

"we must try to reach a city or village. Come, let us go. You are armed, and I have got a sabre, too. Let us go, but previously let us swear that we will not surrender to the French, but rather die, even should it be necessary to commit suicide! You have a knife, and when you cut some bread for me, I saw that it was very sharp. Will you give it to me?"

"What for?"

"I want to stab myself, as soon as I see that I cannot escape from the enemy!"

"And I? What is to become of me?"

"Before killing myself, I will stab you with my sabre. Will that content you?"

"It will. Be careful, however, to hit my heart; do not merely wound, but kill me."

"Ah, I see that we understand each other, and that the same heart is pulsating in our breast!" exclaimed Schill, joyfully. "Let us die, rather than be captured by the enemy and depend on the mercy of the Corsican tyrant! Now, comrade, let us go! For you are right; the wound-fever will set in toward evening, and without assistance we shall be lost."

"Come," said Pückler, "place your uninjured arm in mine. It seems fate has destined us for each other, for it has ruined your right arm and my left arm; thus we can walk at least side by side, mutually supporting ourselves. I shall be your right hand, and you will lend me your left arm when I have to embrace anybody. But, it is true, no one will now care for our embrace; every one will mock and deride us, and try to read in the bloody handwriting on our foreheads: 'He is also one of the vanquished Prussians!'"

"Comrade, did you not tell me a little while ago, that it would be better for us to attend to our own affairs, before talking about other matters?"

"It is true; let us go!"

And, leaning on each other, the two officers left the house.

CHAPTER II.

THE GERMAN SONG.

It was a sunny morning in autumn; the two wounded officers were inhaling the bracing air in long draughts, and their eyes were wandering over the transparent sky and the picturesque landscape.

"And to think that my eyes would never more have seen all this, if you had not had mercy on me!" said Schill, with a grateful glance at his companion.

"Ah, my friend," sighed Pückler, mournfully, "we shall not always behold the sky and this beautiful, silent scene, but it may easily happen that we shall see much misery to-day, and that you will curse your eyes for being compelled to perceive it! Still you are right—it is better to live, even in anguish and distress, than to die in anguish and distress; for he who lives has still a future before him, and is able to strive in it for revenge and compensation for the past. Let us desery our immediate future from the hill yonder, and there decide on the direction we shall take."

They walked toward the neighboring hill. Frequently they had to stop on the way; frequently they sank down exhausted; but their will and youthful energy overcame their weakness, and finally they reached their destination: they stood on the summit, and were able to survey the whole country for miles around.

"Yonder, where that dreadful smoke is rising, is the battle-field of Auerstadt!" said Schill, after a long pause, during which they had taken breath.

"Yes, and beyond those hills is Jena," said Pückler, sadly. "Those are two melancholy names for a Prussian ear, and, like Ulysses, I should like to close mine so as not to hear that siren voice of death any more; for, I tell you, whenever I hear those two names, I am driven to despair, and would like to throw myself into that abyss!"

"My friend, it seems to me we are already in the abyss, and our first and most earnest endeavors should be directed toward saving us from it," said Schill, shrugging his shoulders. "Our first step should be to get safely through the enemy's lines, in order to escape from the dangers to which a

collision with the French would expose us. Whither shall we turn now? Have you formed already a definite plan, count?"

"Being disabled from active service by my wounds, I shall repair to my estates in Silesia, and remain there till I have recovered. And you, comrade—will you permit me to make you an offer? If you have not yet come to a different decision, you ought to accompany me, and stay at my house till your wounds are healed. I have splendid woods, and facilities for angling on my estates; and if you like hunting and fishing, I am sure a sojourn at my house will afford you plenty of amusement."

"But you forget that my right arm is wounded, count," said Schill, with a melancholy smile; "hence, I shall be but a poor companion for you, and ought not to accept your kind offer. I confess, moreover, that my mind is too restless, and my heart too deeply grieved, to enjoy the peace and quiet of country life. I must remain in the noise and turmoil of the world, and see what will become of poor Prussia. I intend going to Kolberg; the fortress is strong and impregnable; it will be an insurmountable bulwark against the enemy, and I have several intimate friends at the fortress. I will stay with them till I am well again."

"Our paths, then, will soon be different. You will go to the north; I, to the east. But, for a few days, we shall still remain together, for the wound-fever will compel us to advance very slowly. Let us look out now for a dinner, and for a place where we may safely sleep to-night."

"And, it seems to me, I see a prospect of obtaining both. Yonder," said Schill, pointing with his left hand to a small point on the horizon. "Do you perceive that steeple? There is a village, and consequently there are men; and, as it is situated northeast, it is in the right direction for both of us."

"You are right; we will direct our steps thither," exclaimed Count Pückler. "May Fate be propitious to us, and keep the French out of our path!"

They walked down the hill on the opposite side, and then commenced crossing, arm in arm, the stubble-field that lay stretched out before them. All around them nothing whatever was stirring—not a sound, not even the chirping of a bird, or the humming of a beetle, interrupted the profound silence; neither a house, nor any trace of human life, was to be seen anywhere.

"It is as still here as the grave," whispered Count Pückler.

"Death probably has already stalked across this field on its

way to Jena and Auerstadt," said Schill, "and for this reason all Nature seems to hold its breath lest it should return."

"But it will not return very soon, for I should think Death itself must be exhausted by the terrible work it had to perform on the battle-field. Comrade, now that we know our destination, and have arranged our affairs, we may converse a little about the dreadful events which occurred yesterday. You were at Auerstadt. Do you know that at Jena we had no knowledge whatever of the battle that was going on at Auerstadt, and were informed of it only in the evening, after we had been completely routed? We did not hear the reports of your guns!"

"So it was with us, too. At Auerstadt we did not know that a battle was being fought at Jena; the roar of our own atillery prevented us from hearing yours. Only when the king had sent off several orderlies to order the Prince of Hohenlohe and General Rüchel to cover our retreat, we learned, from the chasseur who returned first, that a battle had been fought also at Jena, and that Hohenlohe and Rüchel were unable to afford us any assistance. I cannot describe to you the dismay produced by this intelligence. Every one thought only of saving himself; there was no longer any obedience, sense of honor, or bravery. The generals were too confused to issue orders, and the soldiers too frightened to listen to their officers."

"And the king?"

"The king was evidently determined to die. His face was livid, his lips were quivering; wherever the bullets rained down most murderously, thither he spurred his horse. He had two horses killed, but remained uninjured. It seems Fate was too unmerciful toward him: it had decreed that the King of Prussia should not die, but learn in the stern school of suffering and experience what Prussia needs."

"And the Duke of Brunswick—the commander-in-chief?"

"Ah, you do not yet know the terrible fate that befell him? A bullet passed through his head; it entered on the right side, and came out on the left. This happened in the early part of the battle; the duke was brought back to Auerstadt in a fainting condition; his wound was dressed there, and then he was carried by some soldiers to Blankenburg."

"The duke is not yet dead, then, notwithstanding this terrible wound?"

"No," said Schill, solemnly, "God would not let him die without reaping the fruit of what he had sown. For his

mental blindness God punished him with physical blindness. The ball destroyed both his eyes."

"Dreadful!" muttered Count Pückler.

"You pity him?" asked Schill, harshly. "You had better pity the thousands who are lying on the bloody battle-fields of Jena and Auerstadt, and accusing the duke of having murdered them! You had better pity Prussia's misfortunes and disgrace, which have been brought about by the duke! For, I tell you, the indecision, vacillation, and timidity of the duke were the sole causes of our terrible disaster. All of us felt and knew it. None of the younger officers and generals had any doubt about it; every one knew that those old gentlemen, who had outlived their own glory, and still believed that they lived in the days of Frederick the Great, were unequal to the occasion, to the present time, and to the present war. Because we were aware of this, we made the utmost efforts to bring about a change of commanders. We elected a deputation of officers, and sent them to General Kalkreuth, for the purpose of laying our complaints and prayers before him, and of imploring him to induce the king to deprive the duke of his command, and to intrust it to younger and more resolute hands. The deputation consisted of none but skilful, prominent, and highly-esteemed officers, who boldly declared it to be their firm conviction that the king was in danger of losing his crown and his states, if the Duke of Brunswick should remain at the head of the army."*

"And what did General Kalkreuth reply to them?"

"The general asked, in a harsh tone, for a further explanation of their words, and the officers gave it to him. They censured the duke's idea of establishing a camp at Weimar, and dwelt contemptuously on the reasons that might have induced him to do so. They proved, by referring to the whole proceedings of the duke, that he knew neither what he was doing nor what he wanted to do; neither where he was, nor whither he was going; and they added that, in consequence of this deplorable state of affairs, the whole army was filled with the most startling and discouraging rumors.† But their prayers, their remonstrances, their angry denunciations, and predictions, were unavailing. General Kalkreuth could not make up his mind to represent the dangers of the situation to the king, although he himself was just as well satisfied of its critical character as all the younger officers of

* Vide Frederick von Gentz's writings, edited by G. Schlesier, vol. ii., p. 314.

† Ibid., vol. ii., p. 315.

the army. And thus we were defeated, disastrously defeated and routed, in spite of all warnings of our consciousness of the danger, and of all predictions. This time it was not the inexperience and impetuosity of youth, but the antiquated method and slowness of age, that brought about our ruin."

"Yes, you are right," sighed Count Pückler; "our old generals are the cause of our misfortunes."

"Do you know, for instance," asked Schill, indignantly, "why we lost the important defile of Kösen? In consequence of the night-sweat of General von Schmettau!"

"Ah, you can jest even now!" said Pückler, sadly.

"I do not jest, by any means; on the contrary, I am in dead earnest! The Duke of Brunswick had ordered the general, on the day before the battle, to start early next morning with his division, and occupy the defile of Kösen. His adjutant, Lieutenant von Pfuël, went repeatedly to his headquarters to remind him of the urgent necessity of setting out, and to implore him to rise from his bed. 'But, sir,' replied the old general, 'let me wait at least until my night-sweat is gone; I understand it is a very chilly morning!'"* The old general did not rise until nine o'clock, and started at ten with his division toward Kösen. When he reached the defile he found that Marshal Davoust had caused it to be occupied by a regiment of infantry scarcely an hour before. That night-sweat of the old general has become the death-sweat of many brave Prussians, and the gray hairs of the old chieftain will now cause the hair of our youth to turn gray with shame and grief."

"Oh, it is a terrible disgrace for us, and I hardly know how we are to bear it in a manly and dignified manner," said Count Pückler, gloomily. "In these hours of melancholy only we feel the full extent of our ardent love for our country; now only we perceive the indissoluble ties that attach our hearts to it! I should like to pour out my blood in tears for this crushed, disgraced, and yet so dearly-beloved country, and I feel that if we do not rise speedily from our degradation, I shall die of despair!"

"You will not die," said Schill, gravely, "for all of us who love Prussia, and are devoted to her honor, must not think of dying at the present time; all of us must assist Prussia in rising again from the dust, so that she may once more boldly meet the tyrant, and take revenge for herself and for Germany! For Prussia is Germany now, because she is the only power

* Vide Förster's "Modern History of Prussia," vol. i., p. 757.

in Germany that has resisted and braved the Corsican conqueror. But God wanted first to arouse her from her arrogance and vanity, and make the weakness of her leading men known to her, that she might rise after a noble regeneration and with redoubled strength. Life springs from death, and Prussia had to fall so low as to break her old decrepit limbs that were still kept together by her glory from the Seven Years' War; and then the young, vigorous soldier of the new century will arise and draw the sword to deliver his subjugated country, and avenge its desecrated honor!"

"Then you hope still for a change for the better?" asked Count Pückler, mournfully.

"I base my hopes on the propitious star of Prussia," exclaimed Schill, enthusiastically, "on the future, on the wrath and grief which will awake now in all Prussian hearts, arousing the sluggards, strengthening the vacillating, and urging the timid. I base my hopes on the tears of Queen Louisa, which will move Heaven to help us and awaken avengers on earth. And, for ourselves, comrade, with our wounds, with our disgrace, we must be like the spirits of vengeance that sweep across the heath in the howling storm of diversity, and awaken the sleeper who would give way to dreams of peace and inaction. Prussia must not make peace in her present calamitous condition; she must fill the hearts and minds of all with longings for war, till the whole nation arises in its rage and expels the enemy from the country! My friend, we have now witnessed the downfall of Prussia, but henceforth we must exert ourselves in order to witness also her regeneration. We ourselves must be the—"

"Hush!" said Pückler, hastily. "Just look there, and then take your sabre."

They were now near a field-path leading to a small wood which a slender youth had just left, and was hastily approaching them. As yet, however, he was so far from them that they were unable to distinguish his features or his dress, and to discern whether he was an armed soldier or a peaceable wanderer.

"It is, doubtless, a French soldier, and his comrades are lying in ambush," murmured Pückler, placing his hand on his sword.

"If he wants to attack us, he had better say his death-prayers," said Schill, calmly. "There are two of us, and each has one uninjured arm."

The youth had meanwhile drawn nearer, and they saw that he did not wear any uniform.

"He is very young," said Pückler, "and a civilian. He has apparently not yet seen us. That bush yonder is concealing us from his eyes. Let us stoop a little, and, as the path lies beyond, he may pass by without noticing us."

They knelt down behind the bush, but, while doing so, took their swords, and prepared for an attack. Then they held their breath and listened.

Profound silence reigned around, and nothing was to be heard but the quick steps of the wanderer, who drew nearer and nearer. Suddenly this silence was interrupted by a fresh and youthful voice, singing the air of a popular song.

"Ah, he sings," murmured Schill. "He who can sing to-day, must be very harmless, and it is not worth while to kill him."

"Hush! hush! let us listen to his song. He is now singing words to the melody. Just listen!"

The voice resounded nearer and nearer to the two listeners, and they could understand the words he was singing:

O Hermann! for thy country's fall
No tears! Where vanquished valor bled
The victor rules, and Slavery's pall
Upon these hills and vales is spread.
Shame burns within me, for the brave
Lie mouldering in the freeman's grave.

No voice! where sturdy Luther spoke
Fearless for men who dared be free!
O would that Heaven's thunder woke
My people for their liberty!
Must heroes fight and die in vain?—
Ye cowards! grasp your swords again!

Revenge! revenge! a gory shroud
To tyrants, and the slaves that yield!
Eternal honor calls aloud
For courage in the battle-field.
Who loves or fears a conquered land
That bows beneath the despot's hand?

And whither flee? Where Winkelried
And Tell and Ruyter bravely broke
Oppression's power—their country freed—
All—all beneath the usurper's yoke!
From Alpine fountains to the sea
The patriot dead alone are free.

My people! in this sorrowing night,
The clanking of your chains may be
The sign of vengeance, and the fight
Of former times the world may see,
When Hermann in that storied day
As a wild torrent cleft his way.

No idle song, O youth! thy boast.
In self-born virtue be as one
Who is himself a mighty host
By whose sole arm is victory won,
No blazoned monument so grand
As death for the dear Fatherland.

To die! how welcome to the brave!
The tomb awakes no coward fear
Save to the wretched, trembling slave
Who for his country sheds no tear.
To crown me with a fadeless wreath
Be thine, O happy, sacred death!

Come, shining sword! avenge my dead!
Alone canst thou remove this shame.
Proud ornament! with slaughter red
Restore my native land its fame.
By night, by day, in sun or shade,
Be girt around me, trusty blade.

The trumpet on the morning gale!
Arm! forward to the bloody strife!
From loftiest mountain to the vale
Asks dying Freedom for her life.
Our standard raise, to glory given,
And higher still our hearts to Heaven.*

* This is one of Arndt's soul-stirring, patriotic hymns, published in 1806. It is difficult to render into readable English this species of German heroic verse so as to preserve its rhythm. All the thought of the original is however expressed in the translation. The only change of any importance is the transposition of the seventh stanza.

Keine Thräne, Hermann, für dein Volk?
Keine Thräne, und die Schande brennet,
Und der Feind gebietet, wo die Freien
Siegten und fielen?

Keine Stimme laut, wo Luther sprach?
Alle Donner, die der Himmel sendet,
Sollten rufen: Volk erwache! feiges;
Greife zum Schwerte.

Rache! Rache! heissen, blut'gen Tod
Sklavenfürsten und dem Knecht der flichet!
Männerwort gefürchtet und gepriesen,
Männliche Tugend!

Ach wohin? wo Winkelried erlag,
Wilhelm schlug, und Ruyter tapfer siegte;
Auf den höchsten Alpen, in den tiefsten
Sümpfen ist Knechtschaft.

Auch du, Hermann's, auch du, kühnes Volk?
Auf! Erwache! Schüttele deine Ketten,
Dass die Schmach die Welt vernehme, bald auch
Blutige Rache!

Lieder helfen hier and Mäler nicht.
Mäler? Tief im Herzen sei das Denkmal,
An dem Thurm der selbstgebornen Tugend
Hebe dich, Jüngling!

Und voran geworfen kühn die Brust,
Und empor das Auge zu dem Himmel,
Hoch die Fahne! Hoch zum Himmel! Höher
Flammende Herzen.

Tod, du süsser, für das Vaterland,
Süsser als der Brautgruss, als das Lallen
Auf dem Mutterschooss des ersten Kindes,
Sei mir willkommen!

Was das Lied nicht löset, löst das Schwert,
Blinkend Heil, umgürte meine Hüften!
Vor der Schande kannst du Tapfre retten,
Zierde der Tapfern!

Just when the youth had sung the last verse in a ringing voice, he had reached the bush. And now there arose above it two pale heads, wrapped in white, blood-stained handkerchiefs, and sang in enthusiastic tone the last verse of the song they had heard:

Was das Lied nicht löset, löst das Schwert!
Blinkend Heil, umgürte meine Hüften!
Vor der Schande kannst du Tapfre retten,
Zierde der Tapfern!

CHAPTER III.

THE OATH OF VENGEANCE.

SPEECHLESS with surprise, the youth had listened to the song, and fixed his large eyes steadfastly on the two officers, whose uniforms and wounds revealed to him the melancholy fate that had befallen them during the last few days.

When the two were silent, he approached them with an air of profound respect.

"Bravo, officers of Auerstadt or Jena," he said, with a voice trembling with emotion, "permit a poor young wanderer to present his respects to you, and to thank you, in the name of the German fatherland, for the wounds on your foreheads. Such wounds are also an 'ornament of the brave.'"*

"And such words are an ornament of a noble heart," exclaimed Schill, offering his hand to the youth.

He took it with a joyful gesture, and, quickly kneeling down, imprinted a glowing kiss on the feverish hand of the wounded officer.

"My God!" exclaimed Schill, surprised, "what are you doing? How can a man kiss another's hand and kneel before him? Rise!"

"I am no man," said the youth, deeply moved. "I am but a poor boy, who has not yet done any thing for his country, and, perhaps, never will be able to do any thing for it, but who feels the most profound respect for those who were more fortunate than he. I, therefore, kiss your hand as Catholics kiss the hands of their saints and martyrs. For are you not at the present hour a martyr of German liberty? Hence, sir, give me your hand, too. Let me press my poor

* An allusion to the last line of the original song.