

"If the baron has not chosen his seconds," said a soft voice behind him, "I beg to offer my services."

Baron Marshal turned, and saw an officer in the Austrian uniform.

"Count Ranuzi," cried Belleville, astonished; "how, monsieur! you offer yourself as second to my adversary? I had thought to ask this service of you."

"I suspected so," said Ranuzi, with his accustomed calm and quiet manner, "therefore I anticipated you. The right is certainly on the side of Baron Marshal, and in offering myself as his second, I do so in the name of all the Austrian officers who are present. They have all seen the events of this evening with painful indignation. Without doubt the world will soon be acquainted with them; we wish to make an open, public demonstration that we wholly disapprove the conduct of the French officers. The nutshells thrown behind the *fauteuil* of the queen have made us your adversaries, Count Belleville."

"That is not the occasion of this duel, but the affront offered me by Baron Marshal," cried Belleville. "This being the case, will you still be the second of my opponent?"

"I was compelled to insult you," said Baron Marshal, "because you would have given me no satisfaction for the nutshells thrown behind the *fauteuil* of the queen; but be assured that I don't fight with you in order that you may wash out my offence with my blood, but wholly and alone that your blood may wash away the nutshells from the feet of the queen."

Baron Marshal then turned to Ranuzi. "I accept your offer, sir, and rejoice to make the acquaintance of a true nobleman. Have the goodness to meet the seconds of Count Belleville, and make all necessary arrangements. I will call for you early in the morning. I only say further that it is useless to make any attempts at reconciliation—I shall not listen to them. Prussia and France are at war. My great king has made no peace—I also will not hear of it. The nutshells lie behind the *fauteuil* of the queen, and only the blood of Count Belleville can wash them away."

He bowed to Ranuzi, and joined his daughter, who, pale and trembling, awaited him in the next room.

"Oh, father," said she, with tears gushing from her eyes, "your life is in danger—you meet death on my account!"

"No, thank God, my child, your name will not be mixed up in this affair. No one can say that the mortified father revenged an insult offered to his daughter. I fight this duel not for you, but because of the nutshells behind the *fauteuil* of the queen."

CHAPTER IX.

THE DUEL AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

EARLY in the morning two horsemen dashed down the Linden. Their loud conversation, their pert and noisy laughter, aroused the curiosity of the porters who stood yawning in the house-doors, and the maids opened the windows and gazed curiously at the two gallant French officers who were taking such an early ride to the Thiergarten. When the girls were young and pretty, Belleville threw them a kiss as he passed by, and commanded them to give it with his tenderest greeting to their fair mistress.

"Happily," said his companion, "these good Berliners do not understand our speech sufficiently to inform their mistresses of this last insolence of Count Belleville."

"They do not, but their mistresses do, and I cannot think that they are still sleeping. No, I am convinced they have risen early, and are now standing behind their maids, and watching us go by. In this street dwell those who call themselves society; they were at the castle yesterday, and know of this duel. I think our good marquise will one day reward me richly for this duel, when I tell her I stood behind the queen and cracked nuts like a *gamin* in Paris, and that I was shot at because of the nutshells. She will laugh tears—tears which I will strive to convert into diamonds for myself."

"You feel assured that you will return unharmed from this duel?"

"Yes, I cannot doubt it. I always won the prize at our pistol-shooting in Paris, and then, this stupid Dutchman is, without doubt, horrified at the thought of shooting at a man, and not at a mark. No, *vraiment*, I do not doubt but I shall be victorious, and I rejoice in anticipation of that *déjeuner dinatoire* with which my friends will celebrate it."

"But," said his second, "let us for a moment suppose that you are not victorious; one must ever be prepared in this poor world, ruled by accident, for the worst that can befall. In case you fall, have you no last commissions to give me?"

Count Belleville stopped his horse as they were in the act of entering the garden.

"You positively insist on burying me? Well, then, I will make my last will. In case I fall go instantly to my quarters, open my writing-desk, and press upon a small button you will see on the left side; there you will find letters and papers; tie them carefully, and send them in the usual way to Countess Bernis. As to my heritage,

you know I have no gold; I leave nothing but debts. My clothes you can give to my faithful servant, François; for the last year I have paid him no wages. Now my testament is made—no, stop, I had forgotten the most important item. Should the inconceivable, the unimaginable happen, should this Dutch village-devil slay me, I make it the duty of the French officers here to revenge me on the haughty daughter of my adversary, and on all these dull and prudish beauties. They must carry out what I intended yesterday. I have drawn a few sketches and added a few notes; make as many copies as are required, and paste them on the designated places. If I fall, this must be done the following night, that my wandering soul may find repose in the sweet consciousness of revenge. If my enemy's ball strikes me, hasten forward, and, before any one dares lay his hand upon me, take from my breast-pocket a paper, which you will find there, and conceal it; it is the drawing, and it is my legacy to my comrades. Swear to me to do as I have said."

"I swear!"

"And now, *mon ami*, let us forget this stupid thought of death, and look life saucily and merrily in the face. Life will not have the courage to break with a brave son of *la belle France*."

Belleville drew his bridle suddenly, and sprang through the gate into the garden; turning to the right, they rode for some time under the shadow of the trees, then through a side *allée*, which led to an open place surrounded by lofty oaks. At this moment he heard the roll of an open carriage, and turning, he saluted gayly the two gentlemen who were seated in it; he checked his horse suddenly in order to ride by their side, and provoking the beautiful and noble beast by the rude use of his spurs, he forced it into many difficult and artistic evolutions. Arrived at the place of rendezvous, he sprang lightly from the saddle and fastened his horse to a tree, then drew near Baron Marshal, who, with Ranuzi, was just descending from the carriage.

"No man could be more prudent than yourself, sir," said he, laughing, "to come to a rendezvous in a carriage; truly, that is a wise and, I think on this occasion, well-grounded precaution."

"A forethought which I have exercised on your account," said the baron, gravely. "You, sir, will require a carriage, and knowing you, as a stranger, had no carriage in Berlin, I brought mine. It shall be at your service."

"*Vraiment!* you are too good! I hope, however, not to make use of your offer."

Now, according to custom, Ranuzi drew near the baron to make a last attempt at reconciliation. He answered sternly: "You know that I am not to blame, and therefore will take no step in this mat-

ter. I suppose, Count Belleville is as little disposed as myself to make apologies."

"I intend to prove to you, sir baron, that I am a nobleman and a brave one; and as to the nuts which I cracked behind the queen, my only regret is, that they, like every thing else in your detested Berlin, were hollow."

"No, sir, they were not at all hollow," said Baron Marshal, drawing up the cock of his pistol; "in one of those nuts I saw a death-worm, which will soon bore into your flesh."

He bowed to Belleville and took the place pointed out by his second. The second of Belleville then drew near, and led him to the outermost point of the line.

The Frenchman laughed aloud. "How," said he, "you will take me to the end of the world to secure me from the ball of my enemy?"

"Sir," said the grave and solemn voice of the baron, "you will still be too near me."

"Well, sir baron, I give you precedence," said Belleville, laughing, "though, I believe, I have the right; but age must have the precedence—fire, sir."

"No, young man," said Marshal, sadly; "I will grant you one more glance at the glad sun and the fresh, green earth; you shall fire first, and I counsel you to lay aside your levity; let your hand be firm and your aim steady; if you fail, you are lost. I am a good shot, and I am without mercy."

There was something so convincing, so gloomy in his tone, that Belleville was involuntarily affected by it. For the first time his brow was clouded, and a slight pallor took possession of his cheek; but he forced back this prophetic shudder quickly, and raised his pistol with a firm hand.

Far away, in the still park, sounded the echo of his shot; but opposite to him stood his adversary, firm and calm as before, with his eye fixed steadily upon him.

Belleville threw his pistol to the ground, and drawing his gold snuff-box from his vest-pocket with his small white hands, adorned with cuffs of lace, he played carelessly upon the lid; then opened it, and slowly and gracefully took a pinch of snuff, saying, coolly, "I await your ball."

Marshal raised his pistol and aimed directly at the head of his enemy, who looked him firmly in the eye. The appearance of this youthful, fresh, and brave face softened, against his will, the noble and magnanimous soul of this good man. He let his arm fall. "Sir," said he, "you are so young, perhaps your life may improve. I will not kill you. But you need for this life a great, impressive lesson and a lasting warning. I will therefore shoot you through

the right leg, just above the knee."* He raised the pistol quickly, and fired. As the smoke was lifted, Belleville was seen lying bleeding on the ground. The shot had gone right through the knee and broken the knee-pan.

As his second bowed over him, Belleville whispered, with broken eyes and trembling lips: "My legacy! do not forget my legacy! I believe I shall die; this pain is horrible."

The Frenchman took the paper from his pocket and concealed it.

"I will be avenged," said Belleville, with a convulsive smile, then sank into unconsciousness.

Belleville was placed in the carriage of Baron Marshal and carried to the city. Baron Marshal went immediately to the commandant of Berlin, gave notice of what had taken place, and declared himself under arrest.

The commandant took his hand kindly. "The laws forbid duelling, and I must consider you under arrest until I receive further orders. That is to say, house-arrest; you must give me your word not to leave your house. I will send a courier immediately to the king. I was in the castle last night, and witness to all the circumstances which led to this duel, witnessed the conduct of these Frenchmen, and in your place I would have acted just as you have done."

The French officers fulfilled the vow they had made to their wounded comrade; they had promised to revenge him on Fraulein Marshal and the other ladies of the court.

The morning after the duel, on the corners of all the principal streets, placards were pasted, which were soon surrounded by crowds of men, exhibiting astonishment and indignation. These placards contained a register of all the young and beautiful women of the court and city; to these names were added a frivolous and voluptuous personal description of every lady, and to this the name of the French officer which each was supposed to favor. †

An outcry of scorn and rage was heard throughout Berlin; every one was excited at the boundless shamelessness of the French officers, and on this occasion the mass of the people took the part of the rich and the distinguished, whom generally they envied and despised. They felt themselves aggrieved by the contempt and ridicule which these Frenchmen had cast upon the daughters of Prussians, and no police force was necessary to tear these placards from the walls; they were torn off and trampled under foot, or torn into a thousand pieces and scattered to the winds. If a Frenchman dared to show himself on the street, he was received with curses and threats, and

* The words of Baron Marshal.—See Thiébauld.

† Thiébauld, p. 90.

the police were obliged to forbid them to appear in any public place, as they feared they would not be able to protect them from the fierce indignation of the people. The doors of all the prominent houses, in which heretofore they had received so much attention, were now closed against them. The commandant of Berlin had sent a detailed account of the conduct of the French officers to the king, and the answer had been received.

Eight days after the placards had been pasted up by the Frenchmen, exactly upon the same places new placards were to be found, around which the people were again assembled; on every face was seen a happy smile, from every lip was heard expressions of harmony and approbation. This was a greeting of the king not only to his Berliners, but to Prussia and to the world; he was now "the Great Frederick," and all Europe listened when he spake. Frederick's greeting read thus:

"It is known to all Europe that I have provided every possible comfort to all officers who are prisoners of war. Swedes, Frenchmen, Russians, Austrians I have allowed to pass the time of their captivity at my capital. Many among them have taken advantage of the confidence reposed in them and carried on a forbidden correspondence; they have also, by unmannerly and presumptuous conduct, greatly abused the privileges allowed them; I therefore feel myself constrained to send them to Spandau, which city must not be confounded with the fortress of the same name at Spandau; they will be no more restricted than in Berlin, but they will be more closely watched.

"For this decision I cannot be blamed. The law of nations and the example of my allied enemies justify me fully. The Austrians have not allowed any of my officers who have fallen into their hands to go to Vienna. The Russians have sent their captives to Kasan. My enemies lose no opportunity to give a false aspect to my acts; I have, therefore, thought it wise to make known the causes which lead me to change my policy with regard to the prisoners of war.

"FREDERICK."

Two of the officers, with whom we are acquainted, were not included in this sentence of banishment.

One was Count Belleville. On the day that his comrades, deprived of their swords, left Berlin, his corpse was carried through the outer gate. The shot of Baron Marshal made an amputation necessary, and death was the consequence. While his friends, whose condemnation he had brought about, marched sadly to Spandau, his body was laid in the "Friedhof." To the corpse had been granted a favor denied to the living—his sword was allowed to deck his coffin.

The Austrian officer, Ranuzi, because of his wise and prudent conduct and the powerful support he gave to Baron Marshal, was permitted to remain in Berlin. Ranuzi received this permission with triumphant joy. As he looked from his window at the prisoners marching toward Spandau, he said with a proud smile—"It is written, 'Be wise as a serpent.' These fools have not regarded the words of Holy Writ, and therefore they are punished, while I shall be rewarded. Yes, my work will succeed! God gives me a visible blessing. Patience, then, patience! A day will come when I will take vengeance on this haughty enemy of the Church. On that day the colors of the apostolic majesty of Austria shall be planted on the fortress of Magdeburg!"

CHAPTER X.

THE FIVE COURIERS.

It was the morning of the thirteenth of August. The streets of Berlin were quiet and empty. Here and there might be seen a workman with his axe upon his shoulder, or a tradesman stepping slowly to his *comptoir*. The upper circle of Berlin still slumbered and refreshed itself after the emotions and excitements of yesterday.

Yesterday had been a day of rejoicing; it had brought the news of the great and glorious victory which the crown prince, Ferdinand of Brunswick, had gained at Minden, over the French army under Broglie and Contades.

The crown prince had ever remembered that great moment in the beginning of the war, when his mother took leave of him in the presence of the Brunswick regiments. Embracing him for the last time, she said: "I forbid you to appear before me till you have performed deeds of valor worthy of your birth and your allies!"*

Her son, the worthy nephew of Frederick the Great had now bought the right to appear before his mother.

By the victories of Gotsfeld and Minden he had now wiped out the defeat at Bergen, and the laurels which Brissac had won there were now withered and dead.

Berlin had just received this joyful news. After so much sorrow, so much humiliation and disappointment, she might now indulge herself in a day of festal joy, and, by public declarations and testimonials, make known to the world how dear to her heart was this victory of her king and his generals, and how deep and warm was the sympathy she felt.

* Bodman.

All work was set aside in honor of this great celebration—the people were spread abroad in the meadows and woods, shouting and rejoicing, playing and dancing; the rich and the distinguished joined them without ceremony, to prove to the world that in such great moments, all differences of rank were forgotten—that they were all members of one body—united in joy and in sorrow by an electric chain.

So they slumbered on; the streets were still empty, the windows still closed.

But see! There comes a horseman through the Frankfort gate, dusty and breathless; his glowing face was radiant with joy! As he dashed through the streets he waved a white handkerchief high in the air, and with a loud and powerful voice, cried out, "Victory! victory!"

This one word had a magic influence. The windows flew up, the doors were dashed open, and shouting and screaming crowds of men rushed after the horseman. At a corner they surrounded his horse and compelled him to stop. "Who is victorious?" cried they tumultuously.

"The king—the great Frederick! He has whipped the Russians at Künersdorf!"

A cry of rapture burst from every lip. "The king is victorious! he has defeated the Russians!"

Onward flew the courier to the palace; after him streamed the mad people. "The days of mourning are over—the blood of our sons has not been shed in vain, they are the honored dead—their death brought victory to the fatherland; they have drenched the soil with the blood of our barbarous enemies. We whipped the French at Minden, the Russians at Künersdorf, and now we have defeated the Austrians and won back the trophies of their victory at Hochkirch!"

The people surrounded the castle shouting and triumphing. The courier had entered to give to the queen the joyful news. Soon the royal messengers were flying into every corner of the city to summon the ministers and officers of state to the castle. On foot, on horseback, in carriages, they hastened on, and the people received them with joyful shouts. "The king is victorious; the Russians are defeated!"

And now a door opened on a balcony, and Minister Herzberg stepped out. He waved his hat joyfully high in the air. The people returned this greeting with a roar like an exulting lion. He waved his hand, and the lion ceased to roar—there was death-like silence. He then told them that the king had offered battle to the Russians, yesterday, not far from Frankfort. The Russian army was greatly superior in numbers; they received the Prussians with a fearful,

deadly fire! Unrestrainable, regardless of cannon-balls, or of death, the Prussians rushed on, stormed all the strongholds, and drove the Russian militia with fearful slaughter back to the graveyard of Künersdorf. At five o'clock the king sent off the courier and the victory was assured.

"The victory was assured!" reëchoed the mighty voice of the people. With warm and kindly eyes they looked upon each other. Proud, glad, happy, men who did not know each other, who had never met, now felt that they were brothers, the sons of one fatherland, and they clasped hands, and shouted their congratulations.

Suddenly, at the end of the street, another horseman appeared. He drew nearer and nearer. It is a second courier, a second message of our king to his family and his Berliners.

The people looked at him distrustfully, anxiously. What means this second courier? What news does he bring?

His countenance gay, his brow clear, with a flashing smile he greets the people. He brings news of victory—complete, assured victory.

Like the first courier, he dashed on to the castle, to give his dispatches to the queen and the ministers. The people were drunk with joy. The equipages of the nobles rolled by. Every one whose rank gave him the privilege wished to offer his personal congratulations to the queen.

And now in the Königstrasse was seen a venerable procession. The magistrates of Berlin—in front the burgomasters with their long periwigs and golden chains, behind them the worthy city council—all hastened to the castle to offer congratulations in the name of the city.

The crowd drew back respectfully before the worthy city fathers, and opened a path for them, then fixed their eyes again upon the balcony where Minister Herzberg again appeared, and called for silence.

He will give us the news of the second courier. The victory is absolute. The Russians completely defeated. They had retreated to Künersdorf. In this village they proposed to defend themselves. But the Prussians were unceasingly pressing upon them. Seven redoubts, Kirchhof, Spitzberg, and one hundred and eighty-six cannon had been taken. The enemy had suffered a monstrous loss, and was in the greatest confusion. The fate of the day seemed conclusive. This was owing to the heroic courage of the army, whom neither the blazing heat of the sun nor the unexampled slaughter could for a moment restrain. At six o'clock, when the king sent off this second courier, the enemy had retreated behind his last intrenchments, and taken refuge at Gudenberg.*

* Frederick the Great.—Thiébault.

A loud hurrah broke from the people as Herzberg finished and left the balcony. Now there was no room for doubt. The enemy was overwhelmed and had fled to his last intrenchment. Would the king leave him unmolested, and would he not still drive the hated enemy further?

While groups of men were assembled here and there, discussing these weighty questions, and others, intoxicated, drunk with joy at this great victory over their hereditary enemy, were making eloquent addresses to the people, a third courier appeared in sight.

Breathless with expectation and anxiety, they would not give him time to reach the castle. They must—they would know the news he brings. There should be no delay, no temporizing, no mysteries. The people were one great family. They awaited the message of their father. They demanded news of their distant sons and brothers.

The third courier brings renewed assurances. The Russians are routed. The king will give them no rest. He will drive them from their last stronghold. With his whole army, with cavalry and militia, with all his cannon, he was in the act of storming Gudenberg. This is the message of the third courier.

The people are proud and happy. No one thinks of going home. In fact, they have no home but the streets. Every house would be too small for this great family which feels a thirst to express its joy and its rapture to each other. And then it was possible the king might send another courier. Who could go home till they knew that the Russians were driven from their last stronghold, that Gudenberg was drenched in Russian blood?

No one doubted that this news would come—must come. Not the slightest fear, the least doubt troubled the proud, pure joy of this hour. The victory was achieved, but it was still charming to hear it confirmed; to receive these heavenly messages. Every open space was filled with men. Each one would see and hear for himself. No man thought himself too distinguished, too sick, too weak, to stand for hours in the burning sun, carried about involuntarily by this fluctuating wave of humanity. Side by side with the laborer stood the elegant lady in her silk robes; near the poor beggar in his ragged jacket were seen the high official and the wealthy banker in their rich dresses.

More than fifty thousand men were now assembled and waiting—waiting for what they knew not—for news—for a courier who could give the details. It was not enough to know that the king had conquered; they wished to know the extent and the significance of this victory; and lastly, they would know the bloody offering which this victory had cost.

The dinner-hour was passed. What cared this happy people for dinner? They hungered for no earthly food; they thirsted for no earthly drink; they were satisfied with the joy of victory. The clock struck three. Yes, there comes a horseman, his bridle is hanging loose—he is covered with dust—but how, what means this? His face is pale as death; his eyes are misty; he looks around shame-faced and confused. No happy news is written upon this dark and clouded brow. What means this messenger of death in the midst of joy, triumph, and proud consciousness of victory? They seek to hold him, to question him, but he gives no answer. He spurs his wearied horse till he springs aloft, and the men in rash terror are crushed against each other; but the horseman makes no sign. Silently he dashes on through the laughing, chatting crowd, but wherever he passes, laughter and smiles disappear, and speech is silenced.

It seemed as if the angel of death had touched his brow, and the happy ones shuddered at his untimely presence. Now he has reached the castle, he descends from his horse. In breathless silence, pallid, trembling they know not why, those who have seen this dumb messenger look up shudderingly to the balcony. At last, after long waiting, the Minister Herzberg appeared once more.

But, O God! what means this? he is pale—his eyes are filled with tears. He opens his mouth to speak, but strength has left him. He holds on to the bars of the balcony, otherwise he would sink. At last he collects himself. It is not necessary to ask for silence; the silence of the grave is upon those torpid men. He speaks! his voice is faint and weak, and trembles—oh, so fearfully! only a few in the first rank can hear his words.

“The battle is lost! The Russians have conquered! The Austrians came to their assistance! The presence of the Austrians was not known, they had their tents in holes in the ground! As our militia rushed upon the last intrenchment at Judenberg and were only a hundred steps distant, Loudon suddenly advanced with his fresh troops, against the worn-out and exhausted victors. He received the Prussians with so murderous a fire, that their ranks faltered, wavered, and, at last, broke loose in wild flight, pursued furiously by the raging enemy. The fortunes of the day had turned; we lost the battle. But all is not lost. The king lives! he is slightly wounded; three horses were shot under him. He lives, and so long as he lives, there is hope. In the far distance, in the midst of the terrible disasters which have befallen himself and his army, he thinks of his Berliners. He sends you a father’s greeting, and exhorts every one of you to save his possessions, as far as possible. Those who do not feel safe in Berlin, and who fear the approaching

enemy, the king counsels to withdraw, if possible, with their money, to Magdeburg, where the royal family will take refuge this evening.”

The minister was silent, and the people who had listened, dumb with horror, now broke out in wild cries of anguish and despair. Terror was written in every face; tears gushed from every eye. Cries of unspeakable agony burst from those lips, which, a few moments before, were eloquent with hope and gladness.

As if it were impossible to believe in these misfortunes without further confirmation, some men called loudly for the messenger, and the distant crowd, as if inspired with new hope, roared louder and louder:

“The courier! the courier! we will ourselves speak with the courier!”

The demand was so threatening, so continuous, it must be complied with. Herzberg stepped upon the balcony, and informed the crowd that the courier would at once descend to the public square.

A breathless silence succeeded; every eye was fixed upon the castle-gate, through which the courier must come. When he appeared, the crowd rushed forward toward him in mad haste. Cries of woe and suffering were heard. The people, with—mad with pain, beside themselves with despair, had no longer any mercy, any pity for each other. They rushed upon the messenger of misfortune, without regarding those who, in the midst of this wild tumult, were cast down, and trodden under foot.

The messenger began his sad story. He repeated all that the minister had said; he told of the deadly strife, of the bloody havoc, of the raging advance of the Austrians, and of the roar for vengeance of the reassured Russians. He told how the cannon-balls of the enemy had stricken down whole ranks of Prussians; that more than twenty thousand dead and wounded Prussians lay upon the battle-field; that all the cannon and all the colors had fallen into the hands of the enemy.

The people received this news with tears, cries, and lamentations. The courier spoke also of the king. He, himself, had belonged to the body-guard of the king—had been ever near him. He had seen the king standing in the midst of the thickest shower of balls, when his two adjutants fell at his side. At last, a ball came and wounded the king’s horse—the Vogel—so fearfully, that the brave steed fell. Frederick mounted another horse, but remained upon the same spot; a second ball wounded this horse, and the king quietly mounted that of Captain Götzen. At this moment, a bullet struck the king in the breast, but the golden *étui* which the king carried in his pocket, had turned it aside, and thus saved his life. In vain had the generals and adjutants entreated him to leave this

place, and think of his personal safety. His answer was—"We must seek, at this point, to win the battle. I must do my duty here with the rest."*

Many voices cried out—"Where is the king now?"

The courier did not answer; but the question was so fiercely, so stormily repeated, that he was compelled to go on.

"The king, in the midst of the confusion and horror of the flight, had called him, and commanded him to gallop to Berlin, and bear the fatal news to Minister Herzberg. He had then galloped by him, exactly against the enemy, as if he wished their balls to strike him; a little troop of his most faithful soldiers had followed!"

"The king is lost! the king is a prisoner—wounded—perhaps dead!" cried the terrified people.

Suddenly, the mad tumult was interrupted by loud shouts of joy, which swelled and thundered like an avalanche from the other side of the square. A fifth courier had arrived, and brought the news of the complete defeat of the Russians, and a glorious Prussian victory.

Now, one of those memorable, wondrous-grand scenes took place, which no earthly phantasy could contrive or prepare, to which only Providence could give form and color. As if driven by the storm-winds of every powerful earthly passion, this great sea of people fluctuated here and there. At one point, thousands were weeping over the news which the unhappy messenger had brought. Near by, thousands were huzzaing and shouting over the joyful intelligence brought by the fifth courier, while those who had been near enough to the fourth courier to understand his words, turned aside to give the sad news to those who were afar off. Coming at the same time from the other side, they were met by a mighty mass of men, who announced, with glad cries, the news of victory, brought by the fifth courier. Here you could see men, with their arms raised to heaven, thanking God for the hardly-won victory. A little farther on, pale, frightened creatures, motionless, bowed down, and grief-stricken. Here were women, with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes, shouting over their hero king. There, the people wept and moaned; their king had disappeared, was a prisoner, or dead. As at the Tower of Babel, the people spoke in a thousand tongues, and no one listened to another; every one was lost—blinded by his own passionate hopes and fears.

At last the two couriers were called upon to come face to face and decide these important questions. Strong men lifted them upon their shoulders and brought them together; a profound and fearful silence ensued, every man felt that he stood upon the eve of a mighty revelation; fifty thousand men were waiting breathlessly

*The king's own words.—See Thiébault, p. 214.

for news of happiness beyond compare, or of unspeakable woe. The conversation of the two horsemen standing upon the shoulders of their townsmen was quick and laconic.

"At what hour did the king send you off?" said the fourth courier to the fifth.

"At six. The king himself commissioned me."

"Where stood our army at that time?" said the fourth courier.

"They stood before the hollow ground, and the Russians had withdrawn to the intrenchments of Zudenberg; we had taken a hundred and twenty cannon, and many of our soldiers were wandering about the battle-field looking at the batteries they had taken."*

"Yes," said the fourth courier, sadly, "that was at six, but at seven we were in full flight. Loudon had risen from the ground, and the frightened, conquered Russians had recovered themselves. You left at six, I at eight; I have ridden more rapidly than you. Unhappily, I am right, the battle is lost!"

"The battle is lost!" howled the people; "the king is also lost! Woe! woe!"

At this moment the royal equipages were seen making their way slowly through the crowd, and the advance guard were praying the people to open a way for the travelling carriages to reach the castle.

These words excited new alarm. "We are lost! Let us fly, let us fly! The court, the queen, and the princesses flee—let us save ourselves! The Russians will come to Berlin—they will annihilate us. We are deserted and lost, lost!—no one knows where our king is!"

As if driven by madness, the crowds rushed against each other, like the sea when it divides, and in billowy streams pours itself out here and there; and the cry of anguish which now rang out from the castle square, found its echo in every street and every house.

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

THE cannon were silenced, the discharges of musketry had ceased. On the great plain of Künersdorf, where, a few hours before, a bloody battle had been raging, all was quiet. Could this be called repose? How cruel was the tranquillity which rested now upon this fearful battle-field!

It was the peace of death—the stillness which the awful messenger of Heaven presses as a sign and seal of his love upon the pale

*Bodman.