

"Well, we shall see," exclaimed Blucher, smiling, and taking up the paper.

"Very good," he said, after reading it through, "every thing is done just as I wished it, and if all our commanders act in accordance with these instructions, we shall give the enemy no time for taking a position anywhere, but completely disperse his forces without being compelled to fight another battle."

"And when the city of Breslau reads this noble and affecting plea for your wounded," said Gneisenau, "they will be nursed in the most careful manner, and our able-bodied soldiers will receive wagon-loads of food and refreshments. And when the king reads this dispatch, announcing our victory in language so modest and unassuming, his heart will feel satisfaction, and he will rejoice equally over the victory and the general to whom he is indebted for it."

"Have you corrected the grammatical blunders?"

"I have, your excellency; I have erased them so cautiously that no one can see that any thing has been corrected."

"Well, then, be so kind as to dispatch a courier."

"But, your excellency," said Gneisenau, "shall the courier take only these two dispatches? Have you forgotten that you promised Madame von Blucher to write to her after every battle, whether victorious or not, and that I solemnly pledged her my word to remind your excellency of it?"

"Well, it is unnecessary to remind me," cried Blucher, taking up the letter he had first written. "Here is my letter to Amelia. She is a faithful wife, and I surely owed it to her to tell her first that the Lord has been kind and gracious enough toward me to let me gain the battle. But you need not correct it. My Amelia will not blame me for my grammatical blunders, and to her I freely speak my mind."

"Did you inform your wife, too, that you drew your sword yourself, and rushed into the thickest of the fray?"

"I shall take good care not to tell her any thing of the kind," exclaimed Blucher. "As far as that is concerned, I did not speak my mind to her. It is true I had promised my dear wife to be what she calls sensible, and only to command and play the distinguished general who merely looks on while others do the fighting. But it would not do—you must admit, Gneisenau, it would not do; I could not stand still like a scarecrow, while my old adjutant, Katzeler, was charging with the hussars; I had to go with them, if it cost my life."

You will do me the favor, however, not to betray it to Amelia."

"Even though I should be silent, your excellency, your wife would hear of it."

"You believe Hennemann will tell her?" asked Blucher, almost in dismay. "Yes, it is true, she has ordered the pipe-master not to lose sight of me in battle, and always to remain near me with the pipe. Well, the fellow has kept his word; but he will now also fulfil what he promised my wife, and tell her every thing. Yes, the pipe-master will tell her that I was in the charge of the light cavalry."

"Yes," exclaimed Gneisenau, smiling, "he will betray to your wife and to history that Blucher fought and charged at the battle of the Katzbach like a young man of twenty. But for the pipe-master history might not know it at all."

"Gneisenau, you are decidedly too sharp," cried Blucher, stroking his mustache. "Well, please forward the dispatches, and then let us try to sleep a little. We must invigorate ourselves, for we shall have plenty to do to-morrow. 'Forward, always forward!' until Bonaparte is hurled from his throne; and hurled from it he will be! Yes, as sure as there is a God in heaven!"

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### THE REVOLT OF THE GENERALS.

ON the morning of the 10th of October, Napoleon took leave of the King and Queen of Saxony, after delivering at Eilenburg, whither he had repaired with the royal family of Saxony, a solemn and enthusiastic address to the corps which his faithful ally, King Frederick Augustus, had added to his army, and which was to fight jointly with the French against his enemies. He then entered the carriage and rode to Duben, followed by his staff, the whole park of artillery, and all the equipages. Gloomy and taciturn, the emperor, on his arrival at the palace of Duben, retired into his apartments and spread out the maps, on which colored pins marked the various positions of the allies and his own army. "They are three to one against me," he murmured, bending over the maps and contemplating the pins. "Were none but determined and energetic generals, like Blucher, at their head, my defeat would be certain. They would then hem me in, bring on a

decisive battle, and their overwhelming masses would crush me and my army. Fortunately, there is no real harmony among the allies; they will scatter their forces, post them here and there, and in the mean time I shall march to Berlin, take the city, repose there, and, with renewed strength, attack them one after another. Ah, I shall succeed in defeating them, I—”

There was a low knock at the door, and Constant, his valet de chambre, entered the room. “Sire,” he said, “Marshal Marmont and the gentlemen of the staff are in the reception-room, and request your majesty graciously to grant them an audience.”

An expression of surprise overspread the emperor’s face, and for an instant he seemed to hesitate; but gently nodding he said, calmly: “Open the door. I grant them the audience.”

Constant opened the folding-doors, and in the reception-room were seen the marshals and generals assembled. Their faces were pale and gloomy, and there was something solemn and constrained in their whole bearing. When Napoleon appeared on the threshold, the groups dispersed, and the gentlemen placed themselves in line, silent and noiseless, along the wall opposite the emperor, seemingly at a loss whether they or the emperor should utter the first word. Napoleon advanced a few steps. For the first time his generals, the companions of so many years and so many battles, seemed unable to bear the emperor’s glance. Napoleon saw this, and a bitter smile flitted over his face. “Marmont,” he exclaimed, in his ringing voice, “what do you all want? Speak!”

“Sire,” said the marshal, “we wish to take the liberty of addressing a question and a request to your majesty.”

“First, the question, then!”

“Sire, we take the liberty of asking whether your majesty really intends to cross the Elbe with the army, and to resume the struggle on the right bank?”

“You ask very abruptly and bluntly,” said Napoleon, haughtily. “I need not listen to you, but I will do so, nevertheless. I will reply to your question, not because I must, but because I choose to do so. Yes, gentlemen, I intend to transfer the whole army to the right bank of the Elbe in order to occupy Brandenburg and Berlin, then face about to the river, and make Magdeburg the support of my further operations.\* This is my plan, and you, according to your duty,

\* Beitzke, vol. ii., p. 491.

will assist me in carrying it into execution. I have replied to your question. Now let me hear your request.”

“Sire,” said Marmont, after a brief silence, “now that we have heard your gracious reply, I dare to give expression to our request, which is not only ours, but that of all the officers of the army of France. Sire, we implore you, give up this bold plan of operations; do not vainly shed the blood of thousands! The odds are too great, not only in numbers, but in warlike ardor. The enemy is struggling against us with the fanaticism of hatred, and his threefold superiority seems to secure victory to him. Our army, on the contrary, is exhausted and tired of war, and the consciousness of being engaged in a struggle that apparently holds out no prospects of ultimate success, is paralyzing both its physical and moral strength. Sire, we implore you, in the name of France, make peace! Let us return to the Rhine! Let us at last rest from this prolonged war! Oh, sire, give us peace!”

“Oh, sire, give us peace!” echoed the generals, in solemn chorus.

The emperor’s eyes were fixed in succession upon the faces of the bold men who dared thus to address him, and who, at this hour, confronted him in a sort of open revolt. An expression of anger flushed his face for an instant, and his features resumed their impenetrable, stony look. “You have come to hold a council of war with me,” he said. “To be sure, I have not summoned you, but no matter. It is your unanimous opinion that we should return to the Rhine, and thence to France, avoid further battles, and make peace?”

“Sire, we pray your majesty this time to repress your military genius under the mantle of your imperial dignity,” cried the marshal. “As soon as the general is silent, the emperor will perceive that his people and his country need repose and peace. France has given her wealth, her vigor, and her blood, for twenty years of victories, and she has joyfully done so; but now her wealth is exhausted, her strength and her youth are gone, for there are in France no more young men, only the aged, invalids, and children; the fighting-men lie on the battle-fields. Boys have been enrolled, and are forming the young army of your majesty. Sire, it is the last blood that France has to sacrifice: spare it! The enemy is thrice as strong as we are, and even the military genius of your majesty will be unable to achieve victories in so unequal a

struggle. Listen, therefore, to reason, to necessity, and to our prayer; make peace. Sire, let us return to France!"

Another flush suffused Napoleon's face, but he controlled his anger. "You believe, then, that it depends on me only to make peace?" he asked, in a calm voice. "You think we would find no obstacles in our way if we endeavored now to return to France?—that the enemy would leave the roads open to us, and be content with our evacuating Germany? This is a great mistake, gentlemen. I cannot make peace, for the allies would not accept it. They know their strength, and are intent on having war. You say their armies are thrice as strong as mine, and that is the reason why we could not conquer? I might reply to you what the great Condé replied to his generals, when he was about to attack the superior Spanish army, 'Great battles are gained with small armies.' And on the following day he gained the battle of Lons. Yes, gentlemen, the victor of Rocroy and Lons was right; great battles are gained with small armies; only we must make our dispositions correctly, and scatter the forces of our adversaries, instead of giving them an opportunity to concentrate upon one point. It is, therefore, of vital importance for me to hold the line of the Elbe, for with it I possess all the strong points of Bohemia; and, besides, the fortresses of Custring, Stettin, and Glogau, are close to it. If I have to abandon that river, I abandon all Germany to the Rhine, with all the fortresses, and the vast *matériel* stored there. That would be to weaken us and strengthen the enemy, now on the left bank. I will, therefore, cross to the right bank of the Elbe, for thence I am able to deploy my whole army without hinderance, and connect my line with Davoust at Hamburg, and St. Cyr at Dresden. We shall easily take Berlin, raise the sieges of Glogau, Stettin, and Custring, and become masters of the situation. Prussia, the hot-bed of this fermentation and revolution, will be subjugated and crushed. That will discourage the others, and they will fall back as they have so often, their plans will be disorganized, and then I shall have gained my cause; for the strength of the allies consists chiefly in the fact that they are temporarily in harmony. Let us disorganize their plans, foster their separate interests, and we gain every thing. When the Prussians see their country threatened, they will hasten to its assistance; the Russians, Swedes, and Austrians, will refuse to change and reorganize their plans of operations for the sake of Prussia, and discord will prevent them from act-

ing. If Germany had been united, and acted with one will, I could not have taken from her a single village or fortress. Fortunately, however, the people do not act unanimously; wherever ten Germans are assembled, there are also ten separate interests at war among them, and this fact has delivered the country into my hands. Let us, therefore, profit by this national peculiarity; let us stir up their separate interests, and that will be as advantageous as though we gained a battle. We shall, then, cross over to the right bank of the Elbe, make Berlin our centre, support our left on Dresden, our right on Magdeburg, and face toward the west. At all events, this will bring about an entire change of position, and it will then be my task to force my plans of operation upon the allies."\*

"A task that would be easily accomplished by the genius of your majesty, which is so superior to that of all the generals of the allies," said the marshal; "but still this whole plan, how admirable soever it may be, is altogether too bold. If we pass over to the right bank of the Elbe, we would give up all connection with France; the allies, it would be believed, had, by skilful manœuvres, cut us off—hurled us into inevitable destruction. Moreover—your majesty will pardon me for this observation—we can no longer count upon the assistance of our German auxiliaries. They will abandon us at the very moment when we need them most. Even Bavaria is no longer a reliable ally, for, notwithstanding the benefits your majesty has conferred on her, she is about to ally herself with Austria. Sire, you said a few minutes ago that you counted upon the discord of the Germans, but this exists no more, or rather it exists only among the princes; but we have no longer to fight the latter alone—we have to struggle against the genius of Germany, which has risen against us, and for the first time the whole nation is united in hatred and wrath. Sire, this national spirit is more powerful than all princes and all armies, for it overcomes the princes, and makes new armies spring as if from the ground to defend the sacred soil of the fatherland. Those armies we shall be unable to conquer: for one-half of ours is composed of soldiers exhausted by continued wars, and longing for peace; and the other half of young, ignorant conscripts, who will yield to unwonted privations. Therefore, sire, I dare renew my prayer, and implore your majesty to give up your plan against Berlin! Let us not pass over to the right bank of the Elbe, but march toward the Rhine!"

\* Beitzke, vol. ii., p. 492.

"Is that your opinion, too, gentlemen?" asked Napoleon, turning toward the generals. "Do you, though I have condescended to explain to you at length my plan, and the motives that have caused me to adopt it, still persist in your belief that it would be better not to pass to the right bank of the Elbe, but to return to the Rhine?"

"Yes," cried the generals, unanimously, "we persist in our opinion."

Napoleon drew back a step, and a pallor overspread his face; but apparently he remained as cold and calm as ever. "My plan has been deeply calculated," he said, after a pause; "I have admitted into it, as a probable contingency, the defection of Bavaria. I am convinced that the plan of marching on Berlin is good. A retrograde movement, in the circumstances in which we are placed, is disastrous; and those who oppose my projects have undertaken a serious responsibility. However, I will think of it, and inform you of my final decision." \* He saluted the generals with a careless nod and retired again into his cabinet.

The generals looked with anxious faces at one another when the door closed. "What shall we do now?" they inquired. "Wait, and not yield!" murmured the most resolute among them, and all agreed to do so.

With gloomy glances did Napoleon, after his return to his cabinet, look at the door that separated him from his mutinous generals. He felt that now a new power had taken the field against him that might become more dangerous than all the others, and that was the revolt of his generals. He heard distinctly their last words. They had not said, "We persist in our opinion, and would like to return," but, "We must return to France." His generals, then, dared to have a will of their own, and opposed to that of their emperor. They knew it, and it did not deter them!

"Ah, the wretches," he murmured to himself, "they are blind! They will not see that we are hastening to destruction. They compel me to return as Alexander's generals compelled him to return! Woe to us! We are lost!" He sank down on the sofa; and now, when none could see him, the veil dropped from his face, the imperial mantle fell from his cowering form, and he was but a weak, grief-stricken man, who, with a pale and quivering face, was uncertain what to do. Hour after hour elapsed. He was still sitting in the

\* Napoleon's words.—Vide Fain, "Manuscrit de 1813," vol. i.

corner of the sofa, rigid and motionless; only the sighs which heaved his breast from time to time, and the quiver of his eyelids, betrayed the life that was still animating him.

The court-marshal entered and announced dinner. The emperor waved his hand to him that he might withdraw, and his marshals and generals vainly awaited him. They looked at each other inquiringly and murmured, "He is reflecting! We can wait, but we cannot yield!"

At the stated hour in the afternoon, the two topographers of the emperor, Colonel Bacler d'Alba, and Colonel Duclay, entered the emperor's cabinet. As usual, they rolled the table, covered with maps and plans, before the emperor, and then took seats at the other table standing in the corner, which was also covered in like manner. They waited for the emperor, as was his habit, to speak and discuss his movements with them. But he was silent; he took up, however, a large sheet of white paper, and pen, and began to write. What did he write? The topographers were unable to see it; they sat pen in hand, and waited. But Napoleon was still silent. Hour after hour passed; not a sound of the triumphant, joyous, and proud life which used to surround the victorious emperor was to be heard in the dreary palace of Duben. The anterooms were deserted; the generals remained all day in the audience-room, and gazed with sullen faces upon the door of the imperial cabinet. But this door did not open. In the cabinet the emperor was still on his sofa, now leaning back in meditation, and now bending over the map-table, and writing slowly. Opposite him sat the two topographers, mournfully waiting for him to speak to them.\* But Napoleon wrote, gazed into the air, sank back on the sofa, groaned, raised himself again, and wrote on.

This indifference and silence made a strange impression, which frightened even the generals, when the topographers, whom the emperor had at length dismissed with a quick wave of the hand, and an imperious "Go!" entered the audience-room, and told them of this extraordinary conduct. But Napoleon had written something, and it was all-important for them to know what. They wished to discover whether letters or plans had been penned by the emperor, and with what he had been occupied all day. "Let us speak with Constant," they whispered to each other. "He alone will enter the cabinet to-day. He has keen eyes, and will be able to see what

\* Odeleben, "The Campaign in Saxony in 1813."

the emperor has written." Constant consented to cast, at a favorable moment, a passing glance on the emperor's desk. The generals remained in the audience-room and waited.

An hour passed, when Constant, pale and sad, entered the room; he held a large, crumpled sheet of paper in his hand. "The emperor has retired," he whispered. "He called me, and when I entered the cabinet, he was still sitting on the sofa at the map-table, and engaged in writing. Suddenly he threw down the pen and seized the paper, crumpled it in his hand, and threw it on the floor. I picked it up, and may communicate it to you, for it contains no secrets." All the generals stretched out their hands. Constant handed the paper to Marshal Marmont. The sheet contained nothing but large capital letters, joined with fanciful flourishes.\* The generals gazed at each other with bewildered eyes. Those capital letters, this work of a child, was the day's labor which the energetic emperor had performed! The letters, traced so carefully and elaborately, made an awful impression on the beholders—a whole history of secret despair, stifled tears of grief, and bitter imprecations, spoke from this crumpled sheet of paper. The generals turned pale, as if imminent danger was hovering over them—as if Fate had sent them its Runic letters, which they were unable to decipher. They left the room in silence, but murmured still, "We can wait, but we cannot yield."

Night had come. Silence settled on the mournful palace of Duben. The emperor lay on his field-bed, but he did not sleep; for Constant, who was in the cabinet adjoining the imperial bedchamber, heard him often sigh and utter words of anger and grief. In the middle of the night the valet heard a loud, piercing cry, and ran into the bedchamber. The emperor was in agony, writhing, and a prey to violent convulsions. He was ill with colic, which so often visited him, and the pallor of death overspread his face.

Constant hastened to bring the usual remedies, but he did not send for the doctor; for he knew that Napoleon did not like to have any importance attached to this illness. The pain at length yielded to the remedies applied. The emperor submitted to Constant's entreaties, and drank the soothing tea which he always took at these evil hours, and the efficacy of which in such cases had been discovered by the Empress Josephine. He put the teacup on the table, and looked very

\* Constant, "Mémoires," vol. v., p. 269.

melancholy. Possibly he remembered how often Josephine's presence had comforted him during such hours—how her small hand had wiped the cold perspiration from his forehead—how his weary head had rested in her lap, and how her tender words had consoled and strengthened him. Possibly he remembered all this, for he murmured in a low voice, "Ah, Josephine, why are you not with me? You are my guardian angel! My star has set with you!" Then his head sank back on the pillow, and he closed his eyes. Perhaps his grief made him sleep.

Early on the following morning a carriage rolled into the court-yard, and Marshal Augereau requested an audience of the emperor, who had reëntered his map-cabinet.

"Augereau," said the emperor to his marshal, "you bring me bad news!"

"Only news, sire, which your majesty has already foreseen. It is the defection of Bavaria, and her accession to the alliance."

The emperor bent his head on his breast. "It must be so. All are deserting me. I must submit. Augereau," he said, aloud, "Bavaria has deserted me, but, what is still worse, my generals have done so, too. They will no longer follow me. They refuse to obey me; my plans seem too rash and dangerous. They do not wish to go to Berlin—they want peace! Do you understand, Augereau, peace at a moment when all are arming—when war is inevitable, and when it is all-important for me to extricate myself as advantageously as possible from the snare in which we shall be caught if the allies profit by their superiority, and draw together the net surrounding us."

"Sire, and I believe they have the will to do so," cried Augereau. "Nothing but the commanding military genius of your majesty is still able to conquer."

A painful smile quivered round the pale lips of the emperor. "Ah, Augereau," he said, "we are no longer the soldiers of Jena and Austerlitz. I have no longer any generals on whose obedience I may count. I shall give up my plan, I shall not pass over to the right bank of the Elbe, but, by taking this resolution, I renounce all victories and successes, and it only remains for me to succumb with honor, and to have opened as advantageous a passage as possible through Germany to France."

The marshals and generals were again assembled in the audience-room, and gazed in sullen expectation at the door

of the imperial cabinet. Suddenly the emperor, pale and calm as usual, walked in, followed by Marshal Augereau. All eyes were fixed upon the emperor, whose lips were to proclaim the events of the future.

Advancing into the middle of the room, he raised his head, and sternly glanced along the line of generals. "Gentlemen," he said, in a loud voice, "I have changed my plan. We shall not pass over to the right bank of the Elbe, but turn toward Leipsic to-morrow. May those who have occasioned this movement never regret it!"\*

A shout of joy burst forth when the emperor paused. The generals surrounded him, now that they had attained their object, to thank him for his magnanimity, and then they cheerfully looked at each other, shook hands, and exclaimed in voices trembling with emotion, "We shall again embrace our parents, our wives, our children, our friends!"†

"Ah, Augereau," said the emperor, mournfully, "you see I could not act otherwise; it was their will! But you, who are of my opinion that this retrograde movement is a calamity, will be able to testify in my favor if the future shows that I am right. You will state that I was compelled to pursue a path which I knew would lead to destruction!"

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### THE BATTLE OF LEIPSIC.

THE struggle had already been going on for two days. On the 15th and 16th of October the Austrians, Russians, Prussians, and Swedes, had fought a number of engagements with the French between Halle and Leipsic. The Austrians, or the army of Bohemia, commanded by Schwartzberg, the general-in-chief, had been defeated by the French at Wachau on the 15th of October; but the Prussians and Russians, under Blucher, had gained a brilliant victory at Möckern on the 16th of October; and though the Swedes, under Bernadotte, had not participated in the battle, and had, as usual, managed on that day to keep away from the carnage, they had at the same time contrived to participate in the glory of victory.

\*Napoleon's words.—Constant, vol. v., p. 269.

†Ibid.

The French had not gained a single decisive battle during these two days, and yet Napoleon himself was at the head of his forces, directing their movements. Thousands of his soldiers lay on the blood-stained field of Wachau, and thousands more were mown down at Möckern. His army was melting away hour by hour, while that of his enemies constantly increased. Fresh reserves were moved up; the battle array of the allies grew more imposing and overwhelming, and the great, decisive battle was drawing nigh.

It was the evening of the second day, the 16th of October. Napoleon, who had his headquarters on the preceding day at Reudnitz, four miles from Leipsic, removed them for the night into the open field, from which the city could be seen, and behind it the numerous fires of the allies gleamed through the gathering shades. Beside the emperor's tent a large camp-fire was kindled, and near it, on a small field-stool, covered with red morocco, sat Napoleon, his gray overcoat closely buttoned up, his three-cornered hat drawn over his forehead, and his arms folded on his breast. His guards, who were encamping in the plain in wide circles around him, could distinctly see him, partially illuminated by the camp-fire. That bent, dark form was their only hope—a hope which did not look up to the stars shining above them, but which was satisfied with a mortal, who they believed could guide and protect them. And he indeed could save them from death by discontinuing the struggle, by accepting peace, though at the heaviest cost—at the sacrifice of all his possessions outside of France.

Two forms approached the camp-fire. It was only when they stood by the emperor's side, that he perceived them and looked up. He recognized the grave faces of Marshal Berthier and Count Daru.

"What do you want?" he asked, in a husky voice.

"Sire," said Berthier, solemnly, "we come, as envoys of all the superior officers of the army, to lay our humble requests before your majesty."

"Have you any thing to request?" asked Napoleon, sneeringly. "I thought I had fulfilled at Duben all the wishes of my generals; I gave up my plan against Berlin and the right bank of the Elbe, and marched to Leipsic, in order to take the direct road to France. Are my generals not yet satisfied?"

"Sire, who could suppose that on this road we would meet