

Guard of Paris in the apartments of the Tuileries. The empress preceded him on entering the apartments, carrying the King of Rome in her arms. Greeting the officers, the emperor said: "Gentlemen of the National Guard of Paris, I am glad to see you assembled here. I am about to set out for the army. I intrust to you what I hold dearest in the world—my wife and my son. Let there be no political divisions; let the respect for property, the maintenance of order, and, above all, the love of France, animate every heart. I do not disguise that, in the course of the military operations to ensue, the enemy may approach in force to Paris; it will be an affair of only a few days: before they are passed I will be on the flanks and rear, and annihilate those who have dared to invade our country. Efforts will be made to cause you to waver in your allegiance and the fulfilment of your duty; but I firmly rely on your resisting such perfidious temptations. Farewell, and God bless us all!"\* Then, taking his son in his arms, he went through the ranks of the officers, and, presenting him to them as their future sovereign, he exclaimed, in a voice tremulous with emotion: "I intrust him to you; I intrust him to the love of my loyal city of Paris!"

The National Guard responded by protestations of fidelity and devotedness. Cries of enthusiasm rent the apartments; tears were shed, and a sense of the solemnity of the moment penetrated every mind. All shouted, "Long live the emperor! Long live the empress!" Maria Louisa, pale with emotion, her face bathed in tears, leaned her head on the emperor's shoulder; and, holding his son in his left arm, he placed his right around the trembling form of his consort. At the sight of this touching group the enthusiasm of the National Guard knew no bounds. They wept, cheered, and swore they would die to a man rather than forsake the emperor—that they would allow Paris to be laid in ruins by the artillery of the enemy rather than surrender the empress and the King of Rome.

But this enthusiasm of the National Guard met with no response beyond the Tuileries. Paris maintained an ominous silence, and, when the emperor rode through the city at night, the streets were deserted; no one had awaited him to pay homage on his departure. Paris was asleep—its sleep that of exhaustion—and the people were dreaming, perhaps, that adversity was hastening upon them.

\* Constant, "Mémoires," vol. vi., p. 7.

## FALL OF PARIS.

### CHAPTER XLVII.

#### THE BATTLE OF LA ROTHÈRE.

THE morning of the 1st of February dawned cold and gloomy; heavy gusts, driving the snow across the plain, gave to the landscape a sad and dreary aspect. Silence reigned in the camps of the hostile armies. In that of Napoleon at Brienne, and farther down the valley at the village of La Rothière, on this side of the Aube, the camp-fires of the night were flickering in the gray morning, and far away on the horizon were seen the dark outlines of the castle of Brienne. There Napoleon had passed the last night of January, and in the vicinity encamped his troops, scarcely thirty thousand strong, the remnant of that "grand army" which the emperor had so often led to victory.

In the camp of the Silesian army, too, all was quiet. It encamped beyond the Aube, on the heights of Trannes and Eclance, in the vineyards and the forests of Beaulieu; it was enjoying repose after a prolonged exposure and privation. But its commander-in-chief, Field-Marshal Blucher, seemed to have no need of rest. Scarcely had daylight dawned when he was already on horseback, and rode to the crest of the mountain, by the side of his faithful adviser and friend General Gneisenau, and followed by his pipe-master. From the crest he was able to survey the whole valley of La Rothière and Brienne, lying at a distance of scarcely four miles.

Blucher raised his right arm toward the city and heaved a deep sigh. "Gneisenau," he said, "I am deeply mortified at the defeat which Bonaparte inflicted on us two days ago. I cannot get over it, and can imagine what a hue-and-cry the distinguished gentlemen at headquarters have raised, and how the *trübsalsspritzen* are croaking again: Blucher is a crazy hussar who always wants to drive his head through a wall, and yet cannot get through it, and only causes us all a vast deal

of trouble.' I can imagine how the peace apostles are raising their voices again, crying that war ought to cease, and we should run home because we did not gain the battle of Brienne. It is indispensable, therefore, for us, Gneisenau, to strike a good blow and get even with Napoleon. Yonder the fellow stands, with his few thousand men, showing his teeth, as if he were still the lion that needed only to shake his mane to frighten us off as flies. I will show him that I am no fly, but a man who is able at any time to cope with him and such as are with him. Gneisenau, we cannot help it; we must attack him this very day. We must silence the *trübsalsspritzen*, in order to accelerate our operations against Paris."

"You are right, field-marshal," said Gneisenau; "we must strike a decisive blow, and compel the gentlemen at headquarters to discontinue their present system of procrastination. We must show Napoleon that we have also passed through a military school, though not at Brienne."

"It makes me feel angry, Gneisenau, that we were unable to show him that at the very city of Brienne. I had thought how well it would be for me to prove to him, at the place where he passed his examination and received his first commission, that I had also passed my examination and learned something. Well, it is no use crying about it now; we must try to get over it, and only think of the best manner in which we may be even with him. General Wrede must join us with his troops at noon to-day, when we shall be stronger than Bonaparte, Marment, and all his marshals together."

"See!" cried Gneisenau, whose eyes were directed to the camp of the enemy, "the troops yonder have put themselves in motion; I see it quite distinctly now that the view is clearer. But they are not advancing."

"No," cried Blucher, "they are retreating; they intend to escape us; Bonaparte wishes to avoid a battle. But that will not do; I must have my battle here! How am I to get to Paris if I do not rout his forces? how am I to pull him down if the present state of affairs goes on as heretofore? A blow must be struck now; we must take revenge for Brienne to-day!"

"Wrede will be here with his troops at noon," said Gneisenau, thoughtfully; "let us, therefore, attack the enemy at twelve o'clock, and make all necessary dispositions for it. Above all, couriers should be sent to headquarters."

"Yes, Gneisenau, it is your province to attend to all that,

for you know well that you are the head and I am the arm. Consider all that is necessary; I know only that Bonaparte contemplates a retreat, and that I must compel him to accept battle. I have felt sad enough for the past three days; for, say yourself, Gneisenau, is it not sheer arrogance for Bonaparte to remain here so long quietly in front of us, as though he intended to give us time for uniting our forces, and thought we were after all, too cowardly to defeat him?"

"It is, perhaps, not arrogance, but disgust and weariness," said Gneisenau, thoughtfully. "The prince of battles seems to be exhausted, and to have lost confidence."

"A pretty fellow he is whom misfortunes at once exhaust," grumbled Blucher, "and who is courageous only as long as he is successful! But I do not object to this disposition of Bonaparte, for every thing turns out now highly advantageous to us. The Austrians, the Wurtembergers, and the Bavarians, have come up, and will coöperate with us. Gneisenau, dispatch your couriers to headquarters, that the monarchs may come. Take out your note-book; I will dictate to you what occurs to me, and what are my plans in regard to the battle.—Halloo, Christian! give me a pipe! I can think much better when smoking!"

Christian galloped up, and with a grave air handed the short pipe to his master. "Pipe-master," said Blucher, "hold a good many pipes in readiness to-day, for there will be a fight, and you know that our gunners fire more steadily when my pipe is burning well.—Well, write now, Gneisenau: 'Precisely at twelve the troops will be put in motion, and descend from Trannes into the plain. In the centre, Sacken's infantry will advance upon La Rothière in two columns. The Austrians form the left, and will march on the town of Dionville. The hereditary Prince of Wurtemberg's corps, composing the right wing, will penetrate through the forest of Beaulieu, and take the village of La Gibrin. Olsuwiew's infantry and Wassilchikow's cavalry, Sacken's reserves, will follow the two columns of the centre. Two divisions of Russian cuirassiers and Rajewski's corps of grenadiers will remain in reserve on the heights of Trannes. The Bavarian corps, under Wrede, will be stationed on the extreme right wing.\* Well, that is enough; close your note-book," said Blucher, blowing a large cloud of smoke from his mouth. "Every thing else will come of itself after the fight has be-

\* Beitzke, vol. iii., p. 118.

gun. I have said what I had to say, and now commences your work, Gneisenau. Dispatch couriers quickly to the headquarters of the sovereigns, and may they arrive here in time, and not again, by their hesitation and timidity, spoil our game, coming too late from fear of coming too early! Let me tell you that I am not afraid of Bonaparte, with his young guard and his army of conscripts. We are twice as strong, for we have eighty thousand men, and his forces, I believe, are not forty thousand. Besides, we have allies whom Bonaparte cannot have—the good God and His angel, Queen Louisa. He has sent us to put an end to the tyranny of the robber of crowns, and Queen Louisa is looking down and praying for us and Prussia's honor. The enemy, however, whom I am afraid of is, in our own flesh and blood; he is creeping around the headquarters of the monarchs, and singing peace-hymns, and raising a hue-and-cry about the greatness of Bonaparte, representing him as invincible, and ourselves as insignificant. In that way are all our arms paralyzed! Gneisenau, should they hesitate to act in an energetic manner, and fail to be on hand in time, it would be dreadful, and I believe my rage would kill me!"

But Blucher's apprehensions were not to be verified. All the corps on which he had counted in drawing up his plan of operations arrived at the stated hour, and precisely at noon appeared the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, and Prince Schwartzberg, with their numerous and brilliant suites. The monarchs surveyed the position of the two armies from the heights of Trannes, and had Blucher explain his plan to them in his brief and energetic manner.

The Emperor Alexander then turned with a gentle smile toward Prince Schwartzberg, commander-in-chief of the allied forces. "And what do you think of this plan of the brave field-marshal?"

"It is as well conceived as it is bold," said Schwartzberg, "and I beg leave to intrust the command of the whole army to Field-Marshal Blucher. I renounce the privilege of directing the operations of to-day, and leave every thing to the discretion of the field-marshal."

Blucher's eyes sparkled with delight, and a glow suffused his cheeks. "Prince," he exclaimed, offering his hand to Schwartzberg, "this is an honor for which I shall always be grateful to you. You have a generous heart, and know that I must take revenge for the disastrous affair of Brienne. I

thank you, prince, for giving me an opportunity. Now I shall prove to their majesties that Bonaparte is not invincible, or, if I cannot prove it to them, I shall die! Hurrah! Let us begin!" He galloped with the impatience and ardor of a youth to the front of the troops, which put themselves rapidly in motion, and rushed like a torrent down the heights of Trannes.

Soon the artillery commenced to boom, and transmitted Blucher's battle-cry to Napoleon. The emperor, who had intended to retreat with his small army, in order to avoid a fight, now halted his troops, and formed them into line. As the allies were advancing with great impetuosity, a further retreat would have been equivalent to flight. Napoleon, therefore, accepted the battle, and his cannon soon responded. The engagement raged with murderous energy; the balls hissed in every direction; the allies rushed forward in strong columns, but the French did not fall back before them. In the midst of the fearful carnage they stood like heroes, sometimes repulsing the superior enemy with sublime valor; and when they gave way, they rallied and advanced to reconquer their positions. It was easy to see that it was Napoleon's presence that inspired the French with irresistible courage. Hour after hour vast numbers were slain on both sides, and while the earth was trembling beneath the strife, the snow fell to such a depth as to shroud the dead from view.

The contest was most furious in and around the village of La Rothière. The French held it with the utmost obstinacy, and vainly did Sacken's corps, which had been repeatedly repulsed, return to the charge; the French stood like a wall, and their cannon hurled death into the ranks of their adversaries.

Blucher witnessed this doubtful struggle for some time with growing impatience; his loud "Forward!" encouraged the troops to charge, but their assaults were in vain. "Gneisenau," he cried, "we must take the village, for La Rothière is the key of the position.—Halloo, pipe-master!" Hennemann was by his master's side. "There," said Blucher, taking the pipe from his mouth, and handing it to Christian, "take this pipe, and stay, do you hear, on this spot! I shall soon be back, and you will see to it that I then get a lighted pipe. I have to say a word or two to the French."

"You may depend on it, field-marshal, I shall stay here," said Christian, gravely; "you will find me and the pipe here."

"Very well; and now come, Gneisenau," said Blucher, galloping to the head of the assaulting columns. Turning his face, full of warlike ardor, toward his soldiers, he shouted: "You call me Marshal Forward! Now I will show you what that means!" He turned his horse, and, brandishing his sword, rushed toward the village. The soldiers followed him with deafening cheers.

Christian Hennemann looked composedly after them, and, putting the field-marshal's pipe into his mouth, he murmured, "Well, I wonder if this will burn until the field-marshal returns, or if I shall have to light another!" At this moment a bullet whizzed through the air, carrying away the pipe from his mouth, and slightly wounding him. "Well," he murmured, calmly, "the first one is gone, and a piece of my head to boot! Let us immediately dress the wound, and then light another pipe; for if he should return, and it is not ready for him—thunder and lightning!" After giving vent to his feelings, the pipe-master took out his little dressing-pouch, stanching the blood, applied a plaster to the wound, and wrapped a linen handkerchief around his head. "Now I am all right again, and will do my duty," said Christian, closing the pouch, and opening the box, which was fastened to the pommel of his saddle.

The fight was still raging. Night came, accompanied by a violent snow-storm, so as to render the muskets useless. As on the Katzbach, Blucher's soldiers had to attack the enemy with their swords and bayonets. At length the allies were successful; the French were overpowered and driven back. The soldiers, headed by Blucher, rushed exultingly into the village of La Rothière. "Forward!" shouted the field-marshal. "Forward!" repeated the soldiers. They halted in the middle of the village. The French still occupied the houses on both sides of the principal street, and, converting every building into a fortress, they fought like lions against the impetuous enemy. Blucher was in the midst of the flying bullets, but he did not notice them. The position had to be taken, and he knew that his presence inspired his soldiers to heroic efforts. The village was soon on fire, for the wind carried the flames from house to house, and the snowy plain reflected the red glare far and wide. The French rushed from the houses in hurried flight, hotly pursued by Blucher's soldiers. The battle was gained! The enemy evacuated La Rothière, and retreated in disorder to Brienne and across the Aube.

Blucher could now return to his headquarters and inform the monarchs of a victory. He rode back, thoughtfully; and Gneisenau, who was by his side, was also grave and silent.

"Gneisenau," he exclaimed, "I believe we have done very well to-day!"

"Your excellency must not say *we*, but *I* have done very well to-day," said Gneisenau, smiling. "You alone conceived the plan of battle, and directed it;—for La Rothière was the key of the whole position, and it was Marshal Forward who took it. This time your deeds must give the name to the battle, and it must be called 'the battle of La Rothière.'"

"Well, I do not care," said Blucher. "We have gained to-day, then, the battle of La Rothière, and, what is still better, we have shown the French in their own country that Napoleon's invincibility is a myth, and that he can be beaten as well as any other general.—But what is that? See there, Gneisenau! what sentinel is posted on the road yonder?"

In fact, a dark form on horseback halted by the roadside; the flames of the burning village rose higher, and shed a light on the stranger. It was a man dressed in the uniform of a hussar; a white, blood-stained handkerchief was wrapped around his head and half his face; his right arm was also bandaged, and in his mouth was a clay pipe.

"It is the pipe-master!" cried Blucher, quickly galloping up.

"Yes, it is I—who should it be?" grumbled Christian.

"But, Christian," exclaimed Blucher, "how in Heaven's name do you look! And what are you doing here?"

"I am waiting for Field-Marshal Blucher. Did you not tell me that I was to wait for you here, and keep the pipe in order? Well, I did wait for you, field-marshal. And you ask, too, how I look? Just like one around whom the blue beans have been whizzing for hours past, and whose head and arm have been scratched a great deal. You kept me waiting a long time, field-marshal—more than four hours! The French have shot pipe after pipe from my mouth, and this is the last I have. If you had not come soon, it would have been smashed, too."

"No," said Blucher, smiling, "the French will not break another pipe of mine to-day, Christian, for they have taken to their heels. It is true, however, I have kept you waiting a long time. But that was the fault of the French; they resisted with the greatest obstinacy. For the rest, Christian,

you had a pipe of tobacco at least during the whole time that you were waiting, and did not fare so badly after all; as for your wounds, I shall have them well attended to, my boy. You have behaved as a brave man, and stood fire as a genuine soldier ought to do. When we get home I will relate it to your old father, and he will rejoice over it. Now, give me the pipe; it will be the last that you will fill for me for some time to come, for you are disabled; your right arm is shattered, and you must be cured."

"Well," exclaimed Christian, "with my left hand I can fill your pipes. I am and must be Field-Marshal Blucher's pipe-master, and, if they do not shoot off my head, I will not give up my position!"

On the following day Blucher received at the castle of Brienne the congratulations and thanks of the allied monarchs. The Emperor Alexander embraced him, and his eyes were filled with tears of joyful emotion. "Field-marshal," he said, "you have crowned all your former efforts by this glorious triumph. I do not know how we are to reward you for this. But I know we must admire and love you."

King Frederick William shook hands with Blucher, and a smile illuminated his features. "Blucher," he said, mildly, "you have kept your word; you have fulfilled all that you promised us at Frankfort, when I informed you of your appointment to the command-in-chief. To-day you have blotted out the disgrace of Jena. Have you any wish which I am able to fulfil? Pray let me know it, for I should like to prove to you my gratitude and love."

"I have a wish, and before it is gratified, I shall neither sleep well by night nor be calm by day. Now your majesties are quite able to grant this wish of mine, and therefore I urgently pray both of you to do so."

"Tell us what it is!" exclaimed the emperor; "I am anxious to grant it as far as I am concerned, for an heroic head like yours must not lie uneasy at night, and a childlike heart like yours must be content. Speak, then!"

"Ah, sire," said the king, smiling, and fixing a searching look on Blucher's bold face, "sire, beware of promising, for then he will leave us no rest; he will not even let us sleep at night until he has driven us to Paris.—That is your wish, Blucher, is it not?"

"It is!" exclaimed Blucher, ardently. "That is my wish; and, as your majesty has called upon me to tell you something

that you could grant, and as his majesty the emperor tells me, too, that he would like to gratify me—I say, let us now set out by forced marches for Paris. Let us advance with all our armies on the capital, for then the war will soon be over. I implore your majesties, let us proceed quickly. Let us give Bonaparte no time for heading us off; but let us outstrip him moving on Paris, and, if need be, take the city by storm. When Paris falls all France is ours, and the war is over!"

"Well, what says your majesty?" asked Alexander, turning toward the king. "Shall we comply with the wish of our young madcap?"

"Sire, as far as I am concerned, I have pledged him my word," said Frederick William; "hence, I must keep it."

"And I assent with the greatest pleasure, sire," exclaimed Alexander; "let us march on Paris, then; but we should agree as to the best way of doing so."

"Well, we have invited our generals to hold a council of war, and I believe they are waiting for us now," said the king. "Come, therefore, sire; and you, Blucher, pray accompany us. One thing is settled: we shall march on Paris in accordance with your wish—only we have to select the routes which the various columns of the army are to take, for they are too large to move by the same road; they could not find the necessary supplies in the same section of country. We must divide them, and that is the question which we shall now discuss with our generals."

"I do not care about that," replied Blucher, merrily; "if the chief point is settled, all the rest is indifferent to me; I shall obey the orders of my king, and be content with the route selected for me and my corps. The point is—we must profit by our victory and outstrip Bonaparte! We must take Paris!"

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### THE DISEASED EYES.

UPWARD of a month had elapsed since the victory of La Rothière, and Blucher's ardent wish had not yet been fulfilled; the allies were not in Paris. The system of procrastination had again obtained the upper hand at the headquarters of the allies. Austria hesitated to use her power in a decisive manner against Napoleon, the emperor's son-in-law; the crown