

## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE CAPITULATION OF WILTAU.

THE Tyrolese were were still asleep, and profound stillness reigned yet in the streets of Innsbruck, although it was already after daybreak, and the first rays of the rising sun shed a crimson lustre on the summits of the mountains. All at once this silence was broken by a strange, loud, and plaintive note which seemed to resound in the air; it was followed by a second and third note; and, as if responding to these distant calls, the large bell of the High Church of Innsbruck aroused with its ringing voice the weary sleepers to renewed efforts.

They raised themselves from the ground; they listened, still drowsy, to these strange notes in the air. Suddenly two horsemen galloped through the streets, and their clarion voices struck the ears of the Tyrolese.

"Up, sleepers!" cried Joseph Speckbacher; "do you not hear the tocsin? Rise, rise, take your rifles! the French and Bavarians are at the gates of the city, and we must meet them again."

"Rise, Tyrolese!" shouted Major Teimer; "the French and Bavarians are coming. We must prevent them from penetrating into Innsbruck. We must barricade the gates, and erect barricades in the streets."

The Tyrolese jumped up, fresh, lively, and ready for the fray. Their sleep had strengthened them, and yesterday's victory had steeled their courage. The enemy was there, and they were ready to defeat him a second time.

The bells of all the churches of Innsbruck were now rung, and those of the neighboring village steeples responded to them. They called upon the able-bodied men to take up arms against the enemy, whose advanced guard could be seen already on the crests yonder. Yes, there was no mistake about it: those men were the French and Bavarians, who were descending the slope and approaching in strong columns.

A Tyrolese rushed into the city. "The French are coming!" he exclaimed, panting and breathless. "I have hurried

across the mountains to bring you the news. It is General Bisson with several thousand French troops, and Lieutenant-Colonel Wreden with a few hundred Bavarians. We had a hard fight with them yesterday at the bridge of Laditch and in the Mühlbacher Klause; but they were too strong, and were joined yesterday by another French column; therefore, we were unable to capture them, and had to let them march on. We killed hundreds of their soldiers; but several thousands of them escaped, and are coming now to Innsbruck."

"They will not come to Innsbruck, for we are much stronger than they are, and we will not let them enter the city," exclaimed Speckbacher, courageously.

"No, we will not, except in the same manner in which you brought the cavalry into the city yesterday, that is, to imprison them in the barracks," said Major Teimer.

"Yes, yes, we will do so," shouted the Tyrolese; "we will let the French come to Innsbruck, but only as our prisoners."

"Well, let us be up and doing now, my friends," exclaimed Speckbacher. "We must fortify the city against the enemy. Having gone thus far yesterday, we cannot retrace our steps to-day. But we do not want to retrace them, do we?"

"No, we do not!" cried the Tyrolese.

"We have raised the Austrian eagle again," said Major Teimer, "and the portraits of the emperor and our dear Archduke John are looking down upon us from the triumphal arch. They shall see that we are good soldiers and loyal sons of our country. Forward, men, let us be up and doing! Barricade the city, the streets, and the houses; make bullets, and put your arms in readiness. The French are coming! Hurrah! Long live the emperor Francis and the Archduke John!"

Deafening cheers responded to him, and then the Tyrolese rushed through the streets to barricade the city in accordance with Teimer's orders.

The gates were immediately barricaded with casks, wagons, carts, and every thing that could be found for that purpose; and the approaches to the city were filled with armed men, ready to give the enemy a warm reception. The doors of the houses were locked and bolted, and frantic women within

them boiled oil and water which they intended to pour on the heads of the soldiers in case they should succeed in forcing their way into the city ; bullets were made and stones were carried to the roofs, whence they were to be hurled on the enemy. Meanwhile the tocsin resounded incessantly, as if to invite the Tyrolese to redoubled efforts and increased vigilance.

The tocsin, however, had aroused not only the Tyrolese, but also the Bavarians who were locked up in the barracks ; the prisoners understood full well what the bells were proclaiming. To the Tyrolese they said : "The enemy, your enemy, is approaching. He will attack you. Be on your guard !" To the prisoners they proclaimed : "Your friends are approaching. They will deliver you. Be ready for them !" And now the Bavarians began to become excited, their eyes flashed again, the clouds disappeared from their humiliated brows ; and with loud, scornful cheers and fists clinched menacingly, they stepped before their Tyrolese guards and cried : "Our friends are coming. They will deliver us and punish you, and we shall wreak bloody vengeance on you for the disgrace you have heaped upon us. Hurrah, our friends are coming ! We shall soon be free again !"

"No, you will not," shouted a loud, thundering voice ; and in the middle of the large dormitory occupied by the Bavarians appeared suddenly the tall, herculean form of Joseph Speckbacher. On passing the barracks, he happened to hear the cheers of the prisoners and had entered in order to learn what was the matter. "No," he said once more, "you will not ; you must not suppose that we shall be so stupid as to allow you to escape. Do not rejoice therefore at the approach of the French and your countrymen ; for I tell you, and I swear by the Holy Mother of God, if the French should enter the city victoriously, our last step before evacuating it would be to kill every one of you. Do you hear, Tyrolese guards ? If the prisoners do not keep quiet, if they make any noise, or even threaten you, shoot down the ringleaders ! But if the enemy penetrates into the city, then shoot them all, and do not spare a single one of them.\* We will not incur the dis-

\* Hormayr's "History of Andreas Hofer," vol. i., p. 253.

grace of re-enforcing the enemy by several thousand men. The guards at all doors here must be quadrupled, and at the first symptom of mischief among the prisoners, you will fire at them. Now you know, Bavarians, what is going to be done. Beware, therefore !"

And Joseph Speckbacher left the hall with a proud nod of the head. The listening Bavarians heard him repeating his rigorous instructions to the sentinels outside ; they heard also the acclamations with which the Tyrolese responded to him. The prisoners, therefore, became silent ; they forced back their hopes and wishes into the depths of their hearts, and only prayed inwardly for their approaching friends, and cursed in the same manner their enemies, the ragged mob of the peasants.

The tocsin was still ringing, and its sinister notes penetrated likewise into the large guard-house, and spoke to the prisoners confined there. One of these prisoners was a gloomy, broken-down old man, General Kinkel ; the other was a youth, mortally wounded and violently delirious. It was Colonel Dittfurt. The bullet of the Tyrolese had not killed him ; he still lived, a prisoner of the peasants, and, amidst his delirium and his agony, he was fully conscious of his disgrace. This consciousness rendered him raving mad ; it brought words of wild imprecation to his cold, bloodless lips ; he howled with rage and pain ; he called down the vengeance of Heaven upon "the ragged mob," the peasants, who had dared to lay hands upon him, the proud, aristocratic colonel, and rob him not only of his life, but also of his honor. All the night long he had raved in this manner ; and it was truly horrible to hear these words, full of contempt, hatred, and fury, in the mouth of a dying man ; it was dreadful to see this scarred form on the bloody couch, writhing in the convulsions of death, and yet unable to die, because anger and rage revived it again and again. At day-break Major Teimer had entered the guard-house with a detachment of Tyrolese ; and while he repaired with some of them to General Kinkel, the other Tyrolese had entered Colonel Dittfurt's room, to see the miracle of a man whose head had been pierced by a bullet having vi-

tality enough left to rave, swear, and curse, for twenty-four hours.

Gradually the whole room became crowded with Tyrolese, who yesterday had been the mortal foes of the colonel, but who gazed to-day with profound compassion and conciliated hearts at the poor, mutilated being that disdained even on the brink of the grave to consider a peasant as entitled to equal rights and as a brother of the nobleman.

Colonel Dittfurt lay on his couch with his eyes distended to their utmost, and stared at the Tyrolese assembled round him. For some minutes the curses and invectives had died away on his lips, and he seemed to listen attentively to the sinister notes of the alarm-bells which were calling incessantly upon the Tyrolese to prepare for the struggle.

"Is that my death-knell?" he asked wearily. "Have I, then, died already, and is it death that is lying so heavily on my breast?"

"No, sir, you still live," said one of the Tyrolese, in a low, gentle voice. "You still live; the bells you hear are ringing the tocsin; they aroused us because the French and Bavarians are advancing upon the city."

"The Bavarians are coming! Our men are coming!" cried Dittfurt exultingly, and he lifted his head as if to rise from his couch. But the iron hand of death had already touched him and kept him enthralled. His head sank heavily back upon the pillow, and his eyes became more lustreless and fixed.

"They vanquished me," he said, after a pause; "I know I am a prisoner of the peasants, and it is they who keep me chained to this couch and prevent me from going out to participate in the contest. Oh, oh, how it grieves me! A prisoner of the peasants! But they fought like men, and their leader must be an able and brave officer. Who was the leader of the peasants?"

"No one, sir," said the Tyrolese, on whom the dying officer fixed his eyes. "We had no leader; we fought equally for God, the emperor, and our native country."

"No, no," said Dittfurt, "that is false; I know better, for I saw the leader of the peasants pass me often. He was mounted

on a white horse; his face was as radiant as heaven, his eyes twinkled like stars, and in his hand he held a sword flashing like a sunbeam. I saw the leader of the peasants, he always rode at their head, he led them into battle, I—"

He paused, the expression of his eyes became more fixed, the shades of death descended deeper and deeper on his forehead, which was covered with cold perspiration.

The Tyrolese minded him no longer. They looked at each other with exultant and enthusiastic glances. "He saw a leader at our head?" they asked each other. "A leader mounted on a white horse, and holding in his hand a sword flashing like a sunbeam? It must have been St. James, the patron of the city of Innsbruck. He was our leader yesterday. Yes, yes, that is it! St. James combated at our head, unknown to us; but he showed himself to the enemy and defeated him. Did you not hear, brethren, what the pious priests told us of the Spaniards who have likewise risen to fight against Bonaparte, the enemy of the Pope and all good Christians? St. James placed himself in Spain likewise at the head of the pious peasants; he led them against Bonaparte and the French, and made them victorious over the enemy, who was bent upon stealing their country and their liberties. And since St. James got through with the Spaniards in Spain, he has come to the Tyrol to lend us his assistance. St. James, our patron saint, is our leader! He assists us and combats at our head!"

And the Tyrolese, regardless of the colonel, who at this moment was writhing in the last convulsions of death, rushed out of the room to communicate the miracle to their brethren outside. The news spread like wildfire from house to house, from street to street; all shouted joyously: "St. James, our patron saint, is our leader. He assists us and combats at our head!"\*

And this belief enhanced the enthusiasm of the Tyrolese, and with the most intrepid courage they looked upon the enemy, who had by this time come close up to the city, and was forming in line of battle on the plain adjoining the village of Wiltau. From the houses in the neighborhood of

\* "Gallery of Heroes: Andreas Hofer," p. 41.

the triumphal arch the Tyrolese were able to survey the whole position of the enemy; they could discern even the various uniforms of the French and Bavarian soldiers. Up yonder, on the roof of a house, stood Speckbacher and Teimer, and with their eyes, which were as keen and flashing as those of the eagle, they gazed searchingly upon the position of the enemy and that of their own forces. The line from the village of Wiltau down to the river Sill was occupied by the French troops under General Bisson; on the right side of Wiltau to the Inn stood Lieutenant-Colonel Wreden with the Bavarians, his front turned toward the city.

"Now we must surround them as in a mouse-trap, and leave them no outlet for escape," said Major Teimer, with a shrewd wink. "Is not that your opinion too, Speckbacher?"

"Certainly it is," replied Speckbacher. "Mount Isel yonder, in the rear of the Bavarians, must be occupied by several thousands of our best sharpshooters, and a cloud of our peasants must constantly harass their rear and drive them toward Innsbruck. Here we will receive them in fine style, and chase them until they are all dead or lay down their arms. The only important thing for us is to cut off their retreat and keep them between two fires."

"You are right, Speckbacher; you are a skilful soldier, and are better able to be a general than many an officer—for instance, General Kinkel. Kinkel is an old woman; he wept and swore in one breath when I was with him just now; he says all the time that he will commit suicide, and yet he is not courageous enough to do it, but preferred to comply with my demands."

"And what were your demands, Teimer?"

"I demanded that he should give me an open letter to General Bisson, urging him to send some confidential person into the town who might report the state of affairs, and convince him of the immense superiority and enthusiasm of the Tyrolese, and of the impossibility of defeating us or forcing his way through our ranks."

"And did old General Kinkel give you such a letter?"

"He did, and I will send it out now to the French camp. We must make all necessary dispositions, that when the gen-

eral sends a confidential envoy into the town he may become fully alive to the fact that it is impossible for him to defeat us. Above all things, we must send several thousand sharpshooters to Mount Isel and the adjoining heights, in order to cut off the enemy's retreat."

The letter which Major Teimer had extorted from General Kinkel had really the effect which he had expected from it. General Bisson sent to Innsbruck one of his staff-officers, accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel von Wreden, the commander of the Bavarians. A few other officers followed these two, and repaired with them to Major Teimer, who received them at the principal guard-house in the presence of the most prominent Tyrolese.

Meanwhile General Bisson awaited with painful impatience the return of the two ambassadors whom he had sent into the town; and, his eyes constantly fixed on Innsbruck, he walked uneasily up and down. But already upward of an hour had elapsed, and the ambassadors had not yet made their appearance. He had good reason to be uneasy and anxious, for the situation of the French and Bavarians was now almost desperate. He had found out at the bridge of the Eisach, on the plain of the Sterzinger Moos, and at the Mühlbacher Klause, that the French had to deal with an enemy who was terribly in earnest; that the whole Tyrol was in insurrection; that Chasteler, with a body of armed peasants, as well as a few regular troops, was descending the Brenner, and already menacing his rear; while the rocks and thickets in his front and flanks were bristling with the peasants of the Innthal, who, in great strength, obstructed his advance.

"We shall die here, for we are hemmed in on all sides," said General Bisson, gloomily, to himself. "There is no hope left, and in the end we may be obliged to submit to the disgrace of surrendering to the mob of peasants. But what on earth prevents the officers from returning to me?"

And Bisson turned his searching eyes again toward Innsbruck. Now he perceived two men approaching at a run. He recognized them; they were the companions of his staff-officer and lieutenant-colonel, Von Wreden, and their pale, dismayed faces told him that they were bearers of bad tidings.

"Where are the two gentlemen whom I sent to Innspruck?" he asked, advancing rapidly toward them.

"They were taken into custody at Innspruck," faltered out one of them.

"Major Teimer said he had taken upon himself no obligation in regard to these officers, and would retain them as hostages," panted the other. "He then caused us to be conducted through the whole city, that we might satisfy ourselves of the tremendous strength of the Tyrolese and their formidable preparations. Oh, your excellency, the peasants are much superior to us in strength, for there are at least twenty thousand able-bodied men in their ranks; they are well armed, and the most celebrated marksmen and the most daring leaders of the Tyrol are among them."

"Bah! it would make no difference, even though they were ten to one!" cried General Bisson; "for ten peasants cannot have as much courage as one soldier of the grand army of my glorious emperor. We will prove to them that we are not afraid of them. We will attack them. A detachment of Tyrolese yonder has ventured to leave the city. Fire at them! Shoot them down until not one of them is left!"

The shots crashed, the artillery boomed, but not a Tyrolese had fallen; they had thrown themselves on the ground, so that the bullets and balls had whistled harmlessly over their heads. But now they jumped up and responded to the shots of the enemy; and not one of their bullets missed its aim, but all carried death into the ranks of the French. At the same time the sharpshooters posted on Mount Isel, in the rear of the French and Bavarians, commenced firing, and mowed down whole ranks of the soldiers.

General Bisson turned in dismay toward this new enemy, covered by the thicket, which, rising almost to the summit of Mount Isel, made the Tyrolese invisible, and protected them from the missiles of the soldiers.

"We are between two fires," he murmured to himself, in dismay. "We are caught, as it were, in a net, and will be annihilated to the last man."

And this conviction seized all the soldiers, as was plainly to be seen from their pale faces and terror-stricken looks.

There was a sudden lull in the fire of the Tyrolese, which had already struck down several hundred French soldiers, and from the triumphal arch of Innspruck issued several men, waving white handkerchiefs, and advancing directly toward the French. It was Major Teimer, accompanied by some officers and citizens of Innspruck. He sent one of them to General Bisson to invite him to an interview to be held on the public square of the village of Wiltau.

General Bisson accepted the invitation, and repaired with his staff and some Bavarian officers to the designated place.

Major Teimer and his companions were already there. Teimer received the general and his distinguished companions with a proud, condescending nod.

"General," he said, without waiting for the eminent officer to address him, "I have come here to ask you to surrender, and order your soldiers to lay down their arms."

General Bisson looked with a smile of amazement at the peasant who dared to address to him so unheard-of a demand with so much calmness and composure.

"My dear sir," he said, "I am convinced that you are not in earnest, but know full well that we never can or will comply with such a demand. Moreover, our situation does not by any means compel us to allow conditions to be dictated to us. Nevertheless, I am ready to make some concessions to you. Hence, I will pledge you my word of honor that I will neither attack you, nor injure the city of Innspruck in the least. But in return, I demand that you allow us to pass without molestation through Innspruck, that we may march to Augsburg in obedience to the orders of my emperor."

"And you believe we can be so stupid as to grant this demand, general?" asked Teimer, shrugging his shoulders. "I do not want to be beaten down, but stick to my first demand. Either you order your troops to lay down their arms, or you will all be put to the sword."

"No, so help me God! never will I accept so arrogant a demand," cried the general, indignantly; "never will I incur the disgrace of signing so ignominious a capitulation."

"Then, general, you will appear this very day before the throne of God to account for the lives of the thousands whom

you devote to an unnecessary death. For all of you will and must die ; there is no escape for you. You know it full well, general, for otherwise you, the proud general of Monsieur Bonaparte, and commander of several thousand splendid French soldiers, would not have come to negotiate here with the leader of the peasants, who knows nothing of tactics and strategy. You know that there are enemies both in your front and rear. Our men occupy Mount Isel, and the whole country back of Mount Isel is in insurrection. You cannot retrace your steps, nor can you advance, for you will never get to Innsbruck, and there is no other road to Augsburg. We have barricaded the city, and have nearly twenty thousand men in and around Innsbruck."

"But I pledged you my word that I would not attack you, nor take any hostile steps whatever. All I want is to march peaceably through the city ; and, in order to convince you of my pacific intentions, I promise to continue my march with flints unscrewed from our muskets, and without ammunition."

"I do not accept your promises, they are not sufficient," said Teimer, coldly.

"Well, then," cried General Bisson, in a tremulous voice, "hear my last words. I will march on with my troops without arms ; our arms and ammunition may be sent after us on wagons."

"If that is your last word, general, our negotiations are at an end," replied Teimer, with perfect *sang-froid*. "You have rejected my well-meaning solicitude for your safety ; nothing remains for me now but to surrender you and your troops to the tender mercies of our infuriated people. Farewell, general."

He turned his back on him and advanced several steps toward Innsbruck. At the same time he waved his arm three times. Immediately, as had been agreed upon, the Tyrolese on Mount Isel, and in front of Innsbruck, commenced firing, and their close discharges, admirably directed, thinned the ranks of the French grenadiers, while the shouts with which the mountains resounded on all sides were so tremendous that they were completely panic-struck.

General Bisson saw it, and a deadly pallor overspread his

face. Teimer stood still and gazed sneeringly at the disheartened and terrified soldiers, and then glanced at their general.

Bisson caught this glance. "Sir," he cried, and his cry resembled almost an outburst of despair, "pray return to me. Let us negotiate !"

Teimer did not approach him, he only stood still. "Come to me, if you have any thing to say to me," he shouted ; "come, and—"

The rattle of musketry, and the furious shouts of the Tyrolese, now pouring down from all the mountains, and advancing upon the French, drowned his voice.

To render his words intelligible to Teimer, and to hear his replies, General Bisson was obliged to approach him, and he stepped up to him with his staff-officers in greater haste perhaps than was compatible with his dignity.

"What else do you demand ?" he asked, in a tremulous voice.

"What I demanded at the outset," said Teimer, firmly. "I want your troops to lay down their arms and surrender to the Tyrolese. I have already drawn up a capitulation ; it is only necessary for you and your officers to sign it. The capitulation is brief and to the point, general. It consists only of four paragraphs. But just listen to the shouts and cheers of my dear Tyrolese, and see what excellent marksmen they are !"

Indeed, the bullets of the Tyrolese whistled again at this moment through the ranks of the enemy, and every bullet hit its man. Loud shouts of despair burst from the ranks of the French and Bavarians, who were in the wildest confusion, and did not even dare to flee, because they knew full well that they were hemmed in on all sides."

General Bisson perceived the despair of his troops, and a groan escaped from his breast. "Read the capitulation to me, sir," he said, drying the cold perspiration on his forehead.

Teimer drew a paper from his bosom and unfolded it. He then commenced reading, in a loud, ringing voice, which drowned even the rattle of musketry :

"In the name of his majesty the Emperor Francis I. of Austria, a capitulation is entered into at this moment with the