

the letter which you have kept for me so long. There! Now break the nice seal, open the letter, and read to us what I wrote on the day when I dispatched Colonel Steigentesch to the King of Prussia. Read!"

Stadion unfolded the letter and read:

"Colonel Steigentesch will return from his mission without accomplishing any thing. Prussia and Austria are rivals in Germany, and will never join hands in a common undertaking. Austria can never forgive Prussia for taking Silesia from her, and Prussia will always secretly suspect that Austria is intent upon weakening her rising power and humbling her ambition. Hence, Prussia will hesitate and temporize even at this juncture, although it is all-important now for Germany to take a bold stand against her common enemy, rapacious and insatiable France; she will hesitate because she secretly wishes that Austria should be humiliated; and she will not bear in mind that the weakening of Austria is fraught with danger for Prussia, nay, the whole of Germany."

"Now, gentlemen," said the emperor, when Count Stadion was through, "you see that my opinion was right, and that I well knew what I had to expect from Prussia. We must now carry on the struggle against France single-handed; but, after dealing her another blow, for which the King of Prussia longs, we shall take good care not to invite Prussia to our victorious repast. It would be just in us even to compel her to give us the sweet morsel of Silesia for our dessert. Well, we shall see what time will bring about. Our first blow against France was successful.—Archduke, go and help us to succeed in dealing her another; and, after defeating France single-handed, we shall also be masters of Germany."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE BATTLE OF WAGRAM.

"At length!" exclaimed the Archduke John, joyously, holding up the letter which a courier of the generalissimo had just brought him from the headquarters of Wagram. "At

length a decisive blow is to be struck.—Count Nugent, General Frimont, come in here! A courier from the generalissimo!"

So saying, the archduke had opened the door of his cabinet, and called the gentlemen who were in the anteroom.

"A courier from the generalissimo," he repeated once more, when the two generals came in.

"Your highness's wish is fulfilled now, is it not?" asked Nugent. "The generalissimo accepts the assistance which you offered to him. He permits you to leave this position with your troops and those of the Archduke Palatine and reinforce his own army?"

"No, he does not reply to my offer. It seems the generalissimo thinks that he does not need us to beat the French. But he writes to me that he is about to advance with his whole army, and that a decisive battle may be looked for. He says the enemy is still on the island of Lobau, busily engaged in erecting a *tête-de-pont*, and building a bridge across the Danube."

"And our troops do not try to prevent this by all means!" cried General Frimont, vehemently. "They allow the enemy to build bridges? They look on quietly while the enemy is preparing to leave the island, and do not prevent him from so doing?"

"My friend," said the archduke, gently, "let us never forget that it does not behoove us to criticise the actions of the generalissimo, and that our sole duty is to obey. Do as I do; let us be silent and submit. But let us rejoice that something will be done at length. Just bear in mind how long this inactivity and suspense have lasted already. The battle of Aspern was fought on the 22d of May, to-day is the 3d of July; and in the mean time nothing has been done. The enemy remained quietly on the island of Lobau, nursing his wounded, reorganizing his troops, erecting *têtes-de-pont*, and building bridges; and the generalissimo stood with his whole army on the bank of the Danube, and took great pains to watch in idleness the busy enemy. Let us thank God, therefore, that at last the enemy is tired of this situation, that he at length takes the initiative again, and brings about a decision.

The generalissimo informs me that the enemy's artillery dislodged our outposts yesterday, and that some French infantry crossed over to the Mühlau. The generalissimo, as I told you before, advanced with his troops, and hopes for a decisive battle within a few days."

"And yet the generalissimo does not accept the assistance which your imperial highness offered to him?" asked Count Nugent, shaking his head.

"No, he does not. The generalissimo orders me, on the contrary, to stay here at Presburg and operate in such a manner against the corps stationed here, that it may not be able to join Napoleon's main army. Well, then, gentlemen, let us comply with this order, and perform at least our humble part of the generalissimo's grand plan. Let us help him to gain a victory, for the victory will be useful to the fatherland. We will, therefore, form a pontoon-bridge to-day, and make a sortie from the *tête-de-pont*. You, General Frimont, will order up the batteries from Comorn. You, General Nugent, will inform the Archduke Palatine of the generalissimo's orders. Write him also that it is positive that the enemy is moving all his troops to Vienna, and that all his columns are already on the march thither. Tell him that it is all-important for us to detain him, and that I, therefore, have resolved to make a sortie from the *tête-de-pont*, and request the Archduke Palatine to co-operate with me on the right bank of the Danube. Let us go to work, gentlemen, to work! We have no time to lose. The order is to keep the enemy here by all means; let us strive to do it!"

And they went to work with joyous zeal and untiring energy; all necessary dispositions were made for forming a pontoon-bridge, and preventing the enemy from joining Napoleon's main army. The Archduke John superintended every thing in person; he was present wherever difficulties were to be surmounted, or obstacles to be removed. In his ardent zeal, he did not hesitate to take part in the toils of his men, and the soldiers cheered enthusiastically on seeing him work so hard in the midst of their ranks.

Early in the morning of the 5th of July the bridge was completed, the *tête-de-pont* was fully armed, and every thing

was in readiness for the sortie. The Archduke, who had not slept all the night long, was just returning from an inspection of the preparations, when a courier galloped up to him in the middle of the bridge. On beholding the archduke, he jumped from his horse, and handed him, panting and in trembling haste, a letter from the generalissimo.

"You have ridden very rapidly? You were instructed then to make great haste?" asked John.

"I rode hither from Wagram in ten hours, your imperial highness," said the courier, breathlessly; "I was instructed to ride as rapidly as possible."

"You have done your duty faithfully. Go and rest."

He nodded kindly to the courier, and repaired to his headquarters to read the letter he had just received from his brother.

This letter revoked all orders which had been sent to him up to this time. The archduke had vainly offered his cooperation and that of the Archduke Palatine four days ago. At that time not even a reply had been made to his offer; now, at the last moment, the generalissimo called impetuously upon his brother to hasten to his assistance. He demanded that the Archduke John should set out at once, leave only troops enough to hold the *tête-de-pont*, and hasten up with the remainder of his forces to the scene of action.

When the archduke read this order, a bitter smile played round his lips. "See," he said, mournfully, to General Frimont, "now I am needed all at once, and it seems as if the battle cannot be gained without us. It is all-important for us to arrive in time at the point to which we are called so late, perhaps too late. Ah, what is that? What do you bring to me, Nugent?"

"Another courier from the generalissimo has arrived; he brought this letter."

"You see, much deference is paid to us all of a sudden; we are treated as highly important assistants," sighed the archduke. He then unfolded the paper quickly and read it.

"The generalissimo," he said, "informs me now that he has changed his plan, and will not give battle on the bank of the Danube, but take position in the rear of Wagram. He

instructs me to make a forced march to Marchegg, advance, after resting there for three hours, to Siebenbrunn, and take position there. Very well, gentlemen, let us carry the generalissimo's orders into effect. At one o'clock to-night, all must be in readiness for setting out. We need the time between now and then to concentrate the extended lines of our troops. If we are ready at an earlier hour, we shall set out at once. Make haste! Let that be the password to-night!"

Thanks to this password, all the troops had been concentrated by midnight, and the march was just about to begin when another courier arrived from the generalissimo, and informed the archduke that the enemy was advancing, and that it was now the generalissimo's intention to attack him and force him to give battle. The Archduke John was ordered to march as rapidly as possible to Siebenbrunn, whither a strong corps of the enemy had set out.

The Archduke John now advanced with his ten thousand men with the utmost rapidity toward Marchegg. The troops were exhausted by the toils and fatigues of the last days; they had not eaten any thing for twenty-four hours; but the archduke and his generals and staff-officers always knew how to stir them up and induce them to continue their march with unflagging energy. Thus they at length reached Marchegg, where they were to rest for three hours.

But no sooner had they arrived there than Count Reuss, the generalissimo's aide-de-camp, galloped up on a charger covered all over with foam. The count had ridden in seven hours from Wagram to Marchegg, for it was all-important that the archduke should accelerate his march. The battle was raging already with great fury. The generalissimo was in urgent need of the archduke's assistance. Hence, the latter was not to rest with his troops at Marchegg, but continue his march and advance with the utmost speed by Siebenbrunn to Loibersdorf. At Siebenbrunn he would find Field-Marshal Rosenberg; he should then, jointly with him, attack the enemy.

"Let us set out, then, for Loibersdorf," said John, sighing; "we will do all we can, and thus avoid being charged with

tardiness. Up, up, my braves! The fatherland calls us; we must obey it!"

But the soldiers obeyed this order only with low murmurs, and many remained at Marchegg, exhausted to death.

The troops continued their march with restless speed, and mute resignation. The archduke's face was pale, his flashing eyes were constantly prying into the distance, his breast was panting, his heart was filled with indescribable anxiety, and he exhorted his troops incessantly to accelerate their steps. Now they heard the dull roar of artillery at a distance; and the farther they advanced, the louder and more terrific resounded the cannon. The battle, therefore, was going on, and the utmost rapidity was necessary on their part. Forward, therefore, forward! At five o'clock in the afternoon they at last reached Siebenbrunn. But where was Field-Marshal Rosenberg? What did it mean that the roar of artillery had almost entirely died away? And what dreadful signs surrounded the horizon on all sides? Tremendous clouds of smoke, burning villages everywhere, and added to them now the stillness of death, which was even more horrible after the booming of artillery which had shaken the earth up to this time. Where was Field-Marshal Rosenberg?

An officer galloped up at full speed. It was a messenger from Field-Marshal Rosenberg, who informed the archduke that he had been repulsed, that all was over, and that the day was irretrievably lost.

"I have been ordered to march to Loibersdorf," said the archduke, resolutely; "I must comply with my instructions."

And he continued his march toward Loibersdorf. Patrols were sent out and approached Wagram. The fields were covered with the dead and wounded, and the latter stated amid moans and lamentations that a dreadful battle had been fought, and that the Austrians had been defeated.

The archduke listened to these reports with a pale face and quivering lips. But he was still in hopes that he would receive a message from the generalissimo; hence, he remained at Loibersdorf and waited for news from his brother. Night came; profound stillness reigned all around, broken only now and then by dull reports of cannon and musketry fired at a

distance ; and there was no news yet from the generalissimo !

One of the patrols now brought in a French officer who had got separated from his men, and whom the Austrians had taken prisoner. The archduke sent for him, and asked him for information regarding the important events of the day.

The officer gave him the required information with sparkling eyes and in a jubilant voice. A great battle had been fought during the previous two days. The French army had left the Island of Lobau on four bridges, which Napoleon had caused to be built in a single night by two hundred carpenters, and had given battle to the Archduke Charles at Wagram. A furious combat had raged on the 5th and 6th of July. Both armies had fought with equal boldness, bravery, and exasperation ; but finally the Archduke Charles had been compelled to evacuate the field of battle and retreat. The Emperor Napoleon had remained in possession of the field ; he had gained the battle of Wagram.

Large drops of sweat stood on the archduke's forehead while he was listening to this report ; his eyes filled with tears of indignation and anger ; his lips quivered, and he lifted his eyes reproachfully to heaven. Then he turned slowly to General Frimont, who was halting by his side, and behind whom were to be seen the gloomy, mournful faces of the other officers.

"The generalissimo has lost a battle," he said, with a sigh. "This is a twofold calamity for us. You know that we could not come sooner. We arrived even at an earlier hour than I had promised. You will see that the whole blame for the loss of the battle will be laid at our door, and we shall be charged with undue tardiness. This pretended tardiness will be welcome to many a one. A scapegoat is needed, and I shall have to be this scapegoat !"*

The Archduke John was not mistaken ; he had predicted his fate. He was really to be the scapegoat for the loss of the battle. In the proclamation which the Archduke Charles issued to his army a few days afterward at Znaym, and in

* The archduke's own words.—See Hormayr's work on "The Campaign of 1809," p. 236.

which he informed it that he had concluded an armistice with the Emperor Napoleon, he deplored that, owing to the too late arrival of the Archduke John, the battle had not been won, despite the admirable bravery which the troops had displayed at Wagram, and that the generalissimo had been compelled thereby to retreat.

The Archduke John did not defend himself. He lifted his tearful eyes to heaven and sighed : "Another battle lost, and this battle decides the fate of Austria ! Now Prussia will not ally herself with us, for we did not strike the second blow which the king demanded, and she will look on quietly while Austria is being humiliated ! O God, God, protect Austria ! Protect Germany ! save us from utter ruin !"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE ARMISTICE OF ZNAYM.

THE guests of Anthony Steeger, the innkeeper of Lienz, had been greatly excited to-day ; they had talked, debated, lamented, and sworn a great deal. In accordance with the request of Andreas Hofer, the most influential leaders of the Tyrolese had met there and drawn up, as Hofer proposed, a petition to the Emperor Francis, who was now in Hungary at one of the palaces belonging to the Prince of Lichtenstein. The disastrous tidings of the battle of Wagram had been followed a few days afterward by news fully as disheartening. The Archduke Charles had concluded an armistice with the Emperor Napoleon at Znaym, on the 12th of July, 1809. By this armistice hostilities were to be suspended till the 20th of August ; but in the mean time the Austrians were to evacuate the Tyrol, Styria, and Carinthia entirely, and restore to the Bavarians and French the fortified cities which they had occupied.

These calamitous terms of the armistice had induced Andreas Hofer to summon some of his friends to Lienz, and draw up with them a petition to the emperor, in which they implored him with touching humility to have mercy upon them in their distress, and not to forsake his faithful Tyrol. They