

ASSASSINATION OF THE EMPEROR PAUL.

The night appearing sufficiently advanced, the conspirators, to the number of about sixty, sallied forth, divided into two bands. Count Pahlen took one under his direction, General Benningsen the command of the other; both officers, dressed in their full uniform, and wearing their sashes and orders, marched forward sword in hand. The palace Michael was constructed and guarded like a fortress; but the bridges were lowered, and the gates thrown open to the chiefs of the conspirators. Benningsen's party marched first, and proceeded direct towards the emperor's apartments. Count Pahlen remained behind with his reserved body of conspirators. This man, who had organised the conspiracy, disdained to assist personally in its execution. He was only there to provide for any unexpected emergencies. Benningsen penetrated into the apartment of the sleeping monarch. Two heyduks were on duty as his bodyguard. These brave and faithful attendants attempted to defend their sovereign. One was struck down by a blow from a sabre, the other took flight, crying out for help—cries utterly unavailing in a palace, the guards of which are almost all accomplices in the plot. A valet who slept in a room adjoining that of the emperor ran to the scene; they compelled him, by force, to open the door of his master's chamber. The unhappy Paul might have found a refuge in the apartments of the empress; but, in his distrustful suspicions, he had taken the precaution, every night, to barricade the door which led to them. All escape being cut off, he flung himself to the bottom of the bed, and concealed himself behind the folds of a screen. Plato Soubow ran to the imperial bed, and finding it empty, cried out, in alarm, "The emperor has escaped; we are lost!" But at the same instant Benningsen caught sight of the prince, rushed towards him sword in hand, and presented to him the act of abdication. "You have ceased to reign!" he exclaimed to him; "the grand duke Alexander is now emperor. I summon you, in his name, to resign the empire, and to sign this act of abdication. On this condition alone I answer for your life." Plato Soubow repeated the same summons. The emperor, confused and lost in dismay, demanded of them, what he had done to deserve such treatment. "For years past you have never ceased to persecute us," retorted the half-intoxicated assassins. They then pressed upon the unhappy Paul, who struggled hard, expostulated, and implored them in vain. At this moment a noise was heard; it was the footsteps of some of the conspirators who had remained behind; but the assassins, believing that some one was coming to the assistance of the emperor, fled in disorder. Benningsen alone, inflexibly resolute, remained in the presence of the monarch, and advancing towards him, with his sword pointed at his breast, prevented him stirring from the spot. The conspirators having recognised each other, re-entered the chamber, the theatre of their crime. They again hemmed in the unfortunate monarch, in order to force him to subscribe his abdication. The emperor for an instant tried to defend himself. In the scuffle, the lamp which gave light to the frightful scene was overthrown and extinguished; Benningsen ran to procure another, and, on his return, discovered Paul expiring under the blows of two assassins; one had broken in his skull with the pommel of his sword, whilst the other was strangling him with his sash.

Whilst this scene was enacting, Count Pahlen had remained outside with the second band of conspirators. When he was told that all was over, he ordered the body of the emperor to be laid out on the bed, and placed a guard of thirty men at the door of the apartment, with orders not to admit any one, even the members of the imperial family. He then repaired to the grand duke, to announce to him the terrible occurrence of the night.

The grand duke, in a state of violent agitation, demanded of him when he approached, what had become of his father? The silence of Count Pahlen soon dissipated the fatal illusions he had cherished, in imagining that an act of abdication was only contemplated. The grief of the young prince was profound; it continued to be, we are told, the secret remorse of his life, as he was naturally of a good and generous nature. He threw himself upon a chair, and burst into tears; would listen no longer to anything, but loaded Pahlen with bitter re-

proaches, which the latter received with imperturbable composure.

Plato Soubow went in quest of the grand duke Constantine, who was wholly ignorant of what was going on, but who has been unjustly accused of having been implicated in this bloody catastrophe. He came to the spot trembling, believing that all his family were to be sacrificed, found his brother overwhelmed with despair, and then learnt every thing which had taken place. Count Pahlen had desired a lady of the palace, who was very intimate with the empress, to acquaint her with the fact of her tragical widowhood. This princess rushed in haste towards her husband's apartments, and attempted to reach his death-bed; but the guards kept her back. Having for an instant recovered from her first paroxysm of grief, she felt, together with the emotions of sorrow, the rising impulses of ambition awoken in her breast. She thought of the great Catherine, and wished to reign. She despatched several persons to Alexander, who was about to be proclaimed, telling him that the throne belonged of right to her, and that it was she, and not he, who ought to be proclaimed as successor. This was a new embarrassment; this was increased anguish for the already lacerated heart of the son, who, about to ascend the steps of the throne, had to pass between the corpse of a murdered father and an agonised mother, in tears, frantically demanding, by turns, her husband or the sceptre. The night was consumed while these appalling and tragical events were passing; the day approached; it was necessary to leave no time for reflection; it was of importance that the death of Paul and the accession of his successor should be proclaimed at the same time. Count Pahlen approached the young prince: "You have wept sufficiently as a child," said he, "come now and reign." He tore him from this house of mourning, and, followed by Benningsen, hastened to present him to his troops.—*Thiers' History of the Consulate.*

TAKING A HINT.

It is very surprising to see how slow some men are to take a hint. The frost destroys about one-half the bloom on fruit trees; everybody prognosticates the loss of fruit; instead of that the half that remain are larger, fairer, and higher flavoured than usual; and the trees instead of being exhausted are ready for another crop the next year. Why don't he take the hint, and thin out his fruit every bearing year? But no; the next season sees his orchard overloaded, fruit small and not well formed; yet he often boasts of that first mentioned crop, without profiting by the lesson which it teaches.

We heard a man saying, "The best crop of celery I ever saw, was raised by old John—, on a spot of land where the wash from the barn-yard ran into it after every hard shower." Did he take the hint, and apply liquid manure to his celery trenches? Not at all.

We knew a case where a farmer subsoiled a field, and raised crops in consequence, which were the admiration of the whole neighbourhood; and for years the field showed the advantages of deep handling. But we could not learn that a single farmer in the neighbourhood took the hint. The man who acted thus wisely, sold his farm, and his successor pursued the old plan of surface scratching.

A staunch farmer complained to us of his soil as too loose and light; we mentioned ashes as worth trying; "Well, now you mention it, I believe it will do good. I bought a part of my farm from a man who was a wonderful fellow to save up ashes, and round his cabin it lay in heaps. I took away the house, and to this day I notice that when the plough runs along that spot, the soil turns up moist and close-grained." It is strange that he never took the hint.

A farmer gets a splendid crop of corn or other grain from off a grass or clover ley. Does he take the hint? Does he adopt the system which shall allow him a sward to put his grain on? No; he hates book farming, and scientific farming, and "this notion of rotation," and plods on the old way.

POISON FOR RATS.—Small pills, composed of flour, sugar, and about one-sixtieth part of phosphorus, are a very attractive and efficacious poison for rats.