

CHAPTER I

WELL, PRINCE, so Genoa and Lucca are now

just family **estates of the Buona**partes. But I

warn you, if you don't tell me that this means

war, if you still try to defend the infamies and

horrors perpetrated by that Antichrist I real-

ly believe he is Antichrist I will have nothing
more to do with you and you are no longer my
friend, no longer my 'faithful slave,' as you
call yourself! But how do you do? I see I have
frightened you sit down and tell me all the
news."

It was in July, 1805, and the speaker was the

well-known Anna Pdvlovna Sch[^]rer, maid of

honor and favorite of the Empress Marya Fe-

dorovna. With these words she greeted Prince

Vasili Kurdgin, a man of high rank and impor-

tance, who was the first to arrive at her recep-

tion. Anna Pdvlovna had had a cough for some

days. She was, as she said, suffering from la grippe; grippe being then a new word in St.