

seems to cry out like an accusing voice against force and abuse. His attitude is that of prayer; his hands are folded on his knees; his head is bent down, and the vividly felt presence of the Almighty casts a mysterious brightness over the whole scene; for the profound silence becomes absolutely solemn, and the splendid apartment now seems changed into a consecrated spot. Rethel regards the suppliant with respect and astonishment; his tears cease, and with holy awe he recognizes him as the Head of the Church, the Representative of Christ upon earth; for the old man is none other than Pope Pius VII., for four years the prisoner of Napoleon I.

An approaching sound startles the noble youth. He stands listening. The noise approaches nearer through the open door on the right. Short measured steps glide over the carpet, and in the next moment a gentleman, dressed in the uniform of a Marshal of France, crosses the threshold. He advances to the middle of the room, where he pauses, as though transfixed at the sight of the pope. He is of medium height; glossy black hair, worn very short, covers his head; his features are regular and handsome. The closely-shaven chin is unusually long, and does not correspond with the small, fine face, but it is the sign of an iron will; his eyes have a peculiar expression—commanding, penetrating, and threatening; in a word, the look of the conqueror of Europe, of Napoleon I.

After a hasty glance, Napoleon entered the presence of his illustrious prisoner. Pius VII. slowly lifted his head, and rising, received his oppressor with a gentle smile. The page moved a chair forward for the Emperor.

"Pardon me, Holy Father, if I interrupt your pious meditations," began Napoleon, with a slight nod of his head, "affairs are pressing; there shall be peace between the emperor and the pope. Have you not found, after calm consideration, that it would be to your interest to accept the offer I made you yesterday?"

"Perhaps it would be to my personal interest, but not to my interest as pope," replied Pius VII. "You may put an end to the cruel imprisonment in which I have been kept already four years, you may pay two millions of interest every year, that is all very well; but yet you will not restore the patrimony of St. Peter; you retain possession of Rome and of the States of the Church. I cannot consent to this robbery. When Divine Providence called me, although unworthy to be the representative of Christ upon earth, I took an oath, which