

hearing the French policemen tell her husband that they had come to arrest him, and that he must follow them.

They succeeded only after long efforts in bringing her back to consciousness. But she was not restored to life by the salts which her servant-girl rubbed on her forehead, nor by the imploring words of the book-keeper, but by the scalding tears of her little girls which melted and warmed her frozen blood again.

She raised herself with a deep sigh, and her wild, frightened glances wandered about the room, and fixed themselves searchingly on every form which she beheld in it. When she had satisfied herself that *he* was not among them, *he* whom her glances had sought for so anxiously, she clasped her children with a loud cry of horror in her arms and pressing them convulsively against her bosom, sobbed piteously.

But she did not long give way to her grief and despair. She dried her tears hastily and rose.

"It is no time now for weeping and lamenting," she said, drawing a deep breath; "I shall have time enough for that afterward, now I must act and see whether I cannot assist him. Do you know whither they have taken him?"

"To the headquarters of Colomb, the French general, who is stationed in this city," said the book-keeper.

"I shall go to the general, and he will have to tell me at least if I cannot see my husband in his prison," she said, resolutely. "Quick, Kate, assist me in dressing; arrange my hair, for you see my hands are trembling violently; they are weaker than my heart."

She rose to go to her dressing-room. But her feet refused to serve her; she turned dizzy, and sank down overcome by a fresh swoon.

It was only after hours of the most violent efforts that the poor young wife succeeded in recovering from the physical prostration caused by her sudden fright, and in becoming again able to act resolutely and energetically. Then, as bold and courageous as an angry lioness, she was determined to struggle with the whole world for the beloved husband who had been torn from her.

CHAPTER LVII.

A WIFE'S LOVE.

ANNA went in the first place to General Colomb, and begged him to grant her an interview.

About four hours had passed since Palm's arrest when the general received her.

"Madame," he said, "I know why you have come to me; you are looking for your husband, but he is no longer here at my headquarters."

"No longer here?" she ejaculated in terror. "You have sent him to France? You intend to kill him, then?"

"The law will judge him, madame," said the general, sternly. "I have myself examined him and requested him to give us the name of the author of this infamous libel which Mr. Palm has brought into general circulation. Had he done so, he would no longer be held responsible, and would have been at liberty to return to his house and to you. But he refused firmly to state the names of the author and printer of the pamphlet."

"He does not know either!" exclaimed Anna; "oh, believe me, sir, Palm is innocent. That pamphlet was sent to him, together with an anonymous letter."

"He ought to have taken care, then, not to circulate it," replied the general. "It is contrary to law to circulate a printed book, the author and printer of which are unknown to him who circulates it."

"No, general, it is not contrary to the laws of the German free city of Nuremberg. By an order of the Emperor of France, Nuremberg has been given to Bavaria, but the laws and privileges of our more liberal constitution were guaranteed to our ancient free city. Hence, Palm has done nothing contrary to law."

"We judge according to *our* laws," said the general, shrugging his shoulders; "wherever we are there is France, and wherever we are insulted we hold him who insults us responsible for it, and punish him according to our laws. Your husband has committed a great crime; he has circulated a pamphlet reviling France and the Emperor of the French in the most outrageous manner. He refused to mention the author of this pamphlet; so long as he persists in his refusal, we take him for the author, and shall punish him accordingly. As he declined confessing any thing to me, I have surrendered him to my superiors. Mr. Palm left Nuremberg two hours ago for Anspach, where Marshal Bernadotte is going to judge him."

"Then I shall go to Anspach, to Marshal Bernadotte," said Anna; and without deigning to cast another glance at the general, she turned around and left the room.

She intended to set out this very hour, but her endeavors to find a conveyance to take her to Anspach proved unavailing. All the horses of the postmaster had been retained for the suite and baggage-wagons of Marshal Berthier, who was about setting out for Munich, and the proprietors of the livery-stables, owing to the approaching darkness and insecurity of the roads, refused to let her have any of their carriages.

Anna had to wait, therefore, until morning, and improved the long hours of the night in drawing up a petition, which she intended to send to Marshal Bernadotte, in case he should refuse to grant her an interview.

Early next morning she at length started, but the roads were sandy and bad; the horses were lazy and weak, and she reached Anspach only late at night.

She had again to wait during a long, dreary night. No one could or would reply to her anxious inquiries whether Palm was really there, or whether he had been again sent to some other place.

Trembling with inward fear and dismay, but firmly determined to dare every thing, and leave nothing untried that might lead to Palm's preservation, Anna repaired in the morning to the residence of Marshal Bernadotte.

The marshal's adjutant received her, and asked her what she wanted.

"I must see the marshal himself, for I shall read in his mien whether he will pardon or annihilate my husband," said Anna. "I beseech you, sir, have mercy on the grief of a wife, trembling for the father of her children. Induce the marshal to grant me an audience."

"I will see what can be done," said the adjutant, touched by the despair depicted on the pale face of the poor lady. But he returned in a few minutes after he had left her.

"Madame," he said, shrugging his shoulders, "I am sorry, but your wish cannot be fulfilled. The marshal will have nothing whatever to do with this affair, and declines interfering in it. For this reason, too, he did not admit Mr. Palm, who yesterday, like you, applied for an interview with the marshal, and I had to receive him in the place of the marshal, as I have now the honor to receive you."

"Oh, you have seen my husband?" asked Anna, almost joyfully. "You have spoken to him?"

"I have told him in the name of the marshal what I am now telling you, madame. The marshal is unable to do any thing whatever for your husband. The order for his arrest came directly from Paris, from the emperor's cabinet, and the marshal, therefore, has not the power to revoke it and to prevent the law from taking its course. Moreover, Mr. Palm is no longer in Anspach, as he was sent to another place last night."

"Whither? Oh, sir, you will have mercy on me, and tell me whither my unfortunate husband has been sent."

"Madame," said the adjutant, timidly looking around as if he were afraid of being overheard by an eavesdropper, "he has been sent to Braunau."

Anna uttered a cry of horror. "To Braunau!" she said, breathlessly. "To Braunau, that is to say, out of the country. You do not wish to try a citizen and subject of Bavaria, for a crime which he is said to have committed in his own country, according to the laws of Bavaria, but according to those of a foreign and hostile state? My husband has been sent to Austria!"

"Pardon me, madame," said the adjutant, smiling, "the city of Braunau does not yet again belong to Austria; up to the present hour it is still French territory, for we took and occupied it during the war and have not yet given it back to Austria; hence, Mr. Palm will be tried in Braunau according to the laws of France."

"Oh, then he is lost," exclaimed Anna, in despair; "there is no more hope for him."

"If he be guilty, madame, he has deserved punishment; if he be innocent, no harm can befall him, for the laws of France are impartial and just."

"Oh, sir," said Anna, almost haughtily, "there are things which may seem deserving of punishment, nay, criminal, according to the laws of your country, but which, according to the laws of a German state, would not deserve any punishment, but, on the contrary, praise and acknowledgment."

"If what Mr. Palm has done is an offence of this description, I am sorry for him," said the adjutant, shrugging his shoulders. "But," he added, in a lower voice, "I will give you some good advice. Hasten to the French ambassador at Munich. If he should decline granting you an audience, send him a petition, stating the case of your husband truthfully and with full details, and asking for his intercession."

"And if he should not reply to my petition; if he should refuse to intercede for me?"

"Then a last remedy will remain to you. In that case, apply to Marshal Berthier, who is now also at Munich. He has great power over the emperor, and will alone be able to help you. But lose no time."

"I shall set out this very hour, sir, and I thank you for your advice and sympathy. I see very well that you cannot do any thing for me, but you have granted me your compassion, and I thank you for it. Farewell, sir."

An hour later, Anna was on the road to Munich. After an exhausting journey of four days—for, at that time there were no turnpikes, much less railroads, in Bavaria—she reached Munich, where she stopped at a hotel.

She was utterly unacquainted in that capital; she had no friends, no protectors, no recommendations, and, as a matter of course, all

doors were closed against her, and nobody would listen to her. Nobody felt pity for the poor, despairing lady; nobody would listen to her complaints, for her complaints were at the same time charged against the all-powerful man who now held his hand stretched out over Bavaria, and was able to crush her whenever he chose to do so.

Anna, therefore, met with no encouragement at the hands of the German authorities, who even refused to hear a statement of her application. She went to all the ministers, to all those on whom, according to their official position, it would have been incumbent to intercede for her. She even ventured to enter the royal palace, and stood for hours in the anteroom, always hoping that her supplications would be heeded, and that some door would be opened to her.

But all doors were closed against her, even that of the French ambassador. She had vainly applied to him for an audience; when her request had been refused, she had delivered to his *attaché* a petition which an attorney had drawn up for her, and in which all the points for and against Palm were lucidly stated. For a week she waited for a reply; for a week she went every morning to the residence of the French ambassador and asked in the same gentle and imploring voice, whether there was any reply for her, and whether no answer had been returned to her application?

On the eighth day she was informed that no reply would be made to her petition, and that the French ambassador was unable to do any thing for her.

Anna did not weep and complain; she received this information with the gentle calmness of a martyr, and prayed instead of bursting into lamentations. She prayed to God that He might grant her strength not to despair, not to succumb to the stunning blow; she prayed to God that He might impart vigor to her body, so that it might not prevent her from doing her duty, and from seeking for further assistance for her beloved husband.

Strengthened and inwardly relieved by this prayer, Anna now repaired to the residence of Marshal Berthier; her step, however, was slower, a deep blush mantled her cheeks, which had hitherto been so pale, and her hands were no longer icy cold, but hot and red.

She did not apply for an audience on reaching the marshal's residence, for she already knew that such an application would meet with a refusal; she only took thither another copy of the petition which she had delivered to the French ambassador, and begged urgently for an early reply.

Her supplications were this time not destined to be unsuccessful, and she received a reply on the third day.

But this reply was even more terrible than if none whatever had

been made. Marshal Berthier sent word to her by his adjutant that Palm had been placed before a court-martial at Braunau, and that no intercession and prayers would be of any avail, the decision being exclusively left with the court-martial.

A single, piercing cry escaped from Anna's breast when she received this information. Then she became again calm and composed. Without uttering another complaint, another prayer, she left the marshal's residence and returned to her hotel.

With perfect equanimity and coolness, she requested the waiter to bring her the bill and get her a carriage, so that she might set out at once.

Fifteen minutes later, the landlady herself appeared to present to Madame Palm the bill she had called for. She found Anna sitting quietly at the window, her hands folded on her lap, her head leaning on the high back of the chair, and her dilated eyes staring vacantly at the sky. Her small travelling-trunk stood ready and locked in the middle of the room.

The landlady handed her the paper silently, and then turned aside in order not to show the tears which, at the sight of the pale, gentle young wife, had filled her eyes.

Anna rose and quietly placed the money on the table. "I thank you, madame, for all the attention and kindness I have met with at your house," she said. "It only seems to me that my bill is much too moderate. You must have omitted many items, for it is impossible that I should not have used up any more than that during my prolonged sojourn in Munich."

"Madame," said the landlady, deeply moved, "I should be happy if you permitted me to take no money at all from you, but I know that that would offend you, and for that reason I brought you my bill. If you allow me to follow the promptings of my heart, I should say, grant me the honor of having afforded hospitality to so noble, brave, and faithful a lady, and, if you should consent, I should be courageous enough to utter a request which I dare not make now, because you would deem it egotistic."

"Oh, tell me what it is," said Anna, mildly; "for the last two weeks I have begged so much, and my requests were so often refused, that it would truly gratify me to hear from others a request which I might be able to fulfil."

"Well, then, madame," said the landlady, taking Anna's hand and kissing it respectfully, "I request you to stay here and not to depart. Afford me the pleasure of keeping you here in my house, of taking care and nursing you as a mother would nurse her daughter. I am old enough to be your mother, and you, my poor, beloved child, you need nursing, for you are sick."

"I feel no pain—I am not sick," said Anna, with a smile which was more heart-rending than loud lamentations.

"You are sick," replied the landlady; "your hands are burning with fever, and the roses blooming on your cheeks are not natural, but symptoms of your inward sufferings. During your whole sojourn in my house you have scarcely touched the food that was placed before you; frequently you have not gone to bed at night, and, instead of sleeping, restlessly paced your room. A fever is now raging in your delicate body, and if you do not take care of yourself, and use medicine, your body will succumb."

"No, it will not succumb," said Anna; "my heart will sustain it."

"But your heart, too, will break, if you do not take care of yourself," exclaimed the landlady, compassionately. "Stay here, I beseech you, do not depart. Stay as a guest at my house!"

Anna placed her burning hand on the shoulder of the landlady, and looked at her long and tenderly.

"You were married?" she asked. "You loved your husband?"

"Yes," said the landlady, bursting into tears, "I was married, and God knows that I loved my husband. For twenty years we lived happy and peacefully together, and when he died last year, my whole happiness died with him."

"He was sick, I suppose, and you nursed him?"

"He was sick for a month, and I did not leave his bedside either by day or by night."

"Well, then, what would you have replied to him who would have tried to keep you back from your husband's death-bed, and to persuade you to leave him in his agony, because it might have injured your health? Would you have listened to him?"

"No, I should have believed him, who had made such a proposition to me, to be my enemy, and should have replied to him: 'It is my sacred right to stand at my husband's death-bed, to kiss the last sigh from his lips, to close his eyes, and no one in the world shall prevent me from doing so!'"

"Well, then, dear *mother*, I say as you have said: it is my sacred right to stand at my husband's death-bed and to close his eyes. My husband's death-bed is in Braunau; I am not so happy as you have been; I cannot nurse him, nor be with him and comfort him in his agony; but I am able, at least, to see him in his last hour. My mother, will you still ask your daughter to stay here and take care of her health, instead of going to her husband's death-bed in Braunau?"

"No, my daughter," exclaimed the landlady, "no; I say to you, go! Take not a minute's rest until you reach your husband. God

will guide and protect you, for He is love, and has mercy on those whose hearts are filled with love! Go, then, with God; but, for the sake of your husband, take some nourishing food; try to eat and sleep, so as to gain fresh strength, for you will need it."

"Give me some nourishing food, mother, I will eat," said Anna, placing her arms tenderly around the landlady's neck; "I will try also to-night to sleep, for you are right: I shall need my whole strength! But after I have eaten, I may set out at once, may I not?"

"Yes, my poor, dear child, then you may set out. Now come to my room—your meal is already waiting for you."

Half an hour later the landlady herself lifted Anna into the carriage, and said to her in a voice trembling with tearful emotion: "Farewell, my daughter. God bless you and grant you strength. When alone one day, and in need of a mother, then come to me! May the Lord have mercy on you!"

"Yes, may the Lord have mercy on me, and let me die with him!" whispered Anna, as the carriage rolled away with her.

At noon on the following day, August 26th, 1806, she arrived at Braunau.

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE WOMEN OF BRAUNAU.

In the mean time Palm had constantly been in the French prison at Braunau. During the sixteen days since he had been in jail, he had only twice been taken out of it to be examined by the court-martial, which General St. Hilaire had specially convoked for his trial.

This court-martial consisted of French generals and staff-officers; it met at a time of peace in a German city, and declared its competence to try a German citizen who had committed no other crime than to circulate a pamphlet, in which the misfortunes of Germany, and the oppressions of German states by Napoleon and his armies, had been commented upon.

The whole proceedings had been carried on so hastily and secretly, that the German authorities of Braunau had scarcely heard of them at the time when the French court-martial was already about to sentence the prisoner.

The French, however, wanted to maintain some semblance of impartiality; and before Palm was called before the court-martial, it was left to him either to defend himself in person against the charges, or to provide himself with counsel.

Palm, who was ignorant of the French language, had preferred

the latter, and selected as his counsel a resident lawyer of Braunau, with whom he was well acquainted, and even on terms of intimacy, and whom he knew to be familiar with the French language.

But this friend declined being a "friend in need." He excused himself on the pretext of a serious indisposition which confined him to his bed, and rendered it impossible for him to make a speech.

Palm was informed of this excuse only at the moment when he entered the room in which the trial was to be held; hence he had to make up his mind to conduct his own defence, and to have his words translated by an interpreter to the members of the court.

And he felt convinced that his defence had been successful, and satisfied the men who had assumed to be his judges, of his entire innocence.

He had, therefore, no doubt of his speedy release; he was looking every day for the announcement that his innocence had been proved, and that he should be restored to liberty and to his family. This confident hope caused him to bear his solitary confinement with joyful courage, and to look, in this time of privations and pain, fondly for the golden days to come, when he would repose again, after all his trouble and toil, in the arms of love, gently guarded by the tender eyes of his affectionate young wife, and his heart gladdened by the sight of his sweet children.

From dreams so joyous and soul-stirring he was awakened on the morning of the 26th of August by the appearance of the jailer and of several soldiers who came to summon him before the court-martial which would communicate his sentence to him.

"God be praised!" exclaimed Palm, enthusiastically. "My sentence, that is to say, my release. Come, let us go; for, you see, it is hot and oppressive in my cell, and I long for God's fresh air, of which I have been deprived so long. Let us go, then, that I may receive the sentence which I have so ardently yearned for."

And with a kind smile he offered his hand to the jailer who stood at the door with a gloomy, sullen air. "Do not look so gloomy, Balthasar," he said. "You always used to be so merry a companion and have often agreeably enlivened the long and dreary hours of my confinement by your entertaining conversation. Accept my thanks for your kindness and clemency; you might have tormented me a great deal, and you have not done so, but have always been accommodating and compassionate. I thank you for it, Balthasar, and beg you to accept this as a souvenir from me."

He drew a golden breastpin richly set with precious stones from his cravat, and offered it to the jailer.

But Balthasar did not take it; on the contrary, he averted his head sullenly and gloomily.

"I am not allowed to accept any presents from the prisoners," he muttered.

"Well, then, I shall come and see you as soon as I am free, and from the free man, I suppose, you will accept a small souvenir?" asked Palm, kindly.

The jailer made no reply to this question, but exclaimed, impatiently: "Make haste, it is high time!"

Palm laughed, and, nodding a farewell to the jailer, left the prison in the midst of the soldiers.

"Poor man, he suspects nothing," murmured the jailer to himself, and his features now became mild and gentle, and his eyes were filled with tears. "Poor man, he believes they will set him at liberty! Yes, they will do so, but it is not the sort of liberty he is looking and hoping for!"

Palm followed the soldiers gayly and courageously to the room where the members of the court-martial were assembled seated on high-backed arm-chairs which had been placed in a semicircle on one side of the room, awaiting the arrival of the prisoner.

He greeted them with an unclouded brow and frank and open bearing; not a tinge of fear and nervousness was to be seen in his features; he fixed his large and lustrous eyes on the lips of General St. Hilaire who presided over the court-martial and now rose from his seat. The secretary of the court immediately approached the general and handed him a paper.

The general took it, and, bending a stern glance on Palm, said: "The court-martial has agreed to-day unanimously on your sentence. I will now communicate it to you."

The other officers rose from their seats to listen standing to the reading of the sentence. It is true, their faces were grave, and for the first time Palm was seized with a sinister foreboding, and asked himself whether his judges would assume so grave and solemn an air if they were merely to announce to him that he was innocent and consequently free.

A small pause ensued. The general then raised his voice, and read in a loud and ringing tone: "Whereas at all places where there is an army it is the first and most imperious duty of its chief to watch over its safety and preservation;

"Whereas the circulation of writings instigating sedition and murder does not only threaten the safety of the army, but also that of the nation generally;

"Whereas nothing is more urgent and necessary than the prevention of the propagation of such doctrines which are a crime against the rights of man and against the respect due to crowned heads—an

insult to the people submissive to their government—and, in short, subversive of law, order, and subordination :

“The military commission here assembled declares unanimously that all authors and printers of libellous books of the above-named description, as well as booksellers and other persons engaged in circulating them, shall be deemed guilty of high-treason.

“In consideration whereof the defendant, John Frederick Palm, convicted of having circulated the pamphlet, ‘Germany in her Deepest Degradation,’ has been charged with the crime of high-treason, and the commission has unanimously found him guilty of the charge.

“The penalty incurred by the traitor is death.

“Consequently the traitor, John Frederick Palm, will suffer death, which sentence will be carried out this afternoon at two o’clock, when he will be shot.”*

“John Frederick Palm,” added the general, “you have heard your sentence, prepare for death !”

The interpreter repeated to the unhappy prisoner the sentence of the court-martial slowly, impressively, and emphasizing every word ; and every syllable fell like a cold tear on Palm’s heart and froze it. It was, however, not only cold with terror and dismay, but also with determination and calmness.

Before these strangers, with their cold, indifferent faces, he resolved at once not to betray any weakness. He did not want to afford his assassins the pleasure of seeing him tremble.

His bearing, therefore, only manifested firm determination and grave calmness. He cast a single flaming glance, full of proud disdain, on his judges.

“Very well,” he said, loudly and firmly, “I shall die ; I shall go to God and accuse *you* before his throne,—you who trample on all state and international laws, and have not judged, but murdered me. My blood be on your heads !”

“Prisoner,” said General St. Hilaire, quietly, “if you desire any thing before your death, mention it now, and if able to comply with it, we shall grant it.”

“I have but one desire,” said Palm, and now his voice trembled a little, and a shadow passed across his forehead. “I only wish that my wife may be permitted to spend these last hours with me, and to take leave of me !”

“Your wife ?” asked the general. “Is your wife here, then ? And if she be here, who has dared to advise you of it ?”

“Nobody has advised me of it,” replied Palm, “nor do I know whether she is here or not, but I believe it. Moreover, it would be

* “Mémoires d’un Homme d’État,” vol. ix., p. 247.

but natural that she should have followed me hither. Permit me, then, to see her when she comes.”

“Your request is granted. Return to your prison. A preacher will be sent to you to prepare you for death. Soldiers, remand the prisoner.”

Palm saluted the gentlemen with a haughty nod, and slowly and solemnly raised his hand toward heaven. “I summon you to appear before the awful tribunal of God Almighty !” he said, in a loud and ringing voice. “Here you have assumed to judge *me* ; there God will judge *you* !”

He turned around and left the room at the head of the soldiers.

“It only remains for us now to inform the municipal authorities of this city of what has to be done,” said the general, after a short pause. “They must be present at the execution, for this act of justice shall not take place under the veil of secrecy, but openly under the eyes of God and men. Let the authorities, let the whole city witness how France punishes and judges those who, in their traitorous impudence, have offended against her honor and glory !”

He adjourned the court, and returned to his rooms to repose from so exhausting a session, and to prepare, by partaking of an epicurean repast, for the unpleasant duty that awaited him, viz., to be present at an execution.

The general was just sipping a glass of malmsey with infinite relish, and eating a piece of the excellent *pâté de foie gras* which had been ordered from Strasburg, when a strange and long-continued noise on the street suddenly disturbed him in his epicurean enjoyment.

He placed his glass angrily on the table, and turned his eyes and ears toward the windows opening on the market-place. The noise continued all the time ; it sounded singular and extraordinary, as though immense swarms of bees were filling the air with their humming.

The general rose and hastened to the window.

A strange spectacle, indeed, presented itself to his eyes. The whole market-place was crowded with people, not with threatening, violent men, rushing forward with clinched fists and flashing eyes, but with persons whose eyes were filled with tears, and who raised their arms in an imploring manner.

They were women and children, who had marched in solemn procession to the market-place, and now entirely filled it. The news that the court-martial had agreed on a sentence, and that Palm was to be shot by virtue of it this afternoon at two o’clock in the large ditch of the fortress, had spread like wildfire through the whole city of Braunau.

The citizens had received the news with intense rage and silent horror; the authorities and members of the municipality had received orders to repair at the stated hour in their official robes to the place of execution for the purpose of witnessing the dreadful scene.

Too weak to offer any resistance, and well aware that they could not count on the assistance of their own German superiors, they had to submit to the order. Bowing to the stern law of necessity, they declared, therefore, their readiness to comply with the behests of the French general, and to appear at the place of execution.

But while all the men were giving way to cowardly fear; while they timidly swallowed their rage and humiliation, the women arose in the genuine and bold enthusiasm of their grief and compassion. They could not threaten, nor arm their hand with the sword, like men, but they could beseech and supplicate, and in the place of weapons in their hands they had tears in their eyes.

"If you will not go to demand justice for a German citizen, I shall do so," said the wife of the burgomaster of Braunau to her husband. "You have to watch over the welfare of the city, but I shall save its honor. I will not permit this day to become an eternal disgrace to Braunau, and history to speak one day of the slavish fear with which we humbly submitted to the will of the French tyrant. You men refuse to intercede with the general for Palm; well, then, we women will do so, and God at least will hear our words, and history will preserve them."

She turned her back to her husband and went to inform her friends of her determination, and to send messengers all over the city.

And from street to street, from house to house, there resounded the shouts: "Dress in mourning, women, and come out into the street. Let us go to General St. Hilaire and beg for the life of a German citizen!"

Not an ear had been closed against this sacred appeal; not a woman's heart had disregarded it. They came forth from all the houses and from all the cabins, the countess as well as the beggar-woman, the old as well as the young; the mothers led their children by the hand, and the brides lent to their grandmothers their shoulders to lean upon.

The procession formed in front of the burgomaster's house; then the women walked in pairs and slowly as the weak feet of the tottering old dames and the delicate children required it, through the long main street toward the market-place.

General St. Hilaire was still at the window, gazing in great astonishment on the strange spectacle, when the door opened and his adjutant entered.

"Come and look at this scene," said the general to him, laughing. "The days of the great revolution seem to find an echo here, and the women rebel as they did at that time. Oh, well do I remember the day when the women went to Versailles in order to frighten the queen by their clamor and to beg bread of the king. But I am no Antoinette, and no corn-fields are growing in my hands. What do they want of me?"

"General, a deputation of the women has just entered the hotel, and beg your excellency to grant them an interview."

"Are the members of the deputation pretty?" asked the general, laughing.

"The wife of the burgomaster and the first ladies of the city are among them," said the adjutant, gravely.

"And what do they want?"

"General, they want to implore your excellency to delay the execution of the German bookseller, and grant him a reprieve so as to give them time to petition the emperor to pardon him."

"Impossible," exclaimed St. Hilaire, angrily. "It is time to bury and forget this unpleasant affair. No delay, no reprieve! State that to those women. I do not want to be disturbed any longer. Of what importance is this man Palm? Have not thousands of the most distinguished and excellent men been buried on our battle-fields, and has not the world quietly pursued its course? It will therefore do so, too, after Palm is dead. Truly, they are wailing and lamenting about the sentence of this German bookseller as if he were the only copy of such a description in this country so famous for writing and publishing books! Go and dismiss the women; I do not want to listen to them. But if the youngest and prettiest girl among them will come up to me and give me a kiss, she may do so."

The adjutant withdrew, and the general returned to the window to look down on the surging crowd below. He saw that his adjutant had left the house and walked toward a group of women standing at some distance from the others and apparently looking for him. He saw that his adjutant spoke to them, and that the women then turned around and made a sign to the others.

All the women immediately knelt down, and, raising their folded hands to heaven, began to sing in loud and solemn notes a pious hymn, a hymn of mercy, addressed to God and the Holy Virgin.

The general crossed himself involuntarily, and, perhaps unwillingly, folded his hands as if for silent prayer.

The door opened and the adjutant reëntered.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed the general. "I ordered you

to send the women home, and instead of that, they remain here and sing a plaintive hymn."

"General, the women persist in their request. They persist in their demand for an interview with your excellency in order to hear from your own lips whether it is really impossible for them to obtain a reprieve—a pardon for Palm. They declare they will not leave the place until they have spoken to your excellency, even should you cause your cannon to be pointed against them."

"Ah, bah! I shall not afford them the pleasure of becoming martyrs," exclaimed St. Hilaire, sullenly. "Come, I will put an end to the whole affair. I will myself go down and send them home."

He beckoned his adjutant to follow him, and went with hasty steps down into the market-place, and appeared in the midst of the women.

The hymn died away, but the women did not rise from their knees; they only turned their eyes, which had hitherto been raised to heaven, to the general, and extended their folded hands toward him.

At this moment a dusty travelling-coach drove through the dense crowd on the main street, and entered the market-place to stop in front of the large hotel situated there. A pale young woman leaned out of the carriage, and looked wonderingly at the strange spectacle presented to her eyes.

The kneeling women, who filled the whole market-place, took no notice of the carriage; they did not think of opening their ranks to let it pass; it was, therefore, compelled to halt and wait.

The pale young woman, as if feeling that what had caused all the women here to kneel down must concern her, too, hastily alighted from the carriage and approached the kneeling women.

All at once she heard a loud and imperious voice asking: "What do these ladies want to see me for? You applied for an interview with me: here I am! What do you want?"

"Mercy!" shouted hundreds and hundreds of voices. "Delay of the execution! Mercy for Palm!"

A piercing, terrible cry resounded from the lips of the pale young traveller; she hurried toward the general as if she had wings on her feet.

A murmur of surprise arose from the ranks of the women; they perceived instinctively that something extraordinary was about to occur; their hearts comprehended that this pale young woman, who now stood before the general with flaming eyes and panting breast, must be closely connected with the poor prisoner. Every one of them held her breath in order to hear her voice and understand her words.

"They ask for mercy for Palm?" she asked, in a voice in which her whole soul was vibrating. "They speak of execution? Then you are going to murder him? You have sentenced him infamously and wickedly?"

And while putting these questions to the general, her eyes pierced his face as though they were two daggers.

"Pray choose your words more carefully," said the general, harshly; "the court-martial has sentenced the traitor; hence, he will not be murdered, but punished for the crime he has committed. And for this reason," he added, in a louder voice, turning to the women, "for this reason I am unable to grant your request. The court-martial has pronounced the sentence, and it is not in my power to annul it. The Emperor Napoleon alone could do so if he were here. But as he is in Paris, and consequently cannot be reached, the law must take its course. Palm will be shot at two o'clock this afternoon!"

"Shot!" ejaculated the young woman; for a moment she tottered as if she were about to faint, but then she courageously overcame her emotion, and stretching out her arms to the women, exclaimed: "Pray with me, my sisters, that I may be permitted to see Palm and bid him farewell! I am his wife, and have come to die with him!"

And like a broken lily she sank down at the general's feet. The mass of the women was surging as if a sudden gust of wind had moved the waves; murmurs and sighs, sobs and groans, filled the air, and were the only language, the only prayer the deeply-moved women were capable of.

The general bent down to Anna and raised her. "Madame," he said, so loudly as to be heard by the other women, "madame, your prayer is granted. The only favor for which the prisoner asked was to see you before his death, and we granted it to him. Follow, therefore, my adjutant: he will bring you to him. Palm is waiting for you!"

"Ah, I knew very well that he was waiting for me, and that God would lead me to him in time!" exclaimed Anna, raising her radiant eyes toward heaven.

CHAPTER LIX.

THE LAST HOUR.

PALM had returned to his cell without uttering a complaint, a reproach. Nothing in his bearing betrayed his profound grief, his intense indignation. He knew that neither his complaints nor his