

ward of one hundred friends are already assembled in the large saloon, and they are doubtless astonished at my prolonged absence. Come, prince! You will meet an old friend among your new friends."

"Who is it, countess?"

"The Duke d'Otranto!"

"What? Is he here? Has he dared to return?"

"He has, with the emperor's sister, the Princess Eliza Bacciochi; and he is believed to be with her in the south of France, in order to await the course of events. But he has secretly and in disguise come to Paris, in order, like you, to offer his services to King Louis. Late events seem to have converted him into a very zealous royalist, and he openly admits his conversion. He boasts of having said to the Princess Eliza: 'Madame, there is but one way of salvation: the emperor must be killed on the spot.*'"

"In truth, he is right," said Talleyrand, smiling; "that would speedily put an end to all embarrassments. Well, the emperor intends to join the army; perhaps, a hostile bullet may become our ally, and save us further trouble. If not, we shall speak of the matter hereafter. Permit me, countess, to conduct you to the saloon."

CHAPTER XLVI.

MADAME LETITIA.

PROFOUND silence reigned in the palace of "Madame Mère." It was noonday, and the male and female servants, as well as the ladies of honor of the emperor's mother, had left the palace to take elsewhere the dinner which Madame Letitia refused to give them, and for which she paid them every month a ridiculously small sum; only the two cooks, whom madame, notwithstanding her objections, had to keep, in compliance with the express orders of the emperor, were in the kitchen, but under the vigilant supervision of old Cordelia, the faithful servant who had accompanied madame from Corsica to France, and who, since then, notwithstanding all vicissitudes, had remained her companion. Cordelia not only watched the cooks and gave them what was needed for preparing the meals, but, as soon as the dishes were handed to

* "Mémoires du Duc de Rovigo," vol. vi., p. 352.

the servant who was to carry them to the table, she hastened after him in order to prevent him from putting anything aside. When Cordelia went with the servant, she opened, with an air of self-importance, a cupboard fixed in the wall of the corridor, near the dining-room, of which she alone possessed the key, and, as soon as the servant returned with the fragments of the dinner, she locked them in this cupboard with the wine and bread; only on Sundays did the dinner-table of Madame Mère provide any thing for the servants.

To-day, however, was not Sunday, and hence Madame Cordelia herself had placed a bottle, half filled with wine remaining from yesterday's dinner, on the table, at which no one but Madame Letitia was to seat herself, one of the ladies of honor, who always dined with her, having been excused on account of indisposition. Madame Letitia was therefore alone to-day; it was unnecessary for her to submit to the restraint of etiquette, and she yielded with genuine relief to an unwonted freedom. She was in her sitting-room, busily engaged in taking from a large basket, the plebeian appearance of which contrasted strangely with the magnificent Turkish carpet on which it stood, the folded clothes which the washerwoman had just delivered. The appearance of Madame Mère herself was also in some contrast with the gorgeous surroundings amid which she moved.

The room was furnished with princely magnificence, the walls being hung with heavy satin, and curtains of the same description, adorned with gold embroideries, suspended on both sides of the high windows; the richly-carved chairs and sofas were covered with purple velvet, and the tables had marble slabs of Florentine workmanship. A chandelier of rock-crystal hung in solid gold chains from the ceiling; masterly paintings in broad, rich frames were on the silken walls; Japan vases stood on gilded consoles, and numerous costly ornaments added to the splendor of the aristocratic apartment.

Madame Letitia, standing beside the wash-basket, presented a marked contrast with all this. Her tall figure was wrapped in a light white muslin dress trimmed below with rosettes, and from which protruded a rather large foot, covered with a cotton stocking, and encased in a coarse, worn-out shoe. A sash of rose-colored silk, with faded embroidery, encircled her waist; a lace shawl, crossed over her bosom, and tied in a careless knot on her back, enveloped her neck and full shoul-

ders. Her hair, falling down in heavy gray ringlets, was surmounted by a sort of turban, and a large bouquet of artificial roses, fastened above her forehead, was her only ornament.

There was nothing therefore imposing in the appearance of the emperor's mother; but still there was something noble about her, and that was her face. It was of imperishable beauty; its outlines were classic and of great dignity, and her eyes, which were of the deep, incomparable color which she had bequeathed to her son the emperor, possessed still the lustre of youth; her lips were fresh, and her teeth faultless; not a single wrinkle furrowed her forehead, and her finely-curved nose added to the imperious expression of her features. The whole bearing of Madame Letitia indicated a lofty and yet a gentle spirit. He who beheld only this form, with its strange dress, could not refrain from smiling; but a glance at the beautiful and dignified face filled the beholder with feelings of reverence and admiration.

Madame Letitia, as we have said, was engaged in unpacking the clothes just returned by the laundress. This was an occupation which she never intrusted to any of her attendants, but in which she could generally engage only secretly and at night, after she had dismissed them; for the emperor made it incumbent on his mother's ladies of honor to observe the strictest etiquette, and forbade her to occupy herself with affairs improper for the mother of an emperor. Hence, Madame Letitia was obliged, for the most part, to lead the life of an aristocratic lady, embroider a little, ride out, have her companions read to her, receive visitors, and pass the day in *ennui*. Only at night, when the ladies left the palace—when etiquette permitted Madame Letitia to retire with her maid Cordelia into her bedroom—only then commenced her active life. At that time madame conversed with her confidantes about her household affairs; she decided what dishes should be prepared for the following day, and, when all were asleep and she was sure of being watched by no one, she proceeded with her faithful Cordelia to the cupboard of the corridor to examine the remnants saved from dinner, and to decide whether they might not be served up again.

On this day she was free from the restraints of etiquette. The lady on service had been taken ill; and her second lady of honor, not anticipating such an event, had obtained leave to take a trip to Versailles. Madame Letitia, therefore, was at liberty to dispose of her time as she pleased; she could

fearlessly indulge in occupations entirely contrary to etiquette, and she embraced this rare opportunity in the course of the forenoon of examining the clothes, which otherwise would have had this honor only after nightfall. But the consequence was, that the usually serene forehead of Madame Letitia grew dark, because she was by no means satisfied with the performance of her laundress. Just as her busy hands took up another piece from the basket and unfolded it, the door behind her opened. She heard it, but did not turn, knowing very well that it was Cordelia who entered her room, for no one else had the right of taking such a liberty without being duly and formally announced.

"Cordelia," she exclaimed, "Cordelia, come and look at these towels of the cook; all of them are already threadbare, and it is but a year since I bought them. You ought to tell the cook very emphatically that she should be more careful and not ruin my towels. Do you hear, Cordelia?"

"Cordelia is not here," said a grave, angry voice behind her. Madame Letitia started, and a deep blush suffused her cheeks. Close behind her stood the emperor, fixing his stern eyes on his mother.

"The emperor!" she murmured, yielding to the first movement of terror, and sinking back on her chair.

"Yes, the emperor!" said Napoleon, approaching and casting angry glances on the clothes spread out on the table. "The emperor pays a visit to his mother, and finds to his amazement that little respect is felt here for his orders, and that it is deemed unnecessary to comply with his wishes. Ah, madame, how can the emperor expect the people to obey him everywhere and unconditionally, when his own family set an example of disobedience, and openly show that the emperor's orders are indifferent to them?"

"When have I shown indifference to them?" asked Madame Letitia, casting a despairing glance on the basket.

"You show it at this very hour," said the emperor, sternly, "and every thing proves that you are in the habit of disobeying my wishes. I met with no footmen in the outer antechamber; I did not see the chamberlain of your imperial highness in the adjoining room."

"It is noonday, and they have gone to dinner."

"Ah, it is true, your imperial highness directs your court to take their meals at other houses," exclaimed the emperor, with a sarcastic smile. "You are paying board-money to

the chamberlain, the valet de chambre, and the footman, so that it is unnecessary for you to feed them. But where is your waiting-lady, madame? Did I not issue orders that etiquette should be observed at my mother's palace, and that your imperial highness should always have your lady of honor with you?"

"The Duchess d'Abrantes was suddenly taken sick this morning, and had to return to her house."

"In that case the second lady of honor ought to have taken her place."

"Yesterday I gave permission to the Countess de Castries to go to a family-festival to be celebrated at Versailles, and she went early this morning."

"Every thing, then, is here just as it ought to be!" cried the emperor, indignantly, thrusting the basket with his foot. "It is in strict accordance with my wishes that your house is empty, that you are so occupied, that you are alone, and that there was no one to announce my visit?"

"But Cordelia certainly was there, and quite ready to attend to this."

"Yes, she was," cried the emperor, "and it is true she wished to do me that honor. But I would not allow her, and preferred coming to you without being announced. In truth, it would be too ludicrous if the old Sibyl had served the emperor as mistress of ceremonies."

"She formerly did him far greater and more difficult service," said Madame Letitia, in a firm and calm voice, for she had fully recovered her presence of mind, and, rising from her easy-chair, proudly bridled herself up and turned toward the emperor her face, which now had resumed its expression of noble dignity and composure.

"When I first saw your countenance," she said, calmly, "I was frightened, and greeted you in my terror as the emperor. Pardon me for it! I ought to have remembered that when the emperor crosses the threshold of this house, he ceases to be emperor, and is simply Napoleon Bonaparte, who, as it behooves a son, comes to pay his respects to his mother. Hence, I ought to have greeted you at once as my son, and if I did not, it was because I was frightened, for I am not accustomed to see any one enter here without being announced. Now, I have overcome my terror, I bid you welcome with all my heart, my dear son!" She offered her hand to Napoleon so proudly that the emperor, scarcely aware of what he did, pressed the small white hand of his mother to his lips.

A gentle smile lit up the beautiful face of Madame Letitia. "I forgive you also your vehement words, my son," she said; "and how could I be angry with you for forgetting for a moment that you are here only my son, when I myself remembered only that you are the-emperor? Let us, therefore, make peace again. Napoleon, my son, I bid you welcome once more with all my heart."

"Even, my mother, if I should come to ask my dinner of you?" inquired the emperor, smiling.

Madame Letitia was silent for a moment. "Even then!" she said, after a pause. "My son will be content with what I am able to give, and he will pardon an old woman, who attaches little value to the pleasures of the table, if she has, on account of her health, but a very plain dinner."

"That is to say, we shall have the national dish of Corsica—rice dumplings baked in oil!" exclaimed the emperor, laughing.

"So it is," said madame, merrily. "Ah, I see my son has not forgotten his native Corsica; then he will also have a kind look for poor old Cordelia, who, both in good and evil days, has been the most faithful and honest servant of our house, who frequently carried Napoleon Bonaparte for whole days in her arms, and when he was sick sat at his bedside and nursed him with the tenderness of a mother. I will tell Cordelia to take this basket away, and inform the cook that we have a guest." She rang the bell; the door of the adjoining room opened immediately, and old Cordelia entered. She stood still at the door, and cast mournful glances, now on Madame Letitia, now on the emperor.

"Well, Cordelia, do you not greet my son?" asked madame. "He is not the emperor to-day, but comes incognito as my son to ask dinner of me."

"And listen, dear Delia," said the emperor, speaking to her in the voice of a child—"listen, dear old Cordelia; afterward let us go and play, and gather shells on the sea-shore. Shall we do so, 'Lia?"

An air of unutterable happiness illuminated the face of old Cordelia when Napoleon repeated to her, in the voice of his childhood, the words which he had so often addressed to her. She rushed toward him, and, sinking down before him, seized both his hands and pressed them to her lips. "Now do with me what you like, Napoleon," she cried, in the language of her native country, while the tears were rolling down her

cheeks, "I belong to you again, with every drop of my heart's blood. Trample me under foot, strike me, kick me, as you often did during your childhood—I shall never murmur. I am as a faithful dog, who allows himself to be beaten, and yet loves his master to the last!"

"Yes, she is as constant as the sea that washes the shores of our native country," said madame, with a tear in her eye. "You may count on both of us, Napoleon, and if there is power in our prayers you will always be victorious."

The emperor's face darkened. He had forgotten every thing for a moment; but he soon recollected himself. In order to be victorious and prosperous he needed not only soldiers but money, and he had come for the purpose of obtaining this from his mother. He disengaged his hands from those of old Cordelia, and motioned her to rise. She obeyed in silence, quietly took up the clothes, and carried them off in the basket.

"See that we soon have dinner," said madame to her. Cordelia turned and looked inquiringly at her mistress, who nodded to her; Cordelia nodded, too, and went out smiling.

A quarter of an hour afterward, the emperor conducted his loving mother to the dining-table, at which none other than themselves were to be seated. When they entered, the emperor's eyes glided with a strange, searching look along the paintings hanging on the walls, and rested for a moment on the landscape which, in a broad gilded frame, was directly opposite; then a faint smile flitted over his features, and he turned toward his mother to address a few pleasant words to her.

The dinner commenced, as the emperor anticipated, with Corsican rice dumplings baked in oil. He partook of them with great relish, and this favorite dish of his childhood seemed to have restored his good humor. "I believe," he said, gayly, "I am still able to read as well in your face, mother, as I could when I was a boy, and took pains to discover whether or not I had deserved punishment for some naughty prank. I believe I have understood your mute dialogue with Cordelia. Will you confess the truth to me if I tell you what Cordelia's glances and your nod signified?"

"Yes, if you guess it."

"Well, then, mother, did not Cordelia inquire by her glances whether she was to send to the baker for bread, and whether the remnant of yesterday's dinner should not be served again in honor of my presence? And did not your

nod reply, 'Yes?' Was not that the meaning of it? Do I guess right?"

"Yes, my son," said madame, smiling; "I see that my haughty daughters Pauline and Eliza have made you familiar with the habits of my household."

"They have," exclaimed Napoleon. "They told me Madame Mère had every day only three loaves of white bread brought from the baker for herself and Cordelia."

"They told you the truth; all my officers and servants receive their board-money, and three loaves are sufficient for us two. Ah, my son, how happy would you have often been, when still a lieutenant, had you had only one of the three loaves every day!"

"Eliza told me still other things," said Napoleon, casting a glance toward the large oil painting. "She told me you had, like all honest *bourgeoises*, your water-carrier, who furnished every day six buckets of water."

"Eliza told you the truth again. It is still the same water-carrier whom we employed when we lived in the Faubourg St. Honoré; he is a faithful and honest man; why, then should I withdraw this little patronage from him?"

"But you pay him no more for his water, now that you are the emperor's mother, than you did when you were a poor widow with nine children."

"God makes the water flow, and it is the same now as then. Why should I, then, pay more for it?"

"Eliza told me, also," added the emperor, dwelling with singular perseverance on the same subject, "that, instead of collecting a library, and buying the books you read, you have subscribed to the bookseller Renard's circulating library."

"There are very few books that deserve the honor of being bought," said madame, in a dignified tone.

"And is it true, too," asked the emperor, "that you have the books brought by the bookseller's clerk to you every week the year round, and that you have the same exchanged by your servants during only New-Year's week, in order thereby to avoid giving a New-Year's present to the clerk?"

"It is true," said madame, calmly. "This clerk is not poor, nor the father of a family; I avoid, therefore, giving him the money which I prefer giving to poor men."

"But, madame," cried Napoleon, angrily, "you really surpass Harpagon, and Molière has cause to complain that he did not know you." *

* Napoleon's words.—Vide *Le Normand*, vol. ii., p. 451.

"Molière has assuredly cause to deplore that he did not live at the present time," said madame, quietly, "for if he lived now, he would have seen on the throne of France a prince who is even greater and more illustrious than his own Louis XIV. And he would have certainly been glad to make my acquaintance, as I am the mother of this great man."

"The mother of an emperor, and yet living so parsimoniously that one might believe your son suffered you to starve! And still, if I am not mistaken, you receive a million francs a year for defraying the expenses of your court. Am I right, mother?"

"Yes, my son; I receive a million francs a year."

"Ah, madame," cried the emperor, "then you must, considering your economy, lay by riches every year?"

Madame Letitia's face was serious; the emperor had touched a chord unpleasant to her ear.

"No," she said, abruptly, "I lay by no riches, for my expenses are heavy."

"But your income is larger," exclaimed Napoleon. "I am satisfied that you spend far less than you receive. Whom do you economize for, madame?"

"Whom?" asked madame, in an angry voice. "I might say for myself, for my future, for that is uncertain, and one is never able to know what may happen. But, in addition to myself, I have to take care of your brother Lucien, for your majesty knows well that he is poor."

"Because he would not accept the kingdom which I offered to him."

"Because, as a king, he would not be a dependent vassal, the mere lieutenant of his brother. What, sire! Would *you* accept a kingdom offered to you on condition that you should never have a will of your own, but always obey that of another?"

"I would not," said the emperor, smiling; "but I am the emperor."

"You are Lucien's brother, and he is no less proud than the emperor. Let us say no more about it. He is poor; that was all I wished to say. He is unable to endow his daughters, and I have, therefore, taken this upon myself. You know now, my son, what my savings are for."

"But I am just as well your son as Lucien," said the emperor, in a bland voice; "you may very well have laid by money for both of your sons. I am in the same predicament as my brother. I am poor, and need money. Hence I come

to you, to my mother, and pray you, let me have some of your savings. I know you have money; I need it, and you would place me under the greatest obligations if you would lend me a large sum."

Madame Letitia gravely shook her head. "You are mistaken, sire," she said; "I have only as much as I need."

The emperor's forehead darkened more and more. "Madame," he cried, in a tone of irritation, "I repeat to you, it is a great favor which I ask of you!"

"And I repeat that I have no money to spare; I had some, but sent it recently to Lucien, who needs it."

"Well, then, let us say no more about it," replied the emperor, rising, and, as if to overcome his vexation, turning toward the paintings, and closely inspecting one after another. "You have very fine paintings, madame," he said, after a pause.

"Yes, the work of great masters," replied madame, composedly. "You reproach me with being very parsimonious, sire; I have, however, paid very large sums to artists."

"I am especially delighted with this landscape," said the emperor, standing in front of the Swiss landscape, on which he had repeatedly cast furtive glances.

"Well, it is very fine and costly," said madame.

The emperor was silent, and looked up again attentively to the painting. He then turned toward his mother, who stood near him. "Mother," he exclaimed, "I asked money of you, and you refused it. Will you refuse my request, too, if I ask you to present me with this fine landscape?"

"On the contrary," said madame, "I am glad to be able to fulfil your majesty's wish. I shall have the painting conveyed to the Tuileries this very day."

"No," exclaimed the emperor, smiling, "it will be better to take it at once with me in my carriage. You are so economical, mother, you might repent of having given me so costly a present, and might want to keep it."

"Sire," said madame, solemnly, "the emperor's mother pledges you her word that you shall receive the painting this very day."

"Madame," replied her proud son, no less solemnly, "the emperor's mother also pledged me her word that she has no money to lend me, and yet I venture to believe that she has laid by a great deal. Pardon me, therefore, if I persist in taking the painting with me.—Delia, Delia!" The door of

the corridor opened, and old Cordelia looked in. "Run, Cordelia, and tell my two valets de chambre, Constant and Roustan, to come hither at once."

Cordelia disappeared, and Napoleon now turned his head slowly toward his mother. Madame Letitia became pale; large drops stood on her forehead; her eyes were flashing with angry excitement, and her lips were quivering. But overcoming her agitation she forced herself to smile, and offered her hand to the emperor. "Come, my son, let us go into my cabinet and take coffee. It is unnecessary for us to be present with the servants. Come, sire."

The emperor did not take her hand, but, slightly bowing, drew back. "Permit me to stay, madame, till my servants have taken the painting from the wall."

Madame could not suppress a sigh, and clutched a chair, as if she needed a support.

The door opened, and the two imperial valets de chambre, Constant and Roustan, entered. "Come here," cried the emperor, "take this down and carry it into my carriage." The valets hastened to take the painting carefully from the wall. The emperor's glance passed over the spot which it had covered. He saw that part of the silk hangings looked somewhat fresher and darker than the rest. "One would think the wall here were wet, and had moistened the hangings," he said, laying his hand on the dark spot. "No," he then exclaimed, "the wall is hollow here! Let us see what it means."

Madame uttered a cry, and, sinking into a chair, closed her eyes.

The emperor now hastily tore off the dark piece covering the wall, and behind it was a deep square hole, in which stood a rather large-sized iron box. "Ah! do you see, madame," cried the emperor, smiling gayly, "I discover here a secret which you yourself were ignorant of. It is evidently a box which the former proprietors of this palace concealed here during the revolution from the rapacious hands of the Jacobins."

Madame made no reply; her eyes were still closed, and she sat pale and motionless.

"The box is heavy!" added the emperor, trying to lift it up. "Constant, fetch the footmen to assist you in carrying it into my carriage.—I will take it with me, madame," he said, turning toward his mother, "I will personally examine its contents." At this moment Constant returned with four

footmen, and the six men succeeded at length in lifting the iron box. "Now carry it immediately into my carriage," commanded the emperor.

Panting under their heavy load, the men left the room. The emperor looked after them until the door closed. He then turned again toward his mother, who sat motionless and with her eyes closed. "Farewell, mother," he said; "I am anxious to examine the contents of the box which I was lucky enough to find. But I must not dare now to deprive you of your beautiful painting. This hole in the wall must be covered, and your imperial highness might not at once have another picture worthy of replacing this landscape. I thank you, therefore, for your present, and take the will for the deed. Farewell, madame!" He bowed and walked slowly toward the door.*

Madame Letitia said nothing, and made no movement to return the emperor's salutation. As he departed, she groaned and wept. "Five millions!" she murmured, after a pause—"the savings of long years has my son taken from me. Five millions!—the dower that I had laid by for Lucien's daughters—that I had economized for the time when these days of prosperity will end." She buried her face in her hands and sobbed aloud. At length her grief seemed somewhat calmed, and she raised her head again. "Well," she said, aloud, "I formerly supported my family of nine children on an income of less than a hundred louis d'ors a year; if need be, I can do so again, and I hope I shall have at least so much left that Lucien and his daughters will not starve. I must be even more parsimonious." †

Two days afterward, on the 25th of January, the emperor left Paris for his army, and entered upon the last struggle. He was fully aware of the dangers threatening him. Hence, prior to leaving Paris, he put his house in order. The regency by letters-patent was conferred on the Empress Maria Louisa, but with her was conjoined his brother Joseph, under the title of lieutenant-general of the empire; and Cambaceres, the arch-chancellor, was placed at the head of the council of state. The emperor then received the officers of the National

* Le Normand, "Mémoires," vol. ii., p. 448.

† Lucien, the ablest and noblest of Napoleon's brothers, lived in constant dissension with him, for he would not submit to his will. He declined the throne of Naples because the emperor imposed the condition that he should govern in precise accordance with the orders given him. He married a distinguished and beautiful Roman lady, and when Napoleon afterward offered him the throne of Tuscany on condition that he should get a divorce from his wife, Lucien refused, and preferred to live in obscurity outside of France, and to dispense with the splendor surrounding his family.

Guard of Paris in the apartments of the Tuileries. The empress preceded him on entering the apartments, carrying the King of Rome in her arms. Greeting the officers, the emperor said: "Gentlemen of the National Guard of Paris, I am glad to see you assembled here. I am about to set out for the army. I intrust to you what I hold dearest in the world—my wife and my son. Let there be no political divisions; let the respect for property, the maintenance of order, and, above all, the love of France, animate every heart. I do not disguise that, in the course of the military operations to ensue, the enemy may approach in force to Paris; it will be an affair of only a few days: before they are passed I will be on the flanks and rear, and annihilate those who have dared to invade our country. Efforts will be made to cause you to waver in your allegiance and the fulfilment of your duty; but I firmly rely on your resisting such perfidious temptations. Farewell, and God bless us all!"* Then, taking his son in his arms, he went through the ranks of the officers, and, presenting him to them as their future sovereign, he exclaimed, in a voice tremulous with emotion: "I intrust him to you; I intrust him to the love of my loyal city of Paris!"

The National Guard responded by protestations of fidelity and devotedness. Cries of enthusiasm rent the apartments; tears were shed, and a sense of the solemnity of the moment penetrated every mind. All shouted, "Long live the emperor! Long live the empress!" Maria Louisa, pale with emotion, her face bathed in tears, leaned her head on the emperor's shoulder; and, holding his son in his left arm, he placed his right around the trembling form of his consort. At the sight of this touching group the enthusiasm of the National Guard knew no bounds. They wept, cheered, and swore they would die to a man rather than forsake the emperor—that they would allow Paris to be laid in ruins by the artillery of the enemy rather than surrender the empress and the King of Rome.

But this enthusiasm of the National Guard met with no response beyond the Tuileries. Paris maintained an ominous silence, and, when the emperor rode through the city at night, the streets were deserted; no one had awaited him to pay homage on his departure. Paris was asleep—its sleep that of exhaustion—and the people were dreaming, perhaps, that adversity was hastening upon them.

* Constant, "Mémoires," vol. vi., p. 7.

FALL OF PARIS.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE BATTLE OF LA ROTHÈRE.

THE morning of the 1st of February dawned cold and gloomy; heavy gusts, driving the snow across the plain, gave to the landscape a sad and dreary aspect. Silence reigned in the camps of the hostile armies. In that of Napoleon at Brienne, and farther down the valley at the village of La Rothière, on this side of the Aube, the camp-fires of the night were flickering in the gray morning, and far away on the horizon were seen the dark outlines of the castle of Brienne. There Napoleon had passed the last night of January, and in the vicinity encamped his troops, scarcely thirty thousand strong, the remnant of that "grand army" which the emperor had so often led to victory.

In the camp of the Silesian army, too, all was quiet. It encamped beyond the Aube, on the heights of Trannes and Eclance, in the vineyards and the forests of Beaulieu; it was enjoying repose after a prolonged exposure and privation. But its commander-in-chief, Field-Marshal Blucher, seemed to have no need of rest. Scarcely had daylight dawned when he was already on horseback, and rode to the crest of the mountain, by the side of his faithful adviser and friend General Gneisenau, and followed by his pipe-master. From the crest he was able to survey the whole valley of La Rothière and Brienne, lying at a distance of scarcely four miles.

Blucher raised his right arm toward the city and heaved a deep sigh. "Gneisenau," he said, "I am deeply mortified at the defeat which Bonaparte inflicted on us two days ago. I cannot get over it, and can imagine what a hue-and-cry the distinguished gentlemen at headquarters have raised, and how the *trübsalsspritzen* are croaking again: Blucher is a crazy hussar who always wants to drive his head through a wall, and yet cannot get through it, and only causes us all a vast deal