

### CHAPTER III

On returning from the review, Kutúzov took the Austrian general into his private room and, calling his adjutant, asked for some papers relating to the condition of the troops on their arrival, and the letters that had come from the Archduke Ferdinand, who was in command of the advanced army. Prince Andrew Bolkónski came into the room with the required papers. Kutúzov and the Austrian member of the Hofkriegsrath were sitting at the table on which a plan was spread out.

“Ah!...” said Kutúzov glancing at Bolkónski as if by this exclamation he was asking the adjutant to wait, and he went on with the conversation in French.

“All I can say, General,” said he with a pleasant elegance of expression and intonation that obliged one to listen to each deliberately spoken word. It was evident that Kutúzov himself listened with pleasure to his own voice. “All I can say, General, is that if the matter depended on my personal wishes, the will of His Majesty the Emperor Francis would have been fulfilled long ago. I should long ago have joined the archduke. And believe me on my honour that to me personally it would be a pleasure to hand over the supreme command of the army into the hands of a better informed and more skillful general—of whom Austria has so many—and to lay down all this heavy responsibility. But circumstances are sometimes too strong for us, General.”

And Kutúzov smiled in a way that seemed to say, “You are quite at liberty not to believe me and I don’t even care whether you do or not, but you have no grounds for telling me so. And that is the whole point.”

The Austrian general looked dissatisfied, but had no option but to reply in the same tone.

“On the contrary,” he said, in a querulous and angry tone that contrasted with his flattering words, “on the contrary, your excellency’s participation in the common action is highly valued by His Majesty; but we think the present delay is depriving the splendid Russian troops and their commander of the laurels they have been accustomed to win in their battles,” he concluded his evidently prearranged sentence.

Kutúzov bowed with the same smile.

“But that is my conviction, and judging by the last letter with which His Highness the Archduke Ferdinand has honored me, I imagine that the Austrian troops, under the direction of so skillful a leader as General Mack, have by now already gained a decisive victory and no longer need our aid,” said Kutúzov.

The general frowned. Though there was no definite news of an Austrian defeat, there were many circumstances confirming the unfavorable rumors

that were afloat, and so Kutúzov's suggestion of an Austrian victory sounded much like irony. But Kutúzov went on blandly smiling with the same expression, which seemed to say that he had a right to suppose so. And, in fact, the last letter he had received from Mack's army informed him of a victory and stated strategically the position of the army was very favorable.

"Give me that letter," said Kutúzov turning to Prince Andrew. "Please have a look at it"—and Kutúzov with an ironical smile about the corners of his mouth read to the Austrian general the following passage, in German, from the Archduke Ferdinand's letter:

We have fully concentrated forces of nearly seventy thousand men with which to attack and defeat the enemy should he cross the Lech. Also, as we are masters of Ulm, we cannot be deprived of the advantage of commanding both sides of the Danube, so that should the enemy not cross the Lech, we can cross the Danube, throw ourselves on his line of communications, recross the river lower down, and frustrate his intention should he try to direct his whole force against our faithful ally. We shall therefore confidently await the moment when the Imperial Russian army will be fully equipped, and shall then, in conjunction with it, easily find a way to prepare for the enemy the fate he deserves.

Kutúzov sighed deeply on finishing this paragraph and looked at the member of the Hofkriegsrath mildly and attentively.

"But you know the wise maxim your excellency, advising one to expect the worst," said the Austrian general, evidently wishing to have done with jests and to come to business. He involuntarily looked round at the aide-de-camp.

"Excuse me, General," interrupted Kutúzov, also turning to Prince Andrew. "Look here, my dear fellow, get from Kozlówski all the reports from our scouts. Here are two letters from Count Nostitz and here is one from His Highness the Archduke Ferdinand and here are these," he said, handing him several papers, "make a neat memorandum in French out of all this, showing all the news we have had of the movements of the Austrian army, and then give it to his excellency."

Prince Andrew bowed his head in token of having understood from the first not only what had been said but also what Kutúzov would have liked to tell him. He gathered up the papers and with a bow to both, stepped softly over the carpet and went out into the waiting room.

Though not much time had passed since Prince Andrew had left Russia, he had changed greatly during that period. In the expression of his face, in his movements, in his walk, scarcely a trace was left of his former affected languor and indolence. He now looked like a man who has time to think of the impression he makes on others, but is occupied with agreeable and interesting work. His face expressed more satisfaction with himself and those around him, his smile and glance were brighter and more attractive.

Kutúzov, whom he had overtaken in Poland, had received him very kindly,

promised not to forget him, distinguished him above the other adjutants, and had taken him to Vienna and given him the more serious commissions. From Vienna Kutúzov wrote to his old comrade, Prince Andrew's father.

Your son bids fair to become an officer distinguished by his industry, firmness, and expedition. I consider myself fortunate to have such a subordinate by me.

On Kutúzov's staff, among his fellow officers and in the army generally, Prince Andrew had, as he had had in Petersburg society, two quite opposite reputations. Some, a minority, acknowledged him to be different from themselves and from everyone else, expected great things of him, listened to him, admired, and imitated him, and with them Prince Andrew was natural and pleasant. Others, the majority, disliked him and considered him conceited, cold, and disagreeable. But among these people Prince Andrew knew how to take his stand so that they respected and even feared him.

Coming out of Kutúzov's room into the waiting room with the papers in his hand Prince Andrew came up to his comrade, the aide-de-camp on duty, Kozlówski, who was sitting at the window with a book.

"Well, Prince?" asked Kozlówski.

"I am ordered to write a memorandum explaining why we are not advancing."

"And why is it?"

Prince Andrew shrugged his shoulders.

"Any news from Mack?"

"No."

"If it were true that he has been beaten, news would have come."

"Probably," said Prince Andrew moving toward the outer door.

But at that instant a tall Austrian general in a greatcoat, with the order of Maria Theresa on his neck and a black bandage round his head, who had evidently just arrived, entered quickly, slamming the door. Prince Andrew stopped short.

"Commander in Chief Kutúzov?" said the newly arrived general speaking quickly with a harsh German accent, looking to both sides and advancing straight toward the inner door.

"The commander in chief is engaged," said Kozlówski, going hurriedly up to the unknown general and blocking his way to the door.

"Whom shall I announce?"

The unknown general looked disdainfully down at Kozlówski, who was rather short, as if surprised that anyone should not know him.

“The commander in chief is engaged,” repeated Kozlówski calmly.

The general’s face clouded, his lips quivered and trembled. He took out a notebook, hurriedly scribbled something in pencil, tore out the leaf, gave it to Kozlówski, stepped quickly to the window, and threw himself into a chair, gazing at those in the room as if asking, “Why do they look at me?” Then he lifted his head, stretched his neck as if he intended to say something, but immediately, with affected indifference, began to hum to himself, producing a queer sound which immediately broke off. The door of the private room opened and Kutúzov appeared in the doorway. The general with the bandaged head bent forward as though running away from some danger, and, making long, quick strides with his thin legs, went up to Kutúzov.

“Vous voyez le malheureux Mack,” he uttered in a broken voice.

Kutúzov’s face as he stood in the open doorway remained perfectly immobile for a few moments. Then wrinkles ran over his face like a wave and his forehead became smooth again, he bowed his head respectfully, closed his eyes, silently let Mack enter his room before him, and closed the door himself behind him.

The report which had been circulated that the Austrians had been beaten and that the whole army had surrendered at Ulm proved to be correct. Within half an hour adjutants had been sent in various directions with orders which showed that the Russian troops, who had hitherto been inactive, would also soon have to meet the enemy.

Prince Andrew was one of those rare staff officers whose chief interest lay in the general progress of the war. When he saw Mack and heard the details of his disaster he understood that half the campaign was lost, understood all the difficulties of the Russian army’s position, and vividly imagined what awaited it and the part he would have to play. Involuntarily he felt a joyful agitation at the thought of the humiliation of arrogant Austria and that in a week’s time he might, perhaps, see and take part in the first Russian encounter with the French since Suvórov met them. He feared that Bonaparte’s genius might outweigh all the courage of the Russian troops, and at the same time could not admit the idea of his hero being disgraced.

Excited and irritated by these thoughts Prince Andrew went toward his room to write to his father, to whom he wrote every day. In the corridor he met Nesvítski, with whom he shared a room, and the wag Zherkóv; they were as usual laughing.

“Why are you so glum?” asked Nesvítski noticing Prince Andrew’s pale face and glittering eyes.

“There’s nothing to be gay about,” answered Bolkónski.

Just as Prince Andrew met Nesvítski and Zherkóv, there came toward them from the other end of the corridor, Strauch, an Austrian general who was on Kutúzov’s staff in charge of the provisioning of the Russian

army, and the member of the Hofkriegsrath who had arrived the previous evening. There was room enough in the wide corridor for the generals to pass the three officers quite easily, but Zherkóv, pushing Nesvítski aside with his arm, said in a breathless voice,

“They’re coming!... they’re coming!... Stand aside, make way, please make way!”

The generals were passing by, looking as if they wished to avoid embarrassing attentions. On the face of the wag Zherkóv there suddenly appeared a stupid smile of glee which he seemed unable to suppress.

“Your excellency,” said he in German, stepping forward and addressing the Austrian general, “I have the honor to congratulate you.”

He bowed his head and scraped first with one foot and then with the other, awkwardly, like a child at a dancing lesson.

The member of the Hofkriegsrath looked at him severely but, seeing the seriousness of his stupid smile, could not but give him a moment’s attention. He screwed up his eyes showing that he was listening.

“I have the honor to congratulate you. General Mack has arrived, quite well, only a little bruised just here,” he added, pointing with a beaming smile to his head.

The general frowned, turned away, and went on.

“Gott, wie naiv!” \* said he angrily, after he had gone a few steps.

\* “Good God, what simplicity!”

Nesvítski with a laugh threw his arms round Prince Andrew, but Bolkónski, turning still paler, pushed him away with an angry look and turned to Zherkóv. The nervous irritation aroused by the appearance of Mack, the news of his defeat, and the thought of what lay before the Russian army found vent in anger at Zherkóv’s untimely jest.

“If you, sir, choose to make a buffoon of yourself,” he said sharply, with a slight trembling of the lower jaw, “I can’t prevent your doing so; but I warn you that if you dare to play the fool in my presence, I will teach you to behave yourself.”

Nesvítski and Zherkóv were so surprised by this outburst that they gazed at Bolkónski silently with wide-open eyes.

“What’s the matter? I only congratulated them,” said Zherkóv.

“I am not jesting with you; please be silent!” cried Bolkónski, and taking Nesvítski’s arm he left Zherkóv, who did not know what to say.

“Come, what’s the matter, old fellow?” said Nesvítski trying to soothe him.

“What’s the matter?” exclaimed Prince Andrew standing still in his excitement. “Don’t you understand that either we are officers serving our Tsar and our country, rejoicing in the successes and grieving at the misfortunes of our common cause, or we are merely lackeys who care nothing for their master’s business. Quarante mille hommes massacrés et l’armée de nos alliés détruite, et vous trouvez là le mot pour rire,” \* he said, as if strengthening his views by this French sentence. “C’est bien pour un garçon de rien comme cet individu dont vous avez fait un ami, mais pas pour vous, pas pour vous. \*(2) Only a hobbledehoy could amuse himself in this way,” he added in Russian—but pronouncing the word with a French accent—having noticed that Zherkóv could still hear him.

\* “Forty thousand men massacred and the army of our allies destroyed, and you find that a cause for jesting!”

\* (2) “It is all very well for that good-for-nothing fellow of whom you have made a friend, but not for you, not for you.”

He waited a moment to see whether the cornet would answer, but he turned and went out of the corridor.