

contemplating the ring which he had handed her. "Such a memento will henceforth be the most precious ornament of all wives, and no gold will shine so brilliantly and be so valuable as these iron rings with which our women pledge their love to their native land. Ah, dear godfather, I would like to ask a favor of you. I am no wife, nor am I an affianced bride, and I have, therefore, no wedding-ring to give you. I have nothing but my heart, and in this heart there is no other love than that of country. Let me, therefore, offer it to the fatherland instead of gold, and give me for it an iron ring with the beautiful inscription: '*I gave gold for iron, 1813.*'"

"There is a ring, my child; your heart is pure gold; let it remain so; then you will well deserve your ring!" He placed it on her finger, and she thanked him with a blissful smile.

"And now I go, dear godfather," said Leonora. "Farewell, and do not forget me! And—"

At this moment a lady entered the room. Her dress indicated poverty, and her face was pale and sunken, but her eyes were lit up with a noble enthusiasm. "The wedding-rings are exchanged here?" she asked.

"Yes, here."

She quickly drew two from her finger, and handed them to M. Werkmeister. "Take them," she cried. "One of these rings belongs to me, the other I drew from the finger of my dear husband. Ten years have elapsed since then; I have always worn them, and, although I have often suffered great privations, I could never part with my only treasure. But to-day I do so joyously. Give me my iron rings!" She took those handed her, and placed them on her finger. "Farewell, sir," she said. "These will be my daughter's heirloom, and I know she will rejoice over them." She had not yet crossed the threshold when another lady appeared, and another, and more followed in rapid succession. The newspapers, containing the request, had been read in the whole city; all the married women hastened to comply with it, and to lay down their wedding-rings on the altar of the fatherland. Leonora stood as if fascinated by the beautiful and soul-stirring scene. With radiant eyes she gazed at the ladies who came and received with joyous pride iron rings in exchange for gold ones—at the young women, who, blushing and with tearful eyes, gave up their first love-pledge—at the old matrons who came tottering to exchange the golden reminis-

cences of the days of their youth for iron ornaments.* Tears of profound emotion fell from Leonora's eyes. She wished to embrace these women and thank them for their patriotism.

"I will also prove to the country how ardently I love it," she said to herself. "I will also make my sacrifices. I must go, Caroline is waiting for me. I must buy arms for the soldiers whom I intend to furnish." She shook hands with her godfather in silence. The crowd in front of the door receded before her, and allowed her to pass, filled with reverence for the women who returned from the solemn sacrifice they had made. She passed on, absorbed in her reflections. Once she raised her hand, and contemplated the iron ring on her finger. "I gave gold for iron!" she said, raising her dark eyes toward heaven. "I am now a bride, too, the bride of my country! Will it give me only iron for the gold of my love? Only a bullet or a sword-cut? No matter! I am the bride of the fatherland! I will live and die for it!" She was aroused from her musings by cheers suddenly resounding from the side of the Gendarmes Market. An immense crowd had assembled there, and shouted frantically, their faces beaming with joy.

"What is it?"

And a hundred jubilant voices replied: "General York is coming with the Prussians! The king has reinstated York! The court-martial has acquitted him!" †

"Long live noble General York!" shouted the crowd. "York was the first man to take heart, and brave the French!"

"York is coming to Berlin!" shouted others, hurrying from the adjoining streets to the market-place. "York, with his Prussians, is outside the King's Gate, and to-morrow he will make his entry into Berlin!"

"Long live the brave general! All Berlin will meet him to-morrow, and cheer him who first drew his sword against the French! The new era is dawning on Prussia!"

"Yes, the new era is dawning on Prussia!" exclaimed Leonora. "We have long walked in sadness. But morning is breaking—the morning of freedom. Now we shall boldly raise our heads. The country has called us, and we all have heard the call, and are ready to conquer or die. Hail, brave York! The time of thralldom is past! We shall rise from

* On the first day about two hundred wedding-rings were exchanged.—Vide Beitzke, vol. i.

† York made his entry into Berlin at the head of the Prussian troops on the 17th of March, 1813, and was received with boundless enthusiasm.

the dust, and the Germans will now reconquer the sacred right of being Germans. Oh, my heart, rejoice! I am no longer a girl, I am one of Lützow's riflemen, and to-morrow I shall go to Breslau, and add another soldier to the Legion of Vengeance. Farewell, Leonora Prohaska, farewell! Now you are a man, and your soul must be manly, strong, and hopeful. Long live Prussia!"

WAR AND AN ARMISTICE.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THEODORE KÖRNER.

ANOTHER corps of volunteers leaving Berlin had arrived at Breslau, and just alighted from their wagons on the large market-place, called the "Ring," and received their tickets for quarters at the city hall. Two of these volunteers, emerging from the building, descended arm in arm the steps of the front staircase. They were two young men of slight forms and strangely youthful appearance. Not the faintest down was around their fresh lips, and white and delicate were their foreheads. But no one was surprised at their tender age, for people were accustomed nowadays to see lads emulate manhood, believing that courage did not depend on years. By the side of aged men, boys who had just been confirmed were seen to enter the ranks of the volunteers, and handle their muskets with the same strength and energy as veteran soldiers. No one, therefore, particularly noticed the youthful age of the two volunteers who came forth from the city hall, and were now crossing the place arm in arm.

"Now our lot is cast," said one of them, with a smile. "We are soldiers!"

"Yes, we are soldiers," cried the other, "and we shall be brave ones, Caroline!"

"Caroline!" echoed the other, in dismay. "How imprudent! Did we not leave our female names with our wearing apparel at Berlin with the Jew, Leonora?"

"Ah, and you call me, too, by my female name," said Leonora, with a gentle smile. "No matter! it is all right enough so long as no one hears it. We have no secrets from each other, and we are, therefore, allowed to call each other by the names received at the baptismal font."

"But before the world we call ourselves differently now; I