

"Yes, general. Let us begin the new year with a great deed, that we may end it with one."

"But will that be possible, field-marshal? Can all our troops be prepared at so short a notice?"

"That is your task, Gneisenau; ideas are your province, execution is mine. You are my head, I am your arm; and these two, I believe, ought jointly to enable us to cross the Rhine at midnight on the 31st of December, as the holy army of vengeance, which God Himself sends to Bonaparte as a New-Year's gift. But come, Gneisenau, let us ride to the ball. I must dance! Joy is in my legs, and I must allow it to get out of them. I shall ask old York to dance, and, while we two are hopping around, I must tell him what is to be done. We are to advance!"

Blucher's resolutions were carried into effect. All dispositions were made in a quiet and efficient manner; and while the field-marshal scolded vehemently at the inactivity of the winter, General Gneisenau secretly took steps to prepare for the passage of the Rhine. Napoleon's spies at Frankfort and on the Rhine heard only the grumbling of Blucher, but they did not see the preparations of Gneisenau.

On the 26th of December orders were dispatched to the commanders of the different corps of the great Silesian army, communicating the time and place of crossing the Rhine, and on the 31st every soldier of that army stood on the bank ready for the passage. This was to be effected at three different points—Mannheim, Caub, and Coblenz. The grand, all-important moment had come; midnight was at hand.

It was a clear and beautiful night; the deep-blue sky was spangled with stars, and the air cold and bracing. None saw the black columns moving toward the Rhine. The French, on the opposite side, were asleep; they did not perceive Field-Marshal Blucher, who, at Caub, on the bank of the river, was halting on horse back by the side of his faithful Gneisenau, apparently listening in breathless suspense. Suddenly, the stillness was interrupted by the chime of a neighboring church-clock; another struck, and, like echoes, their notes resounded down the Rhine, in all cities and villages, proclaiming that the old year was past, and a new one begun.

Blucher took off his gray forage-cap, and, holding it before his face, uttered a low, fervent prayer. "And now, forward!" he said, in a resolute tone. "Let us in person convey our 'happy New-Year' to the French!—And Thou, great God,

behold Thy German children, who are shaking off the thralldom of long years, and who have become again brave men! Heavenly Father, bless our undertaking! Bless the Rhine, that it may flow to the ocean again as a free German river for German freeman!—And now, boys, forward! Build your bridges, for Heaven sends us to France to punish Bonaparte, and sing him a song of the Rhine! Forward!"

## CHAPTER XLII.

## NAPOLEON'S NEW-YEAR'S-DAY.

It was early on the morning of the 1st of January. Napoleon was angrily pacing his cabinet, while the police-minister, Duke de Rovigo, was standing by the emperor's desk, and waiting, as if afraid to look at his master, lest his anger burst upon his head.

"Why did you not tell me so yesterday, Savary?" asked Napoleon, with his flaming eyes on the police-minister. "Why did you not inform me, immediately after the close of the meeting of the Chamber of Deputies, of the seditious and refractory spirit of the speeches which certain members dared to deliver?"

"Sire, I had no proofs of their guilt. Speeches, it is true, had been made, but they vanish, and offer no solid grounds for convicting men of crime. As I have not the honor of being a member of the committee which your majesty has appointed to take the condition of France into consideration, I was unable to hear the speeches delivered at the meeting. I had to obtain palpable evidence. I knew, not only that the commission of the Chamber of Deputies had resolved to have an address to your majesty published, but that the opposition speaker of the committee, M. Raynouard, intended to have his speech printed and circulated, in order to prove to France that the committee of the Chamber had done every thing to give peace to the nation."

"As if that were the task of those gentlemen—as if they had to give me advice, or could influence me!" cried Napoleon, vehemently. "They have never dared raise their voices against me; but now that we are surrounded by enemies—now that it is all-important for France to startle the world by her energy and the unanimity of her will, these men dare op-

pose me! You allowed, then, their addresses to be sent to the printing-office, Savary?"

"Yes, sire. But I had the printing-office surrounded by my police-agents, and waited until the composition was completed and the printing commenced. Then they entered the press-room, seized the copies already printed, knocked the types into pi, and burned the manuscripts,\* as well as the proofs, except this one, which I have the honor of bringing to your majesty."

The emperor, with an impetuous movement, took up the printed sheet lying on the table by the side of the duke, and glanced over it. "Savary," he said, pointing out a passage on the paper, "read this to me. Read the conclusion of Raynouard's speech. Read it aloud!" He handed the paper to the duke, and pointed out the passage.

Savary read as follows: "Let us attempt no dissimulation—our evils are at their height; the country is menaced on the frontiers at all points; commerce is annihilated, agriculture languishes, industry is expiring; there is no Frenchman who has not, in his family or his fortune, some cruel wound to heal. The facts are notorious, and can never be sufficiently enforced. Agriculture, for the last five years, has gained nothing; it barely exists, and the fruit of its toil is annually dissipated by the treasury, which unceasingly devours every thing to satisfy the cravings of ruined and famished armies. The conscription has become, for all France, a frightful scourge, because it has always been driven to extremities in its execution. For the last three years the harvest of death has been reaped three times a year! A barbarous war, without object, swallows up the youth torn from their education, from agriculture, commerce, and the arts. Have the tears of mothers and the blood of whole generations thus become the patrimony of kings? It is fit that nations should have a moment's breathing-time; the period has arrived when they should cease to tear out each other's entrails; it is time that thrones should be consolidated, and that our enemies be deprived of the plea that we are forever striving to carry into the world the torch of revolution. . . . To prevent the country from becoming the prey of foreigners, it is indispensable to nationalize the war; and this cannot be done unless the nation and its monarch be united by closer bonds. It has become indispensable to give a satisfactory answer to our enemies' ac-

\* "Mémoires d'un Homme d'État," vol. xii., p. 294.

cusations of aggrandizement: there would be real magnanimity in a formal declaration that the independence of the French people and the integrity of its territory are all that we contend for. It is for the government to propose measures which may promptly repel the enemy, and secure peace on a durable basis. Those measures would be at once efficacious, if the French people were persuaded that the government in good faith aspired only to the glory of peace, and that their blood would no longer be shed but to defend our country, and secure the protection of the laws. But these words of 'peace' and 'country' will resound in vain, if the institutions are not guaranteed which secure those blessings. It appears, therefore, to the commission, to be indispensable that, at the same time that the government proposes the most prompt and efficacious measures for the security of the country, his majesty should be supplicated to maintain entire the execution of the laws which guarantee to the French the rights of liberty and security, and to the nation the free exercise of its political rights."\*

"Well," cried the emperor, impetuously, "what do you think of that? Does it not sound like the first note of the tocsin by which the people are to be called upon to rise in rebellion?"

"Sire, it is the language of treason!" replied Savary. "The conduct of the members of this committee would justify your majesty to have them shot as traitors." †

The emperor made no reply, but bowed his head on his breast, and, with his hands folded behind him, paced the room for a few moments. "Savary," he then said, "it is sufficient for us to be at war with our foreign enemies; let us not get into difficulty with our domestic adversaries. This is not the time for doing so. If we conquer our foreign enemies, the domestic ones will of themselves be silent; but if we succumb, every thing will be different. Those gentlemen have acted both foolishly and ungenerously (at a moment when it is all-important that France should act and think as one man), to stir up political partisan feeling; and it is ungrateful to oppose me at a time when, overwhelmed with care and work, I need my whole energy to maintain my position. Let us leave it to fate to punish the traitors. They will not have long to wait!"

\* "Mémoires d'un Homme d'État," vol. xii., p. 293.

† Ibid., p. 294.

"And those haughty members of the Chamber of Deputies do not even feel that they are deserving of punishment," exclaimed the duke, indignantly. "The whole committee, and M. Raynouard with them, have accompanied me to the Tuileries, and repaired to the throne-hall in order to offer your majesty their congratulations for the new year."

"Ah, it is true, to-day is New-Year's-day," said Napoleon; "I had almost forgotten it, for the cares and anxiety of the old year have, as a most faithful suite, followed me into the new year. But I am glad you remind me of it! I will go to the throne-hall and receive the congratulations of my faithful subjects, or those who call themselves so. Follow me!"

In the throne-hall were assembled, as on every New-Year's-day, the dignitaries of France and the most prominent authorities of the government; but for the first time, since the establishment of the empire, the representatives of the foreign powers and the ambassadors of the European princes failed to appear at the reception in the Tuileries. In former years they had hastened to present their congratulations; to-day not one of those representatives was present, not even the ambassador of the Emperor of Austria, Napoleon's father-in-law—not even the ambassador of the King of Naples, his brother-in-law! The troops of the Emperor Francis had invaded France; the troops of King Murat had returned to Naples, and he had informed his brother-in-law that the welfare of his own country rendered it necessary for him to forsake France. The very princes of the Confederation of the Rhine, hitherto the most sycophantic flatterers of the emperor, had likewise turned away from him; all the allies, adulators, and friends of his days of prosperity had left him, as rats desert the sinking ship. No one was in the throne-hall except the dignitaries and officers of France, and one-half of these came, perhaps, because the duties of their offices rendered it incumbent on them—because the events of the future could not be positively foreseen, and the emperor, thanks to his lucky star, might finally conquer his enemies.

The emperor entered with his usual proud and careless indifference. His quick glance swept past the ranks of the assembly, and rested for a moment on the place where the ambassadors of the foreign governments formerly stood beside the throne, and where no one was to be seen to-day. But not a feature changed; he was still calm and grave. With a gentle nod he turned toward the ministers who were on the left, and

addressed each of them a few kind words; he then quickly ascended the steps of the throne. Under the canopy, he turned his eyes toward the side where were the members of the senate and the legislature.

Napoleon's eyes flashed down the silent assembly with an expression of terrible anger. When he spoke, his voice rolled like thunder through the hall, and echoed in the trembling hearts of those who were conscious of their guilt, and who hung their heads under the outburst of their sovereign's wrath. "Gentlemen of the legislature," he said, "you come to greet me. I accept your greetings, and will tell you what you ought to hear. You have it in your power to do much good, and you have done nothing but mischief. Eleventwelfths of you are patriotic, the rest are factious. What do you hope by putting yourselves in opposition? To gain possession of power? But what are your means? Are you the representatives of the people? I am. Four times I have been invoked by the nation, and have had the votes of four millions of men. I have a title to supreme authority, which you have not. You are nothing but the representatives of the departments. Your report is drawn up with an astute and perfidious spirit, of the effects of which you are well aware. Two battles lost in Champagne would not have done me so much mischief. I have sacrificed my passions, my pride, my ambition, to the good of France. I was in expectation that you would appreciate my motives, and not urge me to what is inconsistent with the honor of the nation. Far from that, in your report you mingle irony with reproach: you tell me that adversity has given me salutary counsels. How can you reproach me with my misfortunes? I have supported them with honor, because I have received from nature a sturdy temper; and if I had not possessed it, I would never have raised myself to the first throne in the world. Nevertheless, I have need of consolation, and I expected it from you: so far from receiving it, you have endeavored to depreciate me; but I am one of those whom you may kill, but cannot dishonor. Is it by such reproaches that you expect to restore the lustre of the throne? What is the throne? Four pieces of gilded wood, covered with a piece of velvet. The real throne has its seat in the heart of the nation. You cannot separate the two without mutual injury; for it has more need of me than I have of it. What could the nation do without a chief? When the question was, how we could repel the enemy, you demand institu-

tions as if we had them not! Are you not content with the constitution? If you are not, you should have told me so four years ago, or postponed your demand to two years after a general peace. Is this the moment to insist on such a demand? You wish to imitate the Constituent Assembly, and commence a revolution? Be it so. You will find I will not imitate Louis XVI.: I would rather abandon the throne, I would prefer making part of the sovereign people, to being an enslaved king. I am sprung from the people; I know the obligations I contracted when I ascended the throne. You have done much mischief; you would have done me still more, if I had allowed your report to be printed.—You speak of abuses, of vexations. I know, as well as you, that such have existed; they arose from circumstances, and the misfortunes of the times. But was it necessary to let all Europe into our secrets? Is it fitting to wash our dirty linen in public? In what you say there is some truth and some falsehood. What, then, was your obvious duty? To have confidentially made known your grounds of complaint to me, by whom they would have been thankfully received. I do not, any more than yourselves, love those who have oppressed you. In three months we shall have peace: the enemy will be driven from our territory, or I shall be dead. We have greater resources than you imagine: our enemies have never conquered us—never will. They will be pursued over the frontier more quickly than they crossed it. Go!”\*

The last words of the speech were still resounding through the hall when the deputies, with pale faces, bowing timidly and silently before the throne, turned and walked toward the door. All eyes were riveted on them, and it was felt that the men whom the emperor dismissed with such a strain of vehement invective were twenty new enemies whom Napoleon sent into the provinces, and who would bring a new hostile army—public opinion—into the field against him. Many hoped that the emperor, perceiving his blunder, would call back the deputies by some pleasant word, in order to bring about a reconciliation between him and those who, whatever the emperor might say, represented in the throne-hall the opinion of the people.

But Napoleon did not call them back; standing on his throne, haughty and defiant, he looked after the disappearing deputies in anger; and only when the door of the anteroom closed,

\* Bucher et Roux, "Histoire Parl. de France," vol. xxxix., pp. 460, 461.

did he turn his eyes toward those who surrounded him. As if by a magician's wand his face resumed its former expression of august calmness. He slowly left the throne, and, dropping here and there a few condescending words, crossed the hall. Suddenly he noticed Baron Fontaine, the architect of the imperial palaces. "Ah," exclaimed Napoleon, quickly advancing toward him, "you are here, Fontaine? I intended to send for you to-day. Did you bring your plans with you?"

"Yes, sire."

"Well, then, come; and you, ministers, Duke de Rovigo, Duke de Vicenza, Duke de Bassano, pray follow me into my cabinet."

The officers and cavaliers who remained in the hall looked after the emperor with anxious glances. "A cabinet meeting on this holiday! and at which the imperial architect has to be present!" they whispered. "What means this? Will the emperor commission M. de Fontaine to transform the Tuileries into a fortress, and construct ramparts and ditches? Are we, if all should be lost, to defend ourselves? Or will the emperor convert Paris into a fortress? Is M. de Fontaine to erect outworks and fortifications? Or will the emperor have a new Bastille built for the purpose of confining the traitorous legislature and several hundreds of these new-fangled royalists who are now springing up like mushrooms?"

But the emperor did not think of all this when, followed by the three ministers and Baron Fontaine, he entered his cabinet. An expression of affability overspread his features, and round his lips played the sunny smile which appeared so irresistible to all who had ever seen it. "Come hither, gentlemen," he said, merrily, "let us act here as judges. Fontaine brings us plans for a palace for the King of Rome. It is high time for me to think of building one for the heir-apparent, and this idea has engrossed my mind for a long period. If the times had not been so unfavorable, it would already have been completed. I will begin now, in order to prove to the foreign powers how great is the confidence felt by France and her emperor in their ability to withstand the attacks of the allies; for, while their armies are fighting the enemy, they are constructing a palace for their future emperor.—Now let me see your plans, Fontaine; unroll them!"

Fontaine spread out on the table the papers which he had brought with him from the anteroom. The emperor bent over them, and asked the architect to explain to him the differ-

ent lines and figures. The three ministers stood beside them, grave and silent, and their furtive glances seemed to ask whether this really was not a scene intentionally contrived by the emperor—whether he really could think of building a palace for the King of Rome at a moment when France was hemmed in on all sides, and menaced by enemies, endangering the existence of the imperial throne!

But Napoleon really seemed to be quite sincere. With his magic energy he appeared to have banished all gloomy thoughts, and to be engrossed only in plans for a serene future. "See here, Caulaincourt," he said, pointing to one of the plans, "what do you think of this? It is a sort of castle or fort, and looks well, does it not?"

"Very, indeed," replied Caulaincourt. "It reminds me of the palace at Oranienbaum, which Paul I. built. The towers at the corners, the bastions, and ditches, are similar; and the interior had not only many rooms, but secret staircases, doors, and hidden passages."

"And yet Paul I. was assassinated in that palace!" cried the emperor, whose face suddenly darkened. "The doors and passages did not protect him from murderers.—Well, Maret and Savary, what do you think of it? Do you deem it best that I should build the palace for the King of Rome in the style of a fortress, like that of Oranienbaum?"

"Sire," exclaimed Savary, eagerly, "so precious a head cannot be sufficiently protected. In building a palace for the king, less attention should be paid to an attractive appearance than to safety and convenience."

"Is that your opinion, too, Maret?"

The Duke de Bassano was silent for a moment, and closely examined the plan. "No, sire," he then said, looking at the emperor, with a polite yet somewhat singular smile—"no, sire. I believe we should avoid the semblance of a fortress built for the heir-apparent, just as though he should ever need such a place of refuge against his own subjects, and in the middle of his capital! People would say your majesty intended to reconstruct for your successor the old Bastille."

"Maret is right," exclaimed the emperor. "No fortress! The confidence, love, and attachment of his people should be the only safeguard of a monarch. Ramparts did not save Paul I.; the greatest precautions, locked and guarded doors, did not protect the sultan from the scimitars of the Janizaries; every one falls when his hour has struck; it will strike for

me, too, and my life will belong to him who is willing to give up his life for mine! But I shall teach my son to govern the Parisians without fortresses, and make them love him.\* It is true, however, there will always be malicious men to frustrate our efforts, and sow the seeds of discord between me and my people."

"Sire," said Fontaine, anxious to turn the emperor's thoughts into a different channel, "here is another plan. The former was in the old feudal style; this would look more like a villa."

"That is the very thing I want," exclaimed the emperor, eagerly. "A villa in the grandest possible style—a palace magnificent enough to be mentioned after the Louvre, but still with all the peculiarities of a villa. For the palace of the King of Rome, after all, will be only a sort of villa in Paris; as a winter residence the Tuileries, or the Louvre, would be preferred. But, though I want the building to be large and brilliant, the total cost must not exceed ten million francs. I do not want a chimera, but something real, substantial, and practical, for myself and the king, and not a fanciful structure merely gratifying to the architect. The completion of the Louvre will give glory enough to the architect. As to the palace of the King of Rome, he may forget his personal interest, and think only of rendering the structure as convenient as possible. It is to become a sort of Sans-Souci, where one is merry, forgets care, enjoys the sunshine in the apartments, and the shade in the garden, and may combine the simplicity of rural life with the comforts of a great city. Imagine you were building a commodious residence for a rich private citizen, a convalescent who has need of comfort, repose, and diversion. There must be, therefore, a small theatre, a small chapel, a concert-hall, a ball-room, a billiard-room, and a library; fish-ponds, and shady groves in the garden—in short, a genuine villa." †

"I believe your majesty will find all that you wish for united in this," said the Duke de Bassano, who had carefully examined the second plan. "It is a villa in grand style, and surely worthy of a great prince."

"Ah," said the emperor, with a profound sigh, "would it were already finished, and I could live in it with my son! I—"

At this moment the folding-doors of the cabinet were thrown open, and the usher's voice shouted, "His majesty the King of Rome!"

\* Napoleon's words.—Vide "Memoirs of the Duchess d'Abrantes."  
 † Napoleon's words.—Vide Constant, "Mémoires," vol. v., p. 184.