

up, and shed a flood of light on the plain, shadows were seen emerging from the gloom, and a long line moved past. It was a portion of the imperial army already retreating toward Leipsic.

A quarter of an hour thus elapsed when Napoleon gave a slight start, and, raising his head, cast a long look of astonishment on the persons surrounding him. His sleep had made him for an instant forget his troubles, but the sombre glances of his generals and the noise of the troops filing by, reminded him of what had happened. His eye resumed its calm expression, and, in a firm, sonorous voice he recommenced giving his orders. Suddenly a whizzing sound was in the air above him—a grenade fell to the ground close to the emperor, burrowed into the earth, and scattered the camp-fire.

"It is a cold night," said the emperor, composedly; "make up the fire again, and add fresh fuel!"

The adjutants ran to collect the firebrands, and the generals themselves hastened to pile on the fuel. But another whizzing sound rent the air, and another grenade fell into the fire, which had just blazed up again; it almost extinguished the flames, and remained in the midst of the coals.

Napoleon gazed musingly on the ball, and strange thoughts probably filled his soul at the sight of this messenger at his feet.* "It is enough," he said calmly; "no more fire may be kindled! My horse! To Leipsic! I will spend the night there." The horses were brought; attended by Berthier, Caulaincourt, and a few orderlies, the emperor rode to Leipsic, and took up his quarters at the Hotel de Prusse.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE NINETEENTH OF OCTOBER.

It was eight o'clock on the following morning. A dense fog covered Leipsic as with an impenetrable veil, and extended far over the landscape. No one could see as yet, in the darkness of the night, what had been done by friend or foe. At times the allies heard loud explosions, and saw flashes on the side of the French; then all was dark and silent again. Suddenly, however, a bright glare illuminated

*Beitzke, vol. ii., p. 615.

the night, for in the French camp large fires blazed, and, like a flaming serpent, stretched our far into the plain.

"Ha!" said Blucher; "Gneisenau, I was right after all: Bonaparte is retreating. Do you know the meaning of those fires? The French have placed their caissons on both sides of the road, and set them on fire, that they may serve as beacons to the retreating troops. See! they reach up to the city of Leipsic. It is as I said; the French intend to march through that city, and retreat across the Saale. Well, I think General York will await them there, and Langeron will finish them. But come, Gneisenau, the fog is clearing. Let us ride to yonder knoll; we shall be able to see better there."

With the nimbleness of a lad Blucher mounted his horse, and, no longer restraining his impatience, he galloped off. Gneisenau rode by his side, and at some distance behind him trotted the pipe-master, with the iron box on the pommel of his saddle.

They reached the crest of the knoll and stopped. The fog had disappeared, and they could distinctly see a field of horror and desolation as far as their eyes reached. The immense plain was covered far and wide with piles of corpses; rivulets of blood intersected the down-trodden soil; fragments of wagons, cannon, and vast heaps of horses, lay in wild disorder, and all around the horizon gleamed the dying fires of upward of twenty villages.

Blucher cast a mournful look on this harrowing spectacle. "Gneisenau," he said, "it is almost impossible for one to rejoice over this victory, for it costs too many tears—too much blood. How those poor brave men are lying there, dead or dying, and have not even a grave at which their mothers and wives may weep! May the good God in heaven have mercy on their souls, and comfort those who are weeping for them!" He took off his cap, and, shading his face with it, uttered a short, low prayer for the repose of the dead. With a quick jerk he then put on his cap again. "Well," he said, "we have prayed, and we will now try to find that accursed Bonaparte, who is at the bottom of all this carnage, and—"

At this moment the pipe-master galloped up to his general.

"Well, what do you want, Christian?"

"The morning pipe," said Christian, presenting the short pipe to his master.

Blucher stretched out his hand for it, but drew it back and cast a glance on the piles of dead which covered the battlefield. "No, pipe-master," he said, solemnly, "it would be unbecoming to smoke here. We should show our respect for the dead; but hold the pipe in readiness for me, and when we ride back I will take it. Now, get out of my way, that I may no longer see the pipe, else— Begone, Christian!"

"No, I shall stay," said the pipe-master, coolly; "I have promised the general's wife always to stay near him, and, besides, you will soon need me, for you will not stand it long without your pipe. Call me, your excellency, when you want me." He moved his horse a few steps back, and was busily occupied in keeping the general's pipe lit.

Blucher and Gneisenau in the mean time were keenly looking to the side of the French camp; but not a vestige of it was to be seen. There could be no doubt now that Napoleon had commenced retreating; he had profited by the night to remove the remnants of his army toward Leipsic, that they might still be able to cross the Saale without hinderance. Blucher uttered a loud cry of joy. "He is retreating! Gneisenau, am I right now?"

"Yes, general, you are. With your sagacity you have divined Napoleon's plans better than the rest of us, and, thanks to your wise dispositions, he will find Langeron and Sacken at the gates of Leipsic, and York on the banks of the Saale."

"My dear sir, he will find us, too," exclaimed Blucher, in great glee. "We are not through yet; I know Napoleon thoroughly. You think, perhaps, that he has merely rested at Leipsic, and will evacuate the city without fighting? No, sir, then you do not know much about him. He will not yield an inch unless he must. By a battle in and around Leipsic, he intends to cover the retreat of his army, and I tell you, Gneisenau, we shall have hard work yet. Forward!"

"Yes, forward!" cried Gneisenau. "We must dispatch couriers to all the generals, and send them the glad tidings." "Now comes the last assault," shouted Blucher. "We must take the city by storm; and this will blow Bonaparte over the Rhine, and back to France, like a bundle of rags! Forward! Pipe-master, my pipe! We will attack them!"

At ten in the morning the cannon commenced booming again around Leipsic. The city was attacked on all sides by

the armies of the allies. In the south stood the commander-in-chief, Prince Schwartzberg, with the Austrian army; in the east, the Russian General Benningsen and the crown prince of Sweden; in the north, Blucher, with the Prussians, and the Russian corps under General Sacken.

"Charge!" shouted Blucher to his troops. "General Bulow has attacked the Halle gate; we must hasten to his assistance, for the French are stubborn."

At this moment another volley of grape-shot was discharged from the pieces which the French had placed inside the city, and hurled death and destruction into the ranks of the assailants.

"We must reënforce Bulow," cried Blucher! "General Sacken must advance his troops! We must hurl light infantry against the gate! Charge! Forward!" And, brandishing his sword, Blucher galloped to the side of General Sacken, who was moving with the Russians toward the point of attack.

"Forward!" thundered Blucher to the troops. The Russians did not understand him, but they saw his countenance radiant with impatience and warlike ardor, his flashing eyes, and uplifted hand pointing the sword at the gate, and they understood his meaning.

"*Perod!*" shouted the Russians, exultingly. "Forward! *Perod!*"

The grape-shot of the enemy, and the rattling fire of the French skirmishers behind the walls, drowned their shouts. But when the artillery ceased and the smoke disappeared, they saw again the face of the old general with his young eyes, and the long white mustache. He halted on his horse in the midst of the shower of bullets fired by the skirmishers, and uttered again and again his favorite command.

"Marshal *Perod!*" shouted the Russians. "He is a little Suwarrow! Long live little Suwarrow! Long live Marshal Forward!" and, amid renewed battle-cries in honor of Blucher, and with resistless impetuosity, the Russians assaulted the gate.

While these scenes were passing outside the city, Napoleon remained within. He had sat up till daylight with Caulaincourt and Berthier, receiving reports and issuing orders; toward morning he had slept a little, and now, at ten o'clock, he dictated his last orders to the two generals. In the streets were heard the roar of artillery, the crashing of falling

buildings, the wails, shrieks, and shouts of the terrified inhabitants. The field-pieces rattled past, regiments trotted along, and disappeared around the corners, constituting a scene of indescribable terror and destruction; but here, in the emperor's room, every thing presented a spectacle of peace and repose. Caulaincourt and Berthier sat at their desks, writing. The emperor was slowly walking up and down. He did not even listen to the noise outside; he dictated his orders in a calm, firm voice, and his face was as immovable as usual.

"Marshal Macdonald," said the emperor, concluding his instructions, "is commissioned to defend the city and the suburbs; for this purpose he will have his own corps, and those of Lauriston, Poniatowsky, and Reynier. He will hold the city until the corps of Marmont and Ney have evacuated it, and the rear-guard safely withdrawn. As soon as these troops have crossed the Pleisse, the bridge will be blown up." He nodded to his generals, and, striding across the room, opened the door of the antechamber. "To horse, gentlemen!" he shouted to the generals assembled there. "We must start for Erfurt!" He slowly descended the staircase and mounted his horse, the generals and adjutants following him in silence.

But the emperor did not turn his horse toward the side where the troops were marching along in heavy columns; he rode to the market-place, and halted in front of a large, old-fashioned house in the middle of the square. The King of Saxony and his consort lived there. "Wait!" said the emperor to his suite, alighting from his horse, and walking past the saluting sentinels into the house.

In the small sitting-room up-stairs were old King Frederick Augustus, his consort, and the Princess Augusta. The king sat with his hands folded on his knees, and his lustreless eye fixed on the windows, trembling incessantly from the roar of artillery and the rattle of musketry. The queen was near him, and whenever the volleys resounded, she groaned, and covered her face with her handkerchief, which was already moist with tears. The Princess Augusta knelt in a corner of the room, praying, while tears were rolling down her cheeks.

"Oh," murmured the queen when another rattle of musketry rent the air, "why does not a bullet strike my heart!"

"Father in heaven, and all saints, have mercy on us!" prayed the princess.

"Grant victory to the great and noble Emperor Napoleon, my God!" sighed the king. "I love him as a father, and he has always treated me with the love of a son. I have remained faithful to him when all the others betrayed him. Punish not my constancy, therefore, my Lord and God; grant victory to Napoleon, that happiness may be restored to me!"

A cry burst from the lips of the queen, and she started up from her seat. "The emperor!" she cried, looking toward the door.

Yes, in the open door that form in the gray, buttoned-up overcoat, with the small hat, and pale, stony face, was the Emperor Napoleon's. "I come to bid you farewell," he said, stepping slowly and calmly to the king.

"Farewell!" groaned Frederick Augustus, sinking back. "All is lost, then!"

"No, not all, sire," said Napoleon, solemnly. "We have lost a battle, but not our honor. The fortune of battles is fickle. After twenty years of victory, it has this time declared against me. But honor remains to me. I have, for four days, held out against an army three times as large as mine in troops, as well as in artillery, and they have not overpowered me. I have voluntarily evacuated the battle-field, not in a wild flight as did the Prussians at Jena, and the Austrians at Austerlitz. Our honor is intact. With that we must content ourselves this time."

"Oh, sire," cried the king, with tearful eyes, "how generous you are! You speak of *our* honor! But *I* have lost my honor, for my troops have committed treason—they deserted my noble, beloved ally during the battle! Oh, sire, pardon me! I am innocent of the defection of my troops!" And, rising, the king made a movement as if to kneel; but Napoleon held him in his arms, and then gently pressed him back into the easy-chair. "Sire," he said, "treason is a disease which, by this time, has become an epidemic in Germany. All those who are now fighting against me are traitors, for all of them were my allies, and, while still negotiating with me, they had already formed a league against me. Your Saxons were infected by the troops from Bavaria, Wurtemberg, and Baden."

"Alas," sighed the king, "I had a better opinion of my Saxons! They have turned traitors, and my heart will always remain inconsolable."

"But this is no time for giving way to grief," said Napo-

leon. "Your majesty must leave Leipsic immediately. You must not expose yourself to the dangers of a capitulation, which, unfortunately, has become unavoidable. Come, sire, intrust yourself to my protection. By my side, and in the midst of my troops, you will be safe."

"No," said the king, resolutely; "I remain! Let them kill me; I am tired of the dangers of flight! But you, sire, you must make haste! Leave us!—your precious life must not be endangered! Every minute renders the peril more imminent! Hasten to preserve yourself to your people, your consort, and your son!"

"My son!" said Napoleon, and for the first time something like an expression of pain flashed over his features. "Poor little King of Rome, from whose blond ringlets his own grandfather wants to tear the crown!" He dropped his head on his breast.

"Sire, make haste!" implored the king.—"Make haste!" echoed the queen and the princess.

At this moment there was a terrific roar of artillery. The queen buried her face in her hands; the princess had knelt again and prayed; the king leaned his head against the back of the chair, pale as a corpse, and with his eyes closed. Napoleon alone stood erect; his face was calm and inscrutable; his glances were turned toward the windows, and he seemed to listen eagerly to the thunders of war.

The door was violently opened, and General Caulaincourt appeared, pale and breathless.

"Sire," he said, "you must leave! Bernadotte has taken one of the suburbs by assault, and the forces of Blucher, Benningsen, and Schwartzberg, are pouring in on all sides into the city, so that our troops are compelled to defend themselves from house to house."

"Sire, have mercy!—save yourself!" cried the king. "I can no longer help you, no longer support you! I have nothing left to give you—nothing but my life, and that is of no value! Save yourself, unless you want me to die at your feet!"

"Sire," exclaimed Caulaincourt, "every minute increases the danger. A quarter of an hour hence your majesty may, perhaps, be unable to get out of the captured city."

Napoleon turned with a haughty movement toward his general. "Nonsense," he said, "have I not a sword at my side? But, as you wish me to go, sire—as you are alarmed, I will leave! Farewell! May we meet in happier circumstances!"

"Sire, up there!" said the king, solemnly, pointing toward heaven. He then quickly rose from his seat, and approaching Napoleon, who had taken leave of the queen and the princess, took his arm and conducted him hastily out of the room, through the corridor, and down the staircase. At the foot he stood, and clasping the emperor in his arms, whispered, "Farewell, sire; I feel it is forever! I shall await you in heaven! Not another word now, sire! Make haste!" He turned, and slowly reascended the staircase. The emperor mounted his horse, and directed his course toward the gate of Ranstadt. Behind him rode Berthier, Caulaincourt, and a few generals; a mounted escort followed them.

The streets presented a spectacle of desolation and horror, which, the closer they approached the gate, became more heart-rending. Field-pieces, caissons, soldiers on foot and on horseback, screaming women, wounded and dying cows, sheep, and swine, entangled in an enormous mass, made it impossible to pass that way. Napoleon turned his horse, and took the road to St. Peter's gate. Slowly, and with perfect composure, he rode through Cloister and Burg Streets. Not a muscle of his face betrayed any uneasiness or embarrassment; it was grave and inscrutable as usual.

When he arrived at the inner St. Peter's gate, he found the crowd and confusion to be nearly as great as at that of Ranstadt; he did not turn his horse, but said, in a loud voice, "Clear a passage!" The generals and the mounted escort immediately rode forward, and, unsheathing their swords and spurring their horses, galloped into the midst of the crowd, driving back those who could flee, trampling under foot those who did not fall back quick enough, and removing the obstacles which obstructed their passage. In five minutes a way was cleared for the emperor—the wounded lying on both sides, and a few corpses in the middle of the street, showed how violently the cortege had penetrated the obstructing mass. The emperor took no notice of this; he was silent and indifferent, while his escort attacked the crowd, and rode on as if nothing had occurred.

At length the city lay behind him; he had passed the bridge across the Elster, and reached the mill of Lindenau, where he intended to establish his headquarters. Constant and Roustan had already reached the place with the emperor's carriages, and prepared a room for him. Napoleon rapidly stepped into it, and, greeting Constant with a nod, he said,

"Only a little patience! In a week we shall be in Paris, and there you shall all have plenty of repose! We shall leave our beautiful France no more! Ah, how the Empress will rejoice, and how charming it will be for me again to embrace the little King of Rome!"

It was touching and mournful, indeed, to hear this man, usually so cold and reserved, this general who had just lost a great battle, speak of his return home and his child in so gentle and affectionate a tone, and to see how his rigid features became animated under the charm of his recollections, and how the faint glimmer of a mournful smile stole upon his lips. But it soon disappeared, and, with a sigh, the emperor drooped his head.

"Your majesty ought to try to sleep a little," said Constant, in an imploring voice.

"Yes, sleep!" exclaimed Napoleon. "To sleep is to forget!"

It was the first, the only complaint which he allowed to escape his lips, and he seemed to regret it, for, while he threw himself on the field-bed, he cast a gloomy glance on Constant, and, as if to prove how easy it was for him to forget, he fell asleep in a few minutes.

From the neighboring city resounded the artillery, indicating the final struggle of the French and the allies. The emperor's slumber was not disturbed, for the roar of battle was too familiar to him. Suddenly, however, there was a terrific explosion that shook the earth; the windows of the room were shattered to pieces, and the bed on which the emperor was reposing was pushed from the wall as if by invisible arms. He sprang to his feet and glanced wonderingly around. "What was that?" he inquired. "It was no discharge of artillery, it was an explosion!" He quickly left the mill and stepped out of the front door. There stood the generals, and looked in evident anxiety toward Leipsic. Here and there bright flames were bursting from the roofs of the houses; one-half of the city was wrapped in clouds of smoke, so that it was impossible to distinguish any thing.

"An explosion has taken place there," said Napoleon, pointing to that side.

At this moment several horsemen galloped rapidly toward the mill; they were headed by the King of Naples in his uniform, decked with glittering orders. A few paces from the emperor he stopped his horse and alighted.

"Murat," shouted the emperor to him, "what has happened?"

"Sire," he said, "a terrible calamity has occurred. The bridge across the Elster, the only remaining passage over the river, has been blown up!"

"And our troops?" cried the emperor.

"Sire, the rear-guard, twenty thousand strong, are still on the opposite bank, and unable to escape."

The emperor uttered a cry, half of pain, half of anger. "Ah," he exclaimed, "this, then, is the way in which my orders are carried out! My God! twenty thousand brave men are lost—hopelessly lost!" He struck both his hands against his temples.

No one dared disturb him; his generals surrounded him, silent and gloomy. Presently, some horsemen galloped up; at their head was a general, hatless and in a dripping uniform.

"Sire, there comes Marshal Macdonald," exclaimed Murat.

Napoleon hastened forward to meet the marshal, who had just jumped from his horse.

"You come out of the water, marshal?" inquired Napoleon, pointing to his wet uniform.

"Yes, sire. By swimming my horse across, I have escaped to this side of the river, and I come to inform your majesty that the troops intrusted to me have perished through no fault of mine. Sire, they were twenty thousand strong, and I come back alone. I come to lay my life at the feet of your majesty."

"God be praised that you at least have been preserved," said the emperor, offering his hand to Macdonald. "But you say the troops have perished? Is, then, that impossible for the soldiers which was possible for you? Cannot they swim across to this side of the river?"

"Sire, my escape was almost miraculous. I owe it to my horse, who carried me across in the agony of despair; I owe it to God, who, perhaps, wished to preserve a faithful and devoted servant to your majesty. But, by my side, no less faithful servants were carried away, and, standing on the other bank, I saw their corpses drifting along."

"Who were they?" asked Napoleon, abruptly, and almost in a harsh tone.

"Sire, General Dumoustier was one; but he is not the victim most to be lamented of this disastrous day."

"Who is it?" exclaimed the emperor, and, casting around

a hasty, anxious glance, he seemed to count his attendants to see who was missing.

"Sire," said Macdonald, in a trembling voice, "Prince Joseph Poniatowsky plunged with his horse into the river—"

"And he perished?" cried Napoleon.

"Yes, sire, he did not reach the opposite bank!"

The emperor buried his face in his hands, and groaned. He sat for some time motionless. At length he removed his hands from his face, which looked like marble, bloodless and cold.

"And my soldiers?" he inquired. "Did they endeavor to escape as Poniatowsky?"

"Yes, sire! Thousands threw themselves into the river, but only a few succeeded in escaping, while the others fell into the deep and muddy channel; and those who were on the opposite bank were made prisoners by the allies, who are now in possession of the city."

"Twenty thousand men lost!" sighed Napoleon, and he relapsed into gloomy thought. Presently he raised his head again and cast a flaming glance on Macdonald.

"Marshal," he said, "you will investigate this affair in the most rigorous manner; you will give me the name of him who has dared to disobey my orders. He is the murderer of twenty thousand men! He deserves death, and I shall have no mercy on him!"

"Sire, he stands already before his Supreme Judge! It was the corporal charged with applying the match as soon as our troops had all passed. He thought he saw the enemy advancing upon the bridge, and fired the train, throwing himself into the Elster. He is drowned!"

"It is good for him," said Napoleon. "God will deal more leniently with him than I should have done. To horse, gentlemen, to horse!" He walked slowly and with bowed head to his horse, and murmured, "Another Beresina! It costs me twenty thousand soldiers!"

The generals followed him, and as they saw him walking with bowed head, they whispered to one another, "Look at him now, how he is broken down! That was his very appearance when he returned from Russia! He has no strength to bear up under misfortune!"

While the emperor and his suite slowly and mournfully took the road to Mark Ranstadt, the allies made their entrance into Leipsic. At the head of the procession rode the Em-

peror of Russia and the King of Prussia; behind them followed their brilliant staff, and then came the victorious troops, with colors flying and drums beating. The cannon still thundered, but louder were the cheers and exultant acclamations of the people, who crowded the streets by thousands, to receive the sovereigns and the victorious army. The windows of the houses were opened, and at them stood their inmates with joyful faces, holding white handkerchiefs in their hands, with which they waved their greetings. The friends—the long-yearned-for friends were there, and they received them with tears, exultation, and thanksgiving. Merry chimes rang from every steeple, and proclaimed the resurrection of Germany. The sovereigns rode to the great square; they halted in front of the very house of the King of Saxony, but they turned no glance upward to the windows, behind the closed blinds of which the unfortunate royal family were assembled. The victors seemed to have forgotten them.

The two monarchs alighted, for now came from the other side the crown prince of Sweden, Bernadotte, at the head of his guards, and through the other street approached the commander-in-chief of the allies, Prince Schwartzberg. The Russian emperor and the Prussian king advanced into the middle of the square, and Bernadotte and Schwartzberg arrived there simultaneously with them. Suddenly, deafening cheers rent the air; they drew nearer, and amid these acclamations Blucher, at the head of his staff, rode up. When he perceived the monarchs, he stopped his horse and vaulted with youthful agility from the saddle in order to meet them; but the Emperor Alexander, anticipating him, was by his side. "God bless you, heroic Blucher!" he exclaimed, affectionately embracing him. "You have fulfilled your promise made at Breslau. You have become the liberator of Germany. Your brave sword and your intrepid heart have conquered. Come, I must conduct you to the King of Prussia!" He took Blucher's arm, and, advancing with him, he said, "Sire, I bring you here your hero, Blucher!"

"You bring me Field-Marshal Blucher!" said the king. "God bless you, field-marshal!"

"Sire," exclaimed Blucher, "you apply to me an honorary title—"

"Which you deserve," interrupted the king. "Do not thank me, for, if you do, for conferring a title on you, how