

"I implore your excellency not to do so," said the physician, in an impressive tone. "Give yourself a few days' rest and recreation, and your eyes will get well; but if you expose yourself to-day I shall never again cross your threshold, for I do not care to be disgraced by the report that Field-Marshal Blucher lost his eyesight while under my care; and I tell you, you will be blind, and then I can do nothing for you."

"Stay here, your excellency," begged Gneisenau; "do not trifle with your dear eyes, destined to see still many beautiful things, and gladden the world by their heroic glances! What can a triumph of a few hours' duration be to you to whom every day will be a triumph, and whom delivered Germany awaits to greet with manifestations of love and gratitude?"

"Ah, it is not for the sake of the triumph that I wish to go," cried Blucher, morosely. "But I have sworn, for seven years, and it has been my only consolation, that, in spite of Bonaparte, I would make my triumphal entrance into Paris, as Bonaparte did into Berlin, and now you insist on my not fulfilling my oath!"

"You will nevertheless make your entrance into Paris," exclaimed Gneisenau; "though your person be absent, your name will float as our banner of victory over the monarchs, and all know full well that Blucher is *the* conqueror."

"Stay!" begged Voelzke; "think of the pain which you have already suffered, and of that you will suffer; and of which I give you sufficient warning."

"Yes, field-marshal," begged Hennemann, with tearful eyes, "pray do what the doctor says; do not hazard your sight; for, let me say, field-marshal, a blind man is like a pipe that will not draw; both of them will go out."

"Well, I do not care," cried Blucher, "I will stay. It will not hurt me. My task is performed, and it makes no difference to me how I enter Paris. I have my share of the victory, and no one can take it from me. *He* has been cast down, and none will deny that I assisted."

"Well, I think I have also assisted a little in it," said Christian, solemnly; "for had I not always kept the pipes in so good a state, the field-marshal would not have had such successful ideas, nor could he have so well said, 'Forward!'"

"You are right, pipe-master," said Blucher, pleasantly. "The pipe—but what is that? Was not that a gun, and there another? Have the negotiations miscarried, after all, and the bombardment commenced in earnest?"

"No, your excellency," said Gneisenau, smiling, "you must give up that hope! These are the guns which give the troops the signal that the monarchs have arrived, and that the march into the city is to commence."

"Well, good-by, then; make haste and leave!" cried Blucher, pushing Gneisenau and Voelzke toward the door.

They left, and the field-marshal was again alone with Christian Hennemann.

"Well," he said, "give me a pipe; while the others are making their entrance into Paris, I want you to afford me a little pleasure, too. Come here, therefore, and sing to me the Low-German song which you sang to me on the day when you arrived at Kunzendorf."

The reports of the artillery continued; the monarchs were entering Paris. The field-marshal in the mean time sat with the green bonnet on his head, puffing his pipe. No one was with him but Christian Hennemann, who sang in a loud voice, "*Spinn doch, spinn doch, mihn lütt lewes Döchting!*"

CHAPTER LIII.

NAPOLEON AT FONTAINEBLEAU.

NAPOLEON passed seven days of indescribable mental anguish at Fontainebleau. Adversity had befallen him, but he bore it with the semblance of calmness, uttering no complaint. His was still the cold, inscrutable face of the emperor, such as it had been on his triumphal entrance into Berlin and Madrid, after the victories of Austerlitz and Jena, in the days of Erfurt and Tilsit, at the conflagration of Moscow, at the Beresina, and at Leipzig. He gave no expression to his soul's agony. It was only in the dead of night that his faithful servants heard him sometimes sigh, pacing his room, restless and melancholy. He did not yet feel wholly discouraged; he still hoped. His bravest marshals were still with him; his Old Guard had not yet gone, and at Paris there were many devoted friends, because they owed to him honor and riches.

He was hopeful that Marmont's troops would arrive at Fontainebleau, when, concentrating all his corps, he would march with them and reconquer his capital. Engrossed with this idea, he was alone in his cabinet; bent over his maps, he examined the various positions of his troops, and considered

when they might all reach him. But while he was thinking of war, his marshals were thinking of peace. They had withdrawn into one of the remote apartments of Fontainebleau for the purpose of holding a secret consultation. There were his old comrades Ney, Prince de la Moskwa; Macdonald, Duke de Tarento; Lefebvre, Duke de Dantzic; Oudinot, Duke de Reggio—all of them owing their glory to Napoleon: it was, therefore, pardonable if he confided in their gratitude—but gratitude to the fallen, who had nothing more to give, and whose misfortunes resembled an infectious disease, repelling even his dearest friends.

"He is lost," said Oudinot, in an undertone; "he is on the edge of the precipice, and those who abide by him will fall with him."

"We must, therefore, leave him," whispered Lefebvre. "We are unable to keep him back; prudence commands us to keep aloof."

"We have suffered and bled for him for years," said Macdonald; "it is time now for him to suffer and bleed for us. His death would be a relief."

"Yes," murmured Ney, "his death would give us a new life. But he will not die; his heart is made of bronze, and will not break."

"No, he will not die voluntarily," said Oudinot.

The marshals paused and looked at each other with dark and significant glances. All seemed to read each other's souls, and to divine the sinister thoughts that began to find utterance.

"No, he will not die voluntarily," repeated Macdonald. "But the millions of soldiers that have fallen on the battle-fields have not died voluntarily, either: Napoleon drove them into the jaws of death. Now he is no longer any thing but a mere soldier; could we be blamed, if, in order to save France, we should drive him into the grave?"

"But how could we do it?" asked Lefebvre. "He has with him Caulaincourt, Berthier, and Maret, who would certainly be capable of showing, like Anthony, the blood-stained cloak of Cæsar to the people, and of bringing upon us a destiny such as befell Brutus and Cassius. I am not desirous of seeing my house set on fire, and of being compelled to flee."

"We ought not to imitate Cæsar's generals," said Ney, gloomily. "He has lived like a demi-god, and must die like a demi-god. Not a vestige of him must remain; he must, like Romulus, ascend to the gods."

"Let us consider what ought to be done," said Macdonald.

They whispered in low tones, so that they themselves scarcely heard each other. After a prolonged secret consultation, they seemed agreed as to what should be done, and as if there were now no longer any doubt or objection.

"Caulaincourt, Bertrand, and Maret, are alone to be feared," said Oudinot, loudly. "If they refuse to be silent, they must be silenced! And Berthier? what are we to do with Berthier?"

"We shall tell him all when it is over," responded Macdonald, with a shrug. "Berthier is not formidable; he has a heart of cotton, and a head of wind."

All laughed; Oudinot then said, in a grave and menacing voice: "It is time for us to come to a decision. We are already in April, and nothing decided; the Emperor of Russia is impatient, and the future King of France will never forgive us if we delay his return to Paris. Come, gentlemen, let us for the last time try the way of kindness and persuasion. Let us openly and honestly advise Napoleon to abdicate; he must make up his mind to do so, or—"

"Or we shall compel him," said Macdonald. "He has often enough compelled us to do what was repugnant to us. Come, gentlemen, let us go to the emperor."*

The emperor was still bending over his maps when the four marshals entered his cabinet. With a quick glance he read in their pale, sullen faces that they came to him, not as friends and servants, but as adversaries. "I am glad," he said calmly, "that you anticipate my request, and come to me when I intended to send for you. We must hold a council of war, marshals. I have determined to make a general assault upon the allies to-morrow, and I wished to assemble you here to lay the details of my plan before you. One of you may go and call Berthier, who should participate in our deliberations."

"Sire," said Ney, in a harsh tone, "before entering into deliberations on the war, we should first consider whether it is still desirable." Napoleon cast on him a glance which once would have frozen the marshal's blood, but which now made no impression on him. "I believe," added Ney, "that France can no longer bear the burden of war. She is exhausted, bleeding from many wounds, and would sink to certain ruin if she continue a useless struggle. Her finances cannot be

* "Memoirs of the Duchess d'Abrantes."

restored, for the people are destitute. Our fields are uncultivated, our industry is paralyzed; our workshops and stores are closed, our commerce is prostrated, for France is destitute of money, credit, and laborers. What means has your majesty to shield her from the most terrible misfortunes?"

"I have but one—to attack the allies to-morrow, expelling those who have caused all the misfortunes of France."

"Sire, our country is tired of war," cried Ney; "she wants peace."

"Is that your opinion, marshals?" asked the emperor, hastily.

"Yes, sire, it is."

"Well, then," said Napoleon, after a moment's reflection, "do you know of any way of restoring peace?"

The marshals were silent. Their lips seemed to shrink from uttering the thoughts of their souls; but the Prince de la Moskwa, Marshal Ney, overcame his timidity. "Sire," he remarked, "the allies say in their proclamation that it is not France against which they wage war."

"Not France, but myself!" cried Napoleon. "Ah, you come to propose an abdication to me?"

"We come to implore your majesty to make a last great sacrifice."

"Sire," exclaimed Oudinot, "let your heroic soul conquer itself, and restore peace to France."

"She will forever bless you," said Lefebvre.

"Restore to France the peace for which she has been vainly longing for twenty-five years!" cried Macdonald.

Now that they had all spoken, there was an anxious, breathless pause. Suddenly Napoleon passed over to his desk. He cast a last glance, full of pride, contempt, and anger, on his four marshals; then, seating himself, he took up a pen with a firm hand, and wrote. The marshals stood in silence, and looked at him in an embarrassed manner. Laying aside the pen, and rising, he held up the paper on which he had written, and motioned to Marshal Ney. "Here, Prince de la Moskwa," said Napoleon, "read to the marshals what I have written."

Ney read in a tremulous voice: "The allied powers, having proclaimed that the Emperor Napoleon is the sole obstacle to the reestablishment of peace in Europe, the Emperor Napoleon, faithful to his oath, declares that he is ready to descend from the throne, to quit France, and even life itself, for the

good of the country, inseparable from the rights of his son, of the regency of the empress, and of the maintenance of the laws of the empire."*

"You have willed it so," said Napoleon, when Ney had finished. "Macdonald and Ney, with Caulaincourt, will immediately repair with this document to Paris. On the way they will meet Mortier, and request him to accompany them. The four dukes will present my conditional abdication to the Emperor Alexander, and treat with him in regard to the future of my son and the regency of my consort."

On the 7th of April the Duke de Vicenza entered the emperor's cabinet, pale and with a mournful air.

"Caulaincourt," cried Napoleon, "you have delivered my abdication to Alexander?"

"Yes, sire," said Caulaincourt, sadly. "Ah, sire, I bring bad news, which my lips almost refuse to utter!"

"Speak, I am courageous enough to hear all; be, then, courageous enough to tell me all. I wish no concealment whatever—I desire to know the whole truth."

"Well, sire, all is lost. The Emperor Alexander has issued to-day a manifesto, which has been placarded over every part of Paris, to the effect that 'he would no longer treat with Bonaparte, nor with any member of his family.'"

"Ah, the perfidious wretch!" murmured Napoleon, "he plighted me once eternal friendship and fidelity.—Proceed, Caulaincourt! What says the so-called provisional government presided over by M. Talleyrand, the renegade priest, whom I made a man of distinction, whom I raised to the dignity of a prince, on whom I lavished honors, and who has now become the leader of the royalists? What say M. Talleyrand, and the provisional government, and the senate, who swore allegiance to me?"

"Sire, the senate solemnly declared yesterday, the 6th of April, that the Emperor Napoleon has forfeited his throne, because, by abusing the powers conferred on him, by despotism, by trampling under foot the liberty of the press, by undertaking wars in violation of right, and by his openly manifested contempt of man and human law, he has rendered himself unworthy of the sovereignty of the nation. The senate, besides, have called back the Bourbons to the throne of France. In consequence of this declaration, the provisional government has proclaimed to-day that, till the arrival of King

* Fain, "Manuscrit de 1814," p. 221.

Louis XVIII., the administration is exclusively in their hands."

"Ah, the traitors!" cried Napoleon. "They have dared to proclaim such sentiments! to carry their impudence so far! See what venal creatures those men are! As long as fortune was faithful to me, they, who now call themselves the provisional government and senate, in the name of France, were my most sycophantic servants. A sign from me was an order for the senate, who always did more than was desired of them, and not a whisper was heard against the abuses of power. Ah, they charge me with despising them—tell me, Caulaincourt, will not the world see now whether or not I had reasons for my opinion?"*

"Sire, it is true, your majesty has met with many ingrates during your career, and will still meet with them," said Caulaincourt, sighing. "Perfidy seems to have become an epidemic."

"Ah, I see you have not yet told me every thing. Speak! In the first place, what was the result of your negotiations with the Emperor Alexander?"

"Sire, if your majesty agrees to renounce, for yourself and your heirs, the throne of France, the allied sovereigns offer Corsica or Elba as a sovereign principality, and France will pay your majesty an annual pension of two million francs."

"I am to renounce the throne, too, for my son—my dear little King of Rome?" cried Napoleon, mournfully. "No, never! I cannot deprive my son of his inheritance. This is too much. I will put myself at the head of my army and run the risk of any calamities, rather than submit to a humiliation worse than them all!"

"Your majesty has no army. Treason has infected your marshals."

"What do you mean? Ah, it is true, you come alone! Where are the marshals? Where is Ney? Where is MacDonald?"

"Sire, they have remained in Paris."

"Ah, I understand," exclaimed Napoleon, with a scornful laugh; "they are waiting there for King Louis XVIII., in order to offer him their services. But where is Marmont? You know well that I am greatly attached to Marmont, and I long to see him. Why does he not come?"

"Sire, Marshal Marmont has passed over to the allies with a corps of ten thousand men."

* Fain, "Manuscrit de 1814," p. 225.

"Marmont!" cried Napoleon, almost with a scream—"Marmont a traitor! That is false—that is impossible! Marmont cannot have betrayed me!"

"Sire, he did betray you. He marched the troops, notwithstanding their undisguised reluctance, to Versailles, in order there to join the allies, after receiving from them the solemn promise that the French soldiers should be treated as friends."

"Marmont has betrayed me!" murmured Napoleon. "Marmont, whom I loved as a son—who owes me all—who—" His voice faltered; his heart was rent, and, sinking on a chair, he buried his quivering face in his hands.

CHAPTER LIV.

A SOUL IN PURGATORY.

It was the 11th of April. Napoleon, at Fontainebleau, sat at his desk and stared at the paper before him. It contained an absolute resignation of his throne for himself and his family. After signing this document, he was no more Emperor of France, nor his son King of Rome, nor his consort empress—perhaps, no longer even his wife. By signing this paper, he accepted all the conditions imposed on him by the allies; that is to say, he descended from the sovereignty of all his states and went to the little island of Elba, to live there a pensioner of Europe; his consort wore no longer, like him, the imperial title, but became Duchess of Parma; and the King of Rome became not the heir of his father, the Emperor of Elba, but the heir of his mother, the Duchess of Parma, and the title of "Duke de Reichstadt" was to be given him. He renounced not only France, but his wife and his son!

Napoleon was fondly and sincerely attached to Maria Louisa, and he loved the King of Rome with passionate tenderness. Before consenting, therefore, to affix his signature to this act of abdication, he wished to know whether Maria Louisa agreed to it, and whether she would not at least ask the allies, one of whom was her own father, to permit her to reside with her son and her husband on the island of Elba, sharing the emperor's exile. For some time he had not heard from his consort; he wrote to her every day, but for six days past no answers came. He did not, however, distrust her; he knew that Maria Louisa loved him. His heart longed for