

"We will not conquer—it is impossible!" said he, sorrowfully. "France and her emperor have loaded themselves with grievous crimes, and the avenging justice of God will overtake them."

"I do not understand you, dear Rethel," replied Ditmour. "Our soldiers rush with enthusiasm into battle; they expect, in a few weeks, to cross the Rhine, march in triumph towards Berlin; and yet you prophesy misfortune and defeat!"

"I have my reasons, dear Bernhard, for doing so. Napoleon will share the fate of all princes who oppress, persecute, and despoil the vicar of Christ upon earth.

"Ah! you again recur to that conversation between Pope Pius VII. and Napoleon I. at Fontainebleau, which made such a deep impression upon you when a youth," exclaimed the lively, good-humored lord of the villa. "I do not deny that Almighty God broke the scepter of the first Napoleon, because he kept the pope imprisoned, and desired to use the Church as a political agent; but does it necessarily follow that Louis Napoleon will meet with a similar fate? You have become morbid on the subject."

"The God of old still lives, Ditmour!" earnestly replied the count; "and as surely as the Most High is immutable in His essence, as surely as God is the Supreme Protector of St. Peter's chair, so surely also will His arm crush the crafty enemy and oppressor of the Holy See."

"Judgement should then fall first upon Italy and her king."

"No, my friend! Italy will perish miserably, and her king with her; they will reap what they have sown. Victor Emmanuel, however, is not the instigator of the revolutions in Italy, of the spoliations of the patrimony of St. Peter, but Louis Napoleon, emperor of France."

"According to my opinion, Louis Napoleon has not sinned as much against the pope as his uncle," said Ditmour. "The present emperor has even protected the pope; will he be punished for having done so?"

"Protected! Good heavens, do you allow yourself to be deceived by the outward appearance of things?" exclaimed the painfully agitated count. "Louis Napoleon has done more injury to the Papal See than did Napoleon I., who, it is true, imprisoned the holy father, but he used open force. Napoleon III., however, acts in a cunning, artful, and intriguing manner. His deceitful course is the real cause of the father of Christendom being deprived of his dominions. Ques-