

I lend you my name for two weeks, and know that you will make good use of it. But if at the end of that time, doctor, I am not yet well, then, beware! May the Lord have mercy on your soul! for you will certainly get yourself into trouble."

"Your excellency," cried a loud voice outside, at this moment—"your excellency, are you not coming at all?" The door of the anteroom was violently thrust open, and the pipe-master appeared on the threshold. "It is past eight o'clock," he exclaimed, "and—" He paused on perceiving the two gentlemen, and was about to retire very quickly.

"Come here, pipe-master," exclaimed Blucher, "come here and look at me. Now tell me, pipe-master, have you been a chatterbox, after all, and told these two gentlemen what was the object of our airing?"

"No, your excellency; I have not uttered a word about it to any one," replied the pipe-master, solemnly. "I have been as dumb as a fish; only in secret have I complained of my distress; and, when that did not relieve me, and I still felt as though my heart would burst, I did what I have learned to do from the field-marshal: I went to my room, closed the door, and swore in the most fearful manner! That relieved my heart, and I proceeded to do all your excellency charged me with."

"First, therefore, you had to swear?" asked Blucher, drawing his long mustache through his fingers. "You were, then, greatly dissatisfied with my departure?"

"I did not conceal it from your excellency. I told you honestly that you would no longer be called Marshal Forward if you retreated."

"Yes, retreat—that is just what he said," exclaimed Blucher, laughing, and turning again toward the two gentlemen; "and when I told him I would leave the army and set out for Brussels he remarked that it was a secret flight."

"The pipe-master is an honest man, who loves his master," said Gneisenau, kindly smiling on him. "I have often and urgently begged him to-day to announce me to the field-marshal; but he persisted in replying that he was not allowed to do so, and that he was ordered to admit no one."

"And I would have given my little-finger, if I could have admitted General Gneisenau, and Dr. Voelzke, too; for I knew that, as soon as they would be with the field-marshal, his departure would not be very soon. As they are here now—though I do not know how they got here so unexpectedly—

I suppose, field-marshal, we shall not set out, and I may send the horses back to the stable?"

"Yes, you may," said Blucher. "But wait, Christian, do not go yet; I have first to say a few words to these gentlemen, and you may listen. I will stay here, then, but on one condition. Will you fulfil it?"

"Yes, your excellency," cried Gneisenau and Voelzke at the same time.

"Well, tell me, then, how did you discover that I intended to start to-day, the pipe-master having said nothing about it to you? For I shall never believe that both of you could happen to come to me at so unusual an hour, and without any reason. Reply—who told you that I was about to leave?"

"You yourself, your excellency," said Surgeon-General Voelzke.

"What, I! What nonsense is this!" cried Blucher, laughing.

"Yes, I heard it from yourself. Do you not remember that you heard a mouse rustle in your alcove?"

"To be sure, I did; I heard it twice."

"Well, then, the mouse was myself! I discovered a small secret side-door in your room, and desired to know whither it led. I therefore thrust it open, and was in your alcove; just as I entered I heard your voice, saying, 'It is settled, then, Christian, I shall set out for Brussels to-night, but no one must know a word about it!'—Your excellency, I confess my crime: I stood and listened; only when the pipe-master left your room did I softly creep away, too, and hasten to General Gneisenau to inform him of what I had heard."

"Let us examine the alcove more carefully, pipe-master," said Blucher, "and see whether there is not somewhere else a secret door. Well, you may go now, Hennemann, and send the horses back to the stable."

"Heaven be praised!" exclaimed Christian, hastening out of the room. But scarcely had he closed the door, when he thrust it open again. "Field-marshal," he said, "General von Pietrowitch, adjutant of the Emperor of Russia, wishes to see your excellency immediately."

"Come in, general," exclaimed Blucher; and offering his hand to the officer, he asked hastily, "tell me, in the first place, general, whether you bring good or bad news?"

"I believe I bring what Marshal Forward would call good news," said the general, smiling. "I come as a messenger

from the emperor my master, and the king your master, and am commissioned to inform you of the determination taken at headquarters, and to obtain your consent and coöperation."

"Is it a secret mission?" asked Gneisenau.

"On the contrary, the whole army will have to hear it to-night," said the general. "My first news, then, is, that the congress of Chatillon was dissolved on the 19th of March."

"Without leading to any results?" asked Blucher, breathlessly. "Without agreeing on a treaty of peace, or an armistice?"

"Nothing of the kind, your excellency. The congress has had an entirely opposite result—the speedy and energetic prosecution of the war. All the diplomatists, and the Emperor Francis with them, after the dissolution of the congress, retired southward to Dijon."

"And Schwartzberg?" cried Blucher.

"Prince Schwartzberg remained, and held a council of war with the monarchs yesterday near Vitry. The result of this I am commissioned to communicate to you. The resumption of the offensive against Paris has been decided upon. Prince Schwartzberg agrees with the sovereigns that Paris is the decisive point, and that it is all-important for us to cut off Napoleon from the capital, and take the city before he is able to reach it. Prince Schwartzberg, therefore, sends word to your excellency that from this day all his standards are turned toward Paris, and that the army of Bohemia is marching in three columns. To-night they encamp at Fère Champenoise, where the headquarters of the allies are to be. Now, Prince Schwartzberg invites you to participate with the Silesian army in this advance, starting at once, and advancing by the road of Montmirail and La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and then form a connection with the army of Bohemia."*

"Yes, I shall certainly do so," joyfully cried Blucher. "Hurrah! This is good news; now the word is not only with us, but everywhere, 'Forward!' Tell their majesties, and, above all, Prince Schwartzberg, that they have made me very happy, and have performed a truly miraculous cure. I was sick and desponding; now, since you have come, I am again well and in good spirits. I feel no longer any pain, and my eyes will be all right again, now that they know that they are to see the city of Paris. I thought that it would come to

*Beitzke, vol. iii., p. 431.

this—that my brave brother Schwartzberg would at length agree with me. We shall soon now put an end to the war. Bonaparte must be dethroned, and that speedily."*

CHAPTER XLIX.

ON TO PARIS!

NAPOLEON'S courage was not yet paralyzed; he had not yet given up the struggle. His indomitable heart was still wrestling with adversity, and hoping that he would be able to overcome it. It is true, the disastrous battle of Bar-sur-Aube, where the army of Bohemia had gained a victory on the 20th of March, had greatly weighed him down; but a few days sufficed to restore his determination and energy. On the 26th, when he arrived with his army at St. Dizier, he had already devised new plans, and was again resolved to give battle to the allies. "We are still strong," he said to Caulaincourt, who had just joined him at St. Dizier. "We have upward of fifty thousand men here. I have issued orders to Marshals Marmont and Victor, as well as to all reinforcements that are on the road from Paris, to join our army. When they arrive, my forces will be eighty thousand, and the allies will not dare march on Paris, where they will find me. If I can now induce them to hesitate, and retard their operations a short time, by drawing reinforcements from the neighboring fortresses of the Meuse and the Moselle, I shall increase my army to upward of one hundred thousand, and it will then be easy for me to delay the progress of the enemy by constantly renewed attacks, and thus prolong the war."

"But I am afraid, sire, you labor under a delusion as to one point: that it is still possible for you to delay the progress of the allies by any means whatever," sighed Caulaincourt. "I have examined every thing on my trip to your majesty's headquarters; I have conversed with every prisoner fallen into the hands of our troops, and I do not believe that the army of Bohemia is in the rear of your majesty, but that it has outstripped you, and is already on the road to Paris."

Napoleon shrugged his shoulders and stepped to the door, which he opened, shouting, "The mayor of St. Dizier!" The corpulent form of the mayor, who greeted the emperor with

*Blucher's own words.—Vide Varnhagen von Ense, "Blucher," p. 375.