

men caught hold of one another, fought and killed one another with sword hilts."

Placiard was again going to begin his exclamations, when George became furious: "Hold your tongue, you abominable toady! Are you not ashamed of insulting a brave soldier, who has fought for his country?"

"Monsieur le Maire," cried Placiard, "will you suffer me to be insulted under your roof while I am fulfilling my duties as deputy?"

I was much puzzled: but George, looking angrily at him, was going to answer for me; when a loud cry arose outside in the midst of a furious clattering of horses: a terrible cry, which pierced to the very marrow of our bones.

"The Prussians! The Prussians!"

At the same moment a troop of disbanded horsemen were flying past our windows at full speed; they flashed past us like lightning; the crowd fell back; the women screamed: "Lord have mercy upon us! we are all lost!"

After these cries, and the passage of these men, I stood as if rooted to the floor, listening to what was going on outside; but in another minute all was silence. Turning round, I saw that everybody, neighbors, men and women, Placiard, the rural policeman, all had slipped out behind. Grédel, my wife, George, the cuirassier, and myself, stood alone in the room. My cousin said to me: "This man has told you the truth; the great battle has been

fought and lost to-day! These are the first fugitives who have just passed. Now is the time for calmness and courage; let everybody be prepared: we are going to witness terrible things."

And turning to the soldier: "You may go, my friend," he said, "your horse is there; but if you had rather stay——"

"No; I will not be made prisoner!"

"Then come, I will put you on the way."

We went out together. The horse before the barn had not moved; I helped the cuirassier to mount: George said to him: "Here, on the right, is the road to Metz; on the left to Phalsbourg; at Phalsbourg, by going to the right, you will be on the road to Paris."

And the horse began to walk, dragging itself painfully. Then only did we see that a shred of flesh was hanging down its leg, and that it had lost a great deal of blood. My cousin followed, forgetting to say good-night. Was it possible to sleep after that?

From time to time during the night horsemen rode past at the gallop. Once, at daybreak, I went to the mill-dam, to look down the valley; they were coming out of the woods by fives, sixes, and tens, leaping out of the hedges, smashing the young trees; instead of following the road, they passed through the fields, crossed the river, and rode up the hill in front, without troubling about the corps. There seemed no end of them!

About six the bells began to ring for matins. It

was Sunday, the 7th August, 1870; the weather was magnificent. Monsieur le Curé crossed the street at nine, to go to church, but only a few old women attended the service to pray.

Then commenced the endless passage of the defeated army retreating upon Sarrebourg, down the valley; a spectacle of desolation such as I shall never forget in my life. Hundreds of men who could scarcely be recognized as Frenchmen were coming up in disordered bands; cavalry, infantry, cuirassiers without cuirasses, horsemen on foot, foot soldiers on horseback, three-fourths unarmed! Crowds of men without officers, all going straight on in silence.

What has always surprised me is that no officers were to be seen. What had become of them? I cannot say.

No more singing. No more cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" "À Berlin! à Berlin!"

Dismay and discouragement were manifest in every countenance.

Those who shall come after will see worse things than this: since men are wolves, foxes, hawks, owls, all this must come round again: a hundred times, a thousand times; from age to age, until the consummation of time: it is the glory of kings and emperors passing by!

They all cry, "Jesus, have pity upon us, miserable sinners! Jesus, Saviour, bless us!"

But all this time they are hard at work with the

hooked bill and the sharp claws upon the unhappy carcass of mankind. Each tears away his morsel! And yet they all have faith, Lutherans and Catholics: they are all worthy people! And so on forever.

Thus passed our army after the battle of Reichshoffen; and the others the Germans were following: they were at Haguenau, at Tugwiller, at Bouxviller; they were advancing from Dosenheim, to enter our valley; very soon we were to see them!