the war."

"But your majesty ought graciously to remember that, for the present, there is no question of Austria and her wishes," said Metternich, calmly; "that Austria is merely trying to mediate peace between your majesty and the sovereigns of Russia and Prussia."

"Ah, that is what you call mediating," exclaimed Napoleon, sneeringly. "When you allowed me to exhaust myself by new efforts, you doubtless little calculated on such rapid events as have ensued. I have gained, nevertheless, two battles; my enemies, severely weakened, were beginning to waken from their illusions, when suddenly you glided among us, and, speaking to me of an armistice and mediation, you

spoke to them of alliance and war. But for your pernicious intervention, peace would have been at this moment concluded between the allies and myself. You cannot deny that, since she has assumed the office of mediator, Austria has not only ceased to be my ally, but is becoming my enemy. You were about to declare yourself so when the battle of Lutzen intervened, and, by showing you the necessity of augmenting your forces, made you desirous of gaining time. You have improved your opportunity, and now you have your two hundred thousand men ready, screened by the Bohemian hills; Schwartzberg commands them; at this very moment he is concentrating them in my rear; and it is because you conceive yourself in a condition to dictate the law, that you pay this visit."

"Sire, dictate!" echoed Metternich, in a tone of dismay, but with a strange smile.

"Yes, dictate!" repeated Napoleon, in a louder voice. "But why do you wish to dictate to me alone? Am I, then, no longer the same man whom you defended yesterday? If you are an honest mediator, why do you not at least treat both sides alike? Say nothing in reply, for I see through you, Metternich: your cabinet wishes to profit by my embarrassments, and augment them as much as possible, in order to recover a portion of your losses. The only difficulty you have is, whether you can gain your object without fighting, or throw yourselves boldly among the combatants; you do not know which to do, and possibly you come to seek light on the subject. Well, then, let us see! Let us treat! What do you wish?"

"Sire," said Metternich, with his smiling calmness, which had not yielded for an instant to the storm of Napoleon's reproaches, "Austria has no motives of self-interest. The sole advantage which the Emperor Francis wishes to derive from the present state of affairs is the influence which a spirit of moderation, and a respect for the rights of independent states, cannot fail to acquire from those who are animated with similar sentiments. Austria wishes not to conquer, but to preserve."

"Speak more clearly," interrupted the emperor, impatiently; "but do not forget that I am a soldier."

"Your majesty has taught Europe by upward of fifty battles never to forget that," said Metternich, with a pleasant nod. "Austria wishes to wound your majesty neither as a

soldier nor as an emperor. She simply desires to establish a state of things which, by a wise distribution of power, may place the guaranty of peace under the protection of an association of independent states."

"Words, words!" cried Napoleon, impatiently. "Words having no other object than evasion, veiling your own designs! But I mean to go directly to the object. I only wish Austria to remain neutral, and I am ready to make sacrifices to her for it. My army is amply sufficient to bring back the Russians and Prussians to reason. All that I ask of you is to withdraw from the strife."

"Ah, sire," said Metternich, eagerly, "why should your majesty enter singly into the strife? Why should you not double your forces? You may do so, sire! It depends only on you to add our forces to your own. Yes, matters have come to that point that we can no longer remain neutral; we must be either for or against you."

The emperor bent on him one of those piercing glances which the eagle bends upon the clouds to which he is soaring, seeking for the sun behind them. "And which would be more desirable to you," he asked, "to be for or against me?"

"Ah, sire, the Emperor Francis wishes for nothing more ardently than that the state of affairs should enable him to be for France, whose emperor is his son-in-law."

"But my father-in-law imposes conditions! Pray, tell me what they are!" exclaimed Napoleon, striding up and down the apartment, while Metternich walked by his side, respectfully holding his hat in his hand.

"Tell me what these conditions are!" repeated Napoleon.

"Sire, they are simply these," said Metternich, in a bland tone. "During the late decade the affairs of Europe have been disturbed in a somewhat violent manner. Austria only wishes to have the equilibrium of Europe reestablished, and all the states occupy again the same position which they held prior to these convulsions. If your majesty consents to contribute your share to this restoration, Austria in return offers to France her lasting alliance and, in case the other powers should pursue a hostile course, her armed assistance. Austria wishes to make no conquests, to acquire no provinces, no titles—she is animated with the spirit of moderation. She demands only order, justice, and equality for all, and, moreover, only the restoration of such states as have been recognized for centuries as members of the general confederacy of

European states, the reconstruction of those thrones which have existed for ages, and whose rulers have a legitimate right to their sovereignty. I believe your majesty cannot deny that the Bourbons have a well-founded right to Spain, and that the Spaniards now, by the blood shed in their heroic struggle, have established their right to restore the throne to their legitimate rulers. You will have to admit, further, that no Christian sovereign, how powerful soever he may be, has a right to overthrow the Holy See of St. Peter, and to keep the vicegerent of God away from the capital which all Christendom has so long recognized as his own. You will have to admit, too, that both Lombardy and Illyria have long been possessions of Austria, and that Switzerland has been recognized as a confederation of republics by all the powers of Europe. If your majesty acknowledges all this, and consents to restore the state of things in accordance with those well-established rights, it only remains for us to find compensation for the three powers which have already allied themselves against you. As for Prussia, I believe a portion of Saxony would be the most suitable indemnity for her. Russia, I suppose, would be content if, after the dissolution of the duchy of Warsaw, Poland should once more fall to her share, and England demands only the possession of a few fortified places and safe harbors on the shores of Holland."

The emperor uttered a cry of anger, and, suddenly halting, cast glances on Metternich which seemed to borrow their fire from the lightning. "Are you through with your proposals, sir?" he asked, in a threatening tone.

Metternich bowed. "Yes, sire."

"Well, then," cried the emperor, stepping up to the minister, "to all this I respond only by the question: How much money has England given you to play this part?"

At this question, uttered in a menacing voice, Metternich turned pale, the smile passed from his lips, his brow darkened, and his eyes, usually so mild and pleasant, kindled with anger, and allowed the thoughts, generally concealed in the innermost recesses of the diplomatist's heart, to burst forth for a moment, and betray hatred.

"Ah," cried Napoleon, in a triumphant tone, "I have at length torn the mask from your smiling features, and I see that a serpent is hidden under them as under roses. It would sting, but I know how to be on my guard; I will never grant Austria the right to insult, dictate to, and humiliate me.

I will compel her, as I have done so often, to prostrate herself in the dust before me, and ask mercy and forbearance. Do you hear what I say? I will humiliate Austria, trampling her in the dust." The emperor violently raised his clinched fist, and striking it downward struck Metternich's hat, which the minister still held in his hand, and caused it to fall to the ground.

The emperor paused and looked at Metternich, as if to request him to pick up the hat. But the latter did not make the slightest movement. His thoughts and his hatred had already retired into his bosom; his brow was serene again, and his accustomed smile returned. He looked first at the hat, and then at the emperor, who followed his glances, and met them sullenly and defiantly. This little incident, however, seemed to have dispelled Napoleon's anger, or at least to have appeased the first stormy waves of the sea. When he spoke again his tone was milder, and his look less scorching, returning from time to time, as it were involuntarily, to the hat lying on the floor a few steps from him. He commenced pacing the apartment again with quick steps. Metternich followed him, only with somewhat slackened pace, and thus compelled the emperor to walk a little slower.

"Now," said Napoleon, loudly, "I know what you want! Not only Illyria, but the half of Italy, the return of the pope to Rome, Poland, and the abandonment of Spain, Holland, and Switzerland! This is what you call the spirit of moderation! You are intent only on profiting by every chance; you alternately transport your alliance from one camp to the other, in order to be always a sharer in the spoil, and you speak to me of your respect for the rights of independent states! You would have Italy; Russia, Poland; Prussia, Saxony; and England, Holland and Belgium: in fine, peace is only a pretext; you are all intent on dismembering the French empire! And Austria thinks she has only to declare herself, to crown such an enterprise! You pretend here, with a stroke of the pen, to make the ramparts of Dantzic, Custrin, Glogau, Magdeburg, Wesel, Mentz, Antwerp, Alessandria, Mantua, in fine, all the strong places of Europe, sink before you, of which I did not obtain possession but by my victorious arms! And I, obedient to your policy, am to evacuate Europe, of which I still hold the half; recall my legions across the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees; subscribe a treaty which would be nothing but a vast capitulation; and place myself at the

mercy of those of whom I am at this moment the conqueror! It is when my standards float at the mouths of the Vistula, and on the banks of the Oder; when my army is at the gates of Berlin, and Breslau; when I am at the head of three hundred thousand men, that Austria, without drawing a sword, expects to make me subscribe such conditions! This is an insult, and it is my father-in-law that has matured such a project; it is he that sends you on such a mission!"*

While thus speaking, the emperor was still walking, and Metternich by his side. Whenever they passed the hat lying on the floor, Napoleon cast a quick side-glance on Metternich, who appeared to take no notice of the hat, and it seemed entirely accidental that he slightly wheeled aside, and thus succeeded in passing without touching it.

"You," cried Napoleon, in a thundering voice, "have taken upon yourself the mission of insulting me, and you think I will quietly submit?"

"Sire," said Metternich, with his imperturbable calmness, "I believe you have already punished me for it!"

Now for the first time his eyes turned significantly toward his hat, and then fixed themselves steadfastly on the emperor. They did not dare to threaten, but they defied Napoleon. They said: "You have insulted me by knocking my hat out of my hand. I will not pick it up, but demand satisfaction."

Possibly Napoleon understood this language, for a smile, full of sarcasm and contempt, played around his lips, and he slightly shrugged his shoulders.

"I beg you to consider, besides," added Metternich, calmly, "that I am here only because my sovereign has commissioned and ordered me to repair to you, and that, as a faithful servant, I have repeated only what the emperor commanded me."

"Ah," cried Napoleon, with a harsh laugh, "you wish to make me believe that you are but the emperor's echo? Well, I will suppose it to be true. Then go and tell your master that I henceforth decline his mediation, and that nothing would exasperate me more than the idea that Austria, in return for her crimes and her breach of faith, should reap the best fruits and become the pacificator of Europe. Ask the Emperor Francis in what position he intends to place me in regard to my son? Tell him he is entirely mistaken if he believes a disgraced throne can be a refuge in France for his

* This whole speech contains only Napoleon's words.—Vide Fain, "Manuscript de 1813," vol. i.

daughter and grandson.* That is my reply to the Emperor Francis. Go!"

Metternich bowed; considering the emperor's words equivalent to his dismissal, he turned and crossed the room. His way led him past his hat; he took no notice of it, but quietly walked on toward the door.

"He does not wish to take his hat," thought Napoleon.

Metternich reached the door, turned again to the emperor, and made him a last reverential bow.

"One word more, Count Metternich!" cried Napoleon. "Come, I have still something to say to you."

Metternich blandly nodded assent and returned. Napoleon commenced again pacing the room, with Metternich by his side. The emperor now directed his steps in such a manner that he himself was near the hat. "I wish to prove to you, Metternich," said Napoleon, "that I have seen through you, and that the true reason of your coming is well known to me. You did not for an instant believe that I could accept these proposals, which would dishonor and annihilate me; you know me too well for that; but they were only to be the pretext of the real wish that brought you hither. To be able to ally yourself in a seemingly loyal manner with my enemies, you want to get rid of the alliance which is still connecting Austria with France. In direct contradiction to all that Austria has hitherto said to me, you wish to annul the treaty of Paris. Admit that this is the case."

The emperor, with his eyes fixed steadfastly upon Metternich, crossed the apartment. Suddenly seeming to find an obstacle in his way, he turned his eyes toward the floor. It was Metternich's hat, which his foot had already touched. As if merely to remove the obstruction, he stooped, took up the hat, and threw it with an indifferent and careless motion on a chair near the door. He then quietly passed on and fixed his eyes again upon Metternich.† "Well, reply to me—deny it if you can!"

"Sire," said Metternich, in a bland, insinuating voice, "I had already the honor of telling you that matters have come to that point that we can no longer remain neutral, but that we can take up arms for your majesty, only if you consent to grant us all that I have laid before you, and—"

* Napoleon's words.—Vide Fain, "Manuscrit de 1813," vol. i.
† Vide "Mémoires de la Duchesse d'Abrantes," vol. xvi., p. 173. There is another version of this scene, according to which it was not Metternich's, but the emperor's hat that fell to the floor.—Vide Hormayr, "Lebensbilder," vol. iii., p. 480.

"No," interrupted Napoleon, proudly, "do not repeat the insult! The interview is ended. I know what you desire, and I do not intend to disappoint you! I will not be a dead weight upon my friends, nor raise the slightest objection to the abandonment of the treaty that allies me with Austria, if such be the wish of the Emperor Francis. I shall tomorrow repeat this to you in writing and in due form. Now we are through—farewell!" He turned his back on Count Metternich, with a quick nod, and continued his way across the room.

Metternich cast a last smiling glance on him; went with rapid, soft steps to the chair, took his hat which the emperor had picked up, hastened across the room, and went out without a word or a bow.

When Napoleon heard him close the door, "He is gone," he murmured, "the alliance is broken. I have now no ally but myself!" For a moment he looked melancholy, and then starting glanced at the small door leading into the cabinet of Baron Fain, his private secretary. He remembered that his two dukes were there, and that they could not only hear but see all. Composing his agitated face, he shouted in a merry voice, "Caulaincourt and Maret, come in!"

The door opened immediately; the Dukes de Bassano and Vicenza appeared on the threshold and reentered the room. "Well, have you heard every thing?" asked Napoleon.

"Yes, sire."

"And Fain? has he taken notes?"

"Sire, he has written down every thing as far as it was possible, considering the rapidity of the conversation."*

"Ah, I shall read it afterward," said the emperor; "it is always good to know in what manner we shall be recognized by posterity. Now, gentlemen, since you have heard all, you understand that war is unavoidable, and that Austria will side with my enemies."

"Sire, we have heard it, and it has filled our souls with uneasiness and anxiety," said Maret.

"Perhaps, nevertheless, a compromise may still be possible," exclaimed Caulaincourt. "The armistice has not yet expired, and, in accordance with the orders of your majesty, I have already made the necessary overtures for prolonging it to the 15th of August."

* Fain, "Mémoires de 1813." Fain gives a full account of this interview, and I have strictly followed his narrative.

"It will be prolonged, you may depend upon it," said Napoleon, "for the allies need time for completing their preparations. We shall have an armistice to that time, but then war will break out anew, and it will be terrible. I shall not indeed wage it as emperor, but as General Bonaparte."*

"Oh, sire," sighed Maret, "the whole world is longing for peace, and France, too, entertains no more ardent wish. I have received many unmistakable intimations in regard to it. Paris is not only hoping for peace, but expecting it confidently, after the two victories by which your majesty has humiliated your enemies."

"Paris is very badly informed if she thinks peace to depend upon me," replied Napoleon, indignantly. "You see how greedily Austria augments the demands of my enemies, by placing herself at their head. We were always obliged to conquer peace. Very well, we will conquer it again. The armistice will be prolonged to the 15th of August—time enough to complete, on our side, all necessary preparations, and decree a new conscription. But then, after the armistice, war—a decisive, bloody war—a war that will lead to an honorable peace! Believe me, he who has always dictated peace cannot submit to it with impunity. Courage, therefore! France wants peace, and so do I, but my cannon shall dictate the terms, and my sword write them!"†

* Napoleon's words.

† Napoleon's words.—Vide "Mémoires du Duc de Rovigo," vol. ii.

DELIVERANCE OF GERMANY.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ON THE KATZBACH.

THE armistice expired on the 15th of August, and hostilities were resumed. The state of affairs, however, was essentially different from what it was at the commencement of the armistice; for, at that time, Napoleon had just obtained two victories. During the armistice, the allies had won an important victory over him; they had gained Austria over to their side, and now, at the renewal of hostilities, Austria reënforced the allies with two hundred thousand men. For nearly fourteen years Napoleon was invariably the more powerful enemy, not only on account of his military genius, but of the numerical strength and excellent organization of his forces.

For the first time the enemy opposed him with superior forces, and this vast host struggled, moreover, with the utmost enthusiasm for the deliverance of the fatherland—with the energy of hatred and wrath against him who had so long enslaved and oppressed it. But Napoleon still possessed his grand military genius. Soon after the expiration of the armistice, he gained a new victory over the allies, that of Dresden;* and in this battle Moreau, the French general, who was fighting against his own countrymen, was struck by a French ball, which caused his death in a few days. But the allies took their revenge for the defeat of Dresden in the great victory of Culm, where they, also after a two days' battle, achieved a brilliant triumph over General Vandamme.

General Blucher and his Silesian army had not participated in these battles. At the time when the Russians, the Austrians, and a part of the Prussians, were fighting and yielding

* The battle of Dresden lasted two days, the 26th and 27th of August. Moreau died on the 2d of September, and the battle of Culm was fought on the 29th and 30th of August.