

had remained in town, and every day a few got through the postern to have a shot at the Germans. On the other hand, as the attack on the place had been sudden and unforeseen, there had been no time to throw down the trees, the hedges, the cottages, and the tombstones in the cemetery. So this work began afresh: everything within cannon-shot was razed without mercy.

George tried to reach these men, but the enemy's posts were still too close. At last he got news, but in a way which can scarcely be told—by an abandoned woman, who was allowed in the German lines. This creditable person told us that Jacob was well; and, no doubt, she also brought some kind of good news to Grédel, who from that moment was another woman. The very next day she began to talk to us about her marriage-portion, and insisted upon knowing where we had hidden it. I told her that it was in the wood, at the foot of a tree. Then she was in alarm lest the Prussians should have discovered it, for they searched everywhere; they had exact inventories of what was owned by every householder. They had gone even to the very end of our cellars to discover choice wines: for instance, at Mathis's, at the saw-mills, and at Frantz Sèpel's, at Metting. Nothing could escape them, having had for years our own German servants to give them every information, who privately kept an account of our cattle, hay, corn, wine, and everything every house could supply. These Germans are the

most perfect spies in the world; they come into the world to spy, as birds do to thieve: it is part of their nature. Let the Americans and all the people who are kind enough to receive them think of this. Their imprudence may some day cost them dearly. I am not inventing. I am not saying a word too much. We are an example. Let the world profit by it.

So Grédel feared for our hoard. I told her I had been to see, and that nothing in the neighborhood had been disturbed.

But, after having quieted her, I myself had a great fright.

One Sunday evening, about thirty Prussians, commanded by their famous lieutenant, came to the mill, striking the floor with the butt-ends of their muskets, and shouting that they must have wine and eau-de-vie.

I gave them the keys of the cellar.

"That is not what I want," said the lieutenant. "You took sixteen hundred livres at Saverne last month; where are they?"

Then I saw that I had been denounced. It was Placiard, or some of that rabble; for denunciations were beginning. *All who have since declared for the Germans were already beginning this business.* I could not deny it, and I said: "It is true. As I was owing money at Phalsbourg, I paid what I owed, and I placed the rest in safety under the care of lawyer Fingado."

"Where is that lawyer?"

"In the town guarded by the sixty big guns that you know of."

Then the lieutenant paced up and down, growling, "You are an old fox. I don't believe you. You have hid your money somewhere. You shall send in your contribution in money."

"I will furnish, like others, my contribution for six men with what I have got. Here are my hay, my wheat, my straw, my flour. Whatever is left you may have; when there is nothing left, you may seek elsewhere. You may kill the people; you may burn towns and villages; but you cannot take money from those who have none."

He stared at me, and one of the soldiers, mad with rage, seized me by the collar, roaring, "Show us your hoard, old rascal!"

Several others were pushing me out of doors; my wife came crying and sobbing; but Grédel darted in, armed with a hatchet, crying to these robbers, "Pack of cowards! You have no courage—you are all like Schinderhannes!"

She was going to fall upon them; but I bade her: "Grédel, go in again."

At the same time I threw open my waistcoat, and told the brute who was pointing his bayonet at my breast: "Now thrust, wretch; let it be over!"

It seems that there was something at that moment in my attitude which awed them; for the lieutenant, who did nothing but scour the country

with his band, exclaimed: "Come, let us leave *monsieur le maire* alone. When we have taken the place, we shall find his money at the lawyer's. Come, my lads, come on; let us go and look elsewhere. His Majesty wants crown-pieces: we will find them. Good-by, Monsieur le Maire. Let us bear no malice."

He was laughing; but I was as pale as death, and went in trembling.

I fell ill.

Many people in the country were suffering from dysentery, which we owe again to these gormandizers, for they devoured everything; honey, butter, cheese, green fruit, beef, mutton, everything was ingulfed anyhow down their huge swallows. At Pfalsweyer they had even swallowed vinegar for wine. I cannot tell what they ate at home, but the voracity of these people would make you suppose that at home they knew no food but potatoes and cold water.

In their sanitary regulations there was plenty of room for improvement; health and decency were alike disregarded.

That year the crows came early; they swept down to earth in great clouds. But for this help, a plague would have fallen upon us.

I cannot relate all the other torments these Prussians inflicted upon us; such as compelling us to cut down wood for them in the forest, to split it, to pile it up in front of their advanced posts; threat-

ening the peasants with having to go to the front and dig in the trenches. On account of this, whole villages fled without a minute's warning, and the Landwehr took the opportunity to pillage the houses without resistance. Worse than all, they polluted and desecrated the churches—to the great distress of all right-minded people, whether Catholics, Protestants, or Jews. This proved that these fellows respected nothing; that they took a pleasure in humiliating the souls of men in their tenderest and holiest feelings; for even with ungodly men a church, a temple, a synagogue are venerable places. There our mothers carried us to receive the blessing of God; there we called God to witness our love for her with whom we had chosen to travel together the journey of life; thither we bore father and mother to commend their souls to the mercy of God after they had ceased to suffer in this world.

These wretched men dared do this; therefore shall they be execrated from generation to generation, and our hatred shall be inextinguishable!

Whilst all these miseries were overwhelming us, rumors of all sorts ran through the country. One day Cousin George came to tell us that he had heard from an innkeeper from Sarrebourg that a great battle had been fought near Metz; that we might have been victorious, but that the Emperor, not knowing where to find his proper place, got in everybody's way; that he would first fly to the right, then to the left, carrying with him his escort

of three or four thousand men, to guard his person and his ammunition-wagons; that it had been found absolutely necessary to declare his command vacant, and to send him to Verdun to get rid of him; for he durst not return to Paris, where indignation against his dynasty broke out louder and louder.

"Now," said my cousin, "Bazaine is at the head of our best army. It is a sad thing to be obliged to intrust the destinies of our country to the hands of the man who made himself too well known in Mexico; whilst the Minister of War, old De Montauban, has distinguished himself in China, and in Africa in that Doineau affair. Yes, these are three men worthy to lay their heads close together—the Emperor, Bazaine, and Palikao! Well, let us hope on: hope costs nothing!"

Thus passed away the month of August—the most miserable month of August in all our lives!

On the first of September, about ten o'clock at night, everybody was asleep in the village, when the cannon of Phalsbourg began to roar: it was the heavy guns on the bastion of Wilschberg, and those of the infantry barracks. Our little houses shook.

All rose from their beds and got lights. At every report our windows rattled. I went out; a crowd of other peasants, men and women, were listening and gazing. The night was dark, and the red lightning flashes from the two bastions lighted up the hills second after second.

Then curiosity carried me away. I wished to know what it was, and in spite of all my wife could say, I started with three or four neighbors for Berlingen. As fast as we ascended amongst the bushes, the din became louder; on reaching the brow of this hill, we heard a great stir all round us. The people of Berlingen had fled into the wood: two shells had fallen in the village. It was from this height that I observed the effect of the heavy guns, the bombs and shells rushing in the direction where we stood, hissing and roaring just like the noise of a steam-engine, and making such dreadful sounds that one could not help shrinking.

At the same time we could hear a distant rolling of carriages at full gallop; they were driving from Quatre Vents to Wilschberg: no doubt it was a convoy of provisions and stores, which the Phalsbourgers had observed a long way off: the moon was clouded; but young people have sharp eyes. After seeing this, we came down again, and I recognized my cousin, who was walking near me.

"Good-evening, Christian," said he, "what do you think of that?"

"I am thinking that men have invented dreadful engines to destroy each other."

"Yes, but this is nothing as yet, Christian; it is but the small beginning of the story: in a year or two peace will be signed between the King of Prussia and France; but eternal hatred has arisen between the two nations—just, fearful, unforgiv-

ing hatred. What did we want of the Germans? Did we want any of their provinces? No, the majority of Frenchmen cared for no such thing. Did we covet their glory? No, we had military glory enough, and to spare. So that they had no inducement to treat us as enemies. Well, whilst we were trying, in the presence of all Europe, the experiment of universal suffrage at our own risk and peril—and this step so fair, so equitable, but still so dangerous with an ignorant people, had placed a bad man at the helm—these *good Christians* took advantage of our weakness to strike the blow they had been fifty-four years in preparing. They have succeeded! But woe to us! woe to them! This war will cost more blood and tears than the Zinzel could carry to the Rhine!"

Thus spoke Cousin George: and, unhappily, from that day I have had reason to acknowledge that he was right. Those who were far from the enemy are now close, and those who are farther off will be forced to take a part. Let the men of the south of France remember that they are French as well as we, and if they don't want to feel the sharp claw of the Prussian upon their shoulders, let them rise in time: next to Lorraine comes Champagne; next to Alsace comes Franche Comté and Burgundy; these are fertile lands, and the Germans are fond of good wine. Clear-sighted men had long forewarned us that the Germans wanted Alsace and Lorraine: we could not believe it; now

the same men tell us, "The Germans want the whole of France! This race of slappers and slapped want to govern all Europe! Hearken! The day of the Chambords, upheld by the Jesuits, and of the Bonapartes, supported by spies and fools, has gone by forever! Let us be united under the Republic, or the Germans will devour us!" I think the men who tender this advice have a claim to be heard.

The day after the cannonade we learned that some carts had been upset and pillaged near Berlingen. Then the Prussian major declared that the commune was responsible for the loss, and that it would have to pay up five hundred francs damages.

Five hundred francs! Alas! where could they be found after this pillage?

Happily, the Mayor of Berlingen succeeded in making the discovery that the sentinels who had the charge of the carts had themselves committed the robbery, to make presents to the depraved creatures who infested the camp, and the general contributions went on as before.

Early in September the weather was fine; and I shall always remember that the oats dropped by the German convoys began to grow all along the road they had taken. No doubt there was a similar green track all the way from Bavaria far into the interior of France.

What a loss for our country! for it always fell to our share to replace anything that was lost or

stolen. Of course the Prussians are too honorable to pick or steal anywhere!

In that comparatively quiet time by night we could hear the bombardment of Strasbourg. About one in the morning, while the village was asleep, and all else in the distance was wrapped in silence, then those deep and loud reports were heard one by one. The citadel alone received five shells and one bomb per minute. Sometimes the fire increased in intensity; the din became terrible; the earth seemed to be trembling far away down there: it sounded like the heavy strokes of the gravedigger at the bottom of a grave.

And this went on forty-two days and forty-two nights without intermission: the new Church, the Library, and hundreds of houses were burned to the ground; the Cathedral was riddled with shot; a shell even carried away the iron cross at its summit. The unhappy Strasbourgers cast longing eyes westward; none came to help. The men who have told me of these things when all was over could not refrain from tears.

Of Metz we heard nothing; rumors of battles, combats in Lorraine, ran through the country: rumors of whose authenticity we knew nothing.

The silence of the Germans was maintained; but one evening they burst into loud hurrahs from Wechem to Biechelberg, from Biechelberg to Quatre Vents. George and his wife came with pale faces.

"Well, you know the despatch?"

"No; what is it?"

"The *honest man* has just surrendered at Sedan with eighty thousand Frenchmen! From the beginning of the world the like of it has never been seen. He has given up his sword to the King of Prussia—his famous sword of the 2d December. He thought more of his own safety and his ammunition-wagons than of the honor of his name and of the honor of France! Oh, the arch-deceiver! he has deceived me even in this: I did think he was brave!"

George lost all command over himself.

"There," said he, "that was to be the end of it! His own army was those ten or fifteen thousand Decemberlings supplied by the Préfecture of Police, armed with loaded staves and life-preservers to break the heads of the defenders of the laws. He thought himself able to lead a French army to victory, as if they were his gang of thieves; he has let them into a sort of a sink, and there, in spite of the valor of our soldiers, he has delivered them up to the King of Prussia: in exchange for what? We shall know by and by. Our unhappy sons refused to surrender: they would have preferred to die sword in hand, trying to fight their way out; it was his Majesty who, three times, gave orders to hoist the white flag!"

Thus spoke my cousin, and we, more dead than alive, could hear nothing but the shouts and rejoicings outside.

A flag of truce had just been despatched to the town. The Landwehr, who for some time had been occupying the place of the troops of the line with us—men of mature age, more devoted to peace than to the glory of King William—thought that all was over; that the King of Prussia would keep his word; that he would not continue against the nation the war begun against Bonaparte, and that the town would be sure to surrender now.

But the commander, Taillant, merely replied that the gates of Phalsbourg would be opened whenever he should receive his Majesty's written commands; that the fact of Napoleon's having given up his sword was no reason why he should abandon his post; and that every man ought to be on his guard, in readiness for whatever might happen.

The flag of truce returned, and the joy of the Landwehr was calmed down.

At this time I saw something which gave me infinite pleasure, and which I still enjoy thinking of.

I had taken a short turn to Saverne by way of the Falberg, behind the German posts, hoping to learn news. Besides, I had some small debts to get in; money was wanted every day, and no one knew where to find it.

About five o'clock in the evening, I was returning home; the weather was fine; business had prospered, and I was stepping into the wayside inn at Tzise to take a glass of wine. In the parlor were seated a dozen Bavarians, quarrelling with

as many Prussians seated round the deal tables. They had laid their helmets on the window-seats, and were enjoying themselves away from their officers; no doubt on their return from some marauding expedition.

A Bavarian was exclaiming: "We are always put in the front, we are. The victory of Woerth is ours; but for us you would have been beaten. And it is we who have just taken the Emperor and all his army. You other fellows, you do nothing but wait in the rear for the honor and glory, and the profit, too!"

"Well, now," answered the Prussian, "what would you have done but for us? Have you got a general to show? Tell me your men. You are in the front line, true enough. You bear your broken bones with patience—I don't deny that. But who commands you? The Prince Royal of Prussia, Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia, our old General de Moltke, and his Majesty King William! Don't tell us of your victories. Victories belong to the chiefs. Even if you were every one killed to the last man, what difference would that make? Does an architect owe his fame to his materials? What have picks, and spades, and trowels to do with victory?"

"What! the spades!" cried a Bavarian; "do you call us spades?"

"Yes, we do!" shouted the Prussian, arrogantly thumping the table.

Then, bang, bang went the pots and the bottles; and I only just had time to escape, laughing, and thinking: "After all, these poor Bavarians are right—they get the blows, and the others get the glory. Bismarck must be sly to have got them to accept such an arrangement. It is rather strong. And, then, what is the use of saying that the King of Bavaria is led by the Jesuits."

About the 8th or 10th of September, the report ran that the Republic had been proclaimed at Paris; that the Empress, the Princess Mathilde, Palikao, and all the rest had fled; that a Government of National Defence had been proclaimed; that every Frenchman from twenty to forty years of age had been summoned to arms. But we were sure of nothing, except the bombardment of Strasbourg and the battles round Metz.

Justice compels me to say that everybody looked upon the conduct of Bazaine as admirable—that he was looked upon as the saviour of France. It was thought that he was bearing the weight of all the Germans upon his shoulders, and that, finally, he would break out, and deliver Toul, Phalsbourg, Bitche, Strasbourg, and crush all the investing armies.

Often at that time George said to me: "It will soon be our turn. We shall all have to march. My plans are already made; my rifle and cartridge-box are ready. You must have the alarm-bell sounded as soon as we hear the cannon about Sarre-

guemines and Fénétrange. We shall take the Germans between two fires."

He said this to me in the evening, when we were alone, and I am sure I could have wished no better; but prudence was essential: the Landwehr kept increasing in number from day to day. They used to come and sit in our midst around the stove; they smoked their long porcelain pipes, with their heads down, in silence. As a certain number understood French, without telling us so, there was no talking together in their presence: every one kept his thoughts to himself.

All these Landwehr from Baden, Wurtemberg, and Bavaria, were commanded by Prussian officers, so that Prussia supplied the officers, and the German States the soldiers: by these means they learn obedience to their true lords and masters. The Prussians were made to command, the others humbly to obey: thus they gained the victory. And now it must remain so for ages; for the Alsacians and Lorrainers might revolt, France might rise, and troubles might come in all directions. Yes, all these good Landwehr will remain under arms from father to son; and the more numerous their victories, the higher the Prussians will climb upon their backs, and keep them firmly down.

One thing annoyed them considerable; this was a stir in the Vosges, and a talk of francs-tireurs, and of revolted villages about Epinal. Of course this stirred us up too. These Landwehr treated the

francs-tireurs as brigands in ambush to shoot down respectable fathers of families, to rob convoys, and threatened to hang them.

For all that, many thought—"If only a few came our way with powder and muskets, we would join them and try to get rid of our troubles ourselves."

Hope rose with these francs-tireurs; but the requisitions harassed us all the more.

The pillage was not quite so bad, but it went on still. When our Landwehr, whom we were obliged to lodge and keep, went off to mount guard at Phalsbourg, others came in troops from the neighboring villages, shouting, storming, and bawling for oxen, sheep, bacon! And when they had terribly frightened the women, these fellows, after all, were satisfied with a few eggs, a cheese, or a rope of onions; and then they would take their departure quite delighted.

Our own Landwehr no doubt did the same, for they never seemed short of vegetables to cook; and these good fathers of families conscientiously divided it with all the abominable creatures who followed them and had no other way of living. How else could it be? It takes time to turn a man into a beast, but a few months of war soon bring men back into the savage state.