

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

prince of Sweden wished to spare France, and was still in hope that the congress, which had been in session at Chatillon since the 4th of February, would conclude a treaty of peace. Among the very attendants of the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia this peace party had its active supporters, who opposed an energetic policy, and wished the congress of Chatillon, and not the army, to put an end to the war.

Blucher once had dared openly to oppose these "peace apostles," and disregarded the instructions received from the allied monarchs to move farther back from Paris, and, instead of crossing the Seine, retreat with his army to Chaumont and Langres. This order filled the field-marshal with anger, and his generals and staff-officers shared it. Great as he was in all his actions, Blucher took the bold resolution to pay no attention to the retrograde movements of Schwartzberg and the crown prince of Sweden, but to continue his march, even at the risk of appearing in front of Paris without support.

But it was not as a rebel that he had wished to take so daring a step; on the contrary, before moving, he wrote to King Frederick William, and implored him to fulfil his wish, and allow him to advance. He did not wait, however, for the king's answer, but, though he knew that the commander-in-chief, Prince Schwartzberg, had already commenced retreating, continued to march with his Silesian army alone upon the capital of France.

The monarchs themselves were of Blucher's opinion, and gave him full power, having his army reënforced by the corps of Bulow and Winzingerode. With his forces thus increased to twice their original strength, he was able to confront Napoleon, and attack Paris even without Schwartzberg's assistance. But the fortune of war is fickle, and he did not continue his march without experiencing this. On the 7th of March he fought a bloody battle with Napoleon and his marshals between Soissons and Craonne, and, to his profound regret, was defeated, and forced to retreat.

He took revenge at Laon, where he and his brave Silesian army gained a victory on the 9th of March. This was followed by still another. He at length silenced the "*trübsalsspritzen*" and "peace apostles," who had up to this time raised their influential voices at headquarters. All felt that a retreat, after this great victory, was entirely out of the question, and even Schwartzberg and Bernadotte joined in Blucher's "Forward!" and marched their armies to Paris.

But the brave field-marshal himself was at this time unable to join in the movement. Since the battle of Laon he had been affected with a violent inflammation of the eyes, aggravated by a fever. Confined to his dark room, he was obliged to remain ten days at Laon, suffering not only physical but mental pain. For how could he redeem his pledge—how achieve a final victory over Napoleon—if, half-blind and doomed to the captivity of a sick-room, he could not march with his troops, and lead them in person into battle? Regardless of the warnings of his physicians, he tried to brave his sufferings, and, putting himself at the head of his troops, again advanced with them. Finally, on the 24th of March, by way of Rheims, he arrived at Chalons. But the inflammation of his eyes had grown worse on the road, and gave him intolerable pain; the fever sent his blood like fire through his veins, and what neither age, nor defeat, nor disappointed hope, had been able to accomplish, was accomplished by sickness. He grew faint-hearted—his disease destroyed his enthusiasm. Longing for tranquillity, he remembered how beautiful and peaceful his dear Kunzendorf was, how kind and mild the sweet face of his Amelia, and with what soft hands she would wash his inflamed eyes, and apply the remedies.

During the last march from Rheims to Chalons he constantly thought of this. At length he made up his mind, and no sooner had he arrived at Chalons than he sent for Henne-mann, and locked himself in his room with him.

"Christian," said Blucher, in a subdued voice, "I am going to see whether you are really a faithful fellow, and whether I may confide something to you."

"Very well, field-marshal, put me to the test."

"Not so loud!" cried Blucher, anxiously. "Let us first discover whether any one can hear us here." He opened the door, and looked into the antechamber. No one was there. He then examined the dark alcove adjoining the sitting-room, which was empty, too. "We are alone; no one can overhear us," said Blucher, returning from his reconnoissance to the sitting-room. "Now, pipe-master, listen to me. First, however, look at my eyes, do you hear; look closely at them. Well, how do they look?"

"Very sore," said Christian, mournfully.

"And they have not grown better, though Voelzke, the surgeon-general, has been doctoring them every day; and, by

his salves, mixtures, leeches, and blisters, causing me almost as much pain as the eyes themselves. Nay, they grow rather worse from day to day, and if I remain here longer, and allow the physicians to torment me, I shall finally lose my eyesight altogether, and when I am blind, I shall be of no account—unable to use my sword and fight Bonaparte. I am afraid the good God will not permit me to pull down Bonaparte from his throne. He knows I should then be too happy, and therefore says, 'Gotthold Leberecht Blucher, I have permitted thee to bring Bonaparte to the brink of ruin; now thine armies are close to Paris, and will, without thee, get into the city. Go, therefore, old boy, and have thine eyes cured!' Well, I will comply with God's will, and go to some place and have myself healed, where they know better how to do it than our doctors here. I have been told that there are excellent oculists at Brussels, and Brussels is not very far from here. I will, therefore, go there."

"The field-marshal intends to retreat, then?" said Christian, laconically.

"Retreat!" cried Blucher, angrily. "Who takes the liberty of saying that Field-Marshal Blucher intends to retreat?"

"I take that liberty," said Christian. "The field-marshal intends to retreat from the inflammation of his eyes."

"Why, yes; that is an enemy from which it is no disgrace to retreat."

"A retreat is always a retreat," said Christian, with a shrug, "and if you carry out your intention you will no longer be called Marshal Forward!"

"I do not care to be called so now!" exclaimed Blucher. "The inflammation of my eyes has made me desperate; I shall lose my sight if I stay here, and then they will lead me by the nose like a blind bear. There is no use in talking any more about it; I will and must go. If you do not wish to accompany me say so, and you may stay here."

"If you go, then I will too," said Christian, with his usual calmness, "for where the field-marshal is the pipe-master must be; that is a matter of course. I have pledged my word to my father, to Madame von Blucher, and to the good God, that I would never leave my general, and it makes no difference if he is field-marshal now. If they do not shoot me, I shall stay with my field-marshal."

"Christian," said Blucher, offering him his hand, "you are

a dear boy; your heart is in the right place, and it is always the best thing in a man. When we get back to Kunzendorf you shall lead a very pleasant life, for I can never forget what a faithful and excellent young fellow you have been. Then you will go with me?"

"Yes, to the end of the world, general!"

"Well, we shall not go so far as that—only to Brussels, where there are good oculists; and when they have cured me, I will see whether they still need me here, and whether every thing has then been done to my liking."

"Oh, I believe it will be then as it is now," said Christian, in a contemptuous tone. "When Marshal Forward is no longer here, things will go backward, that is sure. But we need not care, for we shall go forward to Brussels."

"Yes, to Brussels," said Blucher; "we set out to-night; but no one must know it; I will leave as quietly as possible. I cannot stand bidding them all farewell, and listening to their fine speeches; I will leave, therefore, so that no one shall discover it before I am gone."

"A secret flight!" said Christian, laconically.

"Secret flight? how stupid!" grumbled Blucher. "It is strange what ridiculous words the boy uses! How a flight? I believe I am no prisoner."

"No, but you are field-marshal."

Blucher's red eyes cast an angry glance on the bold pipe-master. "You talk as you understand it," he cried; "when I am a poor blind fellow, swallowing powders and using salves all day I am no longer a field-marshal and had better resign, not waiting to be deposed by a few polite phrases. That is the reason why I am going to leave."

"And I leave, too," said Christian; "but as the field-marshal does not wish me to say any thing about it, of course I shall not. But how are we to get away, if no one is to be informed?"

"Well, listen! I will tell you. I have already devised the whole plan of operations, and—but, hark! something seems moving in the alcove, as if a door opened."

"There is no door in the alcove," said Christian; "it was, perhaps, a mouse, and it tells no tales. Inform me, field-marshal, what I have to do."

"Well, listen, Christian!" And the field-marshal began to explain to him, in his vivacious manner, the whole plan of his departure. Christian comprehended it, and entered very

seriously into the duties of quartermaster-general to his field-marshal.

"Do you remember it all now?" asked Blucher, at the conclusion of their conference. "Do you know all that you have to do?"

"I know all," said Christian. "In the first place, I am to go to General Gneisenau and inform him that the field-marshal is sick and confined to his bed to-day, and refuses to see any one. General Gneisenau will mention it, of course, to Surgeon-General Dr. Voelzke, who will come to see the field-marshal. I am to tell him that he is in so much pain from his inflamed eyes that he had ordered me to admit no one—that he is trying to sleep. Then I am to come back to you, and your excellency will give me the farewell letters to General Gneisenau, whereupon I am to pack up your things and lock the bags. When it grows dark, I am to carry them secretly into our carriage. Then it will suddenly occur to your excellency to take an airing, the sun having set, and therefore unable to hurt your eyes. I am to accompany you, and we shall not come back."

"No, we shall not come back," said Blucher, thoughtfully. "Well, every thing is settled now; run, and attend to what I told you. We shall set out at seven o'clock to-night."

Christian hastened away. Blucher looked after him with a mournful glance and a deep sigh. "The die is cast," he murmured to himself; "now I am indeed a poor old invalid, no longer of any use. God has refused to fulfil my dearest wish; He would not let me hurl Bonaparte from his stolen throne. I must face about at the gates of Paris, and creep back into obscurity. Well, let God's will be done! I have labored as long as there was daylight; now comes the night, when I can work no more. Ah, my poor sore eyes! I—but there is, after all, some one in the alcove," cried Blucher, springing to his feet. Again he heard a noise as of footsteps, and an opening door. He bounded into the alcove, but all was still; no one was there, and no door to be seen. "I was mistaken," he said. "A bad conscience is a very queer thing. Because I am about to do something secret, I am thinking that eavesdroppers are watching me and trying to forestall me."

It was seven in the evening; the sun had set. Field-Marshal Blucher, who was very sick all day, now intended to take an airing. The pipe-master had, therefore, ordered the

coachman; and the field-marshal's carriage, drawn by four black horses, had just come to the door. Blucher was still in his room, but all his preparations were completed. On the table lay two letters—one addressed to the king, the other to General Gneisenau; the carpet-bags had already been conveyed into the carriage, together with his pipe-box. The invalid had only to wrap himself in his military cloak, leave the room, and enter the carriage; but he still hesitated. An anxiety, such as he had never known before, had crept over him; and, what had never before happened to him, his heart beat with fear. "That was just wanting to me," he murmured. "I have become a white-livered coward, whose legs are trembling, and whose heart is throbbing! What am I afraid of, then? Is that wrong which I am about to do? My heart has never acted thus even in the storm of battle. What does it mean? Bah! it is folly; no attention should be paid to it. I hope, however, that no one will meet me when I go down-stairs, or at the carriage when I enter it. Let me see if there is any one in the street." He quickly stepped to the window and looked out; there was no one in the street, or near his carriage. "I will go now," said Blucher, turning again toward the room. "I—" He paused, and a blush suffused his cheeks. There, in the middle of the room, stood General Gneisenau, and gazed at him with a strange, mournful air. "Gneisenau, is it you?" asked Blucher, in a faltering voice. "How did you get in?"

"Simply by the door, your excellency," said Gneisenau, smiling. "Your pipe-master kept the door closed all day, and turned me away by informing me the field-marshal had ordered him to admit no one, because he wished to sleep; but my desire to see you brought me back again and again, and so I have come, fortunately at the opportune hour, when the Cerberus is no longer at the door, but is standing below at the carriage, waiting for the field-marshal, who intends to take an airing."

"Yes, I do," said Blucher, casting an anxious glance on the two letters lying on the table. "I do intend to take an airing; good-by, then, Gneisenau!" He turned toward the door, but Gneisenau kept him back. "Your excellency must not ride out to-night," he said; "I implore you not to do so. There is a cold wind, and you must not expose your inflamed eyes to it. You are not careful enough of your health; Surgeon-General Voelzke complains of the little attention you pay

to his prescriptions, and that your eyes, instead of getting better, are growing worse and worse."

"Yes, that is true," grumbled Blucher, "they are burning like fire. I will go out, therefore; the night-wind will cool them."

He turned again toward the door, but at this moment it was thrust open, and Surgeon-General Voelzke entered the room. "I am told your excellency intends to take an airing," said the physician, almost indignantly. "But I declare that I cannot permit it. You have intrusted yourself to my treatment; I am responsible to God, to the king, to the whole world—nay, to history, if I allow you to rush so recklessly to destruction; I will not suffer it; your excellency must not ride out!"

"I should like to see who is to prevent me!" cried Blucher, striding toward the door.

"The physician will prevent you," said Voelzke, standing in the doorway with his large, tall form. "The physician has the right of giving orders to kings and emperors, and Marshal Forward has to submit to his commands, too."

"I do not think of it," said Blucher; "I do not permit any one to give me orders."

"Not even your disease—your inflamed eyes?" asked Voelzke, solemnly. "Did you not obey when your fever and inflamed eyes commanded you to remain idle at Laon for ten days, although you were in a towering passion, and were bent on advancing with the army? Well, your excellency, I tell you, if you do not now obey me, and consent to desist from taking an airing—if you are determined to ride out in the cold night-air, one more powerful than I am will compel you to obey; and that one is your disease. You may ride out to-day, but to-morrow it will command you to keep your bed; the inflammation of your eyes will make you a prisoner, and you will be unable to flee from it, notwithstanding your imperious will, or your four-horsed carriage."

"Well, well," said Blucher, "you put on such solemn airs as almost to frighten me. It is true, my disease is very powerful, and this soreness of my eyes has already rendered me so desperate that—"

"That your excellency has written letters," interposed Gneisenau, pointing to the table. "But, what do I see? There is one addressed to me!"

"No, give it to me," cried Blucher, embarrassed; "now

that you are here, I can tell you every thing verbally, and it is unnecessary for you to read what I have written."

He was about to seize the letter, but Gneisenau drew back a step, and, bowing deeply, said, "Your excellency has done me the honor of writing to me. Permit me, therefore, to read." He stepped quickly into the window-niche, and opened the letter.

"Well, stand back there, doctor," cried Blucher, "let me out! Do not make me angry; leave the door!"

"I do not care if you are angry, your excellency," said the surgeon-general, folding his arms, "but in order to get me out of this doorway you will have to kill me."

At this moment, Gneisenau uttered a cry of terror, and hastened toward Blucher. "What! your excellency," he exclaimed, "you intend to leave us? To set out secretly?"

"What do you say?" thundered the physician. "What did my patient intend to do?"

"He intends to forsake us—his army that worships him, his friends who idolize him, his king who hopes in him—he intends to leave us all!" said Gneisenau, mournfully. "It is written here, doctor; I may mention it to you, for you are one of our most devoted friends."

"And he intends also to leave his physician; he will go, and get blind!" exclaimed Voelzke, reproachfully.

"Well, it is precisely because I do not wish to get blind that I must move from here," said Blucher, who had now recovered his firmness, and felt relieved, since his secret had been disclosed. "What am I, a poor blind old man, to do longer in the field? I am fit for nothing. In the end I shall perhaps fare like old Kutusoff, whom they dragged along with the army. Thus would they drag me when I am no longer myself."*

"But," said the physician, "your excellency is not blind; you will be well in two weeks if you only resolve to comply with my prescriptions, use the remedies I give you, and punctually obey my instructions. You intend to go to Brussels, where you will certainly find celebrated physicians; but they do not know you; they will only doctor your eyes, not suspecting that the seat of your disease is in your nerves, and that your eyes are unhealthy because your mind is suffering. And it will suffer still more when you have deserted your army, your friends—nay, I may say, your duty. The strange surroun-

* Blucher's words.—Vide Varnhagen, "Prince Blucher of Wahlstatt," p. 373.

ings, the want of care, the unknown physicians, your anxiety at being ignorant of what the army is doing—all this will torture your soul, and aggravate the disease of your eyes.”

“It is true, I shall be very lonely in a foreign city,” said Blucher, thoughtfully; “but it is, after all, better than to stay here as a useless, blind old man. I can never again command an army or direct a battle.”

“If you cannot command an army in person, you can by your words,” exclaimed Gneisenau; “and if you cannot direct the battle with your arms, you can do so with your spirit; for that fires our hearts as long as you are with us, and bids defiance to the adversaries and hesitating diplomatists. If your person leaves us, your spirit does also, and with Marshal Forward we lose all prospect of marching forward. Consider this, your excellency; consider that you endanger not only the welfare of your army, but the success of the war; for when you are not present, all will go wrong.”

“Well, you will be here, Gneisenau,” said Blucher; “you are half myself; you know my thoughts just as well as I do—nay, you often know them much better! You will, therefore, carry on all just as though I were still here.”

“But shall I have the power to do so?” asked Gneisenau. “Your excellency did not take into the account that when you leave the army, and give up your position as commander-in-chief, another general must be appointed in your stead. Who will receive this nomination? The senior general is Langeron, and do you consider him qualified to replace you?”

“Well, that would be a pretty thing, if *he* should become commander-in-chief!” cried Blucher. “The confusion and wrangling that would ensue would baffle description; for York and Bulow would be even more disobedient to him than they are to me.”

“But he would have to take command of the army until orders from headquarters arrived appointing another general-in-chief. We might have to wait a long time; for we are distant from the allied monarchs now, and they, moreover, will not hasten to make that appointment. Until this is done, Langeron will command the army, and thereby I, the quartermaster-general, as well as Colonels Muffling and Grolman, will be completely paralyzed in the discharge of our duties, or even lose our positions, which your excellency has always said we filled to your satisfaction, and in a manner conducive to the welfare of the army. If you go now, you there-

by deprive three men of their places, although they feel strong enough yet to serve their country.”

“It is true, I have not thought of that,” said Blucher, embarrassed. “It did not occur to me that I should have a successor here, and that he might be so stupid as to be unable to appreciate my Gneisenau, and the brave Colonels Muffling and Grolman. No, no, that will not do; Langeron must not become commander-in-chief.”

“If you leave us, he will surely have that position, and our brave Silesian army will then be headed by a Russian. No, field-marshal, you must not go. You have no right to quit the army so arbitrarily, and without the king’s permission!”

“Well, I should like to see who would prevent me!” cried Blucher, defiantly.

“Your noble soul, your devotion to duty, and your love of country, will prevent you,” said Gneisenau. “You will refuse to abandon your work before it is completed. You will not incur the disgrace of confessing to all the world that you are unable to fulfil your word—not to rest before having overthrown Napoleon, and made your entrance into Paris. Nor will you tarnish your glory on account of your eyes. You will not become a faithless father and friend to your soldiers, whom you have so often greeted as your children, and who have always confided in you; nor will you break our courage and paralyze our souls by deserting us in this manner.”

“It is true, I did not think sufficiently on this matter,” murmured Blucher to himself—“Voelzke,” he then cried aloud, “you pledge me your word of honor that you can cure me?”

“I swear it to your excellency by all that is sacred that, if you take care of yourself, and comply with my prescriptions, you will be cured in the course of two weeks.”

“Well,” said Blucher, after a short reflection, “in that case I will yield, and stay.”

“Heaven be praised, your excellency!” cried Gneisenau, tenderly embracing Blucher, “you are still my noble field-marshal, who will not desert his army, his fatherland, and his friends, for the sake of his individual comfort.”

“Yes, I will stay,” said Blucher; “but as I have to obey the grim doctor there, and submit to his treatment thoroughly, as a matter of course I cannot work and make the necessary dispositions, but leave this to my head—to Gneisenau alone.