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THE
RUSSIAN PRISONER OF WAR
AMONG
THE FRENCH.

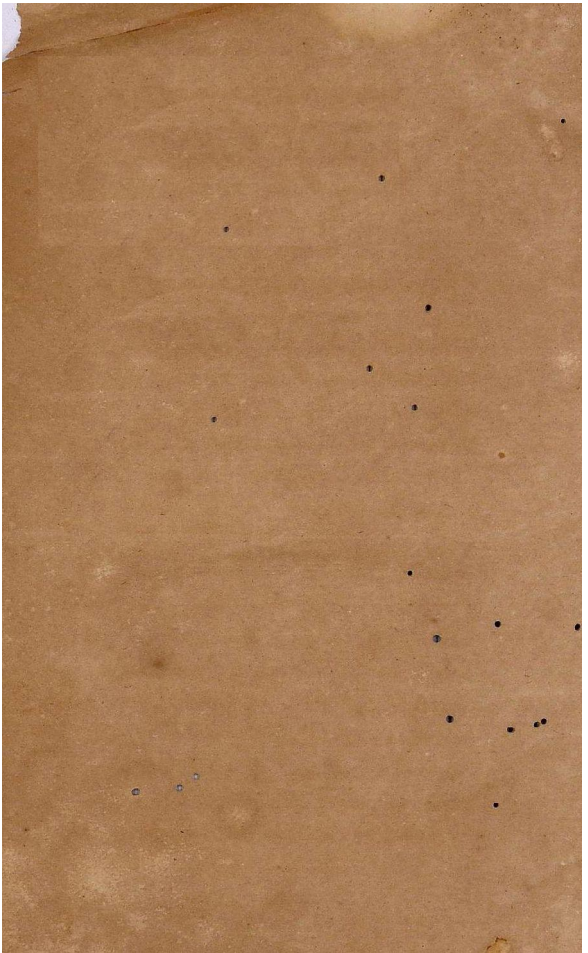
BY
MORITZ VON KOTZEBUE,
LIEUTENANT ON THE GENERAL STAFF OF THE IMPERIAL RUSSIAN ARMY,
KNIGHT OF THE ORDER OF ST. WLADIMIR.

EDITED, WITH THE ADDITION OF
A PREFACE AND POSTSCRIPT,
BY THE AUTHOR'S FATHER,
A. VON KOTZEBUE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

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PREFACE.

It may, without much risk of error, be assumed, that few persons unconnected with the military profession, possess any clear and distinct ideas respecting the situation of an officer on his being taken prisoner, or the hardships he usually encounters during his removal from one place to another, and his residence in that within the limits of which he is finally confined. I am, therefore, of opinion, that the communication of an authentic and artless relation of what has actually occurred in such a situation, will be received with satisfaction by a great number of readers. Such a genuine and simple narrative is that in which my son has given an account of the adventures which befel himself, and his unfortunate companions, made prisoners by the French. He may, perhaps,

have delivered many opinions that are erroneous—pronounced many judgments that are immature; but as, on the whole, I am sure he has always spoken from his heart, I have not thought myself at liberty to alter any of his sentiments.

I have also been induced to commit the following pages to the press, by the anxious desire of the young man, to offer through their medium sincere and public thanks to his benefactors. In that expression of gratitude his father warmly joins.

A. VON KOTZEBUE.

Koningsberg,
May, 9, 1815.

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CHAPTER I.

My Capture.

THE corps of Count von Wittgenstein, to which I belonged, had halted before Polotzk. On the 10th of August (O. S.), 1812, the advanced guard, under General Wlastoff, occupied, in position, the little town of Belo, about a mile and a half* from Polotzk. I was the only officer of the general staff, at that time, with the advanced guard, as my

* In the distances, German miles are always to be understood, unless some other measure be expressed. The German mile is equal to about five English miles.—T.

brother was sick. About a mile and a quarter distant, on our left wing, lay a wood, which it was necessary to reconnoitre, as it extended towards Polotzk, which the enemy possessed. Unfortunately, I learned too late that this wood covered a road which afforded an excellent communication.

We had been obliged to sustain an action, and the whole corps, still fatigued, was resting. I resolved, therefore, to go alone into the wood, and explore it as far as I could by myself. I rode a considerable way into it. As I proceeded, I discovered a pretty good road, which, the farther I advanced, still appeared to become better; and upon which I could discover no recent traces either of horses' feet, or carriage wheels. Emboldened by this last circumstance, I moved gradually onward, and discovered a village. It was situated in a sort of hollow, which enabled me easily to survey it. I could see nobody, but I was unwilling to return with my purpose unaccomplished. I therefore rode straight

into the village, stopped opposite to the first house; when, after long and loud calling, a peasant came forth. On asking him whether there were any French there, he replied that he had seen none. Indeed I could not but believe the fellow, as he still had a wretched coat on his back, and I heard geese cackling in the yard—things not usually found where the French have halted. Such sounds were then pleasing; for men who during long marches have passed through only ruined and desolate villages, without perceiving the trace of a living being, feel an indescribable satisfaction on hearing even a dog bark.

In reply to my questions, the peasant, among other things, informed me, that a very good road led from the village to Polotzk, and communicated, about half a mile farther on, with the highway, along which our army had retired three days before. I immediately determined on proceeding thither, in order to sketch the situation of the road; intending, on my return, to make a report to the

general, and to recommend the occupation of the village. This operation appeared to me, in the first place, calculated to protect our left flank from a surprise, which, as I afterwards learnt, was meditated by the enemy; and secondly, as the village was situated in the rear of the enemy's outposts, they might consequently have been surrounded unobserved. Such were the fine projects I pictured to myself whilst I was drawing, and by which, on their accomplishment, I hoped to obtain credit.

I had, however, scarcely finished my sketch, when about twenty of the enemy's cavalry suddenly rushed upon me from the village. Although I have witnessed many a hard-fought battle, I must confess that terror never so completely took possession of me as at that moment. I soon, however, perceived that my assailants were Uhlans; and, from their irregular manner of riding, I concluded that they were not accompanied by any officer. To think of opposing twenty Uhlans

would have been madness, and yet I was unwilling to surrender myself to such a disorderly party. I therefore spurred my horse, and galloped off at full speed. As my pursuers rendered my return impracticable, I was compelled to go directly towards the enemy's position; I hoped, however, either to escape by some half miracle, or at least to reach one of the enemy's strong pickets, whose officer would protect me from ill treatment.

Scarcely had I turned, when the Uhlans fired several shots, one of which grazed the belly of my horse. He was before much swifter than the Uhlan horses, but the irritation of the wound increased his speed to such a degree, that I soon left my pursuers at a considerable distance behind me. I had now reason to fear that they would put no bounds to their rage should they overtake me, and therefore more earnestly wished to fall into other hands. Had the wood not been so thick, I might, perhaps, have escaped through it; but those who have seen the close growth

of the Russian forests, and have observed the manner in which all the passages are generally filled up with felled trees, well know that they are almost as impenetrable as walls. Perhaps, had I had time to deliberate, I might have abandoned my horse, and endeavoured to have concealed myself among the trees, at the risk of starving, or being shot by the first man who saw me. But the moment on which a man's fate depends is seldom that in which his powers of reflection are most vigorous, and I fled thus rapidly about a quarter of a mile, without perceiving any enemy in front of me. At length the wood became more open, the road took a turn, and in a moment I came plump upon a Bavarian picket. It would be difficult to say which party was, in the first instance, most alarmed by this rencontre, for in spite of my embroidered uniform and beardless chin, there was raised a general cry,—To arms! The Cossacks! The Cossacks! It must indeed have appeared probable that I was followed by a swarm of

Cossacks, and it was impossible at first to perceive the contrary. My horse was seized by the bridle, the bayonets were pointed at me, and I stammered out the hard word—*Quarter!*

The captain who commanded this post, approached me in a very friendly manner, and said: “Young gentleman, I feel for your misfortune. But you have fallen into the hands of a plain old soldier, if that can give you any consolation. I promise you not a hair of your head shall be harmed.”

This unexpected assurance, accompanied by a shake of the hand, banished all apprehension of ill treatment from my mind, and I began to reflect more coolly on the extent of the misfortune which had befallen me. As yet no one had noticed my sword; I took it from my side.—It was one of the most painful moments of my life.—With difficulty I said to the captain—“Sir, I have worn it seven years, and this is the first time”—Here my tongue failed me. “All who bear arms,”

replied the good old man, "are liable to this misfortune; and to lose your sword in this manner is no disgrace. Were it in my power, you should still keep it."

I wished to thank him, but was unable, so deeply did his generous conduct move me. I now consider myself fortunate in having this opportunity of publicly expressing my gratitude. He perhaps has not forgotten me—I gave him my drawing as a memorial of me*.

I heard no more of my pursuers. They doubtless returned to the village, when they found they had driven me on the Bavarian picket. A corporal and two privates were ordered to conduct me to head-quarters. I again shook hands with the captain, cast a

* It is to be regretted that the author did not make a memorandum of the name of this officer, or at least inscribed it in his memory.—Thank heaven it will be seen in these pages that the poor prisoners often fell in with worthy and humane men, but unfortunately their names have very often been forgotten.—A. VON KOTZEBUE.

last sorrowful look on my poor wounded horse, and marched off with my escort.

He who has commanded troops himself, cannot easily avoid experiencing a painful feeling, on being placed under the control of common soldiers. Whilst I walked behind the foremost of my conductors, with my eyes fixed on the ground, and often buried in thought, if I sometimes deviated a little to one side, I immediately heard from behind me the harsh cry—*Keep in the middle!* The words went to my heart.

After a march of more than a quarter of a mile, we came to the second post, where there were two officers. The eldest of the two demanded my papers. Fortunately I had nothing of importance about me, except a small map of the neighbourhood of Polotzk, which I delivered. He appeared unwilling to believe that I had nothing more; informed me that I should be very strictly examined at head-quarters, and that no denial would serve me there. I felt offended, and said,

“If you do not place confidence in my word, you may search me.” I immediately began to pull off my coat. The officers, however, declined the search, protesting very civilly that they had only required me to deliver up my papers in compliance with their orders.

Another party of soldiers now took charge of me, and I proceeded on my journey. Though we were fortunately shaded by the thick trees of the adjoining forest, yet, owing to the great heat, and my being unused to march on foot, I was frequently on the point of sinking to the ground. The corporal, who perceived how fatigued I was, proposed that I should take a short rest, adding that he had received orders to treat me with kindness. This was a very welcome offer. My thirst was intolerable, but in vain did we look around us in the hope of procuring a draught of water. The corporal had only a little brandy, which he readily shared with me. As I had still money about me, I offered him some; but the brave fellow warmly expressed

his displeasure at the proposal, saying that a soldier ought to do an act of civility to another without payment; and that as he himself might one day or other encounter a similar fate to mine, Heaven would reward him for what he now did. Moved by this generosity, I immediately wrote a note in the Russian language, in which I briefly mentioned the friendly services he had performed to me, and recommended him to all into whose hands he might fall. Well did he merit this recommendation; for the soldier who, in a moment of distress, divides his last drop of brandy with an unfortunate prisoner, displays in that act more real charity, than the rich man who distributes hundreds to the poor.

After this refreshment, we resumed our march, and in the course of half an hour we reached a small fortified position about a quarter of a league from Polotzk. Three days before I had myself occupied it with our troops. On a little hillock, on which stands the image of a saint, protected by a covering,

my general was then encamped, and on that very spot, a colonel of the enemy's army had now pitched his tent: he was a venerable looking, gray-headed man, and was seated at a table, writing with great diligence. I was no sooner introduced, than he rose from his seat, and enquired my rank and name: on hearing the name of Kotzebue, he approached me with a friendly air, and gave me assurance of good treatment. I praised what I had already experienced. He seized my hand, and shaking it heartily, ordered an adjutant to conduct me to the general. This delicate attention, so characteristic of the German warrior, affected me deeply; and my eyes, suffused with tears, told the old gentleman what my tongue wanted the power to utter.

Our way led over the field of battle, where a few days before so many of my valiant countrymen had perished; where my brave brother had his horse killed under him in storming a convent, and found, after the action, three balls in his mantle. Broken mus-

kets, lances, and knapsacks, were strewed on all sides; scattered about among them were still numbers of wounded, the greater half of whom, notwithstanding their groans and cries for help, it had been impossible to remove. It was in vain to think of burying the dead.

I particularly remarked an unfortunate Russian near whom I passed: a cannon-ball had shattered his leg in so dreadful a manner, that his recovery was hopeless. He appeared to await tranquilly the approach of death. Half sitting, half lying, his head resting upon a stone, and his eyes directed towards a neighbouring church, he seemed wrapt in devotion: nothing but a Russian uniform could have awakened his attention; he turned his eyes towards me with an emotion of satisfaction, and said, in a faltering tone: "Heaven be praised! I see a Russian before I die! Though you are a prisoner, you are happier than I; not because you have your limbs, but because you will see your friends again.—Oh God! I have a wife and children! How

happy should I die, could I behold them once again !” — I could not long endure this painful sight; I stretched out my hand towards him, and reminded him of the Russian proverb :—

SACRED AND GLORIOUS IS HIS DEATH WHO DIES
FOR HIS COUNTRY*.

The adjutant who accompanied me, was, as well as myself, much affected by this scene, and we proceeded in silence to the house of the general, which was in front of the town, and distant from it a few thousand paces: it was the same house in which Count Wittgenstein had a few days before established his head-quarters; but it was now scarcely possible to recognize it; for as the last battle had commenced by an attack in this direction, the numerous discharges of artillery directed on the head-quarters, had so shattered the roof and walls, that the whole building pre-

* I applied to the surgeon-general to obtain, if possible, some relief for this unfortunate man; but I was assured that any attempt to move him would cause his immediate death.

sented the appearance of a sieve*. In this ruin of a house I was received by a Bavarian general, who, after having asked me a few questions, sent me to General Wrede.

I had formerly known Polotzk, and considered it a very pleasant city; but I now found it much altered: every house served as a sort of breast-work; all the streets were palisadoed; and a redoubt was constructed on the beautiful promenade: instead of citizens peacefully carrying on their business, I beheld only idle officers and hungry soldiers. The hospital was filled with the wounded and dying, and the air was infected with foetid exhalations.

We passed through the market-place, which used formerly to be filled by Jews, but which now overflowed with Frenchmen. My appearance excited curiosity; many dozens, whose approach was announced at the dis-

* The count had fortunately left the house, in order to inspect the right wing, about a quarter of an hour before the attack commenced.

tance of ten paces by the effluvia of brandy, quickly surrounded me, and eagerly began to gratify their loquacious propensities; but the adjutant, with the words, "Here are General Wrede's quarters," put a sudden stop to all interlocation.

We entered the house, and found, in an anti-room, a very foppishly dressed and thoroughly perfumed French secretary; who politely offered me a pinch of snuff: I requested him to let me have a glass of water:—" *Ah! mon Dieu, monsieur!*" said he, "you have only to command, and you shall have both wine and water." Upon this, he immediately ordered some refreshment to be brought to me. He then wished to satisfy his own curiosity; but the door opened, and General Wrede appeared: his manner of addressing me was polite, though he seemed to regard me with an air of uncommon earnestness, and even of suspicion.

"I will go with you myself to the commandant, General St. Cyr"—were the first

words he uttered, while taking his hat and sword. We went out, and, on this occasion, place was respectfully given me on the street, and all *bon-mots* were suppressed.

General St. Cyr had his quarters in the Jesuits' convent, a fine building, with which I was well acquainted. We soon reached the gloomy cloisters, through which the monks were sauntering like so many ghosts. General St. Cyr received me very politely. His first question was: "I hope you have not been ill treated by my troops?" I assured him that I had experienced every thing the reverse of ill treatment, and thankfully related what had occurred. General Wrede now turned to me, and said: "I understand you have not been searched. You will, therefore, lay all your papers on the table."

"Except a small map," I replied, "which I delivered to the commanding officer at the second post, I had no papers in my possession."

An aide-de-camp was immediately dis-

patched to bring the map, and General Wrede again addressed me: "Consider, sir, that you will be searched." Vexed at this observation, I hastily proceeded to offer that sort of satisfaction here which I had so generously been prevented from giving at the second post, namely, to pull off my coat; and if that did not remove all suspicion, to undress myself completely. But General St. Cyr, who is not less distinguished for his conduct as a gentleman, than his ability as a commander, declared that my word was sufficient; and, in order to excuse what had passed, added that such a strict investigation was sometimes necessary, as prisoners, in consequence of the confusion into which they were thrown by the suddenness of their misfortune, could not always recollect what they had about them. Several questions were now put to me, which I answered as laconically as possible, that I might not be drawn into a disclosure of any information I possessed.

With pleasure, in the mean time, I ob-

served young Massena, the son of the celebrated marshal, among the general's aides-de-camp. A few hours before the last battle was fought, we met and had a friendly participation of a flask of wine, at the outposts. In this first interview, on such an occasion, it was natural that military events should form the subject of our conversation. Among other topics, the possibility of being taken prisoner was not omitted: finally we promised reciprocal aid, if such an event should occur, and exchanged addresses. This was scarcely done, when the trumpet sounded, each hastened to his post, and the sanguinary contest commenced. All these circumstances rushed suddenly on my recollection the moment I saw him. We embraced in the presence of the generals, who stared at us with astonishment, until the cause of this proceeding was explained.

General St. Cyr kindly permitted me to send an open letter to my commanding officer. He inquired where my father was, and

smiled when I said that he had still one foot in Russia, but that the other was raised in order that he might, in case of necessity, set himself down in England.—“Your father is right to take precautions, but our emperor is good,” was the general’s answer.—Then turning to Massena, he said: “You will take care that our prisoner is well lodged; and, above all, that he does not die of hunger.” For the last part of this recommendation I was very thankful, as many of the gentlemen, I thought, looked as if they had been on short allowance for some weeks; and in this conjecture I soon found I had not been deceived.

CHAPTER II.

My Halt in Polotzk.

WHILST we ranged through the Jesuits' convent, in which a cell had been allotted to me by the monks, Massena informed me that the Russian officers made prisoners in the last battle, had, a few days before, been transported to Wilna. This was very unwelcome news to me, as Major Switschin, my particular friend, was among the number taken. A captain; who was severely wounded, was the only one left behind; we immediately went to visit him, and he likewise proved to be an old acquaintance, whose joy on seeing me was indescribable. I would gladly have had, for my quarters, a share of the cell which he occupied; but the unpleasant smell arising from his wounds, prevented me from making such a proposal. I, however, promised to visit him as often as I could gain permission.

A monk now came to inform me that my cell was ready: it was a tolerably good one, situated on the third floor, and a half-starved soldier stood as sentinel before it. Massena here recommended me to the care of the monk, and departed. He had scarcely disappeared, when the Jesuit burst forth with the exclamation of the "*Cursed French!*" and began with great fluency to inform me how they had plundered the city, and particularly the fine cellar belonging to the convent; and that even the church had not been spared by them. The good monk must have seen but little of the world, when such occurrences surprised him.

It was now eight o'clock in the evening, and I had not tasted food during the whole day. I, therefore, broke the thread of his discourse, the first time he paused to take breath, in order to make an enquiry respecting the provisions of the convent. This good man, however, whom I would gladly have seen in the kitchen, but who would never

stir from the cellar, reminded me of the Russian proverb : *The full stomach seldom thinks of the empty one.* I, at length, found that there was no other remedy than to overwhelm him with words in my turn, and I thus obtained from him the consoling information that supper would be ready in half an hour, and that I might then set out to partake of it under the escort of my sentinel. He shortened this half hour by relating to me a number of standing jokes upon the French, which he generally ended by expressing a wish of sending them all to purgatory. At length the bell for supper sounded, and my companion and I, escorted by the sentinel, followed the ringing invitation through the spacious halls of the convent.

We entered a large saloon, decorated with sacred images, in which my eyes were gratified by the pleasing sight of covered tables on every side. The Jesuits, among whom there was a number of Germans, received me in a very friendly manner. After supper,

a circle was formed around me, from which each in his own language related his misfortunes, and seemed happy to pour forth his sorrows into a friendly bosom. I cheered them with the hope, that the Russians would shortly enter Polotzk, and with delighted countenances they wished me a good night's rest.

For the fulfilment of this wish, more was necessary than the mere desire to sleep. When alone in my cell I first felt my misfortune in its full extent. It is only in time of war that an officer of the general staff can hope for advancement in his profession; I was now deprived of this prospect!—My country overrun by a foreign enemy; myself totally destitute; separated from my friends; without any hope of a speedy return,—was it to be wondered that I tossed myself about on a sleepless bed?

In the morning Massena introduced several staff-officers to me, who, as his comrades, offered me consolation, though their real object

was to procure information from me. The conversation naturally turned on the last battle. As we had been defeated, I was the less able to justify the errors which had been committed; but I did not fail to remind them of the eighteen pieces of cannon which we had taken, and of the valour of our cavalry, who had bravely charged into the heart of the city. I likewise expressed my satisfaction that their cavalry had been employed for such a length of time in foraging on the other side of the Dwina, which had consequently occasioned their delay in coming up, and to which circumstance we in a great measure attributed our safety. They acknowledged this, and all exclaimed, that the general who commanded those troops had been arrested for his misconduct.

I was rather anxious to get rid of my guests, as I had letters to write; and was besides unwilling to enter too deeply into the military dispositions of our army. They, however, fell into a dispute concerning the particular day

on which they expected to enter Petersburg. Their boasting was intolerable; and I again mingled in the conversation, intending, if possible, to be more extravagant than they: this is the only way to stop a Frenchman's volubility of tongue. "You have forgotten, gentlemen," said I, "that the Crown Prince of Sweden is on our side; and has probably, ere this, landed at Koningsberg with 30,000 men." Should you possess any magazines, they will all be taken; and with regard to your new art of war, by which the whole burthen is thrown on the inhabitants, the Crown Prince, in order to avail himself of it, need only cut off your retreat." They laughed on hearing me mention the landing at Koningsberg, and I laughed at the entry into Petersburg. However, this did not serve to convince them: they began to talk of their projected visit to Moscow, and enquired of me whether a *diligence* could be procured between Moscow and Petersburg. I replied, that at present there was none,

but that when the Russians arrived in Paris, they would not fail to send a number of captured diligences to supply the deficiency. This answer offended them a little, and at intervals they all departed.

I then wrote to my father, to inform him that I was in good health, and in want of money; for, in such circumstances, one is permitted to write nothing more. I likewise wrote to my brother William, and gave both the letters to the chief of the staff to be forwarded: five days however elapsed, and no answer arrived; and I was finally obliged to set off without having the satisfaction of knowing that my friends were acquainted with my fate. During these five days my stomach met with a powerful protector in the chief of the Jesuits (I believe he is termed the general). I had obtained the friendship of this man a year before, when I was inspecting the convent, by making him a present of a few Indian coins, which I had procured during my voyage round the world.

They had been deposited in the cabinet of coins, and were now repaid to me with interest. I sat down to table twice every day with the monks, and this was an advantage which, in my circumstances, could not have been repaid by gold. It was impossible to extend this kindness, had they been at liberty so to do, to all prisoners; for, besides the general officers and officers of the staff, they had to maintain a number of hungry soldiers, who served to guard their cathedral, and the remains of their cellars. As they had to sustain this burthen for two months, I cannot conceive how they managed to satisfy all who visited the convent.

Moreover, I must not omit to mention, that they neglected no opportunity of assisting the Russians who had been wounded and made prisoners; their kindness was, indeed, exerted in secrecy, for they dared not show it openly. Still hundreds daily died of their wounds, and hundreds of hunger; and the length of time which the greater part of the

dead remained unburied, renders it surprising that the plague did not break out. It is worthy of remark, that when the Jesuits calculated how many had died in course of the day, they counted only the Russians; as for the French, having already consigned them to hell, they gave themselves no concern about them.

General St. Cyr was kind enough to invite me twice to his table. He appeared, at first, to consider me a sort of simpleton; for, although the peace with Turkey had been celebrated a few days before by numerous discharges of artillery, and information thereof had been communicated to the French, that they might not misunderstand the cause of the firing of the cannon, his excellency affected to be ignorant of this event, and said that the Turks had been reinforced by a strong French corps, which would greatly endanger our army on that side; and that a reinforcement of 10,000 men, destined for his own corps, which had arrived at Wilna, would

enable him immediately to march to Petersburg. He accompanied the last statement with a smile; and I doubt whether I should have been able to bridle my tongue, had not an excellent dish of roast meat banished all hostile reflections from my mind.

On one of these occasions, when dinner was nearly ended, five Russian dragoons, who had been taken prisoners, were brought in under the escort of ten peasants. They had been stationed in a village within the line of our advanced posts; and had, doubtless, been betrayed through placing too much confidence in the inhabitants; they were suddenly attacked with clubs and pitchforks, disarmed, and forced away. My blood boiled when I beheld them, and I was then convinced that my own misfortune was to be attributed solely to the peasant, who, instead of warning me of my danger, had betrayed me to the Uhlans. General St. Cyr affected to be much displeased with the conduct of the peasants, and desired them not to inter-

fere, in future, with the business of the soldiers. However, this was nothing but hypocrisy; for the peasants, as the Jesuits afterwards informed me, were handsomely rewarded; and I myself saw them, sometime after, regaled in the convent with bread and brandy; articles which were seldom given away, and never without payment.

When the table was cleared, all the company departed; I alone had the happiness to be invited to smoke a segar with the general. After much importunity I consented, and we smoked together very familiarly over a cup of coffee. It is well known, that a Frenchman cannot long converse without boasting of himself; and self-love, in this instance, furnished the subject. St. Cyr spoke of the love of order and justice, by which he was guided even in an enemy's territory, and particularly boasted of his merit in not having availed himself of the favourable dispositions of the peasantry; "for," continued he, "had we only proclaimed liberty, we should have

been received with open arms, and a general revolution must have ensued." I did not remind him how many proclamations of that sort had already gone forth, and had completely failed in their object; I merely took the liberty of asking the general, whether he knew the sentiments of the Russian peasantry; and said, that if he did not, I could assure him they were, upon the whole, very happy; adding, that it was hazardous to force people to accept even blessings which they did not wish for. They must then be happy indeed, was his answer; to which I made no denial.

Our conversation was now interrupted by the entrance of a powdered butler, who rushed in as if he had been the bearer of some important information, exclaiming, We have found them! we have found them! I supposed that he alluded to the seizure of some dangerous spies; but his joy was occasioned by nothing more than the discovery of a dozen bottles of wine, which had been con-

cealed by the poor grenadiers of the Pope, (as the Jesuits were jestingly styled,) and which the delicate scent of the butler had enabled him to detect. By this trifling circumstance I was, for a short time, innocently placed in a disagreeable situation. It was maliciously insinuated to the prior, who had reserved this wine for drinking at supper, that I had hinted its concealment to the French. Fortunately, he soon became reconciled to me, and was convinced that I could not possibly have known whether or not he had any wine in his possession. It was afterwards discovered, that a hungry soldier had, notwithstanding the guard, slipped into the church in search of bread. He was unable to find any, and was preparing to carry off some silver cups, when he perceived the precious wine. The poor wretch proposed sharing his booty with the butler; but the latter preferred gaining his master's favour, and for that purpose betrayed the soldier.

During my residence in Polotzk, I had frequent opportunities of conversing with General St. Cyr; and I must own that his humanity and his talents were such as to merit my highest respect. Massena informed me that Bonaparte disliked this general, because he was the descendant of an ancient and noble family. Had it not been on that account, he would have been made a marshal long ago, in consideration of his ability and services.

CHAPTER III.

Removal to Wilna.

I HAD received no answer to my letters, and on the sixth day I was ordered to hold myself in readiness for accompanying a convoy of prisoners which was shortly to depart for Wilna. Notwithstanding the friendship which the Jesuits, and even the French, professed towards me, not one of them yet seemed to have observed that I had but a single shirt in my possession, and that none of the cleanest. My tongue was indeed silent, but every movement of my body might have convinced them that I had to contend with an enemy which allowed me no rest, either day or night. I allude to vermin, to be annoyed by which is, to a man who has been decently brought up, doubly insupportable.

After I had taken leave of General St. Cyr,

(who promised to forward my letters to me in case they should arrive,) and had bid young Massena a hearty farewell, the Jesuit slipped a loaf into my knapsack, and my old monk whispered to me, for the last time, his phrase, *The cursed French!* The detachment of prisoners, to the commander of which, Lieutenant Pineda, I was delivered, consisted of sixty men, I was the only officer; twenty men and one drummer formed our escort. Lieutenant Pineda was a native of Holland, but strongly attached to the French; he, however, spoke their language miserably, was much distressed for provisions, and with respect to cloathing, worse off than myself. The Jesuits, at my solicitation, filled the empty flask which hung by his side. He took a hearty draught, counted the prisoners, and gave the command, To the left about! The drum beat, and I, the most miserable figure imaginable, marched off at the head of the prisoners. This retinue proceeded to the opposite side of the Dwina, where we halted to

purchase a little tobacco at a sutler's waggon. In the mean while I stood with my eyes turned towards my native country, imploring Heaven for strength to bear my misfortunes, and praying for my father, and all who were dear to me, whom I supposed myself destined never again to see. My eyes were bathed in tears. The lieutenant, who had left a wife behind him in his native country, was much moved. This melancholy scene formed a bond of friendship between us, which in the sequel was only once interrupted, and that through misconduct on his part.

We resumed our march, without beat of drum, or any rigid enforcement of authority on the part of the lieutenant, who treated us with kindness, only requiring that no one should separate from the party. We yet wanted three miles of the distance necessary to complete our day's march, and the heat was most insupportable. I was unaccustomed to long travelling on foot, and consequently suffered much from fatigue. We once stop-

ped to rest on a piece of rising ground, situated near a chapel, which was surrounded by trees; it had of course been plundered, and had frequently answered the purpose of a stable. We there stretched ourselves upon some filthy straw, and woe to him who after this had no change of linen, for every one unavoidably carried off an addition to all the evils of his last quartering. Pineda and I went into the pulpit, and devoured our bread with keen appetites. The poor hungry soldiers, who had lain down in the chapel, turned with longing eyes towards the pulpit. "Do you see your men?" said I to the lieutenant, pointing to them.—"I see them," answered he, "but cannot assist them." It will be asked how we existed. Great God! we devoured every thing that came in our way. Potatoe fields and gardens of all descriptions were industriously ransacked, and we thought ourselves happy when we found a single potatoe or a cabbage leaf, which we threw into the common cooking-pan, and soup made of these

materials formed our only support. In this manner we subsisted eight days.

The drum beat for our departure. We proceeded sorrowfully onwards, and beheld on every side houses levelled with the ground, trees cut down, and roads destroyed. But if our eyes were shocked by this spectacle, our olfactory organs had to encounter a more offensive salutation; for the dead bodies, both of men and horses, which we fell in with at every short distance, so infected the air, that we were frequently compelled to go a hundred paces out of our way to avoid them. The half-clothed prisoners, who had before employed their hands in holding together the rags which hung about their bodies, now felt inclined to hold their noses also; and thus there frequently arose a combat between the feelings of shame and disgust, in which the latter remained in most cases victorious.

Towards evening we perceived, on the border of a lake, a large house, the roof of which was still remaining; and our conductor

surprised us with the welcome announcement, that we were now near our object. Oppressed with hunger and fatigue, I threw myself upon the steps which led to the door; and, according to Pineda's assurance, my countenance displayed a most melancholy expression. The poor prisoners were marched into the court-yard, and lodged in an out building, which in better times had given shelter to cows. The prudent lieutenant caused every hole to be blocked, and surrounded the stable with sentinels. When the sergeant reported that all was arranged, he received, to my great astonishment, an order to kill two oxen, and to distribute a pound of bread, and a glass of brandy, to each man. "How!" exclaimed I doubtfully, and with a hearty wish to be contradicted, "do you think there is any thing besides grass and water to be found in this place?"—"No," answered Pineda, with much coolness; "this order is merely a matter of form, because the blank columns in the marching billet, under the head

Supplies, must be filled up." In this manner we had long to contend with fate, and to live upon form.

The evening was fine, and I felt inclined to remain on the steps; Pineda, however, entered, with the design of searching the house; and I soon heard to my astonishment the sound of voices within it. Many proprietors had still thought it prudent, on account of the numerous bands of robbers by which the roads were infested, to remain in their own houses; they contrived to conceal themselves, but could observe through small apertures all that was passing without doors. When approached by a few persons, and they thought themselves sufficiently strong to resist, they rushed out to repel the visitors; but if the houses were entered by numerous parties, they never stirred from their hiding-places, unless discovered, when they were obliged, with a good or ill grace, to supply the demands of their unwelcome guests. I now saw an old man, his wife, his son, and three young women, his

daughters, issue unexpectedly from the ruins: they were followed by a French officer of the Horse Chasseurs: he appeared to have been wounded; on one foot he wore a boot, and a shoe on the other; a great bear-skin cap covered his head. He informed us that he was a baron, a native of Brussels; that he had fought with honour for his country; and, though wounded, still sought to add to the merit of his services, by doing the duty of safeguard to this worthy family.

“Knight of the rueful countenance!” exclaimed Pineda, “You a safeguard! Why then do you hide yourself in the cellar? But no matter for that.—What can you give us to eat?” The poor people turned towards each other with enquiring looks. “There lies a Russian prisoner,” continued Pineda.

Never shall I forget the sympathy which the poor family displayed on hearing these last words. The old man advanced towards me, his eyes filled with tears, and silently pressed my hand, whilst he pointed to his

starving and ragged family. The mother then addressed me: "You," said she, "are the first Russian we have beheld, since our country was plundered by those who promised us freedom; this occasions our emotion. We lived under your emperor for twenty happy years, and to him we owe all that we possess. We have but little to offer you, but to that little you are welcome."

One of the daughters brought a piece of bread, which she presented to me with down-cast eyes. A sensation of inexpressible pain overcame me; I could not take the bread, but threw myself on the steps, and burst into tears. The old man then approached me, and addressing himself to me in a whisper, said: "Do not hesitate to accept the little gift. We have still some bread and potatoes remaining, though we are indeed very sparing of them, as we know not how long our dreadful situation may last; only grant us the satisfaction of at least not seeing you depart hungry from our house." The family had in

the mean while been entertaining the lieutenant with an account of their poverty; and it was easy to guess, from the length of his countenance, that there remained no hope for him in the way of eating.

At last the old man suddenly said, in good French: "Children, our guests seem to be very worthy people; we will, therefore, trusting to Heaven for the future, freely share our scanty morsels with them." Pineda smiled; the *chasseur* leaped about, in spite of his wounds; and one of the young women, who seemed to have waited only for this hint, hastened to the cellar. She returned with some boiled potatoes and stale bread. We seated ourselves round the hearth, and made a cheerful meal; during which we fraternally shared the remains of our brandy, which I seasoned to the family by the hope that Polotzk would shortly be in the hands of the Russians. We did not retire to rest until pretty late in the evening.

As I was complaining the next day of se-

vere pain in my feet, and doubting whether I should be able to proceed farther, the cheerful Frenchman surprised me by the friendly offer of the *cognac* which he said he had in his possession. I naturally supposed he meant Cogniac brandy, which would indeed have been a very welcome offer; but he alluded to a kind of a Polish horse (named *cogna* in Polish), which in my situation was far more acceptable. "We are unable to keep any horses here," said he, "for they are immediately seized by the passing detachments; I have therefore left mine in the wood, guarded by two chasseurs, who can protect it should any single robbers attempt to carry it off."

Pineda and I were transported. This officer, whose name I have forgotten, was our generous benefactor; for which I now publicly offer him my sincere thanks.

The horse was brought; and, notwithstanding the prominent marking of his ribs, I thought him the finest I had ever beheld.

When we had bid the family a kind adieu, I threw myself on his lean back, and, at a slow pace, preceded the column, for pacing was the only motion which this Cogna was able to perform. The poor starving Russians uttered grievous complaints during the march, and entreated that I would obtain permission for them to enter the villages near which we passed, to solicit food. It, however, appeared to me very improbable that this permission would be granted, owing to the slender escort by which we were accompanied; for it was evident, that very few would have returned, when they found themselves unguarded. I, therefore, advised them to march as widely as possible; and, when we happened to pass through woods and thick bushes, to make their escape singly. They followed this advice so punctually, that ten prisoners were wanting that very evening.

We continued our journey in the same manner. Devastation and distress our daily prospect, and hunger our constant compa-

nion, the number of the prisoners diminished every day. Pineda himself was well convinced that severity could be of no avail; for even the strongest were so overcome by fatigue, that they stretched themselves on the ground, and were unable to proceed. He, however, in one instance, made use of a cruel experiment for ascertaining whether this fatigue were real or dissembled. Early one morning, when the drum beat for the march, one of the prisoners dropped down, and declared himself unable to proceed. Pineda, in a transport of rage, struck him several blows with a stick, to force him to rise; when this method failed, he resorted to kicking; and finding that the poor wretch still remained stretched upon the ground, he forced a musket from one of the soldiers, and pointed it towards him. I seized him by the arm, and represented to him the weak state of the poor prisoner; while the unhappy man raised his eyes towards Heaven with a sigh, and appeared anxiously to wish for death. Pineda

was not hard-hearted. As he returned the musket to the soldier, I observed a tear drop from his eye. He did not leave the prisoner behind without giving him some money. This was the last experiment of the kind which he made during the journey; and he requested me to bear testimony, on our arrival at Wilna, that he had done his utmost to procure provisions, and that all his efforts had proved unsuccessful.

Our unfortunate situation was in some degree amended, when on the seventh day we found, in the little town of Glubockor, a magazine, from which the charitable commandant supplied us, during four days, with bread and meat. The prisoners were here quartered in an old church, where they returned thanks to Heaven for being relieved from the terrible hunger they had endured.

The danger of travelling in this part of the country, induced many persons to wait in some place of security for the arrival of a detachment, in order to join it, and form a

caravan, as is customary in crossing the deserts of Africa. In this way we received the accession of a party, consisting of two severely wounded French officers, seated in a waggon drawn by two horses; and a staff-surgeon, and a young Frenchwoman, named *Victoire*, dressed in male attire, on horse-back.

After we had all purchased fine words and bad provisions, at a dear rate, from a French sutler, who styled himself a *restaurateur*, Pineda ordered the old drum to beat, and our caravan took its departure in marching order. The surgeon was a merry fellow, who wished both Bonaparte, and his expedition to Russia, at the devil; he was proceeding homeward, as he said it was not at all to his fancy to die of starvation at such a distance from his native land. He had visited Spain, and spoke in high terms of the war in that country, where, he said, he was constantly surrounded by friends, found plenty of provisions, good wine, pretty women, and agree-

able weather. He was, likewise, very well pleased with Germany; and never ceased boasting of the part he had acted there; for, he said, he kept company with all who pleased him, took whatever he liked, but sometimes generously left with his host what he could not conveniently carry away. “Even my *Victoire*,” added he, “who has sent several chests filled with clothes and bed-linen to her mother, has also frequently given away what she could not make use of; and, like myself, has often drawn tears of sympathy from the eyes of the good Germans.”

This sort of conversation continued until we reached the place destined to be our night's lodging. It was a chateau (for so the French styled every country house) which had evidently belonged to some rich Pole. We could yet perceive the remains of silk curtains and elegant furniture; and a number of family portraits, habited in the Polish costume, and decorated with orders, which hung over the wrecks of a piano-forte, displayed a

most melancholy spectacle. We brought in the wounded to rest, and hastened to the garden, which though stripped of its fruit, still contained a potatoe bed, from which we fortunately gathered some hats-full of that root; we likewise found a few onions, and hastened joyfully to the fire, where *Victoire* displayed her skill in cookery, by preparing a dish which she termed, *soupe à l'oignon et aux pommes de terre*.

Onion soup appears to be a favourite dish of the French, as they often long for it when they have something better before them: nothing but hunger could have forced me to swallow their warm water with a few wretched onions swimming about in it. This was the excellent mess on which *Victoire* exerted all her skill, and for which she reaped exclusively all the gratitude. It may seem extraordinary, but it is not the less true, that we seldom walked even in the most inviting parts of the country, as we did not find it convenient to promote too quick a digestion.

This day, however, we took a tour through the beautiful park, as we still had a full store of potatoes in reserve. The garden exhibited proofs of the taste, as well as of the wealth of its owner. On a piece of rising ground there was a ruin which resembled an ancient temple, around the mouldering walls of which floated the wild tones of an Æolian lyre, extremely well placed for producing that effect. As we were with a snail's pace approaching this ruin, we came suddenly upon a mausoleum of white marble, on which was this melancholy inscription :

“TO A NEVER-TO-BE-FORGOTTEN WIFE, BY
A LOVING HUSBAND, WHO, AT THE
REQUEST OF THE DEPARTED, *STILL
CONSENTS TO LIVE, THAT THEIR ONLY
CHILD MAY NOT BE LEFT PARENTLESS.”

A neighbouring mossy bank seemed to have been the favourite love-seat of those whose affection this monument records. Be-

low was a little garden, evidently intended for the amusement of a child, flowers gathered in which had probably often been scattered over the grave of the mother. I esteemed her doubly blessed in not having lived to see the misery of her desolated country; and I sincerely prayed that he whom she had left behind, might soon be enabled to return and revisit, with his child, the sacred spot where all that he loved reposes. This estate is situated half way between Polotzk and Wilna. I left the park in a melancholy mood, and threw myself on my bed of straw.

The nearer we approached to Wilna, the better inhabited we found the estates, whose proprietors had obtained safeguards from the governor of Wilna, and were besides protected among their ruins by Polish *gens-d'armes*. They could, however, afford but little to the numerous detachments which passed that way; for, in fact, they had very little left to themselves. Contests often arose, first with the proprietors, and next with their

guards, who exhibited their written orders, strictly requiring them to repress all acts of violence. However, necessity knows no law. When we were the strongest, we took whatever we could lay our hands on, and the guards could then do nothing but fulminate their threat, "to inform the Prince of Neufchatel." Pineda used to answer, "You may inform whom you like, but you shall not know my name; and what care I, though the prince have given you orders. Do you think I am come back from Russia to be starved?"

I have now to mention an occurrence which, for the first time, made me sensible of the doubly unfortunate situation of a poor prisoner who falls into the hands of a rude conductor. One Sunday evening, while we were still two days march from Wilna, we directed our steps, as usual, towards a place which appeared to be the residence of human beings. We found, however, a strong safeguard here, and also a number of people in the house. We, therefore, could not hope

to succeed in obtaining a forced hospitality, though we had eaten almost nothing for three days, and were all greatly fatigued. I seated myself, according to my custom, at the door; and envied the swallows that flew about, and freely gathered the food which nature had provided for them.

Pineda and the surgeon made loud demands on our host for provisions, which they insisted he should give at least for the wounded; but he protested that he had not enough to appease the cravings of his wife and children. Our party, at first, treated him courteously, and he was addressed with the title of Baron, which at last gave place to the most abusive epithets, and the safeguard soon showed themselves ready to protect their charge. In the midst of the bustle, the unfortunate owner of the house said, "Had you not so abused the hospitality which was shown you—had you not plundered every thing, and let the wine run waste from the casks, every one passing this way might still

have had a morsel of bread, and a drop of wine. But now I am quite ruined, and am not able to help you."

I was silent during the whole of this scene; indeed what right had I to interfere in the business? Pineda, however, came to me, and roughly asked me why I did not assist him in bringing the rascal of a Pole to reason. I told him very coolly my mind, and he appeared extremely dissatisfied. Our dialogue took place in the parlour, which he paced up and down with rapid strides. I returned to my place at the door, having nothing to hope for, unless some good fairy should take pity on my hunger.—And, lo! one really did appear, in the shape of our host's daughter, a child about ten years old. She looked cautiously about on every side, then kindly approaching me, asked me to come in and take a share of a frugal supper: I thanked the little angel with a sigh; for I could not easily reconcile myself to the idea of accepting the offer alone, when all the rest of the party,

even the wounded, were starving. The master of the house, however, soon came himself, and began to make the same proposal, but seeing Pineda passing behind us, in a situation in which what passed might be observed, he pointed with his hand to a neighbouring church, as if our conversation had been about it; he afterwards took an opportunity of repeating his invitation. I explained the reasons which made me unwilling to accept it, and begged him to give us all something, if it should be but bread. He assured me most earnestly that he was able only to give something to one; he observed also, that as I was a prisoner, I could not help myself so well as the others; and he thought, therefore, that I ought to have no delicacy in separating from them. I was very well satisfied with the justice of his remark, but still declined to accept his offer, unless on the condition of communicating it to Pineda. This at first did not seem agreeable to my good landlord, but, after reflecting for a moment, he said I might do so.

I then went to Pineda, and told him my good fortune.

“Do as you like,” was his answer. It was not necessary for him to say so twice. I made but one step to the apartment where the family were assembled; the mistress of the house, surrounded by four children, received me with the greatest frankness, and shared her little meal with me in the kindest manner: every thing appeared, however, so scanty, that I could venture to silence only half the cravings of my appetite; but a glass of brandy, with which the repast terminated, invigorated and enlivened me.

As I was returning to my old place at the door, Pineda came to me, and said, “Where have you been?”—“You know I told you that the master of the house invited me to supper.”—“O! indeed it was very prudent in you to go and gorge yourself while we are all dying of hunger.”—“Why should you be displeased that I was particularly favoured? You would not have been a bit the better off

had I starved myself to humour you. The poor man, much as I solicited him to give something to us all, could only spare a scanty meal for one. It was only after repeated invitations, and with your consent, that I went with him;—that I think is all that could be expected of a hungry stomach.” — “ Indeed! how careful of us! how delicate!—I can tell you, however, though I do not understand Polish, that I took good notice of your conversation with our host when he asked you to supper. You told your story to me it is true, but that was only because you knew I had my eyes on you; in a word, he and all the Poles, and you along with them, are nothing but a parcel of scoundrels!” — “ You would not dare to say that if I had a sword by my side.” — “ What? dare?—Don’t you know I may blow your brains out if I like, without being accountable to any body?” — “ That I neither know nor believe; on the contrary, were you fool enough to do so, I am certain you know you would

have to answer for it most seriously.”—
 “What do you fancy yourself? A fine notion, indeed! to suppose that any fuss would be made about shooting such a ——— as you!” (using that well-known gross word of reproach which is common among the French.) —“As I have no sword, your insults only disgrace yourself; I may, however, be at last irritated by you, and then the best stone I can find shall fly at your head.”

Pineda drew his sword and ran at me; but seeing that I stood still to receive him, he called the guard, ordered me to be carried into the stable, and again threatened to shoot me.

I passed a very dull night in the stable, where I was guarded by six men. I had no apprehension on account of his threat to shoot me, but I considered that he might lodge a complaint against me when we reached Wilna, and that, on account of my name, I might there meet with partial judges. I was brought out of my prison at day-break.

Our host and his wife stood at the window, viewing me with compassion; their looks seemed to say—"Ah! we are the innocent cause of his misfortune!" The little girl slipped round about my guard, and appeared to wish to hand me something, but could not get near enough: when we proposed to march off, she showed strong marks of vexation, and the old folks made signs to me to look to the child, but it was all in vain; I could not approach her. I now took farewell of them, by making a motion with my hand, which I laid on my heart, to express my gratitude. I hope they understood me. The little girl continued to run about the court-yard after us, and, finally, as we marched on, she stopped at the gate, and called out "adieu" to me.

During the whole of this time, Pineda never looked at me, and did not say a single word to any one, except what related to the duty of the detachment. He had taken the horse to himself, and rode forward seemingly very thoughtful. After marching somewhat

more than an hour, we halted to take the advantage of a rest in a shady place. He then came to me and said, "It is now your turn to ride, and as I am not fatigued, we will go forward together." Being then freed from my guard, I got up, and mounted the horse, and he walked alongside of me. It was evident that he regretted the manner in which he had behaved to me on the day before. After we had got forward about a quarter of a mile, he, after a struggle with himself, began to talk about his passionate temper, which often led him into foolish acts, and concluded with requesting that I would forget what had passed. "It has so vexed me," said he, "that I have not slept the whole night: but in my excuse I must say, that while you were at supper, the surgeon and the wounded officers did every thing they could to irritate me against you, and I am sincerely sorry for having yielded to their instigations."

I leaped from the horse, and embraced him. In reciprocal confessions we laid open our

feelings to each other, disclosed what had given most pain to each, and amidst tears of reconciliation we became better friends than ever.—I could not but be inclined to forgive him, as I well knew, that a rashness which severe hunger may provoke in one, while another is satisfying his appetite, is of all offences the most pardonable: it was, indeed, all the supper that Pineda had got.

Heaven, however, appeared now more favourable to us, for a poor Jew, with a pig and a cask of brandy, soon fell into our hands, or to speak more properly into our claws. The most rigid commander would have found it impossible, on this occasion, to maintain discipline. The Jew called out, *Robbery! Robbery!* but the treasure was ours, and was destined for us by fate; for the Jew, who had come from a town lying on one side of the highway, was just crossing the road as our starving gang fell in with him. The law of nature was then the only authority that could be appealed to. Pineda

was, however, so honourable as to let the poor wretch keep his horse and cart, which was more than most would have done in the same situation.

The booty was divided as fairly as possible. A fire was lighted, and each held his share impatiently over it, and finally swallowed it half raw. The brandy soon warmed all hearts, and there never was a more jovial march. The soldiers of the escort, and the prisoners, walked along arm in arm, singing. It is probable they imitated Pineda and me in that respect, for we walked, or rather tumbled along, arm in arm, saying all the way the most friendly things to each other. The surgeon and the wounded officers, who, by being as usual a great way in advance of us, got none of the booty, were laughed at by our party; and had besides to endure the still more mortifying joke of finding almost nothing to eat at the place where we took up our quarters for the night.

CHAPTER IV.

Halt in Wilna.

ON the fourteenth day after our departure from Polotzk, we arrived, about five in the morning, at the suburb of Wilna: here we halted.. The soldiers brushed themselves up as well as they could, and Pineda, on his part, put on a new uniform. With respect to myself, I had the day before washed my only shirt, and had slept without it during the night; my boots were torn in pieces, and the last fragment of a stocking which I possessed I had long since thrown away. I had now only to console myself with the reflection, that the ancient Roman heroes also appeared in processions with naked feet.

The prisoners were drawn up in rank and file. There were now only twenty-four, and of course more than thirty were missing.

Pineda reminded me to testify for him, that the detachment had been left entirely without provisions, and that, notwithstanding we had marched ninety wersts in fourteen days. I repeated my pledge, and marched at the head of the prisoners. The people who crowded round us must have supposed that we were a very daring set, as we were scarcely more numerous than our escort.

A painful feeling must be experienced in such an exhibition. At best we could only move with our eyes almost always cast on the ground, while exposed to the jeers of the rabble, and even to acts of rudeness on the part of many persons who wore a respectable appearance ; still, however, we were consoled by the commiserating looks of some. The number of the last description of persons was, however, very small ; and when we were drawn up in the square in front of the Town-House, where we had to wait an hour for Pineda, who was making his report, thousands crowded to look at us ; and though

treated by many with derision, not one came to offer the poor starving wretches a morsel of bread. How different did we find it in Germany! Some of the Poles were so shamelessly offensive, that our guards were obliged to drive them back with the butt ends of their muskets. But even the principal Poles would submit to any treatment from a French soldier.

Several traits of inveterate national hatred, which the Poles during this trying hour displayed, came under my observation. One has fixed itself in my memory, which, though perhaps the most trifling, was rendered remarkable, by its proceeding from an officer, a class of men in Poland, who are accustomed to boast of their superior education. As one was commiserating me on account of the distressed state of my feet, another called out to him, "What! do you pity a Russian? Do you believe he ever wore better boots in his life?"—"Bravo!" exclaimed the mob,

and the heartless witling seemed proud of his vulgarity.

Pineda came at last ; and the honest fellow had, through repeated solicitations, obtained leave from the commandant for me to live in the same quarters with him. This was a great favour, as it saved me from being confined in the church, where I must, like others, have fed on bread and water, and slept on dirty straw.

Our quarters were in an obscure street, where, however, an old motherly landlady received us very kindly and supplied us abundantly, upon being informed that the Russians had been every where beaten. She gave, however, a less friendly reception to her husband ; with whom, on his arriving in a drunken state soon after us, she engaged in a war of fisty-cuffs, which was sustained with great disadvantage on his part, until, through our mediation, a peace was concluded.

Neither the commandant, General Jomini,

nor the governor, Count Hagendorp, desired to see me (as Pineda had passed his word for me); and I enjoyed the perfect freedom of the town. At first, I was almost always accompanied by Pineda; afterwards I walked about alone, as Pineda had found companions, by whom my presence was perhaps thought superfluous. Our first meeting for the day was often at bed-time.

My greatest want was now supplied by a generous stranger, a M. Anderson, who himself did not appear to possess much superfluity. He saw me passing in the street, and observing the distressed state of my dress, sought out my quarters, and with much delicacy offered me a couple of shirts. He afterwards introduced me to his wife, and I was invited to visit them in the evenings.

On the third day of my residence in Wilna, the news of the battle of Moschaisk arrived, very much exaggerated. The Russian army was completely destroyed. The loss was said to be 50,000 killed, 90,000 prisoners, includ-

ing 20 generals, and 2000 inferior officers, with 150 pieces of cannon. A great illumination was ordered, fellows who had got drunk in celebrating the victory lay about the streets, and the Poles carried their heads very high. The Jews alone distinguished themselves for their fidelity; they held a fast of ten days, prayed for the Russians, and got cudgelled by the Poles. A brilliant transparency of a French eagle was exhibited in the illumination, but when the annihilated Russian army entered Wilna victoriously in the December following, another head was with a praiseworthy economy given to the eagle, which was lighted up again for the Russians. The addition was, however, obvious; and the Jews, now triumphing in their turn, having pointed it out to the Russians, the transparency was levelled by a shower of stones.

The battle of Moschaïsk was also celebrated in the theatre by a new piece. I went to see it, wrapped up in a great coat, which I

got from M. Anderson. It was called, "*The Scholars of Crogi*" (a town in Lithuania). From this town fifty Cossacks are supposed to have removed a magazine, in order to convey it to the Dwina. They are scarce gone when the scholars, sixty in number, and the oldest not more than fifteen, resolve to recover the magazine from the Cossacks. In furtherance of this determination a number of boys appeared on the stage, led by a formal pedant of a school-master, who, in order to inflame them, delivered a long harangue on the history of the great Goliath, and the little king David. All armed themselves with old pistols, broken muskets, and cudgels. Their mothers came and shed tears over them; the pedagogue waved a little flag, and all cried out, "VICTORY, OR DEATH!" The children knelt, and were blessed by their mothers; after which a wretched trumpet sounded in the orchestra, and they marched off crying, "LIBERTY AND POLAND FOR EVER!" What a pity that no young female of Crogi joined

the groupe, like another Maid of Orleans, to help the miracle of sixty school boys putting fifty Cossacks to flight, and returning safe and sound after their victory. In the last act a Russian civil officer, who had lost his way, is dragged on the stage and grossly insulted, when he calls for quarter. At last, on his resenting the ill usage he receives, he is reproved by the little children, who are returning from the battle. It was then said by one of the characters, "This is the way in which the Poles conquer Russian heroes." The whole pit then roared out "*Bravo!*" and the old trumpet did its duty. In conclusion, the oldest scholar, with a paper helmet on his head, sung a bravura air. From respect to the Poles, I will not describe the vulgar abuse which they this evening allowed to be uttered against the Russians. On our way home, Anderson related to me many other instances of this sort of Polish patriotism.

By way of indemnification for all the dis-

agreeable feelings I had endured, I found that night, upon my table, a letter in a female hand, in which a Madame S. invited me to visit her, as she wished to entrust a commission to my care. In order that the nature of this little adventure may be understood, I must relate the circumstances which had led to it.

When the enemy passed the Memel, and the Emperor Alexander left Wilna, the best horses, both Polish and Russian, were put in requisition, to remove the chanceries, treasury-chests, &c., with all possible expedition. In consequence of this, several officers' ladies had the misfortune to be deprived of their horses, and were obliged to remain in Wilna; they were besides often driven out of their lodgings, when they were not able to pay for them at the most extravagant rates to which the rents were raised.

The husband of Madame S— was governor of Disna, and was on an official tour when the French unexpectedly took posses-

sion of Wilna. His lady fell of course into the enemy's power, and suffered the greatest distress.

My first business next morning was to visit this lady; but instead of one lady I found six, and four young children, all in one little apartment. We began immediately, though perfect strangers, to open our hearts to each other. The apologies of Madame S—— for having invited me I considered very superfluous, and I willingly offered her all the services a poor prisoner could perform. The ladies were much moved; they could not restrain their feelings on seeing and conversing with a countryman, in the circumstances in which they were placed. They told me, that they could not appear in the streets without being exposed to the insults of the Poles. They had often wished to visit the place where the Russian prisoners were confined, and give them all the little assistance in their power, but they durst not venture for fear of being ill-treated by the sentinels or the populace.

Having learned that I had liberty to walk freely about the town, they held an extraordinary council, at which it was resolved to write to me. One of the ladies, dressed as a peasant, carried the letter to my lodgings. Their villanous landlord not only charged them out of all bounds for their little apartment, but even went so far as to extort money, under the pretence of protecting them from insults, which he provoked by rendering them objects of suspicion and enmity to all the French who were quartered in his house. Often did they tremble while some grenadier threatened to break open their door. Fortunately Madame S—— spoke good French; and partly by her politeness, and partly by threats, repressed these attacks. To the honour of the French, I must, however, mention, that many of them, being convinced of the landlord's knavery, not only severely reproached him for his inhumanity, but rewarded him with a sound drubbing; but for this the wretch never failed to take vengeance

on the poor women by redoubling his extortions and vexations. The maid of the house, on her part, made them pay dearly for every little service on which they had occasion to employ her, and imitated her master in insulting them.

They had not known each other before they met in Wilna, but participation in misfortune quickly begets friendship. One of them had two sick children; it was long before any medical assistance could be procured for them; at last they were visited by an ignorant apothecary, who at first appeared to be a very disinterested man; it was, however, soon discovered that he expected his reward from Madame S——, but when he apprehended that the hopes he had formed of payment from her were likely to be disappointed, he threw aside the mask of disinterestedness. The mother did not apply to her unfortunate countrywomen for assistance, as she was aware of their distress; but the case having come to their knowledge, it induced them to unite

their little stores, and, for the sake of economy, to live together. Madame S——, who was elected treasurer of the society, regulated the expenditure, of which she kept an account; but, as their stock received no addition, no management could prevent its daily diminution. They were at last reduced to so lamentable a state, that upon reckoning what the landlord, at an average, extorted from them daily for rent, in addition to their other expences, they found that they had scarce money enough to last them for a week longer. Their first wish was for cheaper lodgings; but how were these to be obtained, as they did not dare to walk about the streets? In this difficulty they resolved to apply to me. .

I cheerfully undertook the task. As I proceeded from house to house, I became the object of much curiosity, and many seemed to consider me as a mendicant; at that I felt in no way humiliated, and, without regarding the looks of pity which were cast

upon me, I continued to prosecute my labour, but without success; many pretended that they could not accommodate the Russian ladies, others plainly said they would not.

Finding so much difficulty, the thought suddenly struck me of going to the commandant, stating to him the distress of Madame S——, representing myself as her kinsman, the better to account for my interference, and soliciting free quarters for her. I immediately proceeded to execute my plan.

The celebrated Jomini received me with great civility, but declared that he could do nothing in the business without the concurrence of the governor. On my taking leave, he observed, with a smile, that I was very fortunate in having found so amiable a female relative to sweeten the hours of my captivity. I let his unmerited insinuation pass without attempting to reply, for I was anxious only to see Count Hogendorp, to whom I hastened without delay.

The governor, I found, was closely engaged

in business, and I was told I must wait two hours before I could see him. I employed that time in endeavouring to ingratiate myself with his aides-de-camp; and, the better to gain them to my purpose, expatiated on the gallantry of the French to the fair sex. By flattering a Frenchman's vanity any thing may be obtained from him. They all agreed that the ladies ought to be protected; and, in order that they might wait on them, and personally offer their services, asked their address, which I gave.

At last I was admitted, and very kindly received. Count Hogendorp made enquiries after my father, and spoke highly of his talents; but, with respect to my request, he said he was extremely sorry he could not grant it, as the town was so crowded with troops. In vain did I, with all the eloquence I was master of, endeavour to interest his feelings in favour of the ladies, by painting in the strongest colours their distress. Nothing

could be done ;—“ *Cela ne se peut pas,*” was his answer to every solicitation. He turned the conversation, as soon as possible, to the battle of Moschaisk, and assured me that Napoleon must now be in Moscow, and that Count Wittgenstein could not maintain himself upon the Dwina. Such discourse, after his decided refusal, doubly vexed me, and I answered dryly—“ Count Wittgenstein has orders to hold his position on the Dwina, and to fight Oudinot.” He smiled, and I took my leave.

Disheartened at the result of this interview, I sought consolation from honest Anderson; but he was unable to assist me in my object, for he was closely watched by the Poles, because he had been formerly employed in the forest service by the Russians, and was a German: he therefore durst not publicly take any part in an affair of this kind. With much real sorrow for my failure, mixed with not a little wounded pride, I returned to the ladies,

who, though they apprehended such a result, were, notwithstanding, evidently much afflicted on hearing it announced.

It occurred to me, that the personal application of a sensible and engaging woman might succeed in such a case as this, though a man could do nothing. Madame S—— was young, beautiful, accomplished, and prudent; I therefore proposed that she should go with me to the governor, and repeat herself the request I had made. It cost much persuasion to prevail on her to consent; but at last she resolved to venture, another of the ladies having agreed to accompany her. The toilette was the next consideration; but what was to be done? There was but one apartment, and I was present. Necessity is the mother of invention:—a curtain was speedily formed, which cut off a corner of the room, and completely excluded every profane eye from the sight of what was passing behind it. While Madame S—— and she who was to accompany her were making their

preparations on one side of the curtain, I conversed on the other with the four remaining women.

At last the curtain was drawn, and the ladies stood before me, simply but elegantly attired. My threadbare uniform did not well correspond with their dress, but Madame S—— had the goodness to assure me, that she would rather support herself on my arm than on that of the first man in Wilna. Accordingly I walked along proudly by her side, and when I heard persons who passed sometimes say, “How handsome!—What an air!” I strutted as if it had been myself that was meant.

Madame S—— trembled when she approached the governor’s door, and when she reached it, lost all courage. She however supported herself with the thought that it was not merely on her own account she had undertaken this task, but that she had to solicit relief for unfortunate mothers and helpless children. Scarcely had we entered the

anti-room, when the aides-de-camp surrounded us, and strove who should be first in offering their services to the lady: one intimated that she might be introduced without being announced, another tendered her his arm to conduct her. She turned pale, and was so agitated that I feared she would faint. She declared, with great earnestness, that she would not appear before the governor, unless I and the other lady were admitted along with her; if this favour could not be obtained, she begged that I would return with her. The dignity with which she spoke, the delicate glow which her returning colour diffused over her countenance, and the elegant French in which she expressed herself, operated powerfully on all who were present: one of the aides-de-camp eagerly hastened to hand her a chair, and another ran to announce us to the governor.

After waiting about a quarter of an hour longer, during which none of us spoke a

word, we were introduced. The count received the ladies very courteously, but repeated what he had already said to me. Madame S——, unused to solicit favours, did not further urge her application, and while she seemed desirous to go, a tear rolled down her cheek. An old venerable-looking officer, who stood near the fire-place, and who hitherto had not interfered, now addressed the count, and said,—“The unfortunate situation of these ladies calls for our consideration. It is true the town is already over-crowded, and you cannot give them quarters as Russians, but the ladies may be passed for *vivandieres* (market-women employed in supplying the French army). Come, count, you have only to shut your eyes on this business, and, if the ladies please, we can easily manage the business.”

The governor was well pleased with the suggestion, directed the old gentleman to take the necessary steps for executing his

plan, and told the ladies to come freely to his quarters, if in future they should have any occasion to apply to him.

The worthy chief of the general staff had the goodness to accompany us to the billeting-office, where the ladies, on being inscribed as *vivandieres*, overwhelmed their benefactor with thanks. An indescribable jubilee, in which even the sick children fully participated, took place, when we announced the joyful news in the old lodgings; the whole merit of the success was repeatedly ascribed to me; but, whenever that was mentioned, I did not fail to bring to recollection the tears which a pair of fine eyes had shed, and which I was convinced had worked the miracle. For my reward I received from each of the ladies a kiss. I must frankly confess, that I wished Madame S—— to be, on this occasion, the representative of the whole party, and to discharge the debt for each.

In the evening we set out to find the quarters which had been assigned to the ladies,

and which lay at a considerable distance. Our way thither was well lighted, by the illuminations which Polish patriotism still persevered in displaying, in celebration of the victory, though it was now the third day of the rejoicings. Among the transparencies, there was one remarkable for its brilliancy and design, the description of which requires some previous explanation. It was the general belief of the Poles, that Napoleon was indebted for his victory solely to their advanced guard: of this they boasted, without reflecting that he had only made that brave corps his first sacrifice: on this idea, however, was formed the transparency to which I have alluded. It was placed in the balcony of a Polish prince, and represented the battle of Moschaisk. In the fore-ground was a part of the town, through the gates of which the Poles were penetrating, while the French were resting on their arms in the back-ground. Above the transparency were the words, BY THE HELP OF GOD AND NAPOLEON; and below,

WE BEAT THE RUSSIANS. After passing many sights of the same sort, though not quite so splendid, we at last reached the house which the number in our billet indicated. There we found a Jew with a long beard, who at first almost stunned us with his lamentations, but who suddenly assumed a friendly air, when he heard that fate had sent some unfortunate Russians to him.—“I will cheerfully share all I have,” he exclaimed, “with the subjects of the good Emperor Alexander.”

It is undoubtedly certain, that the Jews regarded in the most favourable light both the Russians and their beloved Ruler. These sentiments were not in the slightest degree concealed, though they evidently exposed the Jews to ill treatment and oppression. Whilst the Poles were uttering curses against the Russians in their churches, the Jews were offering up prayers for them in their synagogues. This worthy Jew behaved with great kindness, and instantly prepared two neatly

furnished rooms for the reception of his guests.

On my return home, I found Pineda not in the best of humours. He had received orders to march back with a detachment to the starving army; this was likewise alarming news for me, as I feared I should lose my quarters, and be shut up in the church with the privates. I endeavoured, however, when I lay down to sleep, to console myself by thinking of the Russian proverb: "What the evening makes dark, is brightened by the morning."

As the following day was the last Pineda was to pass in Wilna, he proposed that we should spend it together. He had obtained a little money from an avaricious paymaster, by giving him bills to double the amount; and wished, for the last time, to make merry with me. A speculating Frenchman had established a house on the market-place, under the title of *Une Restauration à la Parisienne*;

thither we proceeded, and for a very miserable entertainment Pineda was plundered of nearly his whole stock; this was, however, but a trifling consideration to him, for he well knew, that on the road between Wilna and Polotzk, money could obtain nothing. After having recapitulated our past adventures over a glass of wine, we left the house, and proceeded to take a turn through the town.

Wilna is disagreeably situated in a hollow surrounded by sand banks, which are overgrown by unshapely fir-trees. The beautiful river Wilja flows at a short distance from it. Had the town been built on the banks of this river, its situation would have been more pleasant, and likewise more favourable for trade. On the opposite side of the river, Bonaparte had constructed several large covering batteries, with the view of availing himself of them in the case of a retreat. These batteries were pointed out by the Poles as being proofs of Bonaparte's superior judgment and penetration; "For," said they, "the

Russians were long in possession of the same ground, but never thought of making so good a use of it:" as if the Russians had ever found it necessary to cover a retreat out of their own country!

In the evening I visited the ladies in their new quarters. They were in excellent spirits, for the worthy Jew had caused the apartments to be cleaned, had hung up white curtains perfumed with juniper, and provided three good beds. Their cheerfulness was, however, in some measure abated, when I informed them that I should, in all probability, be quartered in the church. Madame S—— declared, that, notwithstanding the repugnance she felt at going into the streets, she would daily visit me, and perform for me whatever services lay in her power. This assurance proceeding from so charming a mouth, led me to consider my situation a very enviable one. On my return home, Pineda told me that he had been entreating permission that I might retain my quarters,

but that he had been refused and dismissed with the usual answer : "*Je suis bien fâché—Je suis mortifié, mais cela ne se peut pas.*"

But when we are at the worst, better may be expected ; and such was the case with me. I had resolved to represent my unfortunate case next morning to the philanthropic chief of the general staff. As I was proceeding to the town-house, I observed near the Russian custom-house, a man of melancholy appearance looking anxiously around him. He was elegantly dressed, without any uniform ; but the Russian mantle, which he had wrapped round him, emboldened me to address him. Nothing more fortunate could at that moment have occurred to me, for he proved to be like myself unfortunately a prisoner ; and, moreover, a worthy, generous, and what in those times might be considered a rich man. This gentleman, the Court-Counsellor Barts, inspector of the customs in Bialystock, had been torn from the arms of his wife and children at midnight, and,

scarcely allowed to provide himself with common necessities, had been driven away in his own carriage. He was conveyed as a prisoner of state to Wilna, for what reason he himself was ignorant, except that he was an object of suspicion. He was an intelligent man, well versed in languages, and a profound politician; this, probably, might have rendered him liable to be considered dangerous. But it was difficult to conjecture for what reason the Titular Counsellor C——, a man of a very singular character, was likewise honoured with the title of state-prisoner. This man had been for many years master of the forests, and the care of the wild bulls was certainly a subject of greater interest to him than the subjugation of Europe. His melancholy situation had so deeply affected him, that he arrived at Wilna in a state of insanity. The French, however, regarded his conduct as the effect of dissimulation. When a Pole or a Frenchman approached him, he was accustomed to spit at them, then

turn away muttering to himself, and would not unfrequently pelt them with stones. He was, in other respects, a very worthy man, and behaved with the utmost gentleness towards all who addressed him civilly in German. His dress resembled mine in wretchedness. But the Court-Counsellor Barts afterwards supplied both him and myself with cloathes and linen.

This generous man, who was constantly attended by a *gendarme*, considered himself happy in being able to assist me in my misery. "To-morrow," said he, "I set out for Koenigsberg; that is, likewise, your road; I have room in my carriage, and have six harness horses in readiness; you will do me a great favour by consenting to accompany me." My joy on hearing this proposal may be readily conceived! No starvation in the church, no travelling on foot, a commodious conveyance, and the company of an agreeable gentleman. What unexpected good fortune!

My only anxiety now was lest the French should thwart my project, by refusing me permission to depart. I feared their distrust, and unluckily my fears were not altogether without foundation. It is true, that the worthy chief of the general staff threw no obstacle in my way; but Count Hogendorp told me, in few words, that state prisoners and prisoners of war could not be permitted to travel together, as the former required to be very strongly guarded. I, however, did not relinquish my entreaties. I offered to place myself willingly under the strongest guard that might be thought proper. Pineda likewise pledged his word for me, adding, that my conduct had been most exemplary during the whole of our march; and after Barts and I had been strictly questioned whether we had previously known each other, how and from whence we had arrived at Wilna, &c. my solicitation was complied with.

My satisfaction was complete. The chief of the general staff immediately inscribed my

name in the marching billet, with those of Barts and M. C——; and I seized that opportunity again to recommend the Russian ladies to his attention. He promised to visit them himself, but whether or not he kept his word I am uncertain.

In the evening I went, accompanied by my two friends, to pay a visit to the ladies. Barts was much affected on seeing the children, who reminded him of those from whom he had been separated. When I informed them that the visit I then made must be my last, they suddenly became silent, and an expression of deep concern was visible on the countenances of all. Madame S—— was the first who recovered the use of her tongue, and turning to my friends with her usual grace, explained how it had happened that six ladies had suddenly been struck dumb on being informed of the departure of a young man; namely, that, although a total stranger, I had performed them a very great service. I endeavoured to silence her by excuses and

disavowals, though I cannot deny that I was always well pleased on receiving commendations from her. "Although we can do nothing for you in our present situation," said she, "we shall not fail to recollect you. Had your departure been less unexpected, we had resolved to surprise you; however, that cannot now be done; we have nothing but our grateful thanks to offer you."

My two friends were deeply affected, and I used every effort to repress my grief. Madame S—— turned towards the window, in order to conceal her emotion. She was, however, the first to recover herself. "Grieving can be of no avail," said she; "we should, on the contrary, pass our last evening cheerfully together, to the mortification of our enemies." Then suddenly recollecting that Pineda ranked among the number of these enemies, she concluded by making him a lively and elegant apology. But the good Pineda, whose mind was occupied in contemplating her, had not observed what she

said. No one, indeed, could behold her without interest. In her were united vivacity with the most refined sensibility, frankness with the strictest modesty, and she was even more conspicuously adorned with gentleness than beauty. In fine, she was another Leontine *; but far handsomer, if we may judge from the copper-plate. She was a native of Poland, but had been conveyed, when only eight years of age, to Russia, where she received her education. Her husband was a Russian. I never heard her complain; but one of her friends informed me that she was not perfectly happy in her marriage. Oh man! with indignation against my own sex do I reflect, that out of one hundred unhappy unions, the fault is in ninety-nine instances attributable to the husband.

We passed a friendly evening together. Although the supper which Madame S——

* The heroine of a novel lately published by A. von Kotzebue.—T.

set before us was but scanty, yet we partook of it with cheerfulness; even the good Jew, who had requested to take leave of us, joined the conversation so agreeably, as to render his company by no means intrusive. Finally, we all paid our devotions to one star.

Barts I supposed was the only one among us who possessed a watch; unluckily he bethought himself on drawing it forth. Madame S——, who was always cautious, exclaimed with surprise: “Is it eleven o’clock?” Pineda and I were struck with terror. The Jew, however, proved by means of his great silver repeater, which resembled a howitzer shell, that it was only half past nine; we then resumed our gaiety, and continued to converse until the approach of the unwelcome hour of parting. I stepped silently up to the window, where Madame S—— inspired me with new life, by whispering to me: “It is my earnest request, and that of all my friends, that you should come and see us to-

morrow. To bid adieu to each other will, doubtless, be a painful ceremony ; but it must take place, even between us.”

I did not fail ; though the state of my feelings rendered this last visit deeply afflicting. Tearful eyes, monosyllabic conversation, heart-rending pauses, what else could be expected ! Madame S—— pressed my hand, thanked me in the name of all present, assured me of their unalterable friendship, and declared that it would afford them the greatest possible happiness, should Heaven permit us to meet again at a future period. When I bade them farewell, their countenances were suffused with tears. At last I left them, and when I reached the street, I still heard the sweet voice of Madame S——, who called after me : “ When you have an opportunity of writing to us, do not neglect it ; we will not fail to answer you.” I wandered about the streets for a considerable time, in order to recover, from the agitation into which this affecting interview had thrown me.

I then went, accompanied by Pineda, to Barts's quarters, and got acquainted with the eccentric Titular-Counselloer, whom I have already mentioned. From his dress it was difficult to say to what nation he belonged. Being much distressed for cloathing, he had adopted a very ingenious method of supplying that want. He had obtained through charity, from a woollen draper's shop, some list and selvages of cloth, and with these he stitched together a jacket and a pair of pantaloons. The habiliments which he had thus formed were to be sure of variegated colours, and moreover far from fitting with exactness; but these were matters of trifling importance; they served to cover him, and even to protect him against the severity of the weather. To complete this elegant costume, he wore a cap of the same materials as the dress, and fabricated by the same ingenious hands. It was impossible to regard him without a smile. He resembled a half filled air-balloon. Like an enraged cat, he continued to growl and

spit at all who approached him. The *gendarmes* brought a kind of litter cart for his conveyance, and as there was a scarcity of attendants, he was intrusted to drive it himself. With his usual muttering he threw himself upon the straw, and rolled about in it.

After having once more pressed my friend Pineda to my bosom, I stepped into the carriage, where Barts had already seated himself. Two *gendarmes*, and our conductor, then mounted their horses; and (as Barts observed) our retinue on leaving Wilna resembled that of an exiled prince, to whom none but the court fool remained faithful. Unfortunately our state carriage was furnished with nothing but hay.

CHAPTER V.

Removal to Tilsit.

ACCORDING to our marching-route, we were to be provided every three days with fresh horses and good provisions; but this, like the orders to Pineda, was prescribed merely *pro forma*, for it was well known in Wilna that neither a horse nor a piece of bread could be obtained on the road. Barts fortunately carried provisions along with him, sufficient to last until our arrival at Kowno, which place we expected to reach in five days. The Titular-Counsellor, who soon discovered our store, was always very quiet and well bred when he felt the pangs of hunger, but became as troublesome and disorderly as ever after the cravings of his stomach were allayed.

We passed our nights in any of the houses which we chanced to find open on our road, excepting when we were prevented from do-

ing so by the infected state of the atmosphere, occasioned by the putrid bodies of dead horses. Unfortunately for us, this was too frequently the case; for, as the French themselves acknowledged, these carcasses were strewed in thousands on the road between Wilna and Kowno. This mortality was occasioned by the green corn which the cavalry troops cut down in the fields, and with which, when in want of hay, they fed their horses: if the animals happened to drink after having eaten this corn, their stomachs became monstrously inflated.

The horrible effluvia frequently prevented us from enjoying the beauty of the country; for we were compelled to turn our faces towards the back part of the carriage, to avoid being stifled. When we came to parts of the road which were particularly offensive, the *gendarmes* set off at full gallop, that they might escape as quickly as possible from the infected air. If the Titular-Counsellor rode before us, which he occasionally did, he

served for a punctual telegraph: whenever he began to mutter, we well knew it was the signal for drawing out our handkerchiefs; and when he buried his head in the hay with which his litter was covered, we thought it full time to cover our organs of respiration.

We daily fell in with numerous parties of troops, who were in search of fresh wounds and laurels. It was very whimsical sometimes to observe half a regiment with their hands applied to their noses, and skipping with the utmost velocity over those parts in which the carrion was most offensive. But I cannot avoid mentioning one circumstance which will serve to prove the low-minded ostentation of the French. Many officers, on perceiving the Russian prisoners, exclaimed, addressing themselves to their troops—"Advance, brave soldiers! advance, until you reach Moscow." Shame on the men who could thus insult the unfortunate!

The Titular-Counsellor felt no offence at the jeering of the French troops, as he did not

understand a syllable they uttered ; but we were, at last, met by parties of Germanic-French troops, who treated him as a merry Andrew, and the *gendarmes* had frequently to extricate him from a contest of raillery. After his bed of hay had been entirely consumed by the horses, he threw himself contentedly on the rough boards of his cart.

The day before our arrival in Kowno, we met with an accident near the little town of Rumschischek, contiguous to the Memel, which had like to have proved serious. We had occasion to descend a steep hill, across which beams of wood were laid in the form of steps. One of the shaft horses of the carriage (which according to the Polish custom was only used to go on level ground) was unable to keep his feet on this declivity. He leaped from one beam to the other, and occasioned so violent a jolting of the carriage, that the boy who drove us was thrown from his seat, and Barts and I were tossed from one side of the carriage to the other: at

length two of the horses fell, the carriage was overturned, and my companion and I thrown from it in opposite directions. I unfortunately fell in such a way, that the whole weight of the carriage was thrown upon me ; I suffered unspeakable pain, and at least expected that some of my bones were broken. I, however, escaped with nothing worse than a few severe bruises, which caused me to limp in walking for several days afterwards. In the mean while, the Titular-Counsellor, who had seated himself on the summit of the hill, was regarding the surrounding prospect with the greatest unconcern for our distress. On being questioned concerning his want of feeling, he frankly confessed that his only anxiety was lest the case containing the brandy bottles should have sustained any injury. Unluckily, his fears were not without foundation. We broke two bottles, which to us was a loss not easily recovered. The remainder we employed in bathing our bruises, and at this application of the liquor the Titular-

Counsellor appeared highly dissatisfied. Shortly after this accident, we reached a house which was occupied by a numerous party of French officers; they, however, with the utmost willingness assigned a room for our reception.

They had, as frequently happens, under some pretence or other, quitted the grand army; and were proceeding to Koningsberg, in order to join the reserve corps, or, what is equally probable, to return to their homes. With two of these officers, the most agreeable and well bred of any I had yet met with, I chatted away the evening. They appeared to apprehend the catastrophe which afterwards did happen, and had been prudent enough to absent themselves in due time.

We kept the majestic river Memel, and its romantic banks, in sight almost all the way to Kowno. On the first view of the city of Kowno and its beautiful towers, and the numerous ships with streamers waving, a sensation of delight was experienced by all, but

more particularly by me, who have a right to consider myself half a seaman. The fortifications which had been hastily constructed by the French were by no means displeasing objects, when viewed from a distance, though they obstructed the view of the city on a near approach.

We proceeded straight to the commandant, and our carriage was immediately surrounded by a number of inquisitive Christians and Jews, who so highly offended our Titular-Counsellor, that he expressed his dissatisfaction by the most violent gesticulations. His conduct excited loud bravos on the part of the spectators.

The commandant, who was a strong adherent of Bonaparte, provided us with a miserable lodging; we, however, offered up thanks to Heaven for being suffered to retain our liberty. In the evening several Jews visited us secretly, and with desponding looks communicated the report of the capture of Moscow. I could give no credit to their story, until further news brought an account

of the shocking and ever memorable conflagration, which the French at first boasted of to a disgusting extent : but on its being afterwards proved that this calamity had deprived them of all advantage in point of shelter, the newspapers under their control exclaimed, “ These barbarians of the north know not how to defend their country, except by burning their capital ! ”

Although we never stirred abroad without being stared at by inquisitive persons, nobody offered to whisper to us a word of consolation ; we were, therefore, not a little surprised when a pretty looking chamber-maid one day brought us an invitation to take tea with her mistress, giving us at the same time her address. We of course regarded this as the commencement of an adventure of gallantry. However, on proceeding to fulfil our engagement at the appointed hour, we were introduced to a beautiful young lady, who was confined to her room through sickness, and who complained bitterly of the sufferings she

had endured. She informed us, that she had been suddenly separated from her husband, who was a Pole holding a post of considerable importance, and whom the Russian government, not thinking fit to trust, had ordered to remove to another province during the continuance of the war. On the sudden approach of the French he had been compelled to leave his wife behind him, and the Poles, who were always eager to propagate accounts prejudicial to Russia, had reported that he was arrested, or at least sent to Siberia. The poor lady, with natural anxiety, requested to know whether we could give her any information concerning her husband, and appeared to breathe new life when we assured her, by numerous reasons, that there was no ground for entertaining doubts of his safety. We left her with her mind at ease, and loaded with her benedictions.

In Kowno our French *gendarmes* were replaced by Poles; and it was notified to us that we could not be provided with any fresh

horses, and that we must be conveyed in a vessel to Tilsit. To me, an old sailor, this news was very welcome; but it was not such to Barts, who was apprehensive of sickness; and was besides aware that he should be forced to dispose of his carriage at any price that might be offered for it. The Titular-Counsellor was likewise much displeased at being obliged to move at all; for during the three days which we passed in Kowno, he had done nothing but drink and sleep, and complained bitterly that we intended to drown him.

The chief of the *gendarmerie* had the goodness, on the morning of our departure, to treat us with an excellent breakfast, which the Titular-Counsellor seasoned by relating several of his authentic anecdotes of wild bulls, and describing a shower of frogs, and other marvellous events, of which, he asserted, he had been a witness. Several coachmakers called, for the purpose of inspecting the carriage, which we had now no longer any occa-

sion for; but as none of them offered more than half the value even of the iron-work in it, our landlord resolved to purchase it himself. He counted out fifteen silver rubles, and this small sum was perhaps three times as much as any other person in Kowno would have offered.

As one of our party was allowed to select a vessel, I thought myself qualified to perform that service. There were several which had come by the Memel from Tilsit, laden with provisions, and were on their return, destined for the conveyance of wounded and prisoners. I fixed upon one which appeared to me to be a good sailer. The captain, who was unwilling to be troubled with passengers, disavowed all claim to this quality on the part of his vessel; but fortunately I had not made a bad choice: besides sailing well, the vessel had a neat cabin, and the captain was, after all, an agreeable good sort of man. He was, moreover, forbidden to take more than fifteen soldiers, in addition to our party, on board;

whilst the other vessels conveyed five-and-twenty, and even thirty. We had now an opportunity of seeing the beautiful bridge which the French had thrown across this broad river; I immediately prophesied, that when a thaw took place in the spring, it would not prove sufficiently strong to resist the pressure of the broken ice: my prophecy was unfortunately fulfilled.

After having packed up our little luggage, we bade adieu to the sick lady, who, since our last visit, had slept for the first time during several weeks: she relied on the assurances we had given her, and now tranquilly hoped to hear some tidings of her husband. She presented us with a basket full of provisions, some wine and brandy; things which were not to be purchased in Kowno. Heaven rewarded her for this kindness; for I afterwards learnt, that her husband and she were again happily united.

About noon we parted from the chief of the *gendarmerie*; he was a very worthy

man, and I shall ever remember his kind treatment with sentiments of the sincerest gratitude. He accompanied us to the vessel. The anchor was then raised, and the wind and current proving favourable, we could soon perceive nothing but the tops of the spires of Kowno.

Barts and I were accommodated in the captain's cabin, which was so small, that it would at the utmost contain only four persons to sit, and three to sleep. The Titular-Counsellor, together with the *gendarmes*, occupied the great cabin, which was more airy. The space between both cabins, which was on other occasions filled with merchandise, now contained thirteen wounded men, belonging to different regiments and nations. In the centre of this space stood the fire-hearth, which, though scarcely large enough to boil two kettles, was surrounded in the cold evenings by the soldiers. Before our departure from Kowno, we had been supplied with provisions for six days; our daily allow-

ance was, to each, a pound of meat, a pound and a half of bread, and a glass of spirits. Through the bounty of the sick lady, which had not been sparingly administered, we were enabled to resign our portion of provisions to the *gendarmes*. The Titular-Counsellor, who had grown gray in the forests, was unable to comprehend the use of sails; he regarded them as mere articles of ornament, and recommended his soul to heaven whenever a sudden blast of wind made the vessel heel. I again had reason to congratulate myself on my choice, as our vessel had the start of every other, and was always the first to come to anchor in the evening; for, owing to the numerous sand-banks, and the narrowness of the channel, the river is only navigable during the day.

As the wind was unfavourable the next morning, we were forced to tack, which can only be done in the Memel by the help of the current. The continual tacking rendered the situation of those who were on deck very dis-

agreeable; they were tossed from one side to the other; and the Titular-Counsellor, notwithstanding his antipathy towards the French, was, to his mortification, frequently thrown into their arms. All were sick except myself, and I alone had the good fortune to be able to visit the provision-basket, until, after two days had elapsed, the calmness of the weather enabled my companions to return to it with redoubled appetite. The whole of our brandy was nearly consumed; but the captain consoled us by saying, that we should next day arrive at a castle which was situated in the neighbourhood of a small village; and with the owner of which he was in the habit of transacting business (by which he meant smuggling). We therefore cast anchor on arriving at the village, and went on shore, accompanied by our *gendarmes*. We were here met by a number of Jews, who pointed and stared at us; but from whom we soon escaped, and gained an excellent foot-path, which conducted to the castle, on reaching

which, we were at first saluted by the dogs, and soon after welcomed by their master. He, together with his wife, on being made acquainted with our adventures, showed us every kindness, and treated us free of expense. Our Titular-Counsellor was thrown a little out of humour, by the wind blowing off his magnificent bear-skin cap, which for some time served as a plaything for the dogs. His spirits were, however, soon restored by the punch which we drank; and taking down a violin which hung against the wall, he played, to our astonishment and delight, in a very masterly style; and was so highly pleased with the praises which we bestowed upon him, that he began to dance, and entertained us by all kinds of drollery. In the evening our party was joined by the captain; and we all sang, joked, and chatted, with as much familiarity as if we had been old acquaintances. "After rain comes sunshine," says the proverb; but then it is also frequently reversed.

We were seated at a well-covered table, when suddenly four soldiers from our ship, driven perhaps to intrude by the cravings of hunger and thirst, entered the room; and without lifting their caps, or any other kind of ceremony, walked up beside us, and called for liquor. Our host told them in the most gentlemanly manner, that his house was not an inn; adding, that had they behaved with more civility, he would willingly have given them some liquor; but that their conduct compelled him to desire that they would immediately quit his house: he, however, proposed to send somebody with them who could show them a tavern in the village. "A tavern in the village!" exclaimed one of the soldiers; "no indeed, here we have seated ourselves, and here we intend to remain. You can treat the Russians very kindly, but we who are fighting for your liberty can obtain nothing from you."—"The Russians," said our host, "pay a ducat each man, are you able to pay as much?"—"If the Rus-

sians pay you, they are fools. We must have a refreshment for nothing, and that instantly too.”—“Then I must call the assistance of my servants to turn you out of the house.”—“What! would you dare to ill-treat wounded French soldiers? we will see that!” The impertinent fellows then seated themselves, with their caps on, making use of the most vulgar oaths. The master of the house, who had by this time lost all patience, seized the orator of the party by the collar, and turned him out at the door. The others, who hastily ran to his assistance, were dispatched in the same manner by our *gendarmes*. The contest would, doubtless, have been renewed in the court-yard, had not the servants unchained two large dogs—auxiliaries which soon put our insolent visitors to flight.

This affair put a stop to our gaiety, as we were apprehensive that it would be attended by some ill consequence. We reluctantly took leave of our hospitable host. The night was so exceedingly dark, that we could scarce

find our way, though lighted by a lantern belonging to the ship-master. This obscurity had perhaps prevented the conquered enemy from hailing their friends on board, and returning with a reinforcement to storm the castle.

On arriving at the river-side our boat was not to be seen, the soldiers had taken it with them to the vessel, and detained it there, having forced the sailors who had charge of it to go into the cabin, by threatening to bind them hand and foot if they refused. We hailed, but received no answer. We could hear only some low voices, which appeared to be disputing. The captain began to curse in a good seaman-like style; upon which a musket was fired, the ball of which struck the lantern he held in his hand. This base conduct enraged us to such a degree, that we disregarded the danger in which we were placed of losing our lives by the assassin-like attack to which we were exposed. We continued to call to the soldiers, and threatened immediately to alarm the village; telling them,

that in that case not one of them would escape the gallows. The firing awakened the sailors, who were asleep in the cabin ; they began to dispute with the soldiers, and declared that they would instantly quit the vessel if we were not allowed to come on board. After much quarrelling and abuse, we, at length, heard two men jump into the boat, and row towards the shore. We had scarcely got into the boat when two more muskets were fired ; but hearing no balls whistle, we concluded that they were merely loaded with powder in order to frighten us.

As we approached, the soldiers called to us from the vessel, that the *gendarmes* and the Russians must not presume to come on board. I addressed them thus in reply : “ Soldiers who have served under the great Napoleon surely will never ill treat defenceless prisoners : besides, had we arms like you, and you thought yourselves offended, we should, as men of honour ought, be ready to give you satisfaction.” This ad-

dress operated so well, that they allowed us to come on board. A long dispute then arose respecting what had passed, which, doubtless, would have ended in blows, had not the captain with many loud oaths sworn, that if the dispute proceeded farther, he would leave the ship to themselves.

Next morning, however, new disputes occurred. The *gendarmes* wished to prepare their breakfast as usual, but their kettle was taken off the fire, and one of them driven out of the cabin. Meanwhile the mutineers seemed to pay some respect to me, as I still wore a uniform and the cross of my order: occasionally, however, they said some rude things, which I thought it more prudent to pretend not to hear, than to run the risk of being thrown overboard for resenting. In addition to all the other disagreeable circumstances we experienced at this crisis, we had the misfortune of being detained by contrary winds. Barts considering himself as entirely in a civil capacity, would not inter-

fere in the affair, and remained close in the cabin.

When noon came we lost our dinner, as some of our persecutors threw two handsfull of gunpowder into the soup while it was cooking; and when the mess was brought down, laughed at us through the chinks of the partition which divided our birth from theirs, jeeringly asking us whether we had good appetites. The same thing happened to the *gendarmes*. What was to be done? we could not hope to bring these men to reason. The other vessels were too far behind to afford us any assistance. It appeared, therefore, that the most prudent plan was to disembark, and travel by land.

Fortunately, when we cast anchor at nine in the evening, we were in the neighbourhood of a large castle, whose owner, a Polish countess, was, according to the assurance of our captain, a very benevolent lady. It was, however, so dark, that we could only guide our steps by the glimmering lights which we

saw in the distance. The Titular-Counsellor slept so soundly, that only Barts and I, with our *gendarmes*, could undertake the journey. The lights were extinguished when we had got into the garden, and we were then obliged to direct our course by the gravel foot-paths, and by the sound of bells which we occasionally heard : at last, after many windings and turnings, we again saw the lights, and found ourselves opposite an iron-rail gate leading into the house, but the gate was fast. We knocked long, and the horrid yell of a large dog announced our arrival. A number of lanterns moved in different directions in the court-yard ; and, at last, uniting in a groupe, cautiously approached the gate. In answer to a “ *Who’s there !* ” which indicated no little alarm in the interrogator, our *gendarmes* related who we were, and what had happened to us, and solicited a night’s lodging. All the family was soon put in motion. A young man, who proved to be the son of the countess, accompanied by a number of

servants, hastened to the spot ; and, on hearing our request, ordered the gate to be opened. We were conducted to the castle, and even into the presence of the countess, under a motley escort armed with sithes and pitchforks. We began by begging pardon for the disturbance we had occasioned, a duty which our feelings the more strongly dictated, when we observed the heaving bosoms of two lovely daughters of the countess, who were still agitated in consequence of the alarm.

But whatever had been the degree of terror which our arrival occasioned, it soon yielded to compassion. We were very kindly invited to supper ; but it was at the same time proposed to forward us that very night to the next town, which was Jurburgh. This surprised us : but the eldest daughter told us, in the name of her mother, that she could not allow us to stop all night.—“ We are,” said she, “ suspected by the Poles. They watch us closely, as we have been always attached to Russia, and my brother has not borne arms

in the present war against that country. Were we to lodge two Russians, though only for one night, the Poles would make that a ground of some accusation, perhaps even of treason. If you should ever visit us under more favourable circumstances (and who knows how soon such an opportunity may occur?), you will then be convinced how highly we esteem your nation." After this friendly explanation, we could only return thanks for the kindness we had received, and lament that we should have given any uneasiness to so worthy a family.

After a sumptuous supper, such as for several months we had not enjoyed; and which was superintended by the amiable young lady who had informed us of the situation of the family; we returned, lighted by a lantern, slowly to the river-side. On going on board, we found all the passengers sound asleep; and had considerable difficulty in making the Titular-Counsellor comprehend that we had come to remove him. At last he came to

himself, and crept into his jerkin. We took leave of the master, who was the only person on deck, and in the morning we arrived safely at Jurburgh. Here we found many sick and wounded Russian officers; but none with whom we were acquainted.

We should not have found it an easy matter to obtain horses from the commandant, had we not had the honour of being escorted by *gendarmes*; but from that circumstance he conjectured, that we were state-prisoners of great consequence; and we were immediately provided with the means of prosecuting our journey. We now pretended that we had travelled in the same style all the way from Kowno. The *gendarmes*, who, when they came to Prussia, could only play a silent part, confirmed all we said with a nod; and thus we experienced no farther difficulty.

To approach Prussia from Lithuania seems a removal into another world. Elegant houses, beautiful villages, and numerous little

towns, are seen in the distance, and delight the eye of the traveller : but above all, there live good-hearted Germans, ever ready to hold out a helping hand to the distressed. We experienced a particularly good reception from a miller, whose name I regret I have forgotten. It was late, and all the family were asleep ; yet, without the least murmuring, they all left their beds to provide for our accommodation. We were kindly invited to partake of whatever the house afforded ; and a neat apartment, with three good beds, was consigned to us. In the morning, every one, with the greatest kindness, enquired how we had slept ; and whether we had wanted any thing. The good people then gave us a hearty breakfast, to which they added their blessing on our departure.

We often approached the banks of the river, on which a number of vessels, which had left Kowno long before us, with wounded and prisoners, were detained by contrary

winds. We never looked at them without thanking God that we had abandoned the uncertain element.—We arrived all well at Tilsit.

CHAPTER VI.

Halt at Tilsit, and Removal to Koningsberg.

THE commandant, Von Blackenburgh, who was a colonel of cavalry in the Prussian service; and in whose commendation I need say no more, than that he belonged to Schill's corps, received us in a truly friendly manner, and ordered that we should have good quarters. We were conveyed to the house of a rich merchant, where we hoped we should find ourselves in Abraham's bosom; but, unfortunately, our host proved to be one of the most avaricious of that patriarch's descendants. However, as we daily expected to be sent forward, and as we were kindly entertained by the principal inhabitants, and thus safe on the point of economy, we declined the offers of the commandant to quarter us on another family.

Among the obligations we received, it is

my duty to acknowledge, that we were more particularly indebted to the head forest-master, Herr von ULRICH. To him, in whose house, in the circle of his amiable family, we spent some happy days, my warmest thanks are due. The manner in which this good German announced himself to us, was very singular. On the second day after our arrival, a tall man, with a fine countenance and a majestic air, entered our apartment. He wore a hunting dress in the old German mode, buff-coloured boots, and silver spurs; an elegant hunting sword hung by his side. "Pardon me, gentlemen," said he, "if I have visited you too soon in the morning; this is the hour at which I always put myself in motion; but you do not know me, I am the head forest-master Ulrich, and I have heard of your misfortune. I am told that one of you is called Kotzebue, a name which I respect, and that alone was sufficient to induce me to seek you out, though I would not have failed in attention to any of you: but, re-

member, no compliments, I hate them as I do the French, who are masters in the art of making them. Therefore, all I have to say is—you are prisoners—you are unfortunate. Ulrich keeps a house in Tilsit. From this day forward two covers will be added to my table. Come or not come, just as you please. Ulrich dines at one, and sups at nine. I only wished to tell you this: so, for the present, good bye!”

He immediately set off, without waiting for our answer, or allowing us time to thank him. He seemed that sort of character which I had thought was to be met with only on the stage, and which I was much surprised to find in real life. We did not neglect his invitation, but it had happened that he was not aware of more being in the party than myself and Barts, and he had of course addressed himself exclusively to us. This gave offence to the Titular-Counsellor. He stuttered and spluttered in his own way more than ever, asserting that the head forest-master had

neglected him because he did not wish for his company; and this he persisted in, though Herr von Ulrich made him a particular visit to apologize for his mistake.

The Titular-Counsellor was the only loser by this obstinacy, for in the house of our generous host every thing bore the stamp of his own character. All was done in a brief and pointed manner. No compliments, no pressing, but the most hearty and sincere welcome. During the five days we stopped in Tilsit, this worthy family rendered us perfectly comfortable both in mind and body. There was also another citizen of Tilsit, an inn-keeper; whose generous conduct I cannot recollect without emotion. Though far from being 'rich, he maintained free of expense fifteen Russian officers prisoners, and even provided some of them with linen and clothes. Before their departure, the officers assembled to take solemn leave of him.. They drew up a declaration, in which they expressed their gratitude for the favours which had been

bestowed on them. They recommended their benefactor to the protection of all Russian military commanders in case a Russian force should enter Tilsit, and added a request that the Emperor Alexander should, by such commander, be informed that there lived in Tilsit a man who had shown so much humanity and generosity to Russian prisoners. The parting was very affecting; many of the spectators could not refrain from tears.

Colonel von Blackenburgh also merited particular thanks for the pains he took to alleviate as much as possible the hard fate of the prisoners. As a commandant he gave equal satisfaction to the military and the citizens, a success which is always to be desired, but which is very seldom attained. He stood upon no ceremony with the French soldiers; and when the inhabitants preferred wellfounded complaints against any of them, he punished them without hesitation. He thus rendered himself in every way respected.

It would have been an easy matter for us

to have solicited and obtained the punishment of the ruffians who had driven us from the vessel, and who reached Tilsit three days after our arrival. We contented ourselves, however, by bringing them into the presence of the commandant, effectually humbling them, and then by our intercessions saved them from punishment.

I must not forget to mention a butcher of Tilsit, a man of extraordinary bodily strength, who, while every householder throughout the continent of Europe trembled at the idea of quartering soldiers, was exceedingly unhappy whenever a day passed without some being billeted on him. He took a particular pleasure in bringing impertinent Frenchmen to their senses. It accordingly very seldom happened that any of them would stay more than twenty-four hours with him.

The Court Counsellor Barts, the Titular-Counsellor, and myself, joined the other prisoners, five or six of whom travelled together in one waggon; and from their various, and

often burlesque dress, formed very singular groupes. We three remained together, and chose two officers to make up our party. Our Polish *gendarmes* were relieved by two smart black hussars.

As we were about to commence our journey, a lieutenant of engineers, who was employed in the construction of a bridge head, and with whom I had become acquainted in the house of the head forest-master, came to see us. He brought money which had been collected by some worthy and charitably disposed men. Ignorant of the German language, the prisoners could not return him many thanks verbally; but their moistened eyes, and grateful looks, spoke the more forcibly. The officer himself was much moved, and hastily departed.

At this moment, indeed, we all required consolation, for the news of the taking of Moscow was now fully confirmed. When the truth was ascertained, a death-like silence prevailed among the prisoners, and their

countenances exhibited the most profound grief. Several had their relatives and their property in that city. The latter, it was certain, had become the prey of the flames; and to that was added ignorance of the fate of their families, which placed them in a state of the most painful anxiety. Those who were not natives of that part of Russia did all in their power to comfort their unfortunate companions. One, however, who was sick, was so affected by the intelligence, that he was found 'unable to proceed with the other prisoners, and was sent to the hospital, where he soon died. The only words he afterwards uttered were, "O my poor parents! O my unfortunate country!"

Under the influence of these melancholy impressions, our cavalcade was put in motion, taking its departure from the door of the commandant's house, before which we had been drawn up. We had to pass the inn whose generous owner had laid the Russians under so many obligations. When we

approached the house, there was a general cry of *halt!* and all wished to testify their gratitude. Many wished to give him the trifle of money they had received, but found it impossible to persuade him to accept any such reward. On the contrary, he insisted upon providing the whole party with a good breakfast free of expense. The crowd that surrounded us joined us in blessing him; thus we left Tilsit, where we had experienced both pleasure and affliction, with hearts agitated by the opposite emotions to which these feelings gave birth.

It was a cold day in autumn, and our wardrobe was not very capable of keeping us warm. We, therefore, seldom failed to visit any inn, or good public-house, that came in our way; and at last both we and the black hussars who escorted us, got so animated, that we did not hesitate to jeer and insult solitary French soldiers who had occasion to pass us. Our black hussars slapped them with the flat of their sabres, and

drove them aside. The roads were full of stragglers and small parties, on their march to the army. Among them were many cavalry, but who had no horses, and whom we only recognised by the saddles which they were obliged to drag along with them.

In this manner we proceeded from one magazine station to another, taking up our quarters when it became dark at the best house we could find, where our treatment was the more or less agreeable, in proportion to the wealth and disposition of the owner.

One day we met a battalion of Saxe Weimar troops. It was easy to perceive that these brave men were reluctantly marching against the country of their adored princess. They knew we were Russians, and showed by their gestures that they sincerely sympathised in our misfortune. In passing, the two parties looked sorrowfully at each other, for we pitied their situation as much as they could possibly commiserate ours.

On the third day we reached Tapiau, where

we were to have a rest. Here I first saw the the arrangement for the distribution of provisions, by the means of orders called *bons*, which was very satisfactory. Each prisoner had a daily allowance of bread and meat. Instead, however, of being obliged, when fatigued by a long march, to spend some hours in running from one magazine to another in quest of his morsel of food, he received, on his arrival, from the commandant, a *bon* for bread and meat, which he delivered to his landlord, and then had no further trouble.

According to our route, we were to halt only one day at Tapiau; but, in consequence of the frequent passage of troops, nearly all the horses had been sent towards Tilsit, and there was no prospect of our being able to proceed for five days to come. This was very disagreeable to all. The Court-Counsellor, however, solicited and obtained from the commandant, permission to hire a small carriage for Koningsberg. There were only places for two, but the Titular-Counsellor blus-

tered and begged so long, that it was at last agreed he should get up behind. The road runs so very deep, we got forward with great difficulty; and, to crown all, when about a quarter of a mile from Koningsberg, we were overturned, and thrown right into a loam-pit, where we were severely bruised and bedaubed, and from which we crawled forth in such a plight, that we scarcely resembled human beings. We so astonished the custom-house officer at Koningsberg, that he let us pass without any examination, and the children ran after us, and huzzaed as we passed through the streets. Barts and I adopted the most prudent course; we laughed with the laughers, and took all that passed in good part. The Titular-Counsellar, however, became the object of general attention, in consequence of the ridiculous threatening looks and gestures which resentment instigated him to assume. His uncommon dress and singular figure procured him the honour of being taken for a Baskir. The women dragged

their children out of his way, as if they had been afraid he would devour them.

Still covered with the loam, we directed our steps towards the municipality, where we received quarter-billets. Here I was for the first time separated from Barts; as I was only a subaltern officer, I was not allowed such good quarters as those allotted to him. In vain we pressingly solicited to be quartered together; those who had the superintendence of this business adhered strictly to their orders. I had at last the satisfaction to be sent to the same house, though not lodged in the same apartment, with the Titular-Counsellor, and to which we were directed by a smart youth.—After we had knocked for a considerable time, the door was opened by an old woman, who started when my companion held his quarter-billet before her eyes. She however recovered in some degree from her surprise, on perceiving that he was to occupy an apartment on the upper story. I then showed her my billet, upon which her rage was re-

doubled, and she greeted me by exclaiming :
 “ Good God ! do you think the rooms of this house were ever intended for such a dirty fellow as you ? ” Indeed, when I considered the cleanliness, and even elegance, of the entrance-hall, and reflected on the plight in which I was, I could not be surprised at the old woman’s reluctance to admit me. The authority I brought, however, and my own entreaties, had soon a due effect upon her, and after having given me two or three angry brushes with a sort of broom, an operation which she said was necessary, in order to sweep the clay off my back, she threw open the parlour-door.

The owner of this house, the rich countess Dohna, I was informed, was then in the country : this was bad news enough for my empty stomach ; but the old woman besides assured me, that her lady had taken all the keys with her, and that scarcely any fire would be kindled in the house. The Titular-Counsellor was not better provided than my-

self; his apartment, which was that of an absent general, was decorated by a number of portraits, which all looked very kindly on him, though they never offered him any thing to eat.

It was now so late in the evening that I dared not stir abroad; I therefore endeavoured to relieve my hunger by falling asleep. My miserable appearance, however, had, after all, moved the heart of the old woman, who shortly afterwards found, as she said, by good luck, the key of the larder.

The next day I called on NICOLUVIUS, the bookseller, a friend of my father, who received me very kindly. Though he could give me no tidings of my family, I was agreeably surprised when he told me that the universally respected Consistorial Counsellor Krouse and his wife, who was a relation of mine, had already requested the quartering commissioner to lodge me in their house, on my arrival in Königsberg. This had probably been forgotten, through the alarm oc-

casioned by the appearance of the supposed Baskir.

Nicolovius was kind enough to accompany me to the house of my cousin, where, as I shall ever with the sincerest gratitude remember, I was received and treated in every way like a son. Clothes, linen, boots, every article I stood in need of, were provided for me, and these gifts were rendered doubly valuable by the amiable manners of the family. The blessing of the worthy Krause appeared, indeed, to have henceforth followed me; for after I had visited his house, my situation daily became better; at least, I never again had to contend with that dreadful hunger, from whose attacks I had suffered so much.

In Koningsberg I met Major Switschin, who had been made prisoner only two days before me. But I was still more happy in finding there an old friend named Von Hune, a captain of cavalry. I had not seen him for several years, and was ignorant that he still

remained in the service. This brave young man had entered the army as a volunteer at Riga, where the command of a squadron of hussars was immediately assigned to him, at the head of which he particularly distinguished himself. Unfortunately, on one occasion, he charged the enemy's cavalry with an ardour which prevented him from observing that his troops were driven back, and being unwilling to ask for quarter, he fell from his horse covered with wounds, and apparently lifeless. His life was, however, saved through the attention of some benevolent persons at Mietau; and he was now so far recovered, that he could walk about.

This freedom was enjoyed by all the prisoners, and after repeated representations of our necessitous situation, a monthly salary was likewise granted to us. Thanks to the kind assistance of Counsellor Krause and Nicoloyius, I was better provided than any of my fellow-prisoners. I would, therefore, willingly have ended my misfortunes by being

detained a prisoner in Koningsberg. This, however, I was not permitted to do; for when the news arrived that the French had quitted Moscow, and were retreating, the commandant immediately ordered that the prisoners should be transported to Mentz. The suddenness of this order, and the eagerness with which the *gendarmes* pressed our departure, scarcely allowed me time to take leave of my two friends and benefactors. My linen (which now filled a small portmanteau) was soon packed up, and I proceeded to the rendezvous in front of the commandant's house. Here I was soon joined by Major Switschin, and my good friend Hune, and we agreed to ride together in one carriage. The Court-Counsellor Barts, and the Titular-Counsellor, remained in Koningsberg, guarded by *gendarmes*. They were shortly afterwards removed to Dantzick.

I felt much grieved on bidding adieu to Barts; he was the first who offered me assistance, when I believed myself deserted by all

the world, and we had undergone much misery in each other's company. The Titular-Counsellor, however, appeared very well pleased, and seemed to think by separating from me, he was getting rid of a tormentor.

The officers in the list of prisoners, who were twenty-seven in number, presented a most ridiculous groupe. One was dressed in Cossack pantaloons, and a burgo-master's coat with steel buttons; another wore a woman's cloak, and had large whiskers; and the few who still preserved their uniforms, had patched them in a hundred different places. They all smoaked and drank together; some were merry, and laughed, whilst others complained bitterly.

CHAPTER VIII.

Removal to Berlin.

WE were now left without any escort except two wounded officers, who were appointed to guard us, and to see us supplied with provisions and quarters. The eldest of these officers, who was an Italian, had a strange custom of using the word *forward* on almost every occasion, whether we were going to eat, to sleep, or to travel, which induced the Russian prisoners to give him the name of *Captain Forward*. He was a good-natured agreeable sort of man, and would sometimes join us in laughing at his own oddities.

When any of the prisoners arrived at the rendezvous rather late in the morning, they usually received the following reprimand from Captain Forward: "If this should happen again, you will not get any carriage." This once gave rise to a very droll scene. A

Russian, who did not understand a word of French, and was particularly fond of sleep, had several times listened to this reprimand very patiently; the captain at last repeated it rather warmly. Though the Russian did not understand what he said, he observed the expression of his countenance, and answered very coolly: "*Yerofeitsch* should not be too hot." It is necessary to acquaint the reader that the term *yerofeitsch* is used in Russia to express a strong kind of spirit; and that the Russians, when they wish to reconcile two persons likely to quarrel, make use of the common phrase, "*Yerofeitsch* should not be too hot." The captain, supposing that the prisoner alluded to one of his companions who had slept still longer than he had, exclaimed: "How! recollect, gentlemen, that I make no distinction between you; if Monsieur *Jerofeitsch* should come too late, he must trudge on foot as well as you." He was much surprised when those who understood both languages were seized with an im-

moderate fit of laughter; and it was some time before we could make him understand the mistake.

We took the direct road through Braunsberg and Elding to Marienburgh, where we met with miserable quarters, and were unable to obtain a single horse. We visited the old castle, admired the immense wooden monument, and wandered about the only street in the town. The next day, after having applauded the tricks of a wretched juggler, we proceeded onwards, and on the fourth day reached the beautiful Marienwerder. By a lucky accident, my friend Hune here met with a Prussian major who had been wounded in the same action with himself: Hune, during his illness, was confined in the same chamber with this officer, and had been a sharer in the grief which he experienced at being separated from a young and beautiful wife. This amiable couple were again united, and we spent an evening in witnessing their happiness.

The next day we reached a fortress near

Graudentz, in which the brave General Courbiere immortalized himself. We visited the officers' club, where we were very well received, and talked upon political affairs in a friendly manner. During our conversation the following words were frequently repeated: "Comrade, it will not be long before we rejoin you." I moreover met with many Prussians, who were so eager for the success of the good cause, that they felt a sort of pleasure on learning the defeat of their countrymen at Riga.

We crossed the Vistula at Ostrometzko, and after advancing a league farther, we arrived at Bromberg. We were soon convinced that we were in a place belonging to Poland, by the confused state in which every thing was at the Town-House, and the incivility of the commandant. We had to wait for several hours before we could obtain quartering-billets, and were at last directed to quarters already occupied. We were then compelled to return to the Town-House, where the petty

magistrates were still sitting drinking their beer, and with the liquor tracing out Napoleon's battles on the table. They left this entertainment with much reluctance, to provide Russian prisoners, to whom they bore no good will, with a lodging.

The wife of the Polish commandant was as inquisitive as her husband was rude. We were requested to call upon her next morning. We wondered what she could possibly want with us, and were not a little surprised, when we discovered that the amiable lady, being tired of playing with her lap-dog, wished to vary her amusement by gazing at the Russian prisoners. A most ludicrous scene ensued. She continued during a quarter of an hour lolling on a sofa, and staring at us with an expression of stupid amazement, without uttering a syllable. Her husband, who appeared no less astonished than she was, occasionally whispered something in her ear, to which she assented by nodding her head. At last they both appeared at a loss how to get rid of us.

Madame rose from her sofa and left the room; Monsieur followed her. We looked at each other, and burst into a loud fit of laughter. In a few minutes the commandant returned. We remained silent as well as he. He walked up to the window, looked several times out, coughed, and then began: "Do you know, gentlemen, that Moscow is taken?" We replied, that we knew it, and that the French were again retreating. He regarded that as not quite so certain, and enquired whether there were any Poles among us. There happened to be two. He immediately offered them commissions in the Polish service, which they however meritoriously declined. We all expressed dissatisfaction at this treatment, and one after the other left the room without taking leave of the commandant. He was a silly ignorant man, and had adopted this ridiculous method of gratifying the curiosity of his wife. This town, under the Prussian government, would be a very agreeable place; we observed many fine

situations around it, but were heartily glad when we left it behind us.

In the little town of Driesen, Hune and I were quartered in an inn, the keeper of which, though a very agreeable woman, constantly annoyed my friend in a strange manner. He had received a dreadful wound on the cheek, which had severed his lip, and carried away three of his teeth. This want of teeth, however, was only perceptible when the lip was lifted upwards. Hune was not displeased that our kind hostess should regard his misfortune with pity, but she delighted in telling the story circumstantially to every one who entered the house; and as her inn was the best in the town, it was of course very much frequented. Whenever she mentioned the lost teeth, she approached Hune very unceremoniously, and roughly lifted up his lip, at which he appeared to be prodigiously vexed, whilst I was unable to contain my laughter.

Here a company of strolling players, but such as scarcely deserved even that title, endeavoured in the evening to amuse us by a representation in front of the house. They, however, found some difficulty in collecting payment after the performance, for what entertainment could their strutting and ranting afford to thirty officers who scarcely understood a word of German?

We were much beholden to our kind hostess at Driesen, for we were not only well treated whilst we remained there, (which was more than many of our comrades could boast of,) but the good woman gave us some provisions for our journey, which supplied us plentifully until we reached Frankfort on the Oder. In that fine city, we were quartered upon a very poor family. Though they could afford to give us but little, they endeavoured to render our situation as agreeable as possible. The master of the house had two charming daughters, and Hune, who was a good

flute player, accompanied the one on the piano-forte, while I danced with the other. We were not so fortunate on arriving at Custrin, where Hune and I were unluckily sent to a house which had suffered severely by the Russian bombs during the seven years' war; the owner of the house, who could never forget this misfortune, gave us a very unwelcome reception. He showed us an inscription in gold letters, which mentioned the day and the year in which this bombardment took place, and would scarcely allow us to have a draught of water. We learnt next morning that all our comrades were as badly provided as ourselves. It is a fact, that we did not experience such ill treatment in any other town, either in Germany or France. We poor prisoners would thankfully have accepted the pieces of bread which the insolent Frenchmen threw at the heads of the people upon whom they were quartered. During the remainder of our journey, whenever we experienced ill treatment or privation, it be-

came a kind of proverb with us to say, "This is as bad as at Custrin *."

The kind treatment which we experienced at Kopenick made amends for all we had suffered at Custrin, and had not Berlin been so near at hand, we should have felt much regret at bidding farewell to the kind inhabitants.

* It should, however, be considered, that Custrin was at that time in a very poor state.—A. VON KOTZEBUE.

CHAPTER VIII.

Halt in Berlin.

AFTER passing through several fine streets, we reached the Town-House. Whilst we were all engaged in receiving our quarter billets, a man of most respectable appearance entered quite out of breath, and called me loudly by my name. This was the *Maestro di Capella* WEBER, an old friend of my father. Having accidentally heard that several Russian prisoners were expected at Berlin, and among them one named Kotzebue, he was overjoyed at being able to relieve the misfortune of his friend's son. He immediately requested that my quartering billet might be directed to him, conducted me to his elegant house, and introduced me to his amiable wife. I thought myself in Abraham's bosom whilst I remained with this excellent family, whose kind treatment I

must ever recollect with the warmest gratitude. Unfortunately, the commandant would only suffer us to make a halt of two days, a period much too short for taking even a superficial view of such a place as Berlin; but the worthy Weber spared no pains in showing me all that was curious and interesting in that superb city.

I was struck with admiration on viewing the royal palace, and experienced a sensation of sorrow on entering the cabinet of the late excellent and celebrated queen, in which every thing remains untouched since her death; even the pen with which she last wrote is still preserved. Near her writing-table stands that of the king, who had only to turn his head in order to see his beloved consort. An emotion of melancholy seized me whilst I beheld these sacred relics of conjugal tenderness, such as is rarely to be met with even in common life, still less among princes! In one of the chambers, a celebrated young artist was employed in painting a full length

portrait of the queen. The king daily visited this artist, to observe the progress of his work, and to assist him in perfecting the likeness by his recollection of the original.

On my return home, I was agreeably surprised at meeting with Colonel *Von Valentini*, (now promoted to the rank of general,) who had formerly served in the Russian general staff with distinguished honour. Since the alliance of Prussia with France he had returned to the service of his native country: notwithstanding this he was still strongly attached to Russia, and had visited the prisoners in their quarters for the purpose of consoling and assisting them. He likewise made a collection among the principal families in Berlin, which for a long time secured the unfortunate captives against want.

On the second day of my halt in Berlin, I was invited to visit the Countess Voss, governess to the younger branches of the royal family. Though this lady had arrived at a very advanced age, she still preserved the

most sprightly and agreeable manners. I must confess that my worn-out uniforms, and the general shabbiness of my appearance, made me feel rather awkward in such company, and more particularly on the unexpected entrance of the little Princess LOUISA. I was presented to her, and the compassionate looks of this angel drew tears from my eyes. But my confusion was still greater when the king himself appeared. However, his condescension and frankness soon enabled me to recover myself. He disclosed an amiable trait in his character; for, as we all continued standing, he out of respect to the countess's age requested her to sit down, and when she hesitated to do so, he himself led her to a sofa. The conversation turned on the war; the burning of Moscow, which appeared deeply to affect his majesty; and the operations of Count Wittgenstein. I related all I knew, and the king honoured what I said with the greatest attention. His majesty made many kind inquiries respecting

the situation of my father, called him an inexhaustible poet, and mentioned that he had just published a new piece. On leaving the room, he said: "I hope you will pay a visit to our theatre."

A short time after his departure, one of his aides-de-camp appeared, and delivered to me a very valuable present from his majesty, which he said the king requested I would accept, as I was far from home, and deprived of all opportunity of receiving assistance from my friends. I was moved to the heart. The Countess Voss, by her kind attentions, detained me with her half an hour longer, during which time we vied with each other in praising the king. The performance of this duty, in some degree, relieved my overloaded heart, and I left the castle penetrated with gratitude and admiration. The good Weber, who adored the king, was as much overjoyed as I could be. After I had repeated to him ten times over every word which the king had uttered, he sprang from his seat over-

come with delight, and exclaimed, "Is not our king an angel?" to which I with all my heart assented.

In the evening, Colonel Valentini accompanied me to the theatre, with which I was the more delighted, (both with respect to the house, and the performance,) as it formed a contrast to the miserable German theatre at Petersburg, and as the king himself was present. The French military formed a strong party in the pit. On my return home, I learnt with regret from my friend Hune, that we were to quit Berlin on the following morning. A short time before my departure, the celebrated physician Hufeland honoured me with a visit. My father and he had known each other from their childhood, and he seized this opportunity to prove how deeply he deplored the misfortune which had befallen the son of his friend.

The good Weber accompanied me to the house of the commandant, where, after I had once more endeavoured to express my grati-

tude for his kindness, I mounted my carriage, and set out with the other prisoners. We departed from Berlin with heavy hearts, for we had all experienced most hospitable treatment from our hosts, from whom some of the prisoners had even received handsome presents.—Heaven bless the good people of Berlin!

CHAPTER IX.

Journey to Mentz.

WE left at Berlin the French officers who escorted us, and the charge of conducting us was now intrusted to Major Switschin, the senior Russian officer.

On arriving at the little town of Burgh, a short distance from Magdeburgh, I was attacked by a violent fever. This was probably occasioned by the cold and damp state of the atmosphere, as I was never addicted to intemperate drinking, and indeed seldom resorted to that universal cordial which my companions seemed to regard as a certain protection against the severity of the weather, and all other ills. I was, however, extremely ill on arriving at Magdeburgh, where a day's rest in very good quarters in some measure restored my health. The physician who attended me, was of opinion that I ought to

have remained at Burgh a few days longer, even though I should afterwards have travelled with double speed. But the commandant would only consent to this on one condition, which was, that I should be sent to the lazaretto. This idea filled me with horror. In vain did my good host offer to become my security, and declare that my residence in his house should be no obstacle to another officer being quartered upon him. The commandant persisted in repeating: "*J'en suis bien fâché—Cela ne se peut pas.*" I therefore declared myself ready to proceed. Just as I was stepping into the carriage, the sub-commandant, who had taken compassion on the weak state in which he saw me, gave me a very favourable description of their military hospital. I thanked him, and drove off.

I know not whether the freshness of the air, or the jolting I received in the carriage, contributed in any degree to my recovery, but I felt myself much better on arriving at Schonebeck; and on the following morning,

after a refreshing sleep, I seemed to enjoy a new existence. The fine weather next day completed my recovery.

We soon arrived at C——, where I was quartered in the house of a rich merchant, who was doubly rich in possessing two beautiful and accomplished daughters. It happened that these ladies were going to a ball on the very evening of my arrival; and hearing them complain that there were very few dancers in the town, I offered to accompany them, though I had not entirely recovered from my indisposition. My proposal was joyfully accepted, and I fell to brushing my uniform, which, though almost threadbare, still preserved some remnants of embroidery and epaulettes. After I had eaten a good supper with my host, (for the dancing ladies had no appetite,) I handed my fair companions into a coach, which seemed to have been appropriated to the use of the whole town, for it had already conveyed a dozen families to the ball. We stopped at a door which was illu-

minated by lamps, and, on alighting, were received by the master of the ceremonies, who, with much politeness, wished us a pleasant evening.

I had the happiness to open the ball with my host's eldest daughter, and continued, during the remainder of the evening, to dance with her and her sister, who, besides being the prettiest women, were the best dancers in the room. As there were several Russian officers, my fellow-prisoners, present, I succeeded in forming a party with them for my favourite dance Quadrille; not that the gentlemen of the town did not know how to dance it, but their figures were so different from those which I had been accustomed to, that I found it impossible to go through with them. For instance: we had formed the circle, and were ready to begin the dance, when one of the town beaux, who appeared very anxious for the introduction of new figures, placed himself at the head of the room, and gave the following directions to those who

stood near him: "Now Charles, you set to my partner, and I set to yours; Friss and Reinhold do the same. Then I *chassée* with your partner, and you lead down the middle with mine; Friss and Reinhold do so likewise. Then turn your partners four times, and finish with the grand close."

My total ignorance of this technical language frequently prevented me from joining in the dances; however, the ball was upon the whole very agreeable; every one did as he pleased, and danced as well as he could, without being criticised by the rest of the company. It was pretty late before we thought of returning home, yet we left the greater part of the company still enjoying the dance; and I remarked that my host's flatterers regarded it as a grand point of honour to have been among the first who quitted the ball-room, for on the following day they boasted, with much satisfaction, of having been at home full five minutes before some of their neighbours.

Unfortunately this ball was attended with very serious consequences to me, for on arriving at Bernburgh I experienced a severe relapse of my fever. When we reached Halle, I was so much reduced, that I had scarcely strength enough to alight from the waggon; yet, such was my dread of being sent to the hospital, that I managed to crawl to my allotted quarters. By a lucky accident, my host, besides being a physician himself, was a brother of the College-Counsellor Jacob, of Petersburgh, with whom I was intimately acquainted, and in whose house I had spent many a happy hour. Professor Jacob came to the door to receive me, and I was forcibly struck by the strong resemblance which he bore to his brother. On hearing my name, he gave me a most hearty welcome, and declared himself a warm admirer of my father's writings. He then introduced me to his amiable wife, who expressed the deepest concern for my misfortune. They immediately ordered a bed to be prepared for me, and

hoped that I might be permitted to remain in their house until my recovery. The kind treatment I experienced was increased when I informed my worthy host, that I had the happiness to enjoy the friendship of his brother. He had not seen him for five years, and eight months had elapsed since he had even received a letter. It is impossible to describe with what interest the family listened to every little circumstance respecting their relations. All the children assembled at my bed-side, and I was obliged to relate to them, in great detail, what progress cousin Theresa had made in literature, how well cousin Annette could sing and perform on the piano-forte, and how cousin Adolph still contrived to make himself generally beloved. °

Professor Jacob exerted himself to obtain from the commandant permission for me to remain in his house until I should recover my health. At first he received a decided refusal, and was told that I must go immediately to the hospital. He, however, made

a professional declaration as a physician, that I could not leave my bed, and that he would not answer for the consequences if I were dragged to the hospital. At last it was ordered, that the hospital physician should inspect me; and that, if my case were really such as it had been represented, I might be allowed to remain in the house of Professor Jacob, on his giving security for my appearance. Thus was I suddenly rescued from the prospect of the greatest misery, and fixed in the midst of an amiable and philanthropic family, where I was made the object of the greatest care and the kindest attention. The separation from my friends and unfortunate fellow-travellers was, it is true, painful; but I hoped it would be only of short duration.

The fever compelled me to keep my bed. The commandant sent his secretary daily to ascertain the state of my health. He was under the jurisdiction of Magdeburgh, and seemed far from being well pleased that I

still lived, and had no taste for dying in the hospital.

Though my host devoted to me almost every moment he could spare from the calls of his profession, yet I was often left alone; and would perhaps, in the course of my convalescence, have become a prey to melancholy, had not the worthy Doctor Eberhard spent many evenings by my bed-side, where he animated me by learned and interesting conversation, and often had the goodness to read to me for hours together. For his benevolent attention and sacrifice of valuable time, it was impossible I could make him any return; but he was pleased to appear interested with the anecdotes of my voyage round the world, which I related to him: but our most agreeable employment was beating the French, and we had already driven them to the Vistula, when we first heard the news of their being on the Beresina.

The commandant visited me once just be-

fore my departure, but only showed his anxiety for hastening my recovery, in order that he might send me off as quickly as possible. He obliged me to promise, that I should not go to any other house in the town. This was the only promise I ever made in the course of my life, which I did not conscientiously keep; but how could I leave Halle without paying a farewell visit to Doctor Eberhard and his amiable lady? I accomplished this object wrapped up in a large cloak, and under the shade of night. To keep the secret from the servants, I passed for a miller from the country; and, I believe, I did not play the part badly.

As I could not visit any person in the town, my host kindly invited some friends to spend with me the evening previous to my departure. In this interesting party were the celebrated Aulic Counsellor Schutz, and his highly accomplished wife. This lady was an old acquaintance of my father, and she had shown great attention to me during my in-

disposition. I was now further indebted to her for a bill of exchange on Frankfort, which proved of great advantage to me.

The commandant allowed me to take a walk about the town, in the company of Professor Jacob. He showed me the excellent Institution, the observatory of which affords a view of the whole town, and its beautiful environs. On our way home he showed me the remarkable window from which Napoleon was fired at. It is wonderful how the tyrant happened to be missed. A person, then connected with the university, (and now again connected with it!) caused much misery to many by accusations.

The commandant was so good as to allow me a chaise, which, with an old sergeant, who was to escort me to Erfurt, stood ready at my door by eight in the morning. The Aulic Counsellor Schutz, and Doctor Eberhard, at the same hour, paid me another visit in order to take leave of me, and neither of them came empty handed. The latter gave me, as

a memorial of his friendship, a fine map of France, engraved by Baptiste, which I sacredly preserve. The former brought me an elegant basket, containing some refreshments for my journey; and to this store of dainties, my kind hostess made a considerable addition: but I must confess, that my usual good appetite, which I had then completely recovered, did not permit me long to retain these memorials of my friends.

It is impossible to describe the feelings which agitated my heart when I had to take leave of a family in which, I may say, I had found a new father, mother, and sister. I could not speak, but my eyes overflowed with grateful tears. How happy should I be to have it in my power to make a return to any one of that family!

After I had left Halle long behind, I still wept bitterly; for the painful parting scene through which I had passed, brought strongly to my recollection all I had already lost, and produced gloomy anticipations of the future.

The honest sergeant, who rather served than guarded me, seemed to behold me with astonishment, and said and did every thing he thought could console me.

Merseburgh is so small, that if the burgo-master sneeze at one end of the town, the beadle may hear it at the other. I left it in the midst of a fall of snow, which the wind drove right against us. We could scarce see five steps before us, and the horses moved on slowly and with difficulty. At last, about two in the morning, we reached an inn, called the Balloon, half-way between Merseburgh and Naumburgh. Here I and my poor body-guard, whose clothing was not well suited to the weather, warmed and enlivened ourselves, and found the place so agreeable, that we heard with increased dissatisfaction the raging of the storm which we had again to encounter. Meanwhile it began to dawn, and we thought it necessary to proceed.

The road was covered with snow, and the coachman had taken a drop more than was

necessary to quench his thirst. The horses had their choice of going where they pleased, and they took a fancy to the road to Freyburgh.

In about half an hour it grew quite dark again, and the horses stood still. I never in my life saw such a storm, except one in the sea of Japan. When we wished to speak, we had to roar as loud as possible into each other's ear, and even then scarcely a word could be heard. It was consequently useless to call to the coachman; but when stopped and made to understand, he asserted that we must be near a village called Markrolitz, which was only the quarter of a mile distant from the Balloon. Confiding in this assurance, we let him take his own way; and after alternately knocking against fragments of rocks, and sinking into deep holes, we came at last to the brink of a precipice. Fortunately, we turned in time, and after wandering for some hours through fields and over ditches, without knowing whether we were going, we at last arrived at a

village which, to our great astonishment, proved to be only one thousand paces distant from the Balloon. We were obliged to hire a guide to conduct us to Markrolitz, where we passed the night. Next morning it was calm, but we were obliged to wait an hour after the time at which we intended to depart, until the peasants had so far cleared the road as to render it passable, though they had been at work upon it from day-break.

We arrived at last at Naumburgh, where Herr Zabsch, a relation of the Consistorial Counsellor Krause of Königsberg, had already given notice at the Town-House, of his wish that I should be quartered in his house on my arrival. He received me with open arms. I found him, in every respect, a most worthy man, and his wife a lively amiable woman. He was a sincere patriot, and had obtained the cross of the Saxon Order of Merit.

Here I learned that my grand-mother, who lived in Weimar, and whom, as I had been

born and educated in Russia, I had never seen, was exceedingly anxious to meet me. The route of the prisoners was the shortest way through Buttelsstadt to Erfurt, and though nearly eighty, the old lady had resolved, notwithstanding the badness of the roads and the severity of the season, to travel to Buttelsstadt to embrace her unknown grandson. This intelligence affected me much, but I was at the same time vexed on account of the difficulty I knew she would have to encounter in such a journey.

When I announced my name to the commandant of Buttelsstadt, he immediately said that he had been requested to send an express to my grandmother. "But," added he, "I am personally acquainted with her, and wish to spare her the trouble of coming here." Then drawing me aside, he said, "As soon as your guard is asleep, we may get into a sledge, drive to Weimar, and return here by day-break." This was no sooner proposed than executed, and by eight o'clock I was,

for the first time in my life, in the arms of my grandmother.

A grandmother is usually regarded as a cross old woman, closely confined to an arm chair; but how little did mine answer this description! She moved about her house with all the activity of a girl of eighteen, and by her good humour and vivacity rendered all around her happy.

We had scarcely been an hour in conversation together, when the secretary of the Grand Princess entered, and signified that her highness desired to speak to me. My heart throbbed when one of her ladies conducted me to her apartment, and I only waited for the entrance of the princess. She received me with the most amiable condescension. Her fine features bore evident traces of the grief she had suffered for the fate of her unhappy country. The style in which she expressed herself was simple and unaffected; but what a heart, what a soul animated every word she uttered! When she

mentioned the burning of Moscow, her voice faltered, and tears bedewed her pale cheek. I expressed my hopes of the advance of Wittgenstein's corps, and the princess listened to me with much satisfaction. The hereditary Prince her husband, who then entered the room, honoured me with similar condescension and kindness.

The last words which this divine princess addressed to me will ever remain engraven on my memory: "Too long," said she, "have I deprived your grandmother of your company. I wish you a good journey. Acquaint the rest of the prisoners how sincerely I regret not having seen them at Weimar. You are the first that I have seen from my country since the late unfortunate events. I have ordered my secretary to give you a sum of money, which I beg of you to distribute among your fellow-prisoners; it is indeed far too little to supply all their wants, but it is given with a willing heart. Should you ever return in freedom to your native country, I

entreat that you will all visit me, and the joy which I shall then experience will prove to you how deeply I deplore your present unhappy situation. Farewell !”

Had I been alone in the chamber, I should have thrown myself on the floor, and kissed the ground on which she stood. I returned home quite pale, to the terror of my good grandmother, who for some time could obtain nothing from me but expressions of love and admiration of the princess, in which she willingly joined me.

It was already late, and I had enjoyed but a short slumber on the sofa, when the commandant arrived, to tell me that it was time to depart. My grandmother had become so dear to me, during the few hours I had spent in her company, that I felt much pain on being forced to part with her; but I was obliged to go. We arrived at Buttelstadt at seven in the morning, where, in conformity to the orders of the commandant, my guard was allowed still soundly to enjoy his rest.

If any thing could have heightened the sincere admiration with which I regarded the Grand Princess, it was the information I received from the good commandant, that her highness had ordered a wardrobe to be provided in Buttelstadt, from which the travelling prisoners were completely clothed, and each provided with a sum of money, according to his rank. I might freely have been a sharer in these benefits, but all my necessities were more than sufficiently supplied; notwithstanding this, none of my comrades could feel more sincerely grateful than I did for the bounty of this noble princess.

I was desirous of remaining a whole day in Erfurt, as I wished to send a letter to my benefactor Jacob, by the serjeant who was returning to Halle; and likewise that I might relieve the anxiety of my grandmother by announcing to her the successful issue of my secret journey to Weimar. It, however, suddenly struck me, that I might probably gain permission to return to Weimar for a few days. I hastened to make this request to the

commandant, and was so unthinking as merely to say, that I had a relation in Weimar. He refused me this permission, and I went from place to place, from one general to another, but all was vain. I was not, however, disheartened; I appealed a second time to the commandant, and told him, that my dear grandmother, who was eighty years of age, resided in Weimar. "Good God!" he exclaimed, "why did you not tell me this sooner? You must be permitted to see your grandmother." He repeated this twenty times over, whilst he hastily walked about the room, and desired his secretary to sign for me a permission for four days' absence. He undoubtedly possessed both parents and grand-parents, the recollection of whom forcibly entered his mind at that moment. He certainly ran great risks on my account, for, in the first place, no prisoner was permitted to go beyond the prescribed route; secondly, my name was one which no Bonapartist could bear to hear pronounced; and thirdly, a French envoy resided at Weimar, who might

easily have rendered my journey thither a ground of suspicion. But his kindness overcame every scruple: may Heaven reward him for it!

I arrived at Weimar in two hours. My grandmother, who was seated in her arm-chair reading, let the book drop from her hands on the unexpected entrance of her grandson. I immediately paid a visit to the French envoy, M. de St. Aignon, who received me very politely, and promised to be answerable for my remaining in Weimar as long as I pleased. I ventured to observe, that I could only, with propriety, obtain that permission from the commandant at Erfurt, under whose charge I then was. M. de St. Aignon said, that I was a good soldier for this strict observance of discipline, and promised that he would instantly write to Erfurt.

As I was free from all restriction during this visit to Weimar, I had frequently the honour of being invited to the court, where

not only the Grand Princess, but the Duke and his amiable consort overwhelmed me with favours. I was so happy whilst I remained at Weimar, that I sometimes forgot I no longer wore a sword. Unfortunately, I could not remain there longer than five days.

Such a degree of cold as that which was experienced in the beginning of December, had never before been known at Weimar. One day the report spread that Bonaparte had passed, in great haste, through the town. It was also whispered, that the French army had been completely routed. I dined on the same day at the court, and when the august personages entered the saloon, it was easy to read joy on every countenance; but no public expression of congratulation took place, as the French envoy was present. The anxious and melancholy air of M. de St. Aignon formed a striking contrast to the happy looks of the rest of the company. I had the honour of being the first to whom the Princess spoke as she passed to her place; and

she said only these few but important words, "He passed through here last night—our country is delivered!" She then turned to others, and communicated to them the same pleasing intelligence. Nothing was said on the subject at table, but the happy looks of the Germans betrayed what was passing in their hearts. After dinner, the French envoy, who entered into conversation with me, confirmed the report of Napoleon having passed through Weimar during the night; and lamented that, in consequence of this change of circumstances, he could not keep his promise with me. He, therefore, requested me to proceed forward that day if possible, or at the latest next morning. This was a great disappointment to me, for I had formed the hope of stopping in Weimar until the Cossacks arrived. M. St. Aignon, however, justly merited the sincere thanks which I did not fail to return for his civility. His conduct had indeed procured him general respect in Weimar.

At the farewell audience, which the Grand Princess was pleased to grant me that evening, she related to me several particulars of the total overthrow of the French. As she was about to withdraw, she said, "Carry to your unfortunate comrades the joyful news of the deliverance of their country—that thought will animate all of them."

The words of this angelic princess so powerfully moved me, that I stopped for some time in the audience-chamber after she was gone, in order to conceal my emotion from the attendants whom I had to pass. But why was I ashamed of my tears? I shed none when, after the battle of Friedland, splinters of bone were every fortnight taken out of my shattered arm; but this noble generosity and kindness towards an unfortunate youth penetrated to the inmost recesses of my heart.

Having received my grandmother's blessing, I left Weimar, overwhelmed with regret at being obliged to depart. The commandant

at Erfurt gave me a very favourable reception. He inquired after the health of my grandmother, informed me that the envoy had written to him respecting me, and that consequently my having remained beyond the time allowed was immaterial. He then gave me a marching billet, and permitted me to travel without an escort; but I had to give my parole of honour that I would go directly to Mentz, without deviating from the prescribed route. Accordingly, I proceeded on my journey, not as a prisoner, but as if I had been a private gentleman travelling for his pleasure.

In passing through Gotha, I was entertained in a most friendly manner by Herr Schenk and his lady, to whom I brought letters from Weimar. In the inn at which I stopped at Eisenach, I heard some warm conversation and argument about Napoleon's flight, and I was sorry to observe that he still had many partizans there. I had a letter to the post mistress, a handsome young woman

born in Weimar. She told me, that as she was quietly knitting on the evening before, a man entered wrapped up in a large pelisse. He laconically wished her a good evening, and proceeded to warm his hands at the stove. Such visits were common, and she, at first, took no particular notice of him. He soon began, however, to make inquiries respecting the damage which had some time before been done by the blowing up of an ammunition-waggon, and asked whether those who suffered by the accident had received the money which the French Emperor ordered to be distributed among them? She related what she knew of the affair. He asked her whether she knew the Emperor. She answered she had only seen him transitorily. "Do you wish to see him?"—"O yes!" He then threw back his pelisse, with the cape of which his face was partly covered, and said, "You see him now." The surprise of the post-mistress may be easily conjectured. She offered him some refreshment, which he declined.

Meanwhile there was a loud noise at the door, where Caulincourt was caning the postilions for delaying to put to the horses. These gentlemen were on the point of returning him like for like, when the post-master, who recognised the Duke of Vicenza, ran to his assistance. In passing through the office he found the emperor paying compliments to his wife, and dissuading her from going to see what the noise was about. He went, however, to the door himself, put an end to the uproar, and then proceeded farther on his journey, after very politely taking leave of the post-master and post-mistress. It was reported at Eisenach, that he made the latter a present of a valuable ring.

When I arrived at Frankfort, the celebrated twenty-ninth bulletin had appeared; and, in spite of the vigilance of the French police, various demonstrations of joy took place. Many persons illuminated their houses. I visited only the Russian consul, General Bethman, whom Bonaparte so shamefully ill treat-

ed in preventing him from executing the duties of his office.

At Castel, opposite Mentz, my portmanteau was searched by the French Custom-house officer, and I was detained twenty-four hours on account of a Russian prayer book. The Grand Princess had requested me to carry it to one of the Russian popes who had been taken prisoner, and who had made application for the book to be sent to him. The ancient Slavonick character was quite incomprehensible to the French, and they suspected that it served to conceal a cipher for secret correspondence. When an intention of detaining the book was intimated, I required a receipt for it; but that was refused; and I was told that I must wait until it was examined by a skilful decipherer in Mentz. At last one of the officers good-naturedly remarked, that as it was a book which had been used, it was not liable to duty, and that therefore they had no occasion to notice it. This opinion was assented to, and I was

allowed to embark my little property on board of a ferry-boat, in which several ladies and gentlemen had also taken their passage, across the Rhine to Mentz. After we had put off, a gale of wind came on; and the master of the boat, who was drunk, steered so badly, that the waves broke every moment over the boat. The ladies screamed, which vexed him, and made him more confused. I placed myself beside him, began to think it time to exert my seamanship, and helped him to avoid the waves. The ladies observing that I knew something of the management of a boat, and that I was at least soberer than the master, requested him with one voice to give up the helm to me. Their confidence induced me to take the helm from him, and I steered the boat safely to Mentz. When we landed, the boatman showed himself sensible of my assistance, and wished me to drink spirits with him; but, on my refusal, muttered curses against the Russians.

CHAPTER X.

Journey from Mentz to Soissons, by the way of Paris.

ON showing my marching-billet to the commandant of Mentz, quarters were immediately assigned me, but the worst I had occupied since I left Tilsit. Next morning I was required to give my parole of honour, that I would not remove from the place appointed for my residence without permission. This was done in the following manner: on a sheet of paper was printed the form of the required declaration, or oath; to which were added several questions, as, Where were you born? What is the name of your father? of your mother? Are they living? &c. When the prisoner had filled up the answers to these questions in his own hand-writing, and signed the whole, the commandant congratulated him on being now left to travel by himself. He delivered to me a new marching-route

to the depot at Soissons, and reckoned the resting-stations, which were thirteen in number. He then counted out two francs for each station, amounting altogether to twenty-six francs, and bade me set off, in God's name; adding, that I might ride if I could afford to pay for it, and if not, I must be content to go on foot. Those who could prove that they were above fifty years of age were provided with a horse. This I could not do; but it was impossible, even at my age, to travel through the mud, with which the roads were covered, without running the risk of severe illness. I soon overtook a peasant on the road; he was returning from market, and offered to drive me to Altzey for three francs, provided I would sit among the empty butter-casks in his cart. The roads, as well as the weather, proved so unfavourable, that it was pretty late in the evening when we arrived at Altzey. I was, it is true, provided with quarters by order of the mayor; but I was not even allowed a light to undress

by, much less could I obtain any thing to eat. A day or two afterwards, I was conducted by another peasant, in a miserable two-wheeled vehicle, to Lautern, a distance of about eight miles: for this journey I was compelled to pay twenty-five francs, in spite of all my remonstrances against this imposition upon a poor prisoner. When I appealed to the mayor for redress, he told me, with much coolness, that I had not been overcharged. On arriving at Lautern, where I was very comfortably quartered, I began to ruminate on the low state of my purse, and calculated, that during my two last short journeys, I had spent much more than the sum I received from the commandant of Mentz. My host, who was very ready to do me any piece of service which took nothing out of his own pocket, was very active in seeking a suitable conveyance for me, but all his efforts proved useless: it cost me twenty-five francs to go to Deux-Ponts. Here I was fortunate enough to be quartered in the house of a physician, who not only

treated me well, but was the means of helping me out of my trouble : when I told him the cause of my vexation, he immediately said, "Why do you not travel by the diligence? You would be more comfortably accommodated at far less expense."

I entertained some idea of this when I departed from Mentz, but I was fearful lest the great road might deviate from the marching-route which was prescribed to me, and doubted whether I should be admitted into the diligence on presenting my marching-billet. The physician assured me that it would be all one on my arrival at Soissons; that town was situated nine French leagues from Chateau-Thierry, whither I might proceed in the diligence, and so reach Soissons on the fourteenth day. My host himself recommended me to the driver of the diligence, and the journey from Deux-Ponts to Chateau-Thierry cost me only ninety francs. By this means I saved one half of the expense which I must other-

wise have incurred, and was no longer forced to creep like a snail along the road.

I thought myself transported to Elysium, when, instead of a wretched cart, I got into a good carriage hung on springs. I had but one travelling companion, an agreeable old man, a civil officer from Mentz, who was going to Paris on business; he possessed all the fine vivacity and delicate urbanity of the old French character. He never once enquired who I was, or what was my name; and our political conversation was not interrupted by any warm dispute. When he, as a good Bonapartist, abused the Russians, I sometimes opposed him with such convincing arguments that he was unable to answer me; he would then usually fall asleep, and thus we continued on very good terms. We passed through Metz, Verdun, and Chalons, and arrived, on New-year's day, at Epernay, so celebrated for good Champagne. My companion and I here welcomed the new year (1813) by drink-

ing a flask of Champagne from the fine cellar, out of which the Russians are said to have since consumed about 60,000 bottles.

We proceeded onwards that very night. The wine had raised our spirits; and when I informed my companion that I had never been in Paris, he gave me such a description of its magnificence, that I felt a strong inclination to visit that Babylon, particularly when I considered that an exchange of prisoners might shortly take place, and I should not again have an opportunity of gratifying my wish. My marching-billet, it is true, distinctly mentioned Soissons; but, as my companion assured me, I might easily excuse myself for going to Paris, as there was no diligence from Chateau-Thierry to Soissons, though there was one from Paris to the latter place. He neither knew my name nor my situation, otherwise he would probably have been more scrupulous in advising me. The driver of the diligence being, on his part, very well satisfied, I was determined it should

not be said of me, that I had been to Rome without seeing the Pope.

Our travelling party was increased at Chateau-Thierry by the entrance of a gentleman and two ladies into the diligence. As the old gentleman and I were first in the coach, we were by custom entitled to the first places; we, however, willingly resigned them to the ladies, who, in return, entertained us very agreeably.

A short time before we reached Paris, I took my seat along with the driver, in the cabriolet, in order to enjoy an uninterrupted prospect: but Paris lies so extremely low on this side, that we were unable to descry a single steeple. Instead of the fine castles and pleasure-grounds with which Petersburgh is surrounded, we beheld, on approaching Paris, nothing but spacious kitchen-gardens, which were neither enclosed, nor attached to handsome houses. We at length reached the barriere, which might certainly be rendered much more elegant, for it is formed merely of pali-

sades, which are not even painted. Here the diligence was searched, and a custom-house officer accompanied us to the coach-office, in order to be present at the unloading of the coach.

In the Faubourg St. Denis, I was much amused by observing the splendid shops and the crowds of restless inhabitants; some of whose countenances expressed gaiety and contentment, whilst the looks of others seemed to indicate the deepest distress. When the diligence reached the coach-office in the *Rue Notre Dame des Victoires*, it was immediately surrounded by a throng of impertinent beings, called *facteurs*, who very officiously offered their services. My trunk was scarcely out of the coach, when one of these gentlemen placed it on his shoulders, and set off at so brisk a rate, that I should soon have lost sight of him, had I stopped even to bid my travelling companions farewell. Fortunately, I had not far to go, as there was an hotel in

the same street, where I made choice of a convenient apartment.

When the master of the house requested to see my passport, I showed him with some degree of fear my marching-billet. He glanced over it, then looked at me with surprise, shook his head, and retired. It then struck me that the police might possibly order me back beyond the barrières; and as I had yet seen but little of Paris, I immediately shut my room, and resolved to wander about until evening; so that they would, in the mean time, at least experience some difficulty in finding me. I at first ran from one street to another like a hunted hare, for I imagined that every body could perceive by my countenance that I was a stranger in Paris. I got by chance to the *Place Vendome*, and had a view of Napoleon's triumphal monument. I was then anxious to visit the *Palais-Royal*, of which I had heard so much; but how was I to find my way? There is perhaps no city in

the world in which information can be so readily obtained as in Paris, for the French omit no opportunity of ingratiating themselves into the favour of strangers. I had scarcely inquired which way I was to go, when the person to whom I addressed myself immediately said, "Turn into the first street on your right, cross the *Place des Tuileries*, then enter the street at the corner of *la Grosse Tete*, keep still in a straight line, and you will soon find yourself opposite the Palais-Royal." I returned thanks, and repeated my lesson as I walked along. Meanwhile, Bonaparte suddenly passed me with a great retinue; and I thought right, like others, to make him a profound bow. I soon was surprised by the sight of the triumphal arch, in which his treaty of peace with Austria is commemorated in bas-relief. At last I was convinced that I had got to the Palais-Royal, by the obliging offers of service which were made to me on all sides. One very politely took my hat off my head, protesting that he

would dress it up for me in the most elegant style; a second, with many graceful bows, insisted upon brushing my coat; a third was ambitious of the honour of cleaning my boots; and a fourth held a newspaper up to my eyes, in which I might have read how many teeth the young King of Rome had already got. I disengaged myself from them, and hastened to find an asylum under the protection of the Restaurateur Bery, who in a saloon surrounded with mirrors, sits enthroned, with madame his spouse, amidst *Beefsteaks aux pommes de terre, cotelettes à la Marengo*, and many other good things of that sort. Here I refreshed myself with some oysters, the charge for which was very reasonable.

I soon made myself acquainted with the manners of the place. In entering this temple of gourmands, it was necessary to make a slight obeisance to the priestess, hum two or three bars of a fashionable air, have the hair combed up *à l'incroyable*, look at oneself in

each mirror, stare impudently with a quizzing glass at every body in the room, go to a seat, though not to sit, but to stretch oneself along it, and call out as loud as possible, "*Garçon, la carte !*"—"Waiter, bring me the bill of fare !" He who can do all this is quickly served, receives a kind look from *madame*, and is charged a good price for what he orders. After I had satisfied my appetite, I wished to smoke, and I was directed to an apartment allotted for that purpose. He must be fond of smoking who could continue ten minutes in this region of fumes and fire. I tried, however, to smoke a little, as the boy, notwithstanding the thick cloud, noticed me, and put a pipe in my hand.

I thanked God when I found myself again under the colonnade. The Palais-Royal, with its splendid shops, and the women which crowded it, forms a principal topic in every account of Paris, and I shall not attempt a new description. It is a perfect raree-show,

the objects of which change so rapidly, that the spectator becomes giddy in contemplating them. I was jostled out in the same manner as I had been on my entrance, and wandered as chance directed me through the finest streets, until I was quite fatigued with walking. At last, I called a cabriolet, wishing still to see more of the town in it, and was not a little surprised when the driver set himself down beside me. This, however, only happens when the person hiring the vehicle either cannot, or does not choose, to manage the horse himself. If he choose to undertake that, the driver goes behind. The fellow was ragged, and wore a pair of thick wooden shoes; but, upon the whole, these cabriolets form the best kind of public carriages. The fiacres are good for nothing; the driver, the horses, and the carriage, are in general most wretched; and, within the coach, the most disgusting filthiness prevails.

We passed across the *Place de la Revolution*, where the unfortunate royal family suf-

ferred. I shuddered ; it seemed to me, that the trees here could never look green again. The fine view of the Seine, over which the beautiful bridge called the *Pont des Arts*, seemed suspended in the air, diverted the melancholy impression.

At the gate of the *Musée Napoleon*, over which a colossal bust of Bonaparte is placed, I discharged my cabriolet. I then purchased a catalogue of the Museum. Here I admired the *Venus de Medicis*, and the *Apollo Belvidere*, pitied the unfortunate youth drawing a thorn from his foot, and gazed at the immense height of the Egyptian antiquities. I next proceeded to the Picture Gallery, where an exhibition of paintings afforded an opportunity of comparing ancient and modern art. It would be necessary to devote months, and even years, to see this gallery as it ought to be seen. I experienced a sort of giddiness, or rather intoxication, whilst I wandered up and down among the crowd. One picture in particular attracted my attention, for it could

not fail to interest every Russian : the subject was Peter the Great in a small boat in the Lake of Ladoga, during a storm ; the pilot had lost all courage, and the Czar himself seized the helm, and steered successfully through the waves. This picture is remarkably well executed ; at least I, though no connoisseur, may affirm, that the dishevelled hair, and the breaking of the waves, are very correctly delineated. My own hair has frequently been blown about in the same manner during a storm, whilst the waves were breaking over my head.

An Italian, who had stationed himself near the Museum, apparently wished to satirize the military art, by exhibiting two apes dressed in regimentals, which had been taught to perform their exercise. The larger of the two animals, who was called General Jako, was seated in a chair, and it was his business to thrash the less one, who was only a sergeant, whenever he made a wrong movement with his musket. When this correction hap-

pened to be too severe, the sergeant lost sight of his subordination, and wished to take vengeance on his superior officer, upon which a smart contest would ensue, which usually lasted until the Italian thought proper to interpose.

The *Louvre*, of which I took but a hasty view, would certainly form a most magnificent building when finished, if the numerous N's did not disfigure it.

I again hired a cabriolet, without knowing whither I should go. The coachman mentioned several places to me, and among others, the Mad-House; but I thought it unnecessary to go there, for madmen are to be found every where. At last, he mentioned the *Jardin des Plantes*, and the *Cabinet de l'Histoire Naturelle*. "Oh, yes," I exclaimed, "drive me there." After we had passed rapidly through several narrow streets, we reached the *Pont d'Austerlitz*, a beautiful iron bridge, with which, had it borne any other name, I should have been highly delighted.

I cheerfully paid two sous to be driven across it.

The beautiful Jardin des Plantes can only be seen to advantage during the summer, at which season I was not fortunate enough to visit it. I saluted the elephant, for whom a new palace and bath, of free stone, had been erected; I frequently found it necessary to stop my ears, owing to the frightful howling of the animals. The perseverance of the hyena greatly astonished me; he was continually jumping from one side of his cage to the other, and gnashing his teeth: I trembled for the perilous situation of the little dog, confined with the lioness, which snapped up, even under her nose, the best pieces of meat that were thrown into her den.

On leaving the garden, I proceeded to the finely arranged Cabinet of Natural History, where my attention was particularly attracted by an exact model, in wax, of every part of the human body. I had already seen most of the other objects in nature, excepting the

Egyptian mummy, whose countenance has, for thousands of years, been adorned with smiles.

On my way home, I again passed through the Palais-Royal, which is the central point of mirth and activity. After I had looked about me for a short time, I went to the grand opera. Here I was enchanted by the excellence of the orchestra; and the ballet, *Nina*, appeared to me to be a perfect representation of its kind. The intervals between the acts were rendered insupportable through the indecorum of the audience. Conversation was carried on, though the parties happened to be five or six seats distant from each other; and the theatre resounded with loud cries of lemonade, orgeade, punch, &c.

It was eleven o'clock when I returned through the Palais-Royal, which was now brilliantly lighted up, and thronged by those smartly-dressed nymphs, who are familiar with every one, and who know how to combine impertinence with so many graces. I chanced

to enter the *Caff  des Aveugles*, where nine blind men and a blind woman were playing and singing. I staid so long listening to this music, that, on quitting the coffee-house, I was surprised to find that most of the shops were shut. The clock had struck one.

I hastened homewards, in the full expectation of finding a party of *gendarmes* stationed before the house, who, in that case, would doubtless have provided me with free, though not very agreeable, quarters. What joy did I experience, when the porter opened the door, without saying a word, and gave me the key of my apartment. My host had ordered a cheerful fire to be kindled in my bed-chamber, and I slept very soundly the first night I spent in Paris.

Early next morning I was saluted by a loud knocking at my chamber-door, and on opening it, I was surprised by the entrance of what the French term a *Grippe-Jesus*: it was no other than the colonel of the *gendarmerie*. When he expressed his surprise at my

assurance, in coming to Paris, I played the simpleton, protested my ignorance of the geography of France, and told him, that I had no idea whatever of the situation of Soissons. Instead of apologizing, I requested permission to remain another day in Paris, as I had been so highly pleased with it. He hesitated for a short time, and declared that to be impossible. I will try, thought I, whether French vanity can resist being flattered. I began to praise Paris in the most extravagant terms, declaring it to be far superior to St. Petersburg; and congratulated myself, that I could, on my return home, bear testimony how far the French exceeded all other nations in civility and politeness. He smiled, and remarked, that it was now doubly hazardous to allow me to remain, as Napoleon was then in Paris: he, however, granted my request, on condition that I should be booked for the diligence next morning, when he would accompany me himself to the place of departure.

The Grippe-Jesus had scarcely closed the door, when I again resumed my rambling. In the Palais-Royal the men were sitting with their wretched *café au lait*, which by-the-bye ought rather to be called *lait au café*, for it is generally composed of a cup-full of milk, with a very small quantity of coffee: this forms a most insipid drink to a German.

In my opinion, the streets and buildings in Petersburg far exceed in elegance those of Paris; and, were it not for the fine quays of granite, which are no where else to be found, the Seine could not be compared to the Neva. What is the celebrated Pantheon, next to the new Kasan church! We have, it is true, no Louvre in Petersburg, but we have many beautiful and extensive palaces. In all that regards dissipation, it must, however, be confessed, that Paris has the advantage.

In the evening, I visited the celebrated gaming-houses, and observed the horrible countenances of the players, which were

lengthened or shortened at every turn, according as fortune smiled or frowned upon them. The death-like stillness which prevailed was only interrupted by sighs and murmurs. No sound was to be heard except that of the wooden box, into which the gamester threw his money, and perhaps lost it for ever. I even observed women, who, having lost all their money, staked their rings, earrings, combs, &c.; they perhaps won these trinkets again, with a loss of five per cent.; or, if they lost them, they rose to solicit a loan from the first stranger they chanced to perceive. Poor as my appearance bespoke me, I was applied to, and the request was made by one so fair, that I was weak enough to give her a trifle, and then hastened from the room (or, as it should rather be called, the den). Directly over the gaming-house, only one pair of stairs high, is a gun-smith's shop, where the unfortunate gamester may, with his last remaining franc, purchase a pistol to blow out his brains.

I entered the *Caffé des mille Colonnes*, so called from the numerous pillars which are reflected by mirrors which cover the walls. The chief attraction of this coffee-house is the hostess, the celebrated *Belle Limonadiere*, who formerly sold lemonade in the *Rue St. Honoré*. Being visited by the whole population of Paris, she soon obtained enough to enable her to become the proprietor of the *Caffé de mille Colonnes*, where she sits behind a sideboard, adorned with diamonds which are said to be worth 30,000 francs. She is, I must acknowledge, the most beautiful woman I ever beheld.

At the Theatre Français, I saw the tragedy entitled *Gabriel de Vergy*, in which a lady receives the heart of her lover, enclosed in a golden box. This piece was very well declaimed and gesticulated; but I have no taste for such unnatural stories. The actress, who performed the principal character (probably Mademoiselle Duchesnois), was loudly applauded, though I consider her far inferior to

the late Madame Ohmann, of Revel. This charming actress has impressed on my mind an idea of perfection, which nothing I have since seen has surpassed*.

As I crossed the Palais-Royal for the last time, I observed, to my astonishment, a richly-dressed Cossack, making his way with difficulty through the crowd. I experienced a mingled sensation of satisfaction and regret on thus unexpectedly beholding one of my countrymen. I approached him, and whispering in his ear, asked him, in Russian, whether he was a prisoner? He suddenly turned about, and, by way of answer, gave me a hearty embrace. A number of idle persons immediately collected around us. I was fearful of exciting suspicion, and therefore drew him aside. We walked along, arm in arm, followed by a considerable crowd. He had been taken prisoner near Smolensko, and was retained in the service of a French general.

* The author had never seen Madame Bethmann.—
A. VON KOTZEBUE.

He expressed himself well satisfied with his situation, and said, that, though he was sometimes annoyed by the curiosity of the Parisians, he fared well at the expense of strangers. I asked him, somewhat peevishly, whether he preferred remaining in France. "Sir," answered he, "I am a Cossack, and have left a wife and children at home."

The crowd, which had gathered round us, appeared rather to increase than diminish, and, as I observed several *gendarmes* lurking about, I suddenly disengaged myself from my companion, and ran off, notwithstanding his repeated cry of "Countryman!"

I hastened homewards, and bade adieu to Paris. The good colonel of the *gendarmerie* breakfasted with me next morning, and accompanied me to the diligence, when, to the surprise of all my travelling companions, my name was called over, and I was described as a Russian officer. I then took my seat, the driver smacked his whip, and we drove away.

We conversed agreeably until we reached

Villers-Cotterets, about six leagues from Soissons. The road by which we travelled was nearly level, and not surrounded by any very agreeable prospects. A large forest extends from Villers-Cotterets to the beautiful valleys of Soissons.

CHAPTER XI.

Soissons.—Situation of the Prisoners there.

IT was late when we reached Soissons, and I immediately waited on the commandant, who received me very courteously. He proposed that I should provisionally share Major Switschin's quarters, in which there was room enough for us both. I gladly allowed myself to be conducted thither. Our joy at meeting after so long a separation is indescribable. I also found my friend Hune there, and it was with difficulty I could convince them that I had come straight from Paris. They appeared much dissatisfied with Soissons, and complained greatly of the privations they had experienced. I revived and delighted them by the agreeable news, that our illustrious Grand Princess had sent them relief. The report soon spread : next morning I was surrounded by all my companions in misfortune, and en-

joyed the delightful satisfaction (while I distributed the gifts of the benevolent princess), of seeing many a sorrowful countenance filled with gladness.

Before I proceed farther with the history of my own destiny, I will relate to the reader the manner in which the prisoners lived in France, and how they were treated. Perhaps the account may be useful to many who, at a future period, may be placed in a similar situation: they will thus, at least, easily learn what we were taught by a year and a half of bitter experience. Some suffered more, and some less, than others; to the latter class I fortunately belonged. It is true, that my conduct at a latter period, subjected me, whether originating in passion or levity, to very severe treatment; but the French had, in that instance, the appearance of right on their side; and my case may serve as a warning to others.

When the prisoner announced himself to the commandant, he took an oath, similar to that which was required at Mentz; but with

the addition, that he was not to go beyond half a league's distance from the city. He then obtained free quarters for three days, but without any allowance for provisions. At the expiration of that period, he was to be lodged at his own expense, in the house of one of the inhabitants; and, if he could afford it, to pay for his own board. A general received one hundred and fifty francs monthly, a colonel one hundred, a lieutenant-colonel and major seventy-five, a captain fifty, and a lieutenant or ensign twenty-nine. The sergeants and privates were best provided for, being allowed bread and meat besides their pay, and at least secured against starving. It will be observed from this statement, that a general was placed above want, that a colonel could live tolerably well, that a lieutenant-colonel and major could with difficulty exist, and that the subaltern officers were miserable. It is true, that twenty-nine francs were sufficient to pay for their board; but how could they provide themselves with linen, clothes,

and boots? During the first few months, whilst we all possessed some remains of clothing, we were tolerably comfortable; but, in the course of time, our feet and elbows remained without covering. Soissons is an opulent city, containing six thousand inhabitants, yet none of them took compassion on our distress.

During the first three days, some of the inhabitants, after giving the prisoners who were quartered upon them provisions, in addition to the lodging they were obliged to provide, turned them out of their houses without pity; but even this was kinder treatment than others experienced, whose hosts would give them nothing, and who were forced to beg a morsel of bread from their comrades. Had the prisoners, on their arrival, received a month's pay in advance, they would have been enabled to provide themselves with necessities. But the government did not consider it prudent to adopt this measure, as many of the prisoners might have died, and

would thus have received more than was their due. I call two hundred comrades to witness, that there was only one baker in Soissons who would give bread on credit, even with the security of the commandant: it is evident, therefore, that numbers must literally have begged.

The climate of France is doubtless very fine, though the cold is extremely severe during the winter; and as the rooms are not heated by flues, we felt the torments of cold even more insufferable than those of hunger. Business could scarcely be thought of during the severe weather; we had enough to do to keep our fingers in a moveable condition, by breathing upon them. To defend themselves against the cold, twenty or thirty of the prisoners frequently crowded together in one room, and stopped up the doors and windows as well as they were able, in the hope of warming the atmosphere by their own exhalations. But the slight mode in which the houses are constructed, the chimney which

serves to convey a continual draught of air, and the cold brick floor, rendered even this scheme unsuccessful. However, the prisoners continued to assemble together for the sake of society, as it afforded them some little consolation to suffer and complain in each other's company; but excepting Major Switschin (with whom I was quartered) and another of our unhappy comrades, none could afford to have fires in their apartments, on account of the high price of wood. Our most intimate acquaintances, therefore, came to our quarters early in the morning, and remained with us until bed-time. We also frequently visited our shivering comrades, to show that we were not unfeeling enough to avoid them whilst we were better off than they; though a visit to these truly unfortunate men, *des véritables malheureux* (as the French themselves styled the prisoners), cast a gloom over our spirits for several days, as we witnessed only pale and dejected countenances,

grief, and distress; and heard nothing but complaints.

At last, a speculating Frenchman daily kindled a large fire for the accommodation of the prisoners, for which each paid him one franc per month. He contrived to render this plan very profitable, as he took the opportunity of selling to the crowd, whom his fire attracted, much wretched brandy at a very dear rate. As no shopkeeper in the town would give us any thing on credit, the commandant consented to pay this speculator the cost of his fire out of our monthly allowance. Most of the prisoners, it is true, had then very little balance to receive; and being unaccustomed to calculate their expenses to the precision of a single sous, they were frequently induced, through cold and hunger, to take a dram more than they could properly afford to pay for. The commandant, who was tormented by the applications of the starving prisoners, at length ordered that

thirteen francs should be allotted monthly to purchase bread; and, on no account whatever, applied to any other purpose. Most of the prisoners carried these thirteen francs immediately to the baker, and were thus certain of procuring their daily allowance of bread. But many who had not resolution enough to withstand temptation, failed to perform this act of prudence; they spent the money they received in drinking, and starved the remainder of the month, gliding about the town like ghosts. The misery and distress of the prisoners increased every month, till at length the Russian priest was one morning found dead in bed, and two days after an officer expired in the same manner.

These distressing occurrences roused, at last, the attention of the commandant. He invited the principal officers to a consultation, which I attended as interpreter. After a long deliberation, it was resolved that no deduction should be made from the pay of the prisoners, excepting what was due to the

butcher and baker. Whoever gave them credit might do it at his own peril, as no complaints would henceforth be attended to. By this regulation, numbers were rescued from despair. Returning spring diminished their difficulties, and in summer the fuel was superfluous. Roots of all kinds were likewise very cheap, and many of the prisoners devoted a great part of their time to fishing, and were thus enabled to support themselves.

The demands of the stomach being now provided for, the claims of the back began to be considered. Most of the prisoners had either slept in their clothes, or used them to cover their beds during the night; they were, consequently, doubly worn. While wandering about the streets covered with rags, they had the appearance of sturdy beggars, especially as they all carried long sticks. When we were reviewed, which was generally twice every month, money might very fairly have been required from the crowd that witnessed so tragi-comic a spectacle. The spectators

were, however, only disposed to laugh, and seemed too hard-hearted to bestow on us any proofs of commiseration.

The following circumstance was regarded as a phenomenon among us. My worthy friend, Doctor Kuhne, who, with his monthly allowance of thirty-nine francs, would sit for whole days in a garret studying and chewing tobacco, had, in the course of five months, by half starving himself, saved enough to purchase a new great-coat and a pair of boots. His health was, however, impaired by this mode of living; and, in a month afterwards, he was seized with a violent fit of illness. He would then have been obliged to sell all his clothes, had not a rich apothecary, who valued him for his chemical knowledge, supplied him with medicine gratis.

In general, the inhabitants continued distrustful and selfish from first to last, though they must have known, that our emperor, on the conclusion of every treaty of peace, agreed to pay the expenses of his imprisoned sub-

jects, and that those who proved their benefactors were always generously rewarded.

It was impossible to procure board and lodging under forty francs; few, of course, could enjoy the advantage of living in a respectable family, and thus learning to speak the French language with facility. The chief part of the prisoners formed themselves, therefore, into what they termed messes, for each of which one individual was chosen to be the manager. But even in this way their existence was very miserable: in the first place, the peasantry in the market made no scruple of cheating the Russians; secondly, wood was excessively dear; thirdly, they were obliged to provide themselves with cooking-utensils; and fourthly, if they did not purchase their provisions at the proper time for laying in a store, they were forced to pay double for them. But how were we to lay in provisions, who could scarcely pay for a morsel from hand to mouth? And, had such purchases been practicable, in case of a sudden ex-

change of prisoners, how could we have disposed of our stock ?

Had we been provided with bread and meat by the government, and had the citizens been bound to cook our meat and roots for us, we should never have had to endure the torments of hunger, and the government would even have saved by such an arrangement. Had we even been allowed to send open letters to our friends, how much misery might have been spared to us ! And this permission might have been granted by the government without any chance of danger. The Englishmen and Spaniards, who enjoyed this advantage, were all well provided for, whilst we wrote a hundred letters without receiving either answers or relief ; for, in fact, none of our letters were forwarded.

The number of Russian officers who had been made prisoners amounted only to 260, among whom were one general, and at least sixty civil persons (with the rank of military officers), who were for the most part men of

property, and who had been dragged from their homes, without knowing why, and declared prisoners of war.

I must now say a word respecting the city of Soissons, which is built in a style common to the whole of France, with very little variation. Soissons was in ancient times, under Louis the Debonnaire, a royal residence; and the remains of the palace are still to be seen. The old fortifications of the city are now planted with fine trees, and form a beautiful promenade, surrounded with luxuriant scenery. The river Aisne divides the town into two unequal parts, the smallest of which is on the side towards Laon. This fine river winds through a superb valley, and loses itself in the Oise near Compeigne. Soissons itself is situated in an extensive plain, which is encircled with vine-covered hills, and from which five long valleys, interspersed with villages and chateaus, proceed like so many rays. All the roads are bordered with trees, particularly that which leads towards Laon. Here

there is a walk of a league and a half, between sextuple rows of old trees, where delightful clumps and groves vary the prospect all the way to the river, on the opposite bank of which the view is closed by an elegant chateau. About the middle of this long alley is a spot surrounded with arbours, where the inhabitants dance on Sundays. But the most beautiful promenade is the *Bois de Plexè*, on the road leading to Compeigne. It is a pity that the trees in this beautiful grove are so frequently cut down, for numbers of singing-birds are thereby driven away. The chateau Vaubin stands in a delightful situation on the road to Paris. The owner of this castle is the learned and celebrated Pougins. Though he is now sixty years of age, and has been forty years blind, he still possesses a very lively disposition: he is at present employed in compiling an universal dictionary, and holds correspondence with several academies. His wife is a very amiable Englishwoman. The people of the surrounding

country speak with the highest respect of this worthy pair. He gave me a pressing invitation to visit him, as he knew and respected my father. His study is covered with green baize, and he generally sits in a kind of cabinet or tent, made of green pasteboard, where he dictates to his secretary.

The chateau of General Dulolois is particularly distinguished for the beauty of its situation, and the tasteful style of its architecture. The grounds which surround the castle are laid out by Madame Dulolois, who wandered about this paradise of her own creating, leading a melancholy kind of widowhood, whilst her husband was with the army. She is one of the handsomest women I ever saw in my life. At a short distance from this chateau stands the convent of St. Michael, in which the unnatural children of Louis the Debonnaire confined their father. The following words are cut on the wall of his prison: "I am an unfortunate king and father! My own children have imprisoned me!" It is

affirmed, that these words were the work of the king himself, but I cannot answer for the truth of that statement. This convent is now the property of a rich currier.

The streets of the small towns in France are very narrow. The houses, though in general consisting only of two stories, are rather high in proportion to their breadth, and are painted on the outside with an ugly gray colour, which becomes darker every year. The stone which is used for building is quite soft when it is first dug from the quarry, but it becomes harder in time. The ground-floors are, for the most part, shops. Few houses have more than four windows, looking towards the street; many have only three, and some even but two. Most of the houses in Soissons contain only three rooms, for the same apartment serves for kitchen and sitting-room; the bed-chamber is on the first floor, and on the upper story there is a little room, which is either let out, or occupied by

a servant. Every room contains a chimney. The floors are sometimes paved with brick, but, in general, only covered with a mass of clay, which becomes dry, and produces a horrible dust on being swept. In the course of two years, this floor is either entirely swept away, or becomes so uneven and furrowed, that one can scarcely walk across it without the risk of breaking a leg. The windows have small panes of glass and lattices. The ceilings are seldom plastered, being generally formed of white-washed beams; and the walls are hung with coloured paper. Wicker chairs, unshapely tables, and large bedsteads, are, in general, the only articles of furniture; sophas are seldom to be met with. The French suppose, that sleeping with their heads low tends to improve the shape, and therefore never make use of pillows; this, however, accounts for the custom they all have of snoring in their sleep; and, as in this position, there is a strong determination of

the blood towards the head, it is not surprising that they are troubled with continual head-aches.

The churches, which are very old, are majestic buildings, in the Gothic style.

On market days, the whole market-place is filled with asses; and I must take this opportunity of mentioning the profitable speculation of a Monsieur Defrance, a dealer in tobacco, at Soissons. He lived near the market-place, and, on market days, let out his yard for putting up the asses. The peasants delivered these animals to his care, whilst they carried their goods about the market. Each peasant paid him two sous, by which means Monsieur Defrance obtained every week three hundred sous. On these occasions, the office of taking charge of the asses was consigned to his amiable and accomplished daughter.

CHAPTER XII.

Residence in Soissons.

I LIVED about a month with Major Switschin, in the house of Ancri, the *peruquier*; we took our meals at an ordinary, wishing to enter into no fixed engagement until we should be better acquainted with the town, and know how to make as economical an arrangement as possible. That was less necessary for the major than for me, as I had twenty-five francs less of income, and was very badly equipped. He wished not to leave his quarters, but it was necessary for me to find a house in which I could board. It now appeared to be my fate to live among the *friseurs* of Soissons; for I could find accommodation no where, except with another *peruquier*, named Cho-selet; where, however, every thing was in a better style than in the mansion of M. Ancri. The gay, lively, and witty wife of M. Cho-

selet, managed her household affairs with great propriety, and often succeeded in re-animating the drooping spirits of the poor prisoners. The only disagreeable circumstance was, that we had to dine with M. Choselet's journeymen—fellows, who instead of deserving to sit at our table, were not even fit to wait behind it.

For a neat apartment, with a bed and my board, I paid fifty francs a month, which was the whole of my allowance; but the terms were, in fact, very reasonable.

The mode of living among this class of people throughout the whole of France is the following. At eight o'clock in the morning, the bourgeois goes to his door, where he carries on a conversation, about the news of the day and politics, with his neighbour on the opposite side of the street. They keep up the dialogue by loudly bellowing to each other. In the mean time, each, interlocutor consumes his breakfast, consisting of bread and cheese; to enable him to do which the

more readily, he always carries a knife with him. The talking and the eating ended, he pronounces his *à revoir* ! Then, returning into his house, he drinks some sour wine, endures a little scolding from his wife, and goes quietly to work. The same sort of breakfast fell also to my lot, but it was not served to me in my apartment ; I was obliged to descend, and make one of the company.

The poorer bourgeois dine at one o'clock, the more wealthy at three or four. A pot, which has been set on the fire at an early hour in the morning, remains stewing to that time, when its contents are emptied into a large dish. These consist of a very small piece of meat, a considerable quantity of cabbage, onions, carrots, turnips, beet-root, in short, vegetables of every kind, potatoes excepted. Every thing which after the long boiling still retains any degree of consistence, is removed into another dish. The liquid remains in the first dish, into which *madame* puts a quantity of bread, which she cuts

down for that purpose. When the operation of soaking the bread is completed, the cry of "*La soupe est trempée !*" resounds through the house, and summons all the family to dinner. Whenever I heard the call, two leaps served me to descend the stairs ; on account of which, and my corpulency, the jocular landlady called me her "leaden bird." Whenever she saw me approach, she used to exclaim, "*Voici mon oiseau de plomb !*"

The soup is nutritious, but the seven hours boiled beef can possess no quality of that sort. It is seasoned with a mustard sauce, and eaten with spoons. As for the sour beverage which follows, I shall not mis-call it wine. The French have good reason to drink to each other's health at every glass they take, for if they experience no injury from the liquor, it can be owing only to the kind prayers they reciprocate when they swallow it.

After the second dish was served, the company generally began to depart. We all,

however, eat heartily of the well salted and peppered vegetables, which were graced on Sundays and holydays with the addition of a couple of good large sausages. Roasted or boiled meat seldom appeared on the table; but a good dessert, consisting of all the fruits of the season, was never wanting. At night, we supped on an omelet and fruit. This sort of food, which is very light, and by no means pleasing to the stomach of a German, or even a Russian, is very agreeable to a Frenchman, who requires nothing more.

The intellectual entertainment is, however, still worse. The French have no idea of hospitality. If a friend happen to visit a family at meal time, he is offered a seat, but nothing else; and they continue to eat, with perfect indifference, while he looks on. In winter, the first place in the chimney corner is given to the visitor, where his face is burnt, whilst his shoulders are shivering; for a glass of water would freeze in any corner of the room. Whoever sits in this way during a whole even-

ing, with no other amusement than rubbing his hands, says next day, “*J’ai passé la soirée chez Monsieur un tel*,—I have passed the evening with Mr. such a one.” Several of the prisoners were honoured, by having printed cards addressed to them, inviting them to the house of the prefect, *pour y passer la soirée* (to pass the evening). As they of course expected a good supper, which to them would have been a very acceptable compliment, they ate more sparingly than usual at dinner; but the clock struck eleven, and they were obliged to return home without having tasted a morsel. It is only on extraordinary family festivals, that even the richest persons think of giving their guests any refreshment. At their balls the music generally consists of two old violins; if they can procure a drum, the band is considered complete. They dance only one quadrille, which is extremely beautiful, and might with propriety be termed a ballet. There was, however, only one couple in Soissons who

danced with any thing like grace, though they all managed to jump about. The figures of the dances are regulated by the violin-players, who give their directions in a loud tone of voice.

During the winter it is customary for a party, seated round the fire, to play a game of forfeits. A piece of burning wood is passed from one to another; each of the party, on receiving it, repeats the following words: "*Mon petit bon homme vit encore*,—My good little man is alive still;" and he who happens to have the wood when the last spark extinguishes must pay a forfeit. The Russians have a similar game. Another game, sometimes played in the French towns, is called the *Chevalier Cornard*; in which, however, married gentlemen seldom take part, as they do not like that game, even in jest.

The French have, in general, very little taste for music; and, for this reason, pianofortes are seldom seen in their houses. In the whole city of Soissons, there were but six

of these instruments, three of which were in boarding schools. Parties are, consequently, much more dull in France than in Germany, where every young lady can play and sing; or, at least, jingle a lively air, to which the young people may dance, whilst the old converse. The French, on the contrary, are accustomed from their earliest years to sit in a circle, and talk in a loud confident manner; this habit evidently lays the foundation of that loquacity, for which the whole nation is remarkable. The chattering of old intelligent Frenchmen is, I allow, not disagreeable; but for the present revolutionary breed, alas, what a race!

I regard the peasants of France as much more ignorant than those of Russia; they are, moreover, insolent and avaricious in the extreme. When a stranger enters the dwelling of a Russian peasant, and asks for a glass of milk, is he ever allowed to pay for it? A French peasant is seldom able to read, much less to write. Among the citizens, a young

woman is allowed to have received a superior education, when it can be said, "*Elle écrit bien sa langue*,—She can write her own language well." The way in which the peasantry live is miserable in the extreme. They seldom taste meat. Their dress consists of a frock of blue linen, ornamented here and there with figures worked in white thread. Their thick wooden shoes make a most insufferable noise, particularly when they play at billiards. They frequently throng into the coffee-houses with their hats on, bawl out their jargon, smoke, drink, and play at matrimony. This is the *grande nation*! The filth which prevails in the houses of the peasantry is indescribable. Their wine cannot be envied, it is even worse than the Russian *quash*, and they drink it though it be turned quite sour. Those who have witnessed what I have in France, must feel doubly enraged at the insolent pretensions set up by the French troops in foreign countries.

I had lodged about two months in the

house of the *peruquier* Choselet, when I accidentally learnt, that a certain Doctor Létierce wished to let a spare room in his house to a lodger, whom he could likewise accommodate with board. I fancied that his family would be preferable to the one I was then with, and in this conjecture I was not wrong. I found him a worthy, upright man, quite free from the taint of French frivolity. His wife, who was an amiable and accomplished woman, was considered remarkably beautiful on account of her fair complexion. She was, without doubt, very pretty; but her daughter, a young lady of fifteen, was still prettier; and, moreover, so frank and innocent, that every thought could be read in her eyes, and then—*elle écrivoit bien sa langue*, and was of course well educated. The family, besides, consisted of a son, fourteen years of age, and a good old grandmother. I paid, it is true, ten francs more for this lodging, but with what advantage both to my heart and mind!

On the 1st of April, 1813, in a lucky hour,

I went to live with this worthy family ; a resolution which rescued me from misery and idleness, transported me to agreeable and learned society during the remainder of my captivity, and which gave me a father, mother, brother, and sister ; and formed a bond of friendship which can never break until I cease to live!—May every one in my unhappy situation meet with another Letierce !

The family of this worthy man, amidst all the levities and fluctuations of Soissons, had still the reputation of being conducted with the decency, morality, and good order, which prevailed before the revolution. The doctor visited, gratis, the patients in the *Hotel Dieu*, every morning before breakfast. When he returned home, the children hastily ran to salute him ; I also went down stairs, to be a joyful witness of their reciprocal tenderness. The doctor had by this time seen and spoken with so many persons, that he was enabled to relate to us the news of the day. After breakfast, he rode out to visit his patients in

the neighbourhood of Soissons, round which he had very extensive practice. He returned home about three o'clock. During his absence, I instructed both the children in the German language, arithmetic, geography, and drawing; in return for which, the daughter perfected me in French, by dictating exercises, which she taught me to analyze, and write out correctly. The mother was, in the mean while, busy in the kitchen, which in France, as I have already mentioned, is connected with the sitting-room. Her business was, in general, very soon ended; and she would then sit down with us, and take a part in the instructions, praising or blaming the children, according as she found them industrious or negligent. I was not exempt, when it was my turn to repeat my lesson: the errors which I committed in pronunciation were instantly corrected; and I was frequently obliged to repeat a word over and over, until I could utter it to the satisfaction of all. A few weeks had scarcely elapsed in this man-

ner, when I became in some measure one of the family. I participated in all their pleasures and disappointments. No secret was withheld from me; and I willingly placed equal confidence in them.

About three in the afternoon, Madame Letierce used frequently to sit at the window, to watch the return of the doctor: she would then say, "Children! it is three o'clock; your father will shortly be home; the cloth must be laid for dinner." Books and papers were then laid aside, and all assisted in preparing the table. Whenever the sound of the horse's feet were heard approaching the house, both the children ran out, exclaiming, "Papa! Papa!" and each strove eagerly to obtain the first embrace. We then sat down to a frugal, but wholesome meal; and, what might be considered a rarity, the wine was not sour. During our repast, the doctor used to relate to us all the occurrences he had met with: we then gave him an account of the manner in which we had employed our time, and re-

ceived, according to our merits, either praise or censure ; the latter was, however, always sparingly dealt out.

After dinner, we retired to the little garden, where we all waged war against the weeds and caterpillars. In about an hour the ladies sat down to their needle-work, and I used either to read to them, or employ myself in drawing, &c. Doctor Letierce, in the mean while, visited his patients in the town, and returned home precisely at six o'clock. When the weather was not too warm, we took a walk in the fields ; and the society which I then enjoyed rendered the charms of the country doubly attractive. During these walks, we sometimes visited M. Pougins, who was a patient of Doctor Letierce, and who always received us with great kindness. We frequently rambled into the villages, the inhabitants of which, many of whom owed their lives to the doctor, eagerly thronged to see him, whenever his presence was made known. Old and young formed a circle

around us, and all cordially shook their benefactor by the hand. The doctor made enquiries respecting their health, gave them wholesome prescriptions, joked; and when he talked on political affairs, would sometimes say, whilst he pointed to me, that he knew how to live on very good terms with the Russians. They would not, however, believe that I was a Russian, as I had not, like my countrymen in Soissons, mustachios and a small green cap. All kinds of refreshments used to be set before us; and when we quitted the good people, we received so many nosegays from the pretty peasant girls, that our chamber in the town frequently resembled a green-house. As we varied our walks daily in a regular routine, it so happened that we revisited the same place every sixth day. The country-people remarked this, and felt much disappointment when our visits were retarded by any unforeseen obstacle.

We were accustomed to return home about nine o'clock, when the grandmother had laid

out the table for supper, and the asparagus was boiling on the fire. We seated ourselves for a short time in the garden, and were soon saluted by the welcome call, "*A' table, mes enfans!*" Our supper seldom consisted of any thing but roots. When our repast was ended, we usually sat in the garden until eleven o'clock, and the ladies permitted me to smoke a pipe of tobacco (in France an extraordinary concession), on condition that I should deposit the ashes, by way of manure, over the roots, of a favourite tree.

I continued to live thus happily for the space of eight months! It is true, that I in some measure neglected my comrades, who now, however, suffered less from indigence, than want of society. But there were some men among them remarkable for goodness of heart and understanding; for example, General Tutschkoff, my friends Switschin and Hune, the worthy Baron Hahn, Colonel Mengden, and Prince Putatin. My dear friends, Doctor Kuhne and Haberland usually

visited me every afternoon, in order to improve themselves in the Russian language by my instructions. With all these persons I continued on terms of sincere friendship. When it sometimes happened that I did not visit them for a week, instead of being offended, they rallied me on our meeting with the utmost good humour.

The conversation of the other prisoners was, however, by no means agreeable. It turned eternally on the disadvantage they sustained by the interruption of their military career. I heard constantly repeated,—“Such a one is now a colonel or general! and I was a major when he obtained his ensigncy.—Such another has received an order; had I not been made prisoner, I should not now have been without that honour.”

I seldom went near them, because the uniform repetition of the same litany distressed me; and, likewise, because I wished to avoid the smallest unnecessary expense; for my pay was not more than sufficient to support

me, and I was resolved not to run in debt a single sous to my worthy host. The good man, it is true, after I had lived a month in his house, requested that I would only pay him such a sum as I could conveniently afford, and that the rest should remain owing until a future period; but this delicate proposal rendered me the more punctual in discharging what I owed him.

It is impossible to relate every act of kindness which I experienced from the family of Doctor Letierce. I cannot, however, forbear to mention two circumstances, at the recollection of which my heart overflows with gratitude.

I was awaked one morning as early as four o'clock. On suddenly opening my eyes, I was amazed to find M. Letierce standing by my bed-side. He embraced me, and congratulated me on my birth-day. A few weeks before, in the course of conversation, I accidentally told him when my birth-day happened, and he had not forgotten it. I im-

mediately rose, and went down stairs, where I found all the family dressed; and where each, according to the French custom, presented me with a nosegay. As I had not enjoyed the happiness of living with my parents since I was seven years of age, these marks of attention were new to me, though I had frequently contributed my mite to surprise others in the same way. Tears were the first thanks I had to offer. All remained silent, but all were interested. Breakfast was on the table, in the centre of which was a rich cake, impressed with my initials, and strewn over with flowers.

Letierce perceiving that I was unable to speak, thus addressed me: "Deâr Kotzebue, I am glad we have succeeded in surprising you. No thanks, I beg of you. Were we in your situation, you would, I am convinced, do the same. But no more of this. It is now half-past four; there is every prospect of a fine day, and we must enjoy it; I have therefore obtained the Commandant's permis-

sion for you to accompany us to Compeigne. The carriage waits at the door—*Allons !* Children, get your hats.”

All hastened to depart. My cake was put into a basket, along with other articles of refreshment. Before the clock struck five, we were without the gates of the city, and were saluted, on passing through the *Bois de Plexe*, by the warbling of a thousand singing-birds—Oh, happy day ! Since that period the return of my birth-day has always been accompanied by pleasing recollections !

We seated ourselves in a long carriage, in which were three benches ; Letierce and I (who drove by turns) occupied the first ; on the second sat the mother and daughter ; and on the third, the son and one of his school-fellows. The fine weather raised our spirits ; we sang, laughed, and jested, as we rode along, and took our breakfast when we were half-way on our journey. The beautiful road conducted us through a delightful country on the banks of the Aisne, to the distance

of nine leagues, and we reached Compeigne at ten o'clock. We stopped at an inn (the Golden Ball) near the chateau, and, after having taken a little refreshment, we hastened to view the city, the chateau, and the gardens.

The town is neatly built, and divided by the river Aisne, to which beautiful promenades lead. Bonaparte seldom visited Compeigne, notwithstanding the fine hunting-country in which it is situated, as it was too far from Paris; the Empress, however, spent a few months every year at Compeigne. The chateau is a magnificent building, and the beautiful gardens are terminated by a wood. There is a fine gravel road, half a French mile in length, enclosed on each side with iron railings, and covered with mahogany, under which the Empress could, in all weathers, enjoy the exercise of riding or walking in the shade, and upon dry ground. The whole of this fine promenade may be seen from one end to the other at once, with the view from

the extremity terminating in the horizon. The middle of the garden affords the delightful prospect of an immense plain, with a sheet of water ; the plain extends to a hill crowned with fine trees, with a broad passage cut through it, which permits the eye to rove over boundless space. Here a colossal crucifix of marble seemed to reach to the sky. On quitting this place, the front of the chateau is discovered ; before which, terraces covered with numerous statues and orange-trees, form a magnificent prospect. I made a sketch of this view, which, on finishing, I gave to Doctor Letierce in remembrance of this happy day. By giving a little money to the porter, we were permitted to see the interior of a pavilion belonging to the Empress, in which, among other furniture, there was a toilette-table. Though the servants were strictly prohibited from taking any presents, we soon found that money could throw open all the rooms in which there were either fine pictures or curious furniture to be seen. On nume-

rous doors to our right and left we read the names, Duke of Vicenza, Prince of Neufchatel, &c.: these doors led to apartments which the officers of state occupied when the court resided at Compeigne.

We dined at the *Boule d'or*, and at four o'clock set out on our return. We were not so cheerful during our journey homeward as we had been in the morning; we felt fatigued, and all slumbered by turns, until we were awakened by the heavy clanking of the gates of Soissons. The good grandmama had prepared supper, and we all retired to rest, well satisfied with our journey. The kindness which was on this day shown to me, has made an impression on my heart which no time can efface.

CHAPTER XIII.

Continuation—Journey to Paris.

As Napoleon's birth-day, which happened on the 15th of August, was to be celebrated with much pomp in Paris, Doctor Letierce received an invitation to the house of his brother-in-law, M. Berthole, in that city. Without mentioning a word to me, M. Letierce again applied to the commandant to procure me permission to accompany him to Paris. The commandant replied, that he was not authorized to grant leave of absence; but, said that he would be less strict on the roll-call, and would pass over my name, if I would promise to return within five days. M. Letierce was himself unable to stay longer, and I was highly thankful for this recreation. We travelled by the diligence, I under the name of Dulon, a merchant from Mentz, in

order that my foreign accent might not excite suspicion.

One of our travelling companions violently abused the Russians, whilst he blamed the generosity of Napoleon in granting them a truce, which he said would cause the French to enter Petersburg at a bad season of the year. M. Letierce appeared to assent to this observation, but at the same time declared that the inhabitants of Soissons were highly satisfied with the good conduct of the Russian prisoners in that city.

We passed through Villers-Cotterets and Nanteuil, and arrived at Paris, on the 14th of August, at eight o'clock in the evening. We immediately proceeded to the house of M. Berthole, near the *Rue Notre Dame, des Champs*, where the whole family joyfully received their long looked-for relation. I was introduced as an intimate friend of M. Letierce, and experienced a kind reception. M. Berthole, though pretty far advanced in life, possessed a most cheerful disposition; and

his wife was a lively agreeable woman. His family consisted of two handsome daughters and a son. He was rich, kept an elegant house with a spacious garden, wanted for nothing; but, on account of his principles, had but a small circle of acquaintances. My real name was made known to this amiable family, but all were requested to call me Monsieur Dulon.

Next morning we repaired to the Tuilleries, where an immense concourse of people had assembled. It was understood that the Empress would, that day, attend mass in the church of *Notre Dame*. Every one thronged to the court-yard, to get a sight of her; and it was easy to read in their eyes the events which were passing with the army; for though the newspapers were for the most part silent, some ventured to hint that the Russians had broken the armistice. The Empress at last appeared: her air was melancholy and down-cast, and a gentle bow of the head was the only return she made to the warm acclama-

tions with which she was greeted. This excited a disagreeable sensation among the people, and led them to suspect that all was not right. The crowd then hastened to the garden, and appeared to forget the sorrowful looks of the Empress, whilst they gazed at the little King of Rome. He was riding on the terrace in a carriage drawn by two goats, and kissed his hands to the populace as he drove along. His little aide de-camp followed him, dressed in a hussar uniform. The King is a pretty little boy, with fair hair, and a pair of large blue eyes.

His Majesty was, however, soon deserted by the people, who hastened to witness the ascension of an air-balloon in the *Champs-Élysées*. To our astonishment we beheld in the car of this balloon a beautiful little child, who was sobbing most bitterly; for though the balloon was confined by ropes, yet the roughness of the wind caused it to vibrate backwards and forwards with considerable velocity. The father of the child frequently

took him from his seat, and endeavoured to console him ; but whenever the balloon began to ascend, the child resumed his sobbing, for the aerial machine continued to swing with great violence, notwithstanding that the ropes were very firmly secured. There was, it is true, no chance whatever of the child falling out of the car ; but he appeared to suffer the greatest alarm, and the people exclaimed : “ Take the child out ! Let the unnatural father himself ascend in the balloon ! ” This was not, however, attended to, and a strong guard prevented the people from putting their wishes into execution.

The man wished to make the balloon ascend by ropes to the balcony of the Empress, to whom the child was to present a poem. For this purpose it was to pass over the *Place de la Revolution*, and then enter the Tuilleries. The wind had by this time increased in violence, and the balloon was driven from one side to the other in a dreadful manner. The poor child, whom terror had rendered almost

senseless, stretched forth its hand to the spectators; its voice was no longer audible. I was so enraged, that I could have strangled the father. Many of the spectators felt as I did, but others regarded it as a good joke, and laughed heartily. The father was, however, deservedly rewarded for his barbarous speculation: after having waited in vain for a considerable time in the Tuilleries, a servant of the palace came out to inform him that the Empress had unexpectedly set out for St. Cloud. The man stood murmuring at his disappointment, but the spectators called out: “*Qui présidera donc à la joute?*—Then who will preside at the tournament?” This, it was remarked, was the first time she had ever been absent on such an occasion; and her withdrawing appeared to be considered by many a mark of neglect towards the people; but politicians suspected the loss of a battle.

The banks of the Seine were crowded with people; particularly on one side, along which

many tents were erected; and among them, a most magnificent one for the reception of the Empress. After giving some pieces of silver, and receiving some hearty squeezes, we at last succeeded in obtaining places in one of these tents. We endured the most intolerable heat for the space of an hour, when, at last, several carriages drove up, each drawn by six horses, and the people shouted, "*Vive l'Imperatrice!*" There was, however, no Empress there. The carriages were filled by elegantly dressed ladies and gentlemen, the latter decorated with orders. A trumpet was sounded; and we immediately perceived, on the river, a number of boats rowing towards each other: the sailors of one party were dressed in red, and those of the other in blue. At the head of each boat stood a sailor, dressed in a white jacket, with a sash of the colour of his party, and furnished with a long pole, at the end of which was fastened a large knob, which appeared to me to be made of leather. When the boats

had approached near enough, on the sounding of the trumpet, one of these men endeavoured to seize the knob of his opponent's pole, and thereby to throw him overboard. If he succeeded, he was declared the conqueror, and loudly applauded ; whilst the one who remained struggling in the water excited the ridicule of the spectators.

This was the whole of a spectacle, respecting the grandeur of which very high expectations had been raised, but which was divested of all the interest which the reciprocal activity and efforts of the combatants might have given to such an exhibition ; for it was settled that the sailor in the red sash should always be thrown overboard, as he was the champion of the English squadron. The moment he fell into the water, the people triumphantly exclaimed, “ *L'Anglois est tombé.*”

This show afforded me little amusement. I received far more entertainment from the agreeable party with which we dined under

the trees, in M. Berthole's garden. In the evening we went out to see the illuminations; those on the *Pont-Royal*, and in the *Champs-Élysées*, were remarkably splendid, though far inferior to what I have witnessed in Petersburg.

Whilst I remained in Paris, I visited the celebrated *Hotel des Invalides*. I was highly gratified with every thing I saw on the establishment, excepting the pretended Russian standards, which were made in Warsaw by Bonaparte's orders, in 1807, and then sent as trophies to Paris. In the court of the Hotel, (a kind of garden, in which the invalids amuse themselves,) I saw one unfortunate man who had lost both his legs and arms in battle, and whose trunk, with the head still attached to it, was dragged about by his wife in a little car. The rope by which she pulled it was fastened to her waist, and she walked along knitting quite at her ease, without seeming to consider whether the vehicle was moving securely or not, and paying

no attention to the expressions of compassion which the mutilated carcase of her husband extorted from the spectators.

After having spent five days, partly in pleasure without doors, and partly in the enjoyment of agreeable society within, we departed from Paris with sorrowful hearts. The kind M. Berthole requested, in the most friendly way, that I would visit his house, if ever I should again come to Paris.

On our return to the little town of Soissons, we found every thing as peaceable as when we left it, and I became daily more attached to the excellent family of Doctor Letierce. The hopes of my comrades had been raised by the armistice, and the prospect of a speedy peace; but when hostilities were recommenced, they all became disheartened, and many were reduced to a state of despair. Five of these unhappy men, among whom was my friend Hune, formed the project of escaping, and, in some measure, succeeded in executing their design. They departed

from Soissons, in the disguise of peasants, and directed their course northwards, by the way of Lille, in the hope of reaching the coast of Flanders, and there finding a vessel by which they might have been conveyed to England. They slept during the day, and at night proceeded on their journey. The flatness of the country in Flanders rendered their enterprise extremely difficult, for they could seldom find a thicket to conceal themselves; and, being besides unacquainted with the road, their enquiries naturally excited suspicion. They reached Lille, however, in safety; and, though contending with hunger and thirst, had already completed three-fourths of their journey, when they were pursued, during the night, by a party of *gendarmes*, and finally taken. They were dragged from one jail to another, all the way back to Soissons; here they were placed in the most rigid confinement, and it was with difficulty that our earnest solicitations saved them from being imprisoned along with the com-

mon felons. I was one of the few who obtained permission to visit them. What a melancholy aspect they presented! Their disguise, and the dishevelled state of their hair, scarcely permitted me to recognise them. We relieved their misery, as far as lay in our power; for no compassion was felt for their sufferings by any of the French, except Doctor Letierce, who sent them many supplies of provisions and bottles of brandy. At last an order arrived for their removal to Chateau Bouillon: here they remained, in the greatest misery, until the allies entered France, when they were fortunately released by the Russian army.

That we should experience more rigid treatment after this affair, was naturally to be expected; we were now mustered twice every day by the commandant, instead of only twice a week, as we formerly were. For a long time we vainly cherished the hope of being exchanged for the French prisoners who had been taken along with General St. Cyr: on

the contrary, orders were issued, at the latter end of November, for transporting our depot to Dreux, twenty miles beyond Paris. Many of my comrades were overjoyed at this news; but it sounded like a thunder-bolt in my ears.

Though the French kept the battle of Leipzick very secret, or rather talked of it as a victory, yet the preparations in the departments; and even Bonaparte's sudden arrival in Paris, plainly indicated that all the *Te Deums* had been sung for nothing. On these occasions, popular opinion was freely expressed, and the number of reproaches uttered against Napoleon was incalculable; but it would not have been safe for any foreigner to join in the abuse which was unsparingly lavished on him; and this was certainly laudable in the French. It may be safely asserted, that no merchant, citizen, or peasant, was at this time favourable towards the Emperor; it follows, therefore, that three-fourths of the people disliked his government.

There was, it is true, in the town of Soissons an old physician, a Doctor Dieu, who had, during the revolution, been first of all a zealous royalist, next a jacobin, and was then a furious partizan of Napoleon. His medical skill was allowed to be considerable, yet none of the inhabitants appeared willing to apply for his advice.

The day of our departure terminated my happiness in France. What words can describe my feelings, when I bade adieu to the family of Doctor Letierce!—For several days before we had given up all our little occupations and pleasures. How were our hearts oppressed when we sat round the fire the evening before my departure! The melancholy silence which prevailed was broken only by our sighs, and the rude November wind, which whistled round the house. The hour struck at which we were accustomed to retire to rest—my eyes overflowed with tears—our parting was most painful.

General Tutschkoff, Baron Hahn, and I,

had engaged places in the diligence, to proceed to Dreux by the way of Paris, though the rest of the prisoners went by St. Denis, without entering Paris. My companions had the goodness to call me at five in the morning. Doctor Letierce, who was up before that hour, had himself prepared some coffee for me : leaving the ladies asleep, he accompanied me to the coach, and, when he shut the door of the house, it appeared to me as if heaven had been for ever closed upon me !

CHAPTER XIV.

Journey to Dreux—Imprisonment at St. Malo—Deliverance.

THE coach drove swiftly through the gates of Soissons ; I looked back upon the beloved town until we entirely lost sight of it. Every spot which we had visited during our walks, and which I now passed over for the last time, awakened within me the most painful recollections. These reflections occupied my mind during the whole of our journey, except at short intervals, when I was overcome by sleep.

M. Berthole entertained General Tutschkoff, the baron, and myself, in the most hospitable manner possible, and likewise obtained for us the advantage of remaining two days in Paris : the general was the more desirous of this, as he himself had never before seen the French capital.

The fugitive Napoleon had by this time arrived, and was saluted by lampoons, which, notwithstanding the vigilance of the guards, were posted up on the very walls of the Tuilleries. He then dispersed the legislative body, and thereby increased the number of his slaves, though not that of his friends.

From Paris we proceeded to Versailles, and saw the Great and the Little Trianon: the latter was destined for the King of Rome; all the furniture represented Roman ruins. In the beautiful, though desolate, city of Versailles, we stopped at a tavern, which had once been the residence of the Duchess de la Vallière, the favourite mistress of Louis XIV. The landlord was in heart and soul a royalist.

We rode to Dreux in an odd sort of diligence; it had but two wheels, was drawn by three horses, and carried eight persons. Fortunately we had but fifteen leagues to go, and we reached Dreux that very day. Our comrades, who had arrived a few days before us, appeared better pleased with this station

than they had been with Soissons, though the town was smaller, and in every respect less comfortable: the inhabitants, it is true, showed us the utmost kindness, and many of the prisoners were lodged and boarded free of expense. We received invitations from the sub-prefect, and other respectable families; but we felt severely the loss of Captain Claffy, the good commandant of Soissons. We were here tormented by M. Otto, a one-eyed upstart, whose friendship was only shared by those who were willing to drink with him for several hours at a time. Fortunately, his authority was subordinate to that of the prefect, and therefore he could only harass us in trifling matters.

We commenced the new year, 1814, agreeably enough in Dreux. Accounts soon reached us, that the allies had crossed the Rhine, and were advancing to Paris. Leticier wrote, to inform me that Soissons had been hastily fortified, and that, owing to the near approach of the enemy, he and his fa-

mily were thrown into a state of great uneasiness: he requested that General Tutschkoff would immediately send him a letter of protection, to be used in case the Russians should storm the town. Many of the inhabitants of Soissons, who had known the general, made the same request, with which he most readily complied. But how were these papers to reach the place of their destination without being opened? Had their contents been discovered, consequences very disagreeable to the general, as well as the persons to whom they were addressed, might have followed. I passed a restless night; and, whenever I closed my eyes, I fancied I beheld my benefactor plundered and insulted. I rose by break of day, and hastened to General Tutschkoff; the letters were not yet sent to the post-office: I resolved to seize this opportunity of proving my gratitude, and, even at the risk of losing my liberty, to convey the letter to the worthy Letierce. Although I suffered severely for this enterprise, I have

never yet regretted the undertaking it ; and even when lingering in a jail, I was consoled with the idea of having saved the honour and property of my benefactors, whilst the whole city was a prey to pillage : my life would have been a cheap forfeit for such an object.

I took my place in the diligence, paid a momentary visit to M. Berthole, as I passed through Paris, and, at nine in the evening, astonished Doctor Letierce and his family by my unexpected entrance, whilst they were all seated at supper. Their joy was boundless at seeing me ; but so was also their anxiety for my safety : they deprecated the protection, for my danger made them forget their own. I endeavoured to remove their fears, by assuring them, that the general in Dreux would be answerable for me ; and that, as the prisoners were mustered only once every week, I might yet remain six days absent.

What happiness did I not experience when I again joined the circle of this amiable family ! How joyfully I entered my old apart-

ment, where every thing appeared to remain as I had left it! Yes, I must even acknowledge (and why should I feel ashamed to own it?) I was overjoyed when I again beheld my old boot-jack!—Nobody knew that I spent five happy days in Soissons, for I always withdrew to my apartment whenever a visitor entered the house. But in the meanwhile a storm was gathering in Dreux.

The good understanding which had prevailed between the prisoners and the French authorities there was interrupted by an unlucky accident, which was likewise the principal cause of the sufferings which I afterwards endured. The prisoners were ordered to be in their respective quarters by nine o'clock every evening; those, however, who happened to be invited to parties, and were unable to return home so early as nine, received billets, on presenting which to the patrole, they were suffered to pass through the streets at any hour. The distribution of these billets was sometimes delayed for seve-

ral days, and it happened, on the very evening of my departure from Dreux, that General Tutschkoff was arrested whilst returning home from the house of the prefect, although his person was very well known to the guard. He was, at his own request, conveyed back to the prefect, and immediately liberated. The prefect, next morning, sent him a billet. The general expected that the prefect would have paid him a visit in person; and he had no sooner opened the billet, than he tore it, and sent it back, with the following answer: "Napoleon returned me my sword upon the field of battle; I am therefore no prisoner, and am at liberty to quit France whenever I think fit: I, however, choose to remain here, to share the fate of my unhappy countrymen. As I voluntarily submit to this kind of captivity, I have the more reason to expect, that the prefect should treat me with all the consideration which is due to my rank, as well as my irreproachable conduct."

The general received no answer to this

note. The enraged prefect immediately enforced, in the strictest manner, the orders of the commandant; one of which was, that the prisoners should be mustered three times every day. I, of course, was missed on the first call; and though the General and Baron Hahn both offered to pledge their own freedom for my return on the fifth day, a report of my absence was immediately drawn up and transmitted to Paris.

In the mean while I had a second time, with regret, torn myself from the arms of my benefactors; I had also been disappointed of the company of a worthy neighbour in the diligence; and, therefore, returned to Dreux under the influence of very melancholy sensations. When I learnt what had taken place, I hastened to the commandant, to assure him that I was no deserter. Though he affected to feel for my situation, he suffered me to be seized by a party of *gendarmes*, and sent to Versailles to General

Ulemburgh. My comrades scarcely had time to convey to me something for my relief.

General Ulemburgh received me with kindness, and appeared well convinced that I had not deserted. He immediately sent a report to the minister in Paris, from whom he received an answer, directing that my confinement was to be as strict as if I had committed theft or murder. I protested solemnly against this treatment, but could only obtain a written recommendation from the general to the keeper of the prison. Had it not been for the kind treatment of this 'worthy man (whose name was Biset), I should probably have become a prey to despair. I occupied a part of his own chambers, for which, it is true, I paid at a very dear rate; for few Frenchmen are free from selfishness; but he treated me with great attention, and I enjoyed all the liberty which he had the power to grant. I was much indebted to him for sending a letter to Soissons, which he caused

to be safely delivered according to the address.

Eight melancholy days had passed away, and I began to fancy that all the world had forgotten me, when one morning a man requested to speak to me in private. He proved to be the brother of the Russian Colonel Radulphe de Goumé. I had served in the same corps with the colonel, and was therefore enabled to give his brother the most satisfactory information respecting him. This worthy man, besides relieving my necessities, frequently enlivened the dull hours of my imprisonment by his agreeable conversation, and repeatedly waited on the general to make inquiries respecting my future destination.

At last an order was received for removing me to the garrison of St. Malo. Before my departure I was permitted to breakfast with Radulphe, and was by this means introduced to his amiable family. He gave me a letter of recommendation to a Madame de St. Maur, in St. Malo, who afterwards rendered

me considerable services. I travelled according to the prescribed routes. I passed through Dreux, where I endured the mortification of not being allowed to speak to my companions. It was then reported, that the depot at Dreux would shortly be broken up, as the country round Paris was expected to become the theatre of the war.

I passed through Alençon, Mayenne, and Fugeres, and was every where stared at like some strange animal. I arrived at St. Malo on the 15th of February. The commandant was unluckily at St. Sçavant, not far from the town. In consequence of his absence, however, I was driven from place to place; no one seemed to know how to dispose of me. I was, at length, thrown into a most horrible jail; for which severity I had to thank, in a great measure, the sergeant of the *gendarmérie*. This man had the assurance to speak unbecomingly of my Emperor. I at first took little notice of him; but his insolence afterwards became so unbearable,

that I called him a stupid, impertinent Frenchman, and declared I would complain of him. The commandant not being in St. Malo, I was left at the disposal of this rude fellow, who got me imprisoned among the vilest malefactors, where I was allowed no resting-place excepting the bare ground. While I deplored my fate bitterly, some of the wretches laughed at me, and others asked me to join them in a game at matrimony, assuring me that I might live very comfortably there, and that the jailer's wife was an agreeable woman, and one who would sometimes give credit for a glass of brandy.

In this miserable situation I received a letter from Madame de St. Maur. The jailer's wife for a long time refused to deliver it to me; but my prayers and entreaties, accompanied by a little money, at length succeeded in moving her. Heaven seemed to smile upon me when, in a short time, the noble lady herself entered the prison, to convey friendly consolation to one who was languish-

ing in a filthy dungeon, surrounded by the vilest felons. I need scarcely mention, that she was a *ci-devant*. This angel wept with me, promised to go herself to the commandant, to make a representation of my miserable situation, and in the mean while to provide for my necessities.

She departed. Her presence had, in some measure, set my mind at ease; and, overpowered with fatigue, I suffered my eyes for a short while to close. But what a scene did I witness on awaking from a short slumber! The prisoners were sound asleep, and snoring on every side of me. I seated myself on a bundle of straw, over which hung a dismal lamp; the desire of sleep now entirely forsook me. Towards midnight the great dog in the prison-yard began to bark furiously, the heavy doors creaked on their hinges, and a guard entered the cell. A horrible thought suddenly entered my mind: I fancied they had come in the dead of the night to murder me. Life had indeed become almost indif-

ferent to me. It was, however, only the patrol; and the corporal, who had a lantern in his hand, proceeded immediately to count the prisoners. He rudely asked me why I was not asleep. I am inclined to think he would have struck me, had not the jailer interposed with the words, "He is a Russian officer." The patrol counted forty-three prisoners: "And that Russian there," said the sergeant, "makes forty-four." The sensation which these words excited within me is indescribable! I was unable to bear the thought of being classed with such a gang. When the guard had departed, I uttered a deep groan, which awakened some of the prisoners, and I was saluted by the insulting words, "Be quiet, you Russian rascal!" Several times I felt inclined to slumber, but was constantly disturbed by frightful dreams. I fancied myself contending with a wild beast, or falling from a lofty precipice. Yet the dawn of morning was unwelcome to me, for it doomed me to hear the vile discourse

of the prisoners, and to become the object of their brutal jests.

At nine o'clock a *gendarme* entered the prison, to conduct me to the commandant. Heavens! with what delight did I again inhale the fresh air! Some persons whom I met on the street seemed to take pity on me, but others stared, and exclaimed, "*Coquin de Russe!*" as I passed along. Though the commandant behaved, upon the whole, with much arrogance, yet he condescended to make some apology for the wretched quarters which had been assigned to me. I did not think fit to answer some of the political questions which he put to me, upon which he said very drily, that he had already ordered an apartment to be prepared for me in the castle, but that in the mean while I must be satisfied with the jail. I earnestly entreated that he would not send me back to the prison, declaring that I would willingly surrender myself to the strongest guard, and be content with the most wretched corner he could

allot to me. This, the unfeeling man termed affectation, which ill became a state-prisoner. I departed in silence. Madame de St. Maur visited the commandant shortly after I left him; and, at eleven o'clock, I was conducted to the castle by the commandant's aide-de-camp: it is situated near the town, and is surrounded by a ditch and high walls. The interior space is divided into two small gloomy yards, in one of which apartments had been built for state-prisoners, along one side of the wall; mine consisted of a small room, furnished with a table, a chair, and a bedstead filled with straw. A guard was stationed before the door, and changed every hour. I was debarred from all society, and all correspondence, though for a little money I procured pens, ink, and books.

No one was suffered to visit me, excepting the commandant and his two aides-de-camp, one of whom appeared to take an extraordinary interest in my fate. The commandant

unluckily perceived this, and I saw the aide-de-camp no longer.

Soup, and a small piece of meat, were, in return for my money, daily thrust in at the door. My guards and I did not long agree together, for they took the liberty of coming into my room ; and this was doubly disagreeable to me, both on account of the tobacco which they smoaked, and because their presence hindered me from employing myself in the way I wished. I at length forbade them to enter ; but they revenged themselves for this affront, for whenever they relieved guard during the night, they called out to me, and I was thus obliged to vociferate an answer every hour. Yet I preferred this nightly inconvenience to the disorderly intrusion which I had endured during the day ; I now passed the tedious hours of the day very quietly in reading and study. But when I recollected Soissons, and considered that I knew not how long I had to remain in this state of

wretchedness, alas, I was then miserable indeed!

Whilst I was in this situation, I well knew that many other unfortunate men were confined in the castle; however, I never saw them. I had been in it about a month, when one evening the door of my apartment was suddenly opened; the commandant's aide-de-camp entered, accompanied by a guard, and imperiously ordered me to rise. From the manner in which they behaved, I at first thought they had been sent to carry me out to the castle ditch, and shoot me; but this was not the case, they merely sealed up my papers, and carried off all my writing materials. My mind was at ease, when I considered that there was among my papers nothing which could furnish ground for suspicion. A plan of Soissons, which I had sketched during my leisure hours there, was fortunately not in my possession: I lent it to one of my comrades, who forgot to return it. I had to thank him for his negligence; had it

been found on this occasion, it might have afforded a pretence for treating me with still greater severity.

When the aide-de-camp had searched every corner of the room, he noted down with much formality that I was the son of the Russian Counsellor of State, Kotzebue, and asked me why my father wrote against Bonaparte. I made no answer to this strange question. He then packed all my things together, and doubled my guard. I have since learnt, that the apartments of several other prisoners underwent a similar examination, but for what reason I am at a loss to conjecture. After this I was more strictly guarded, the aide-de-camp seldom visited me, and his conduct was always very austere.

In this manner a month and eight days elapsed, when, great God! on the memorable fourth of April, the commandant, accompanied by an immense crowd of people, entered the yard. The incessant cries of "*Vive le roi!*" and the waving of the white

flag, filled me with astonishment, and I trembled without knowing why. As the crowd advanced, I heard several persons exclaim, "To the Russian! to the Russian!" The commandant advanced towards my door; my room was instantly filled with people, all exclaiming, "You are free!—*Vive le roi!*—*Vive l'Empereur Alexandre!*" I could scarcely credit what I heard, when the commandant informed me that the Russians had entered Paris, and congratulated me on my freedom.

I remained for some time motionless; all was silent.—I know not by what impulse I was led to exclaim, "*Vive le roi!*" These words were rapturously received. Several persons seized my hands, and conducted me from my prison. We then went by turns to the rest of the prisoners, and I soon enjoyed the satisfaction of congratulating them on their freedom, and being a witness of their joyful surprise; many wept aloud, and, like me, were unable to believe what they heard: they were eleven in number.

The people impetuously demanded, whether there were any prisoners in concealment? The commandant assured them, upon his honour, that there were no more. The crowd dispersed by degrees, and I had thus an opportunity of becoming acquainted with my companions in misfortune, namely, a Dutch colonel and three captains, a Westphalian baron, and several Frenchmen: the Frenchmen soon retired, but the foreigners remained. We showed to each other the cells in which we had been confined, and related what we had suffered during our imprisonment; we had all encountered nearly the same fate: some had been regarded as rebels, for having joined the Dutch National Guard, and fought against the French. The wife of the colonel had come to Paris, to endeavour to procure her husband's liberty, when the minister of police unfeelingly presented to her a list of the prisoners who were to be shot at St. Malo. The name of her husband was the first which caught her eye; she im-

mediately fainted, and was carried off in a state of insensibility. I am ignorant whether or not my name was inscribed in this list. The sentence was to have been executed in the beginning of April, but the Russians entered Paris before the day appointed.

The people greeted us with loud huzzas as we passed through the town. St. Malo lies quite in the sea, being built on a small island; it is surrounded by a massy stone wall, which serves also for a promenade; the streets are narrow, but some of the houses are very well built; in every corner of the town the finest oysters were selling at ten sous the hundred.

I hastened to visit Madame de St. Maur, by whom I was joyfully received. She had frequently requested permission to send provisions and wine to my prison, or in any other way to relieve my distress, but all her applications were vain. I felt so indignant at this conduct of the commandant, that I did not even bid him farewell.

Whilst I was overwhelmed with distress at

St. Malo, my unfortunate comrades, whom I had left at Dreux, were transported to the depot at Chartres; their removal took place during the worst season of the year, and they had to travel by the most miserable roads. Several other depots had undergone similar removals; and, as the preparations occasioned by the near approach of the enemy excited the greatest confusion, it frequently occurred that the prisoners and the military crossed each other on their march, till at last it often happened, that neither knew which way to proceed; the stronger party drove away the weaker. My comrades had scarcely arrived at Chartres, when they were ordered to remove, to make room for a depot of dragoons. They were desired to go to Orleans, where it was said they would find good accommodation; but, on reaching Orleans, they found their quarters occupied by two depots of cuirassiers. They were then ordered to Brest, where they expected to find only seamen. They had remained but a short time in Brest,

when they received an order to march to Rennes. Although the number of military in the last-mentioned place was very considerable, yet the half-starved and ragged prisoners at last found some persons who took compassion on them, and they remained in Rennes until their liberation. There were moreover many good royalists in Brittany and Normandy, from whom the prisoners received such kind treatment, that they felt the sincerest regret on taking leave of their benefactors.

When Louis XVIII. was proclaimed, they paraded the town at the head of the people, and destroyed the eagles. The prefect stationed himself in a balcony, and excited the people to hoist the white cockade, and exclaim, *Vive le roi!* General Tutschkoff was visited by a formal deputation, and pressingly requested to accept the office of prefect, until the king could appoint another; and it was with some difficulty he succeeded in waving

this proposal. He wrote to me, requesting that I would hasten to Rennes, to participate in the general enthusiasm. I had scarcely finished reading his letter, when I received one from my benefactor Letierce, the mere sight of whose hand-writing overjoyed me; he had sustained no injury in the storming of Soissons, and had found an opportunity to send his family to M. Berthole in Paris, where they still remained.

I continued in St. Malo two days longer, during which I witnessed nothing but rejoicings. I then set out for Rennes, and from thence, accompanied by my comrades, proceeded to Paris.

I shall ever regard as one of the happiest moments of my life, that in which I again saw Doctor Letierce's family. They declared, they were indebted for their safety to the letter which I conveyed to them. General Winzingerode, and my good uncle General Rosen, paid full respect to the re-

commendation of their unfortunate fellow-soldiers; may Heaven reward them for it! —This information amply indemnified me for all my past sufferings.

THE END.

POSTSCRIPT

BY

A. VON KOTZEBUE.

THOUGH the preceding relation contains many serious complaints of severity and selfishness manifested on the part of the French, yet every friend of humanity, who feels repugnant at the idea of condemning a whole nation, will remark with pleasure, that in France, as well as in all other places, misfortune is sure to extort sympathy. How many noble-minded Frenchmen did the prisoner meet between Polotzk and St. Malo! and in what country in the world would he have experienced better treatment in his situation, than in France? His name, though hateful to the ears of every Bonapartist, proved no

disadvantage to him ; he enjoyed at Soissons as much freedom as any of his comrades ; he was even permitted to visit Compeigne and Paris. It was only when the gratitude of his heart induced him to absent himself five days from Dreux, that he experienced harsh treatment ; but would not such a proceeding have been attended by similar consequences in any other country ?

The author having, at the commencement of this work, mentioned his unfortunate brother, his father, avails himself of the opportunity of here inserting a plain, but well merited, memorial of that beloved son.

WILLIAM VON KOTZEBUE was born in Russia. At the age of six years he was carried by his parents to Weimar, where he had the misfortune to lose his excellent mother. He was then sent to the celebrated Salzmann, at Schnepfenthal, where he remained five years. Though his tender age did not permit him to pursue his education on an extensive plan, yet he had to thank the Institution at Schnep-

fenthal for activity of body and purity of mind. No youth was ever more attached to truth; he was unacquainted with the nature of falsehood. The tender love which he entertained for the worthy Salzmann, ended only with his life. If all the scholars at Schnepfenthal were taught to regard truth and virtue as sacredly as William did, this institution must be the best in the world; for though it might not produce the greatest scholars, it would certainly produce the most virtuous men.

Between the age of eleven and twelve, William returned to his native country, and was sent to pursue his education in the ancient and celebrated establishment called Peter's School, in St. Petersburg. A few years afterwards, he quitted the Russian capital for Vienna, where his father then was; and commenced his military career by entering the excellent engineer cadet corps, in which his industry and good conduct gained him universal esteem.

Having attained the age of puberty, he wished, on his next examination, to enter the Austrian engineer regiment; but as there prevails in Austria a disinclination to the admission of foreigners into that corps, he was passed over, though he had greatly distinguished himself at his examination. This circumstance deeply affected him; but he unexpectedly received a brilliant indemnification. His imperial highness the Archduke Charles, that great commander and eminent judge of merit, who was present at the examination, observing that William had acquired no common knowledge, immediately appointed him ensign in the regiment which belongs to his imperial highness as grand-master of the Teutonic Order, and confided to him the instruction of the cadets. The colonel of this regiment, Von Faber, proved the young ensign's most sincere friend.

He was promoted to the rank of first lieutenant, when the war of 1805 broke out. The Archduke, at that time, increased his general

staff. How great was William's astonishment, when, without the slightest expectation of such an advancement, he was suddenly informed that he was made a captain of the general staff!

In this rank he made his first campaign with the Archduke Charles in Italy. He was engaged in every action, particularly in the battle of Caldiero, and had his share in the celebrated retreat through the Tyrol. He was thus formed in the best school of his profession. At the conclusion of the peace, he was employed in making surveys and measurements in the Tyrol; and experienced the greatest happiness whilst he remained among the good people of that country.

In the mean while, his worthy Colonel, Von Faber, was appointed general and chief of the cadet corps at Wiener-Neustadt; and, on his representation, William was, at the age of twenty-three, made professor of mathematics and military tactics to that institution. In this situation, however, he still retained

the rank of captain on the general staff, in order that he might, in the case of a renewal of the war, be ready to draw his sword; for his hatred of Bonaparte was boundless. In the year 1809 his wishes, in this respect, were fulfilled.

He served, in the first place, under his imperial highness the Archduke John; and had an active share in the operations in the neighbourhood of Presburgh. The following account would appear almost incredible, were it not corroborated by several authentic documents. But to prove the truth of what was related by this young man, no such evidence is necessary, for none could be more devoid of ostentation than he was.

It is well known that a bridge-head had been constructed in front of Presburgh; it was not, however, at this time completely finished, nor even provided with cannon. William was one day stationed in this fortification with 1500 men; he himself, with 500 men, occupied the out-works, and the remaining thou-

sand were distributed in the other works on both flanks, the bridge over the Danube being in their rear. The French unexpectedly debouched from an adjacent wood; it was at first supposed that they intended to cross the river, but they gradually surrounded the bridge-head. William had hitherto only attended to the safety of his own position, and had intrusted the flanks to his comrades. He, however, soon perceived that the thousand men were retreating along the bridge, and that he and his party were almost completely cut off. He had now no alternative but to retreat likewise. But this operation could only be effected under a shower of balls; many of his troops were taken prisoners, and his loss was altogether so great, that he reached the bridge with only sixty men. These brave men hastened to cross it. But with what astonishment did they find that two of the supports of the bridge were removed! This had been done by the party who first crossed the bridge, in order to stop

the pursuit of the French. Many of William's men leaped into the river, in the hope of saving themselves by swimming, but he had the mortification of seeing them perish before his eyes.

In this dreadful situation, with the French in his front, and the river in his rear, he ordered his little party to face the enemy; the firing continued on every side, and he soon had only five men left with him, one of whom in a few minutes fell dead at his feet.

The French were as little aware of the destruction of any part of the bridge as the Austrians had been, and imagined that the little party meant to defend themselves to the last extremity. William used often to relate with astonishment the coolness with which a French colonel, on approaching the bridge-head, sprang from his horse, drew his sword; and, placing himself at the head of his troops, ordered them to march forward, then led them on the bridge itself at the charging step.

In this critical moment, William suddenly reflected, that such of his troops as leaped into the river, and had been drowned, probably perished only because they lost presence of mind, in consequence of the precipitate plunge from the bridge into the water. William had learnt to swim when he was at Schnepfenthal, and that acquisition now proved of service to him. Having climbed across the balustrades of the bridge, he dropped on one of the pillars underneath, along which he gradually slipped down, until he was up to the neck in the water. He then quitted his hold, and swam across the Danube, amidst the firing of the enemy.

When all the Austrians had left the bridge, General Bianchi ordered his troops to open a heavy fire of grape-shot from the opposite side, by which the French suffered considerably, and were soon compelled to retreat. William only took time to wring the water from his clothes before he joined in the pursuit, eager to take vengeance for the morti-

fication he had experienced. On this occasion he took the standard of a battalion, which he sent to the magistracy of Presburg.

During the battle of Wagram, William was stationed on a detached tower, with an excellent Dolland telescope. He had several guides under his command; and his duty was, to report all the observations he might make relative to the situation and movements of the enemy. He often afterwards expressed his satisfaction of having, in his view from this tower, had the whole field of battle lying before him, like the chequered face of a chess-board. He observed the passage of the French across the Danube with such minuteness, that he could even distinguish whether the horses had long or short tails. He frequently mentioned a large open space, which appeared for several hours to separate the French army into two parts. Convinced that an Austrian corps penetrating into this opening would have produced the most favourable results, he transmitted

repeated reports of this observation: circumstances must have existed which prevented the opportunity thus presented from being taken advantage of. He did not quit the tower until Austrian and French cavalry had frequently galloped past it in every direction.

He had, in concert with some others, formed a very bold plan, which had received the approbation of his Imperial Majesty; but its execution was prevented by the peace. The persons engaged in this plan were to insinuate themselves, in the disguise of strolling musicians, into the Tyrol (where William, in consequence of his surveys, was very well known), and to head an insurrection of the Tyrolese.

This plan being frustrated, his hatred of Bonaparte made him turn his thoughts to the English service, which he wished to enter, in order to bear arms under the great Wellington in Spain. Mr. Bathurst, having been informed of the merits of the young man, actually engaged him, and furnished

him with several letters to England and Spain. He applied to that excellent prince the Archduke John, whose esteem he had gained, requesting a testimonial of his past services, as a pledge of his qualification for those he was about to undertake. The Archduke, full of ardour himself, immediately granted the request, and applauded the resolution which dictated it; he was, however, reminded by the cold calculators by whom he was surrounded, that it would not be proper, after the conclusion of the peace, to send Austrian officers to Spain. William was thus forced to renounce his ardent wish. The state of dependence in which Austria was now placed with regard to France, produced a disgust to the service in which he had formerly been engaged, and awakened in him the desire of returning to his native country. In the year 1811 he entered the Russian army.

His majesty the Emperor Alexander was so generous as to permit him to enter into

the Russian army with the rank he then held, whenever he could obtain leave to quit the service of Austria. That leave was, however, with difficulty procured. He was required to promise, among other things, never to bear arms against Austria; a condition with which he could not possibly comply. During the long correspondence which took place on this subject, William was for some time placed in an embarrassed situation in Petersburg, his father being unable to supply his wants: but, uncorrupted by false pride, he availed himself of the talents he possessed; he gave instructions in military tactics; and thus, by his industry, obtained enough to support himself.

Having at last obtained leave to quit the Austrian army, he entered the service of his native country, and was placed in the corps of the brave Count von Wittgenstein. William so completely gained the confidence of the Count, that a short time previous to the commencement of hostilities in 1812, he was

intrusted with a secret and very dangerous mission to Prussia, which he executed to the entire satisfaction of his commander.

He took so active a part in the operations of the war, and so highly distinguished himself by gallantry and skill in his profession, that in the space of four months he was successively invested with the orders of St. Anne of the Sword and St. Wladimir; received a Golden Sword, and St. George's Cross; and was promoted from captain to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and finally, to that of colonel. His mantle had frequently been penetrated with balls, and several horses were killed under him.

When the Finland troops under General Steinheil arrived at Riga, William was sent by Count Wittgenstein to concert a plan of operations with that general. That he thus essentially contributed to the safety of Petersburg, and consequently, in a material degree to the deliverance of his country, is now the only consolation of his deeply afflicted father.

At the dreadful storming of Polotzk, he

was one of the first to enter the town, and his horse alone received a slight wound; but alas! a few days afterwards, in a pursuit of the enemy, he rushed forward too inconsiderately. His miraculous deliverance from the bridge of Presburgh had rendered him too daring; he disregarded every danger.

One of the grenades which had been thrown by the enemy, lay on the ground for some time without exploding; William had not observed it, and continued to gallop forward: his comrades behind him called to him, to warn him of his danger; but the wind, which blew violently in the contrary direction, prevented him from hearing their voices. The grenade exploded, and part of it flying into his face, broke both his jaw-bones.

Count Wittgenstein was deeply afflicted. He immediately gave orders that William should be conveyed in an easy carriage to Polotzk, where the skill of the ablest surgeons, and the kind attentions of the Jesuits, were exerted to promote his recovery.

William was unable either to speak or to swallow food. It was with very great difficulty that some liquids were conveyed into his stomach. He was, however, in a state which afforded hopes of convalescence; for, three weeks after the accident had occurred, his father received a letter written in his own hand, in which he said: "Heaven be praised! my wounds are no longer dangerous!" But he was attacked by a violent fever, which his body, enfeebled by the want of nourishment, was unable to withstand. He died in the twenty-seventh year of his age; and the best hopes, the pride, and the happiness of his father were buried in his grave.

Even during his fatal illness, he was occupied in forming plans for fresh military achievements. It was the universal opinion of the most distinguished officers, that he was born to be a military commander; it is undoubtedly certain, that, had he lived, he would soon have been raised to the rank of general. That, besides being an able officer,

he was a most amiable and gallant youth, is sufficiently proved by the friendship with which he was honoured by Count Wittgenstein, General d'Auvray, Prince Repnin, General Dirbitsch, General Dorenberg, and several other men of acknowledged worth. When his father was, in the year 1813, called to Berlin by Count Wittgenstein, the sorrowful looks, the silent pressure of the hand, and even the tears of these eminent persons, proved the best encomium which could have been bestowed on his adored son!

William's brother, Otto, a skilful seaman, is now on a dangerous voyage round the world; the younger brother, Moritz, on the re-appearance of Bonaparte, joined the army to march against the enemy. May their father's blessing, and their brother's spirit, rest on both! William's life was short, but how few men of advanced years can boast of having lived so long as he did!