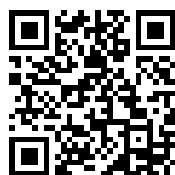

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MEMOIRS
OF A
GENERAL OF CAVALRY

unvallis Maude
from his friend
No. 1. Lawley
Oct. 1872





GENERAL SEYDLITZ:

A Military Biography.



BY

CAPTAIN THE HONORABLE

ROBERT NEVILLE LAWLEY,

2nd LIFE GUARDS.

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THE FOLLOWING WORK,
THE OBJECT OF WHICH IS TO EXEMPLIFY AND ENCOURAGE
MILITARY HORSEMANSHIP,
AND WHICH
HAS BEEN TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN,
IS DEDICATED
TO
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE, K.G.,
g.c. g.c. g.c.
IN ADMIRATION OF HIS EFFORTS
TO IMPROVE
THE CAVALRY BRANCH OF THE BRITISH SERVICE,
BY
THE TRANSLATOR.

R. 92.369

P R E F A C E.

THE memorable "SEVEN YEARS' WAR" in Germany, as it has been designated, commenced in 1756, and terminated in 1763. The political events which led to that contest, or the mighty influence it exerted on society during its progress, and in subsequent years, it does not accord with the present Translator's object to narrate, as those who are curious to learn such details can easily obtain them from the Memoir written by Frederick the Great, as well as from the pages of contemporary history. We need only state the issue, which was that the Prussian Monarch became the victor, having succeeded in crippling the energies, or overthrowing the forces, of his numerous assailants and foes.

Of all the Generals who contributed to this result, and who by their bravery and skill seconded the efforts of their Sovereign, none was so conspicuous or so fortunate as the celebrated General of Cavalry, VON SEYDLITZ, whose name and exploits, although well known and esteemed in his own country, has almost passed into oblivion in ours.

To attempt to rescue this great man's fame from its neglected condition, and to exhibit the General in his real character as the dashing and successful cavalry officer, is the object the Translator has had in view ; and whilst he cannot but regret that it has not devolved upon a more able pen to recount Seydlitz's daring assaults and achievements at Kollin, Rossbach, and Zorndorf, yet he consoles himself with the reflection that a better narrative will not be displaced by his efforts ; but that, on the contrary, he may have acted as a pioneer in investigating the causes by which so much brilliancy of action, and such unparalleled success was produced.

It is almost unnecessary to add, that it is chiefly as the *soldier*, and not as the *man*, that the Translator would elevate the Prussian general, and point to his example ; although much allowance may be made for his failings, in consideration of the general state of society a century ago, when the coarseness and profligacy which would now ensure obloquy and disgrace for their advocate, was rather encouraged and assisted than reprobated and discountenanced.

The translation has been compiled, to a considerable extent, from the works of Seydlitz's best biographers, Blankenburg, Bismark, and above all, Varnhagen von Ense. Reference has also been made to the annals of the German historians, Becker, Luden, and Menzel ; and many of the contemporary incidents have been selected from the pages

of Baron Archenholz, Rotteck, Paganel, Professor Preuss, and the Lectures published by the Officers of the Prussian General Staff.

In conclusion, and as expressive of the manner in which he has sought to bring before his readers the deeds of daring so fully recounted by the Authors to whom he has referred, the Translator cannot better express his intention than by adopting the words of Denham :—

“ That servile part thou nobly dost decline,
Of tracing word by word, and line by line ;
Those are the laboured births of slavish brains,
Not the effect of poetry but pains ;
Cheap vulgar arts, whose narrowness affords
No flight for thoughts, but poorly sticks at words.”

R. N. L.

29, BERKELEY SQUARE,
September 29, 1852.

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CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE, CHILDHOOD, AND EDUCATION.

FRIEDRICH WILHELM VON SEYDLITZ was born on the 3rd of February, 1721, at Calcar, in the Duchy of Cleves. Rees is also named as his birthplace ; but the two towns are synonymous, as formerly the church of Rees, in which the registry of this great Reiter's baptism occurs, was the only one in the two townships. The house is still shown in which he was born.

His father, Daniel (Baron) von Seydlitz, was a captain in the dragoon regiment of Sonsfeld, quartered at the time of our hero's birth at Calcar. His mother's maiden name was Von Ihlow. The family of Seydlitz is a noble one, and branches of it are still found in different parts of Germany ; but nothing remarkable is recorded, either of his parents or of his two sisters and only brother. It was settled, when Seydlitz was yet in his cradle, that he should follow the profession of his father. The schoolmaster, however, was not then abroad, and instruction was but scantily doled out to the Prussian nobility ; whilst perfection in bodily accomplishments, in riding, swimming, and other manly sports, was more esteemed than book lore. Seydlitz, consequently, was more celebrated for his *coup de main* than for his handwriting ; and although his despatches were

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always worded with singular terseness and vigour, yet he never made use of the French language in their composition. Frederick the Great always addressed him in German, a language not usually patronised by him.

At seven years of age Seydlitz sat well on a horse, rode races with grown up youth, and never evinced the timidity natural to his tender years. Thus he enjoyed the eminent advantage of being born to his profession, and was enabled to follow the path where his inclination and love of glory naturally led him.

The Margrave of Schwedt (a duchy of Prussia) enjoyed princely rights, and gave the command of a squadron, in his own regiment of cuirassiers, to the father of Seydlitz. Herr von Seydlitz was so proud of his son's feats that he seems to have mentioned him thus early to the young Margrave, who delighted in daring exploits of every description. Shortly afterwards, the youth sustained a serious loss in the death of this valued parent; and hence, before he had attained his eighth year, his education devolved entirely on his mother. She sent him to school at Freienwalde, but her so doing had neither the effect of increasing his learning, nor decreasing the wildness natural to his time of life in a boy of such high spirits.

The Margrave, however, kept his eye upon him, and chose him for his page before he was fourteen years of age. This prince was nephew to King Frederick I., of Prussia; and, on the mother's side, of Prince Leopold, of Anhalt Dessau. He was as wild as the winds, and played the maddest pranks in sheer wantonness of spirit. Neither the strict formalities of the service, nor the disapprobation of the King, to whose daughter he was betrothed, could control these outbreaks. He rode the most restive horses, went straight across the country from town to town, (the large

plains of Prussia made this a much less hazardous undertaking than it would prove in England,) dared the most breakneck leaps, and outraged all the routine of society. Moreover, he was such a Don Giovanni, that risk and danger formed the chief attractions in his love adventures.

To such a master, and such a course of life, was the great Seydlitz abandoned at the early age mentioned, without other guide or council than his own good sense. But this schooling, which threatened to be his ruin, served only to develop his great qualities; and the many proofs of address and courage which Seydlitz exhibited, fascinated the Margrave, and thus the page became his prime favorite. Not that any indulgence or care for the youth was the result of this favoritism; on the contrary, the Margrave manifested an unceasing disregard for his protégé's life and limbs.

Not content with encouraging him to ride all the unbroken and vicious horses in the duchy, the Margrave actually compelled him to mount the stags in his park. Being threatened with punishment if he fell, the boy showed his superiority even in this novel school of riding.

In driving out for pleasure, the prince generally drove across country. The coachman and leading postillions were first dismounted, the reins of all four horses thrown over their heads, until urged with whip and voice to madness, they dashed over every inequality of ground, and the carriage, of course, was broken to pieces. It was at such a critical juncture as this that the prince and page, who clung to the footboard, according to the custom of the day, sprang to the ground; their only chance of safety consisting in a bold and well-timed jump.

On the difficulty and danger of this feat it is unnecessary here to dilate; suffice it, that the death of Louis Philippe's eldest son, the late Duke of Orleans, who numbered a

whole nation among his mourners, was caused by missing his ground under similar circumstances.

All the biographers of Seydlitz agree in their evidence respecting this fact, otherwise we could scarcely believe their accounts ; which conclude by narrating that he and the Margrave attained such excellence in performing this feat, that no accident ever occurred to them personally.

Another of their pranks is as unlikely to attract imitators as the former. They frequently rode between the whirling sails of a windmill while at work—a piece of skill in horsemanship which Seydlitz repeated many years afterwards, when a general, before many witnesses, at Woisselsdorf, near Grotthau. The danger was such, that safety alone consisted in seizing the happy moment for diving, at a gallop, between the gigantic sails, for in case of the least failure, both horse and rider would have been hurled into the air. However, the constant foolhardiness necessary for these undertakings, produced a degree of presence of mind not often met with.

To the Margrave these attributes were only of use in prosecuting a *bonne* fortune, or other idle pranks ; to our hero, they formed the basis of his subsequent renown ; so that while the former remained a mad desperado, the latter became a bold and skilful horseman, who had not his equal for a firm seat and a sure hand, while he scarcely seemed to note danger or difficulties.

On the other hand, the sensual excesses encouraged by the Margrave were most injurious to the health and morals of the page ; indeed this precocious experience in the most luxurious habits had a very sad effect on his after life, inducing the greatest unhappiness, and a reluctant absence from many well-fought fields. In particular, his partiality for tobacco grew into an uncontrollable passion, often very

inconvenient, and ultimately most deleterious. He has for this reason been represented, in one of the pictures of that day, on horseback, with a pipe in his mouth.*

Seydlitz pursued this wild career for four years with the Margrave of Schwedt. His biographers would fain draw the veil over these follies, and claim for their hero some indulgence, on the score of his faulty education and the evil customs of the day.

* Seydlitz is reputed to have made great use of his pipe in one of his charges at the battle of Rosbach, flinging it into the air at the moment any other general would have sounded the charge. His squadrons, thoroughly in hand, always afterwards awaited this signal.

CHAPTER II.

HE ENTERS THE ARMY, AND IS TAKEN PRISONER.

THE Margrave of Schwedt gave Seydlitz, in his 17th year, a commission in his regiment of cuirassiers, quartered at Belgard, in Pomerania. Unfortunately, Colonel von Rochow, the commanding officer of the regiment, was at variance with the Margrave, and therefore looked on the new cornet with prejudice. He affected to consider the youth a spy on his own actions, and made a point of reporting all regimental details to the King: in short, he let the supposed informer feel the whole weight of his dependence on the colonel's will and pleasure.

Seydlitz, however, had not long to endure these trying vexations, which were, however, greatly enhanced by inactivity. He had only been a year in the service when Frederick the Great, who had ascended the throne in 1740, asserted his claims to Silesia, by an appeal to arms. The regiment of the Margrave took a prominent part in the war against the Austrians, which broke out so unexpectedly in 1741. In the first campaign, which was attended with brilliant success to the Prussian troops, Cornet Seydlitz lost no opportunity of distinguishing himself; in fact, he soon gave evidence of that rapid *coup d'œil* and coolness in action for which he was afterwards so eminently renowned.

Through the ill feeling of his colonel his services were not rewarded as they deserved ; but the high-spirited and impetuous youth was not long in forcing himself upon the great king's notice.

It happened one day, in a skirmish, that Seydlitz was orderly officer ; and an Austrian battery on the flank of the Prussians was doing great execution to the latter. Frederick asked, in a loud voice, of what calibre the hostile guns were ? Opinions were divided ; but Seydlitz settled the question by riding in front of the battery, to a spot much exposed, then halting in the line of their fire, and observing where the heavy shot struck the ground. One of these balls he was fortunate enough to pick up, without sustaining any injury ; he then wrapped it in his handkerchief, and rode back and presented it to the King, who had noticed his behaviour, and who did not fail to thank him, with gracious looks, for the courageous and practical answer thus given to his enquiry. This little incident shews the good spirit which animated the young Seydlitz ; but his conduct on this occasion served, if anything, rather to increase the unfriendly disposition of his colonel towards him ; nor was the youth long in experiencing the capricious effects of the war.

In April 1742, the king had withdrawn his forces from Moravia to Bohemia. Of this the Hungarian light horse took advantage, and made frequent incursions, most troublesome to the Prussians. Colonel von Rochow, with his cuirassiers, held the small town of Cranowitz, not far from Ratiboz, where he had intrenched himself strongly, resolving not to venture out without pressing occasion ; but as it was reported to him that about 6,000 Hungarians were advancing against him, he deemed it advisable to occupy a small village in front of Cranowitz, not yet in possession of the enemy.

Cornet Seydlitz accordingly received orders to march to this village with 30 cuirassiers, and maintain his position there, until infantry came to his assistance. The young officer thought this selection of himself unjust; moreover, he foresaw but little chance of success with so small a force against overwhelming numbers, and deemed his own death or captivity almost unavoidable. Suspecting that the colonel had chosen him especially for the latter reason, and knowing that it was not his turn for duty, he ventured to express an opinion that he was too young for the command of an important outpost of this sort, which might fairly demand all the energies of many of his brother officers, senior to himself. Being probably aware that remonstrance would prove unavailing, he concluded by remarking, that since he had been thus ordered to the post of honor, he would try to do his duty, and that the colonel might rely upon his selling his life and freedom dear. He departed with his small detachment, and on a nearer survey found that he had by no means overrated the dangers of his first command. He lost no time in causing the approaches to be barricaded, made his dragoons dismount and link their horses together in a large yard, and then posted twelve cuirassiers behind the hedges and enclosures on each side of the village.

The enemy appeared, and were received with an unexpected fire of small arms, which was smartly kept up, and did much execution. Their forces, however, increased, enfilading and surrounding the village on all sides. Still the young cornet maintained his post, in spite of overwhelming numbers. The colonel heard the skirmish going on, without disturbing himself, but the general in command came personally to relieve the gallant little party. While marching with three squadrons of heavy cavalry to his aid,

he was himself suddenly attacked on a narrow bridge by 3,000 Hungarians, and only contrived to secure his own retreat, after considerable loss, without having benefited Seydlitz. Our hero now found that the village was getting too hot to hold him. Many of his troopers were wounded or slain ; no probability of success appeared, even if they tried to cut their way out sword in hand, so completely were they surrounded and hemmed in.

Seydlitz, therefore, gave ear to the terms proposed by the enemy, and which, under the circumstances, were very honorable to both parties : he surrendered himself and his men prisoners of war, with the proviso that they should retain their horses and weapons, their regimental valises and pouch belts.

After the general's unsuccessful effort to relieve Seydlitz, much sympathy was shown for the gallant youth, the vast superiority of the enemy being thus demonstrated, against whom the long defence appeared little short of a miracle. The firing continued after the general's return, and therefore a few companies of infantry were despatched to the scene of action. These arrived too late, for Seydlitz was forced to capitulate before they could effect any diversion in his favor.

The King was informed of all the circumstances of this affair. He expressed pity for the bold cornet, and in order to facilitate his exchange announced publicly that he would gladly set free an Austrian captain, if it would ensure his release. This occurred towards the end of May 1742.

In the mean time Seydlitz was taken, as a prisoner of war, into Hungary, where he spent his time very gloomily ; for, however much his conscience acquitted him of doing wrong, he could not but think his case a hard one, and ponder on the impressions and comments which would be

excited thereby. His biographer, Blankenburg, asserts that he was taken to Raab, and allowed to wander about the town unguarded, in consequence of which he furnished Frederick with a plan of the fortifications. Varnhagen von Ense, however, rejects this statement, alleging, with some show of reason, that it is to be attributed to the partiality of this biographer, and others like him, who would fain invest their hero with attainments, which, in the eighteenth century, were almost unknown in any service. It is, as he says, neither probable, nor necessary to his fame, that Seydlitz should have designed plans; in fact, he was essentially a man of original talent and action.

CHAPTER III.

HE IS EXCHANGED AND PROMOTED.

SEYDLITZ's exchange followed in the course of the campaign, and no sooner did he arrive at the Prussian camp than he was summoned before the King. To his Majesty he narrated circumstantially the events of the excursion which led to his imprisonment, and had an opportunity of satisfying the king as to the honorable capitulation he had made with the Austrians—taking care to authenticate every circumstance carefully, as Frederick desired him.

The good opinion which the King had already formed of the affair was thoroughly confirmed by the youth's modest narration, and he at once therefore asked him whether he would rather receive the first lieutenancy which fell due in a cuirassier regiment, or be nominated on the spot to the command of a troop of hussars.

At this period the hussars were considered inferior to the rest of the Prussian cavalry, having been newly raised and awkwardly mounted. Seydlitz chose the second of the two offers, which pleased Frederick not a little, as he was very anxious to bring his hussar regiments on a par with the fine corps of Hungarians. He accordingly gave him a troop in the regiment of Natzmer, then called the White Hussars.

Encouraged by these favors, Seydlitz took the opportunity

of recommending for promotion those of his brave cuirassiers who had survived the affair, saying, "that it was their fortitude alone which had enabled him to keep off the enemy so long." The King received this request graciously, caused their exchange to be attended to, and gave orders that presents should be made to them.

Colonel von Rochow had no intimation of all this; he therefore received Seydlitz, on his return from the King, with hard words and reproaches. Vowing that in consequence of his capitulation the honor of the Margrave's regiment had been compromised, he concluded by saying that he would be obliged to report the misconduct of Seydlitz to his Majesty, and press him for punishment. The young captain replied with the greatest composure that there was no need of any further report, for the King was well informed of all that had taken place; and indeed, that he himself had only waited on Colonel Rochow, in order to thank him for nominating him to a command of so much honor, since the King had just entrusted him with the command of a troop in the hussar regiment of Natzmer.

In this manner did our hero gain that most important step in any service to a cavalry officer—viz., the command of a troop. His promotion was the more honorable, as he was preferred from a cornetcy to a captaincy; in fact, he never was a lieutenant at all.

According to Graf von Bismark and Blankenburg, his promotion was effected in a different manner, which it may not be amiss to relate, especially as it has obtained very general credence, and is spoken of in Berlin to this day. Their version is as follows:—

Seydlitz, still a cornet, was returning, in 1743, from a review, and relating the circumstances attending his captivity to those of the King's suite who were entering Berlin

with him. He attributed the whole mishap to the fact of his being obliged, for the security of his position, to dismount and fight on foot in a narrow space, loudly contending that no mounted cavalry soldier need ever surrender, while his horse continued fresh and sound. The King overheard the discussion and the latter assertion, but said nothing until they all arrived on the narrow bridge over the Spree, near the Zeug-Haus.* Having first ordered the drawbridge to be raised, he called Seydlitz to him, and, laying his hand on the youth, laughingly exclaimed to those around, "See, he has his horse, but he is my prisoner for all that!" Seydlitz, however, though much surprised, never hesitated a moment, but, putting his horse at the rails of the bridge, leaped safely over into the river, and succeeded in mounting the opposite bank without an accident.† Whereupon the King is reported to have saluted him as captain, and given him a troop in the White Hussars.

Our former account, however, appears more like the correct one; but the concluding remarks of Blankenburg sound very well:—"He rode into the Spree a cornet, but swam to the shore a captain."

* Armory—arsenal.

† This feat would not be impossible, nor entirely without precedent. In later times, an eminent cavalry officer, now no longer in the English service, was reported to have performed a similar feat.

CHAPTER IV.

ATTACHED TO THE CORPS OF OBSERVATION IN SILESIA.

AFTER the Peace of Breslau, October 22, 1744, Silesia became a Prussian province; and a corps of observation was left there to secure the new and valuable acquisition to the Prussian crown. Among other regiments so detached were the White Hussars, to which our hero now belonged. He marched to Trebnitz, and took up his quarters on the right bank of the Oder; and did not shine less, when the ordinary avocations and routine of the regiment in peace were resumed, than he did in the stirring events of the war. He succeeded in establishing an easy and friendly superiority over those below him, especially with his officers, and which proved most useful in their field exercises. There was, however, no want of daring adventures, while the discipline of the regiment was most strictly maintained; indeed he seems to have been a model of the "*suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.*"

The truce continued but a short time. In 1744 the second Silesian war broke out, and Seydlitz was immediately employed in the vanguard of Lieut.-General von Nassau, which was speedily engaged with the enemy.

The White Hussars, under Lieut.-Colonel von Schütz, (who had risen to the rank of captain in the Russian service,) soon distinguished themselves particularly. This

colonel was very celebrated in the partizan warfare of the day, and most useful to the King's cause. But all his successes were sullied by the ruthless barbarity which accompanied them. Traits of horrible cruelty are related of him,—indeed, he spared neither friend nor foe. He treated the Silesian peasants, who were favorable to the Prussian cause, as prisoners, dragged them along with him, and forced them to act as guides. As soon as they were of no further use to him in the latter capacity, he sabred them, in order that they might not convey the same information to the enemy. Indeed, his march was traced in the map by a long red line, as the Indian tiger is tracked by the natives from the sanguinary footsteps he leaves behind. The King did all he could to restrain these excesses, which tended to counterbalance all the advantages the hussars gained in the field. Seydlitz, in whose magnanimity Frederick placed just confidence, was ordered to remain about the person of his commanding officer, and to repress as much as possible such unnecessary severity.

In this most difficult task the young captain was eminently successful, contriving ultimately to abolish the system of butchering the guides: the peasants were closely guarded until the close of the campaign, or their treason could be injurious to the Prussians, and then sent home without harm. Seydlitz also found means to avert other barbarities, such as burning down hamlets, or inflicting bodily torture, which the colonel had formerly practised. In all this, though supported by royal authority, it required great tact and ability to perform his orders efficiently. Above all, he was careful to pay the greatest homage to Colonel Schütz in all matters of discipline, and rendered himself eminently useful in the daring exploits which were beginning to make this wild *chef* famous.

In the next campaign Silesia was relieved of this blood-hound, whose courage was the only redeeming trait in his character; he was literally cut to pieces, in a skirmish with the enemy, in which no quarter was given. Our hero was then twenty-one years of age, and distinguished himself uniformly against the Austrian light troops by his presence of mind and courage. His hussars regarded him as their model, and followed a leader with confidence, who never asked anything of them which he hesitated to perform himself. But an affair which took place on Whitsunday 1745, in the neighbourhood of Landshut, nearly proved fatal to him.

The Austrians had been driven back sharply by the Prussian cavalry, but not before the former had contrived to occupy a narrow road through the village of Reich Hennersdorf.

Colonel Soldau commanded the first line, the White Hussars advanced in the second. Seydlitz, Malachowski, and Warnery, young, impetuous, and well acquainted with the ground, would not suffer this, but pushed on through the intervals of the first line with their several troops. They succeeded in dislodging the Austrians, and were preparing to attack ten more squadrons of the enemy posted in the narrow way of Fallbrück, when Soldau sounded the recall. On this the Prussians turned round and retreated in disorder, pursued in their turn by the Austrian hussars. The disordered troops were formed facing to the rear, according to the rules of the Prussian service at that date, by which means Seydlitz received a severe check, and lost many men. In consequence of this, a general order was issued during the subsequent year, by the king, to the whole of the Prussian cavalry, "That troops in disorder should form invariably to their previous front."

Seydlitz does not appear to have suffered in the King's estimation by this reverse near Landshut, probably because he had been very favorably mentioned by Winterfeld, an eminent Prussian general; also because he had strikingly exemplified in his own person the qualifications most becoming in a cavalry officer. Frederick found that his cavalry were far behind the infantry in general aptitude and efficiency; and was resolved to infuse more life and energy into their operations. However, in the battle of Hohenfriedberg, on the 4th of June, 1745, the Prussian cavalry gained the most important advantages. Seydlitz fought on the right wing, against the allied Austrians and Saxons, and was so fortunate as to take the Saxon General, von Schlichting, prisoner with his own hand. Immediately after this great victory Seydlitz was created major, being then in his twenty-fourth year; but his reputation was already far beyond his years. From this period may be dated a vast improvement in the Prussian cavalry, which lasted throughout the Silesian, and even to the end of the Seven Years' War.

At the battle of Sorr, on the 30th of September, 1745, Seydlitz again led his White Hussars to victory, but in one of his irresistible attacks was wounded by a carbine ball in the left arm; this, however, did not prevent his taking part in the campaign, which was protracted until late in the winter of 1745. Near Zittau, he and Warnery surprised the Austrian rear-guard under the Count von Burghausen, proceeding slowly through bad roads in stormy weather, and by the sudden attack of the Prussian hussars, they were entirely dislodged and routed. Before the end of the year, after the battle of Kesseldorf, (won by the Prussians,) the peace of Dresden was concluded, the second Silesian war terminated, and Seydlitz returned to his old quarters at Trebnitz, on the cessation of hostilities.

But the Prussians had to encounter much ill will in Silesia, the Catholic Clergy, as well as the former Austrian officials, being obstinately opposed to them. This disaffection showed itself in various ways, sometimes in frigid reserve, but more frequently in ill-concealed spite and general insubordination.

CHAPTER V.

THE CISTERCIAN NUNS, AND THE DEPUTY.

IN Trebnitz there was a convent of Cistercian nuns, whose abbess was decidedly unfriendly to the new order of things. She considered the discipline of the cloister in great danger, now that so many heretical and attractive officers were in her immediate neighbourhood ; consequently, the forage which was levied on the estates of the monastery, for the use of the White Hussars, was both bad and insufficient. The deputy governor of the province allowed the frequent complaints of the Prussian officers to pass unnoticed ; and therefore Seydlitz determined to adopt other means of overcoming the evil in question.

The abbess was in the habit of driving out daily with some of the nuns, for exercise, in a heavy old fashioned coach, drawn pompously along by four sleek well fed stallions. To the light carriage of Seydlitz were attached other four stallions, horses with much more blood and speed than the monasterial team. Owing to the above cause, however, the latter were as thin as whipping posts. Selecting an opportunity, Seydlitz with his team contrived to meet the abbess's carriage in a road too narrow for both to pass. No sooner did the military Jehu, Seydlitz's coachman, see her ladyship's equipage, than he apparently lost all com-

mand of his horses, and allowed them to rush madly upon the approaching steeds. The consequence was a tremendous *melée* and confusion; the eight excited beasts began to fight and lash out promiscuously, while the poor nuns believed themselves lost, and their servants remained paralysed with fear. Seydlitz took advantage of his agility to rush to the carriage of the abbess; he then opened the door without further ceremony, lifted the ladies out one by one, so that each believed she owed her life to him.

Indeed it was time to afford succour, for the strife was beginning to grow "fast and furious," and the servants of Seydlitz had some difficulty in parting the enraged animals, encumbered as they were with the heavy harness of the day.

Having deposited the ladies courteously on the bank, and remedied the seeming accident as well as he could, Seydlitz affected great indignation against his coachman, vowing he would punish him severely. The abbess, however, deprecated this, and showed a most forgiving humour, thanking the young officer with much courtesy for his timely aid. Seydlitz yielded to her intercession, and concluded by remarking, with a significant smile, that after all his coachman was not so much to blame, for that very possibly his brutes had rushed against the others out of sheer jealousy, in consequence of the latter monopolising all the good corn in the country. The joke was received *au pied de la lettre*; and there was no further reason to complain of the forage served out to the dragoons, whilst a more friendly understanding ensued between both parties.

But the deputy governor was a far more dangerous customer to deal with than the abbess. He had found means to ingratiate himself with General von Natzmer, who was sufficiently odious without his assistance. Every thing that

happened, all the tittle tattle of the regiment, was reported to the general, who parried the frequent complaints respecting the forage, with admonitions against overworking the horses, and having too frequent field-days. Moreover, at each inspection he vowed that the returns for forage were immoderate, and thus teased his unfortunate subordinates beyond all bearing. The informations laid against the officers were generally false or exaggerated; sometimes, of course, there was a little cause for them, but in the main they were trivial, and particularly artful and vexatious.

For some time the officers could not discover who was the informer; but at length Seydlitz traced these annoyances unmistakeably to the deputy of the province. It was resolved accordingly to disgust him with his occupation, and no open opposition being available, Seydlitz hit upon the following method of counteracting his interference.

The deputy was in the habit of riding, on one particular day in the week, from his estate to a neighbouring town, and in order to shorten the distance, left the highway to avail himself of a footpath, which though traversing unequal ground, led him sooner to his destination. On a foggy evening, when the deputy was about to return home, Seydlitz, who was marching his hussars back from a field day, divided the troop into two parties, one to keep their man in view, and the other to occupy every footpath, pushing forward outposts, so as to observe whatever took place on either side. The deputy came riding along, stumbled on a vidette of course, was detained, and in spite of all opposition carried to the nearest post. The serjeant in command made excuses for the hussars, who had only done their duty, as they did not know the deputy by sight; and then caused him to be conducted back to the footpath. Scarcely, however, had he proceeded an hundred yards before he was

again accosted by a sentinel ; and as he now wished to fall back upon his former explanation, he was treated as a deserter coming over from the enemy, and conveyed all the more strictly to the next outpost. Once there, he was dismissed again with apologies ; but starting on his journey fell into the same unavoidable mishap soon after, and was thus bandied about from one to the other, until tired and furious he arrived at the chief outpost or head-quarters, where he found Major Seydlitz, to whom he stated his complaints of the treatment he had received.

Seydlitz answered, with some severity, that he regretted the misfortunes of the deputy, but that the hussars had only performed their duty, as they could not tell under what aspect a spy might present himself ; and that his riding in a bye-path would naturally appear suspicious to them, as in so dense a fog no one would leave the open road unless he had some secret business to transact. The tone in which Seydlitz pronounced these words made them thoroughly intelligible to the deputy, and they proved effectual, as he subsequently thought it expedient to allow many things to pass unreported, nor did he ever mention the trick which had been played him.

CHAPTER VI.

COURSE OF LIFE AT TREBNITZ.

THE position to which Seydlitz had already raised himself, the reputation which he had acquired, and the good opinion which the King entertained of him, seemed rather to stimulate than satisfy his ambition, and had the greatest influence upon his character. Frederick presented to him, as well as to Major Warnery, a costly Turkish sabre, and took occasion to praise his zeal and performances, after the autumnal review of 1746. Seydlitz now felt how much was needed to maintain the ground he had already won, and how much more to enter upon a land of promised hopes and fears, which the future opened out before him.

The consciousness of personal worth and self reliance, joined to a never fading anxiety for advancement to a higher grade, had the effect of producing in his deportment a mixture of earnestness and dignity, very striking in so young a man, without impairing the charm of his general behaviour.

The anticipation of a complaint, as well as the silent, rough, and almost impatient manner which Seydlitz adopted in unfriendly or heterogeneous societies, at Court, and even before the King, seems to have been confirmed at this early period. Every inch a soldier, and a remarkably good horseman, he had the pleasure of finding the greatest

satisfaction in doing his duty; and as he was careless of all which lay beyond the sphere of his calling, neither his ambition nor inclination supplied any motive for stepping out of its routine.

He conducted himself with moderation towards the laws of the land, so becoming to every modest person, but still more advantageous to a proud one. While he never allowed his inferiors to forget in him the commanding officer on all points of inflexible severity which he practised, avoiding imperious harshness or unworthy cruelties, he himself set the example, in everything, of a well-disciplined spirit and of untiring zeal; performing more than was expected of him, and requiring nothing from his subordinates which he could not himself accomplish. He also applied himself assiduously to all the duties of the service, which in the cavalry implies so much that is apparently trifling and insignificant, but is really so requisite for arriving at the grandest results.

The various manœuvres which the King, with unremitting attention and endless admonitions, prescribed from a distance, did not everywhere meet with a desirable result; but with the troops which Seydlitz commanded or inspected, they attained the highest perfection, so that the whole regiment took his troop for a model.

General von Natzmer, however, does not seem to have carried out the intentions of the King in an equal degree, but often professed himself discontented with the orders of the major, as tending only to spoil the horses and place the men in unnecessary peril. Seydlitz, secure of the King's approbation, did not relax in his zeal, but found means, in all matters of subordination, to make himself independent of the general's opposing influence. That which he had undertaken formerly for the gratification of his love of adventure, was now practised by the whole troop; and his soldiers,

animated by example and ambition, and not by flogging or severity, soon distinguished themselves by extraordinary zeal and ability. He was the first to teach hussars (as Warnery states) to use their sabres a-foot or on horseback, with effect ; also to ride without stirrups, and sit with ease on a horse at full speed.

Horse and man were by these means completely blended ; inequalities of ground were not considered, and in the storm of the charge his hussars acted with ready presence of mind and dexterity. To break in a horse according to the rules of the school, to make the wildest tractable, and to master the most restive and unbroken, became the task of every common hussar ; whilst to leap over deep ditches, high fences, or other obstacles, to press on through wood and water, unmindful of all accidents and injuries, was also practised without intermission ; and to load and discharge fire-arms with good aim at full speed, was a frequent but still more difficult object of attainment. In all these feats Seydlitz led the way, exemplifying his own precepts, so that both inferiors and equals were compelled to emulate him. He was not, however, always so earnest and silent with persons among whom he was thrown in juxtaposition, for he loved free and unfettered conversation and intercourse when off duty, either in the chase, which he loved passionately, or when in the company of the fair sex.

He had a great respect for appearances, and hence the arrangements of his establishment were in good taste, his table being both handsomely and well served, though he was usually very moderate in eating and drinking. He was particular in procuring good and various wines, and was annoyed if a guest sought to conceal a preference for any particular kind of wine, out of modesty. And this was a repugnance which General von Natzmer loved to excite ;

for when he came to Trebnitz to inspect the squadron, and sat at the major's table, he invariably asked for the ordinary French wine, to show that he did not live well himself, and that he despised luxury. The haughty host, however, to confront the unwelcome lesson with the offence which the general affected to reprehend, caused the finest and most costly wines to be served to himself and his other guests.

Seydlitz's inferior officers paid him frequent visits, and regularly spent every evening with him : here they smoked much, but drank little ; they never gambled, but the time was passed in friendly conversation. All superiority was at an end, and every one gave his opinion, or recorded his impressions, on all subjects, without restraint. They spoke of their chances of promotion, and of the accidents of the service ; or discussed dangerous positions, and probable difficulties and contingencies. The chase and humourous adventures were also dilated on ; but much as Seydlitz encouraged a soldierlike frankness, he would not allow honorable ideas to be spoken of ironically in his presence ; still less did coarse improprieties please him, although he did not conceal his own lascivious propensities, and treated all adverse opinions as prejudices. Seydlitz often declared that the years he passed in Trebnitz were the happiest of his life.

At Sponsberg, two miles from Trebnitz, the major repeatedly visited, at mid-day, a gentleman of the name of Rüdiger, who had a very amiable and agreeable wife. Each evening, at a late hour, he and his comrades returned from this hospitable mansion, directed through the obscurity by white greyhounds. These animals often wandered from the way in the rocky neighbourhood, but the belated travellers were obliged to follow their guidance, as each individual had pledged himself, on his honor, to *ride to the hounds*.

Of the officers who at that period were mostly his companions, the names of three have remained to posterity—Lieutenants von Lossow and Zetmar, and Cornet Hohenstock, all of whom were in his squadron. He promised, when he left the regiment, to be mindful of their interests, and to open the road to promotion and honor for them, if they continued to merit it. This promise he fulfilled most truly, remembering with pleasure his former compact, in 1768, when Hohenstock, although of humble origin, and formerly a private, had risen to the rank of a major, and received the command of the hussar regiment of Usedom. “I have tried,” said he to Hohenstock, “to act up to the promise I gave you in Trebnitz, as well as I could—Lossow, already a major-general, has made his own way; Zetmar attained the same grade, and your turn is coming.”

Zetmar was killed in the battle of Torgau, at the head of Zieten’s hussar regiment. Seydlitz, however, was outlived by the other two; Lossow died a lieutenant-general, and Hohenstock a major-general; and it is from the grateful recollection of the latter, that this anecdote of his honest comrade has been transmitted to us.

CHAPTER VII.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR.

IN the autumn of 1752 Seydlitz was made lieutenant-colonel, but only remained a few weeks as such in the hussar regiment of Natzmer; for the King, dissatisfied with the state in which, at his last inspection, he had found the dragoon regiment of Prince Frederic of Wurtemberg, wished to appoint to its command an officer who, as he took pains to make known, would bring it into order. To this office Seydlitz was chosen; he was therefore compelled to leave his old comrades, and take up his quarters at Trepton, in Pomerania. He continued but a short time in this regiment, for in the beginning of 1753, the command of the cuirassier regiment of Rochow was given him, and he was consequently again transferred to Silesia, the head-quarters being then at Ohlau.

The King was not unmindful of the difference of service between hussars, dragoons, and cuirassiers; but he felt that a good cavalry officer should not be tied down to one branch of the service, but should seek to moderate and to render disposable in each department that rapidity and impetuosity which is the essence of the whole force. As the minutiae of each were entrusted to, and regulated by their colonel, it was necessary that they should be well

understood by him ; and therefore the King purposely promoted exchanges among the higher officers, from dragoons to hussars, and from hussars to the heavy cavalry, without considering the inconvenience it might cause to individuals : his sole object was that they might attain an equal degree of smartness in each branch of the service.

This was early acquired by Seydlitz, as he had commenced his military life as a cuirassier ; was then for a long time a hussar ; afterwards, for a short period, a dragoon ; and then again a cuirassier. Yet, although he apparently gave his entire attention to this branch of the service, and wore the uniform and accoutrements of the heavy cavalry, he was nevertheless free from party prejudice, was especially favorable to hussars, gave every one his due, only exacting from those under him that they should make corresponding efforts for the public good, and charge courageously and efficiently when in action. He had, indeed, so formed his hussars for determined attack, that they resembled cuirassiers ; and now he instructed the latter, in their turn, in the arts of petty warfare and skirmishing.

In the summer of 1755, he was promoted to be full colonel of cuirassiers, so that the Seven Years' War, which commenced in the following year, found the young hero in a prominent position, and likely to become one of the brightest examples in that eventful campaign.

On the inroad of the Prussian army into Saxony, Seydlitz, with his regiment, was attached to the corps d'armée which Duke Ferdinand, of Brunswick, led through Halle and Leipsic towards Pirna. He was delayed a few days at the latter place to levy contributions and exact the rations which had been imposed on the inhabitants, and of which he transmitted full intelligence to the King. He

soon after joined that portion of the Prussian army which lay between Bohemia and Pirna, having orders to observe the Austrians, who were advancing to the relief of the Saxons enclosed in Pirna. Duke Ferdinand, of Brunswick, commanded the advanced guard, Field Marshal Count von Gesler the cavalry, and Lord Mareschal Keith led the whole, until the arrival of the King, who then assumed the full command, and resolved on attacking the enemy.

On the 1st of October, near the county town of Lowositz, the action commenced ; the field was enveloped in a thick fog, but hostile cavalry were just discernible. The King sent for Seydlitz, and asked him whether he thought he could overthrow any cavalry with his cuirassiers. "Yes," answered Seydlitz, "but the cannon of Lowositz will soon bring me to my senses." The King, who was not much pleased with this answer, ordered the assembled cavalry to march up between the infantry, in three lines ; and fifteen squadrons of dragoons received instructions first to attack, that the position and strength of the enemy might be discovered. They were met by twenty-five squadrons, who were immediately put to flight ; but finding that, as they advanced, their own flanks were exposed to the enemy's infantry and artillery, they retreated, on which the Austrian cavalry, reinforced, again advanced.

The Prussian dragoons, who soon rallied, were now joined by the cuirassiers, among whom was Seydlitz with his five squadrons, together with the other dragoons and hussar regiments. This united force, of seventy-one squadrons, rushed with such vehemence on the enemy that they could not resist the shock, but fled in great confusion ; yet a deep ditch, behind which the Austrian infantry were secured, stopped the pursuit. Seydlitz, however, discovered a stone bridge, across which he sprang, followed by some of his men ;

but the greater number remained on the other side, unable to extricate themselves from the heavy ground, while a murderous fire of artillery and small arms was opened on both their flanks. Fresh squadrons of Austrian cavalry now advanced on the right, so that the Prussian horse were again compelled to quit the ground in disorder, and did not stop until they reached the foot of an eminence, where they were protected by their own artillery. They had sustained great loss in this affair: among the killed were Generals von Luderitz and von Oertzen; and nine officers, with many privates, were taken prisoners.

The King, who had been unable to prevent this inopportune attack, although he had sent orders by an adjutant to forbid it, withdrew his cavalry behind the infantry, led the latter himself into action, took Lowositz, and compelled the enemy to retreat, which they did in good order, as the inequalities of the ground prevented his making use of cavalry in pursuit. As Seydlitz did not act independently in this battle, the failure of the attack was not laid to his account, but the temporary success he had gained tended to his honor, as well as to that of the other leaders; whilst the King recognised with pleasure, in the zeal and impetuosity of his cavalry, a proof of their excellence. After having thus defeated the Austrians at Lowositz, Frederick left a part of his army to observe Bohemia, and then led the remainder against the Saxons, who, deprived of all extraneous aid, were at length compelled to surrender their arms.

The Prussian army took up their winter quarters along the Bohemian frontier, in Saxony and Silesia. Seydlitz was ordered to remain in Dresden. A letter which he wrote to the king from thence, dated the 24th of January, 1757, has been preserved, and deserves to be noticed, as illustrative of the times, and still more, of the writer's character.

“In the name of the officers of the cuirassier regiment of Rochow, I beg to return your Majesty their grateful thanks for the pay and rations allotted to their winter quarters, so graciously bestowed upon us. We have nothing to set against this gratuity excepting the zeal displayed in your Majesty’s interest, which is not to be estimated with gold. We shall consider it a much greater gain if your Majesty passes many days like the present, still in continued health and continual victory.” At that time the art of writing was little known among military men; but sometimes the character and disposition of the writer are the more discernible from the very want of this talent, as his own ideas, and the statement of facts, are expressed with terseness and simplicity. In the brevity of the above letter, for instance, the gratitude of the troops, as well as the circumstances which produced it, are done justice to, with a rough but expressive eloquence.

It may be supposed that the quiet of the winter quarters was not allowed to pass unemployed by the troops—nor did Seydlitz omit anything which could place his horsemen in the best condition, and increase their utility in battle. Indeed the King strenuously impressed this requirement upon the commanding officers, and as he had, in the course of the winter, added twenty-four files to each squadron of cuirassiers, the utmost attention of their officers was necessary, although, even then, sufficient time remained for joining in the amusements which Dresden afforded.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BATTLES OF PRAGUE AND KOLLIN.

THE Prussians opened the campaign of 1757, in April, with powerful reinforcements, and entered Bohemia simultaneously, on four sides, with four different corps d'armée.

Seydlitz was with the troops which, under the command of Prince Maurice, of Anhalt Dessau, advanced from the Hartz upon Commotau, and thence upon Prague. General Zieten commanded the advanced guard of this division, and Seydlitz had besought the King, as a particular favor, to be allowed to serve under a general whom he so much respected. Numerous cavalry actions took place, in which, side by side with Zieten, Seydlitz distinguished himself by his boldness; and as each division joined the main army, occasionally this occurred in the presence of the King. Near Prague, upon which town the enemy fell back, Zieten followed the King in person to the right bank of the Moldau, and the celebrated encounter, known as the battle of Prague, took place on the 6th of May.

It is not necessary to enter into the details of this action, as the troops with whom Seydlitz was stationed had but little share in it; a result which was attributable to Prince Maurice, who had received the King's orders to cross the Moldau on that day, above Prague, near Klein-Kuchel,

so as to fall on the enemy's rear. His pontoon trains were not sufficiently lengthy to accomplish this object, and the Prince was therefore forced to remain on the left bank, whilst his troops, who might have annihilated the retreating enemy, were compelled to look on and allow them to pass unmolested. Seydlitz, burning with impatience, wished to swim the river with his forces, although warned that the swiftness of the stream, and its many dangerous quicksands, would render the feat impossible. Determined to prove how far this assertion was correct, he rode into the river, but nearly perished in the attempt; for the water being too shallow to admit of swimming, his horse sank to the neck in a quicksand, his holster pipes filled with water, and he was only saved by the efforts of some of his followers, who, at great personal risk, dragged him from the horse, and brought him in safety to the shore.

After winning the battle the King kept the enemy enclosed in Prague, and with his artillery made preparations for forcing them to surrender the town. A portion of the Austrian troops had retreated farther into Bohemia, and these, as well as the reinforcements which Field Marshal Count Dann was bringing up to join them and relieve Prague, required observation. Zieten was appointed to this command, and with forty squadrons marched for that purpose: after him came the Duke of Brunswick Bevern, at the head of troops of all arms.

As Dann continued daily to receive fresh supplies of men, and consequently advanced with more confidence, the King determined to place himself at the head of this corps of observation, and as he had in his turn brought up reinforcements, he hoped to make head against the enemy, however numerous. But he soon began to doubt whether Dann really possessed the strength that had been repre-

sented, although the accounts he received continued to assert that fact. In his obstinacy the King neglected all friendly warnings, and even his own presentiments; and hence, on the 17th of June, at noon, when on his march from Kaurzim to Kuthenberg, he beheld the whole force of the enemy encamped very advantageously before him, on the heights of Kriechenau, a position in which the front was protected by boggy ground, while the left flank was unassailable, as the manœuvres requisite for an assault would have intercepted the communication of the Prussians with Silesia and Prague. The right flank of the Austrians was apparently open to attack, which the King decided at once to commence, as weighty considerations impelled him to hazard a battle. That very afternoon he ordered his small army to take ground to the left, in the direction of Planian. Dann, to whom this movement discovered the intentions of the King, broke up his camp immediately, and occupied a new position on the heights behind the village of Chotzemitz, in which he was found by the Prussians the following morning.

The King continued his movement, notwithstanding this change, and deployed his troops along the imperial road between Planian and Kollin. Here the first halt was made. From the upper windows of an inn on this road, the "Golden Sun," the King observed, with his telescope, the actual position of the enemy, and becoming at length aware of its extraordinary strength, seemed for a time to abandon his design. As, however, the right flank of the Austrians was still, comparatively speaking, weak, and a decisive movement was absolutely necessary, he persevered in his first arrangement. Dann was at that time, with his telescope, upon the heights, behind Brzistuvy.

The execution of the plan was arranged by the King

according to the new aspect of things, and he himself gave the necessary orders to the assembled generals.

It was past mid-day on the 18th of June, 1757, (the same day as Waterloo, in 1815,) when the Prussians put themselves in motion, Frederick having decided on attacking, with his left flank, the right wing of the enemy, and for this purpose leaving his whole force available on that side, gave orders that his right wing should withdraw itself entirely from before the enemy, so as to enable him to supply his left with reinforcements.

The greater part of his cavalry, a hundred squadrons strong, was posted on the left flank. Of this force fifty squadrons of hussars, under Zieten's guidance, were to drive the enemy's cavalry, (which, under Nadasdy, covered Dann's left flank,) from the field, while the remaining fifty were to co-operate with the main attack.

The assault was led by General von Hülßen, at half-past one, P.M., with seven battalions, thirty squadrons, and some field pieces, against the village of Krzeczhorz, which the enemy had strongly defended by advancing the whole of his right flank. The resistance was greater than had been expected, for the Austrian general, seeing his right flank was mainly threatened, had early altered his position, and strengthened it with artillery, changing his front towards Krzeczhorz: an oak plantation, lying on the right of this village, he had also occupied with infantry. Nadasdy gave ground on the charge of Zieten, and retired behind the plantation, but soon took up his former position. Upon this Seydlitz, who at the commencement had fifteen squadrons under his command, was advanced with twenty-five squadrons to support Zieten. After a sharp encounter Nadasdy's horse were driven back some distance, but the Prussians being hindered from advancing by the unfavorable nature of the

ground, and exposed at the same time to a flank and rear fire from the oak plantation, were obliged to resume their former position. Meanwhile Hülsen had stormed the village of Krzeczhorz, taken seven cannon, and pushed on against the Austrian flank ; but finding that, unsupported, he was not strong enough for this attack, he established himself in a good position, and continued to fire while awaiting the arrival of reinforcements.

The King, however, had ordered the main line, which was in retreat, to halt too soon, without paying attention to the remonstrances of Prince Maurice, who wished to keep his troops longer on the march, so as to reach the oak plantation, which was the point of attack, somewhat later. Dann had been continually strengthening his right during the action, so that the Prussian infantry, who ought to have turned that flank, found themselves in its front when the King gave the order to advance and attack the enemy.

Prince Maurice in vain renewed his representations ; the King, who would not admit of opposition, was in a passion, and drew his sword, saying, "Will the Prince obey?" The infantry, twenty-two battalions strong, advanced opposite the village of Chotzemitz, and their left flank was ordered instantly to push on, while their right, under General von Manstein, was directed to outflank the Austrians, and remain for a time out of action. A part of the cavalry, who were also on that flank, received the same order. Notwithstanding great chasms were visible among Zieten's cavalry, also in Hülsen's position, and among the troops of Prince Maurice, and though these last, who had been ordered by the King to incline to the left, showed many new gaps in their lines, which were filled up by some battalions from the second line, the advance of the Prussians was, on the whole, successful. Hülsen's grenadiers pushed through the plan-

tation, and he himself, with Prince Maurice, at the head of nine battalions, stormed the great Austrian battery near Krzeczhorz, and threw a large portion of the enemy's force into disorder. The Prussian cavalry might now have done some execution, but they lost the opportunity, either because the difficulties of the ground seemed too formidable, or that they waited for fresh orders, and for a more complete development of their leader's intentions. The Austrians were already meditating a retreat, while the Prussians were on the point of securing their own victory.

But Damm had by no means exhausted his resources. His infantry once more cleared the plantation, and established themselves firmly within it. Nadasdy's cavalry, strongly reinforced, pressed forward; and although he had suffered much from Zieten's impetuous onslaught, the latter was compelled to withdraw his troops from the murderous fire kept up from the plantation. From this moment the battle went against the Prussians. The King was alarmed, and ordered fifteen of Zieten's squadrons to form a rear-guard, under Seydlitz, behind the left flank of his infantry. Unfortunately, it was impossible to reinforce the infantry, for General von Manstein, contrary to the King's orders, and perplexed by a wrong message given by an adjutant, had advanced contemporaneously with the left wing, and hazarded an attack with the battalions of the centre, with the intention at first of taking only the village of Chotzemitz, in their front; but the action soon becoming general, all his troops came under fire. Here also the enemy was overthrown, and the Prussians pushed on confidently; but the advance only brought them more and more into trouble. The King hurried to the spot, but was unable to restore the battle; his attention, moreover, was immediately recalled to the left wing, on whose flank two lines of Austrian

cavalry showed themselves. Another cavalry attack, executed at the King's command by the aged General von Pennavaire, failed like the former, from its exposure to the murderous fire from the oak plantation.

Seydlitz now found himself, for the first time, at the head of a heavy brigade, composed of ten squadrons belonging to the Prince of Prussia, and two regiments of cuirassiers, to which five squadrons of dragoons, called the regiment of Norman, were joined. He seized a favorable moment for advancing, and descended from his position into the open ground which lay between the oak planting and the right flank of the enemy, thus covering the left flank of the Prussian infantry. Nor did he stop here, but falling like a whirlwind on the foe, put to flight successively an infantry and two cavalry regiments, who advanced against him; and while he pursued the latter with his cuirassiers, his dragoons, under Major von Platen, fell upon the second line of the Austrians, overwhelming another infantry regiment, and carrying off their standards. Some Saxon carabineers attempted to cut off their retreat, but the dragoons wheeled about by divisions, and fell upon the Saxons with such impetuosity that they fled with loud cries, leaving two standards behind them.

But this could not last—the horses were out of breath, the different squadrons in confusion, the enemy in superior numbers threatened their left flank; this brilliant charge was therefore comparatively useless, and Seydlitz was compelled to withdraw his horsemen in rear of Krzeczhorz. Another cavalry attack, under Pennavaire, also failed, as did two others which the King and Prince Maurice hazarded with a few shattered squadrons.

The Prussian infantry still maintained themselves with the greatest resolution on the heights which they had won;

but their ammunition began to fail, no reinforcements arrived ; and struck down by the heavy artillery as well as musketry fire, disordered by the manœuvres of their own cavalry, and unexpectedly assailed by the enemy, the courageous bands were finally overpowered. In vain did the King, who rode forward accompanied by Mitchel, the English Ambassador, and Major Grant, enquire, " Do you wish to live for ever ? " and in vain did he, as bold as his own grenadiers, lead on a small but chosen band to the attack. The battle was lost. Dann advanced with greater numbers ; and the centre and right flank of the Prussians was beaten back, after hard fighting, with great loss. Nadasdy deployed again, and was again forced back by Zieten, who, establishing himself on the battle field till dusk, covered the slow retreat, which no pursuit could turn into disorder ; but was wounded whilst attacking an Austrian battery at the suggestion of Prince Maurice. Each troop of horse followed its respective leader ; General Werner and Colonels Seydlitz and Warnery remaining nearest to the foe. Seydlitz, who had advanced up the imperial road, lined it in perfect order the whole length of the Austrian front, (which had advanced considerably up to Planian,) where the troops were collected and their loss ascertained.

The Prussians had lost 45 cannon and 22 standards. Of their 18,000 infantry above two-thirds were *hors de combat* ; while the cavalry had scarcely lost 1,500. Not only had the King too few infantry for what he undertook, but he had been diverted by circumstances from his first plan of attack, and by the mistake which Manstein had committed on receiving wrong orders : hence the battle went against him. The troops had, nevertheless, done their duty, the cavalry only having been a little deficient in what was required of them. But the King was dissatisfied with the

latter, and felt little disposed to praise or to reward any one. Seydlitz, however, had shown such an example of boldness and talent, that he could not leave him unrewarded. Accordingly, on the 20th of June, two days after the battle of Kollin, Seydlitz was promoted to the rank of major-general. He was then but thirty-six years of age: very young for so great an honor. Zieten, twenty years his senior, and who had particularly recommended him to the King, was congratulating him on his success in the action, when Seydlitz answered: "If anything is to be got out of me, it is full time, for I am already thirty-six years old." Major von Platen, who had fought so well under Seydlitz's orders, was made a colonel.

CHAPTER IX.

EVACUATION OF BOHEMIA.—SURPRISE IN GOTHA.

THE immediate consequence of the battle of Kollin was to raise the siege of Prague; and the gradual evacuation of Bohemia followed. The King assigned the command of his conquered troops to his brother, Augustus William, who commenced his retreat, closely pursued by the Austrians. The history of this retreat, and its disastrous consequences, are elsewhere related; and we have, therefore, only to recount the part which Seydlitz took in it. He belonged, with his brigade of ten squadrons, to that part of the army which General Count von Schmettau led in advance of the main body. As they entered Lusatia, near Zittau, on the 19th of July, they found the enemy in force, in possession of the Eckhartsberg, and about forty squadrons of cavalry descended into the plain.

Judgment and presence of mind were here more necessary than the most daring courage; for, as Seydlitz observed, it was impossible with only ten squadrons to resist such a superior force, in such a position. The Prussians therefore avoided a conflict, and marched into the town. On the following day the whole opposing force appeared, and occupied the heights of Herwigsdorf, as well as the plain, by which movement the Prussians in Zittau were cut off

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from the main army of Prince Augustus William, which was still behind them, in Bohemia. Schmettau considered it prudent to order the cavalry to return to the army of the Prince, if possible, for, should the town be attacked, the horsemen would be of little use. Seydlitz, therefore, made his preparations immediately.

The suburb of Zittau, near Herwigsdorf, was filled with infantry ; 100 hussars, destined to remain with Schmettau, were also sent there ; and the pack-horses of the officers, together with some draught-horses of artillery, were turned into the neighbouring fields, while corn was hastily cut, and trussed on their backs. Seeing this demonstration of the Prussians, the Austrians turned out of their camp, and an outpost, consisting of nearly 1,200 horse, was thrown forward, to watch them incessantly. As, however, the whole of the Prussian cavalry were dismounted, and merely seemed occupied in getting forage, the Austrian infantry marched back to their quarters, and their horsemen also alighted. In the meantime Seydlitz had formed a long chain with his squadrons, extending the whole length of the suburb, and when the foraging party had loaded their horses, and were returned to the town, he suddenly sounded the call to horse. His horsemen, uniting their forces concentrically from both extremities of the chain, burst impetuously upon the enemy, and literally overwhelmed the cavalry before they could gain their saddles. The Austrians were dispersed, ridden over, and would have been entirely destroyed, but that Seydlitz dared not delay a moment in making his escape : he burst straight through, in close column, then broke up his line, and in a sharp trot hastened on his course. He was quickly out of sight of the astonished Austrians, and succeeded in reaching Prince Augustus William without losing a single man.

At this period the King was compelled to turn his arms against the French, who were pressing his allies in Westphalia and Hanover, and were also marching against him from the side of Thuringia. Seydlitz was despatched from Dresden to Leipsic with ten squadrons of hussars and five of dragoons, from thence to harass the French General, Turpin, who had ventured as far as Halle, with his light troops. He hoped to overtake Turpin at Maresburg, on the night of the 4th of September, but finding that he had left, he pushed on to Grimma, to join the troops which the King was leading in person against the allied French and Imperial forces. Seydlitz commanded the advanced guard, and first encountered the enemy at Pegau, on the 7th of September, where he found the gate on the other side of the stone bridge over the Elster barricaded, and the adjoining houses defended with artillery. He had no infantry, but his horsemen were accustomed to all kinds of service; so he caused 100 hussars to dismount and attack the gate, which was soon forced open; and then pressing across the bridge, with the whole of his brigade, and rushing through the town, he gained the fields on the opposite side. Without pausing, he there attacked and overthrew two Austrian hussar regiments, who were advantageously posted in a narrow road, pursued them to Zeitz, and returned with 250 prisoners. On the following day a portion of these troops showed themselves again near the bridge over the Saale, not far from Schnleforta, and were again surprised and dispersed with loss.

At Buttstädt the King received the news of the unfortunate treaty of Kloster Seven, whereby the Hanoverian troops were rendered useless, and the whole French force, under the Duc de Richelieu, enabled to turn their arms against him. The small Prussian army dared not advance

further ; but the King, anxious to drive back the force under the Prince de Soubise, which was collected near Erfurt, led thither 2,000 horse and two battalions of infantry. He gained his object ; Soubise drew off his forces, and the King followed him with his cavalry to Gotha, where the Austrian hussars were again overthrown, and pursued nearly to Eisenach. Seydlitz, with twenty squadrons, remained to observe the enemy, while the King betook himself to Erfurt, where he had left the remainder of his troops, taking every precaution to conceal their weakness from the enemy. On the 17th of September, Seydlitz, who lay with his hussars beyond Gotha, having posted one detachment to the rear of that town, and another towards Gumbstädt, reported to the King that the enemy's troops had intrenched themselves near Eisenach, and being glad that this position remained to them, intended there to await the attack of the King.

Seydlitz here received intelligence of the death of General von Winterfeldt, to which he alluded in his dispatch, an event which every one who had the interest of the king at heart could not but regret. His sympathy was sincere ; neither partiality nor envy formed a part of his character ; he flattered a favorite as little as he feared an enemy. With Winterfeldt he had been on the best terms, and had admired in him the higher qualifications of a warrior as well as the noble and lofty genius of the man, without in the least detracting from the merit of Zieten or of Schmettau.

The French believed that the king was still at Gotha, and Seydlitz sought to confirm them in this opinion by his bold attack on their outposts, one of which he drove back as far as Mechterstadt ; he also harassed them in divers ways. But the Prince of Hildburghausen, who commanded

the Imperial troops, had better information, and pressed Soubise to act in concert with him, and to drive the Prussians from before Gotha. The united armies consequently advanced early on the 19th of September, from three different quarters, against Seydlitz, with 6,000 infantry, 4,000 horse, and some field pieces. Seydlitz, warned betimes of the danger, gradually withdrew in excellent order behind Gotha, and then ordered his squadrons to advance upon the enemy, placing Szekely's hussars in the first line, Meineke's dragoons in the second, while further in the rear Katt's dragoons were extended in a semi-circular form, to give the appearance of a large body of troops. He had also arranged that on a given signal this last regiment should, if necessary, close their files, so as to cover his own retreat.

The enemy, however, really believed that a powerful force lay before them ; and Seydlitz confirmed the error by despatching a dragoon, in the character of a deserter, into Gotha, to report that the king was approaching the town with a large army. While the Austrians were deliberating as to their own movements, Seydlitz dismounted some hussars, pushed them through the intervals of his remaining squadrons, so as to represent infantry, and commenced an advance with his whole line. The enemy, on seeing the supposed infantry, no longer doubted that the main army was near. They did not withstand the attack, which the leading squadrons made at first sluggishly, then with impetuosity ; and when a crowd of Prussian hussars and dragoons burst at full speed into the town, they found the Imperial troops were already retreating. The Prince de Soubise who at that very moment was at dinner in the castle, rehearsing the praises of the Prussian cavalry to the duchess, had scarcely time to mount his horse to secure his

own freedom. More than sixty men were taken prisoners in Gotha, in addition to four staff officers, four lieutenants, and great spoil in horses and baggage ; and as there were many articles for cleansing wearing apparel, as well as all kinds of luxuries, much merriment and sarcasm was produced among the Prussians. Seydlitz attacked the rear-guard on the other side of Gotha, put them to flight, and pursued them until they reached Eisenach in breathless disorder.

This brilliant exploit, achieved solely by cavalry, who had done all which could be expected from a large force of horse and foot united, gratified the King so much that he specially addressed the troops in its honor ; and long after, when writing the history of his own life and times, he narrated circumstantially the success of Seydlitz that day as worthy of undying fame. "Any other officer," writes the king, "would have contented himself by withdrawing his troops from so difficult a position without much loss ; but General Seydlitz would not be satisfied without gaining an advantage at the same time. His example proves that genius and courage in a leader are of more value than the number of his troops. In such a case an ordinary general would have been discouraged by the decided superiority of the enemy ; would have retreated on their advance, and lost half his force in defending his rear guard, which the overwhelming number of the enemy's cavalry would immediately have attacked. The able disposition of one dragoon regiment, so distended as to deceive the foe from a distance, gave General von Seydlitz an opportunity of winning everlasting renown."

In his report of this action to the king, Seydlitz begged for reinforcements, "since," he said, "such a manœuvre cannot be expected to succeed twice !" The King, however,

recalled him on the 20th of September, with all his troops, from Gotha ; and he ventured to withdraw his small force, in broad daylight, without any loss, "because," as he wrote to the king, "the dread of your majesty's arms is by no means small."

CHAPTER X.

THE BATTLE OF ROSSBACH.

THE position of the King was, at this period, everywhere dangerous, and it required the greatest attention and energy to make head against his numerous foes. He had been compelled to evacuate Bohemia ; Saxony and Silesia were threatened by the Austrians ; the Russians were advancing into Prussia ; the Swedes into Pomerania ; while the French and Imperial troops lay on the side of Thuringia, near the Elbe. The Austrian General, von Haddik, actually appeared with 3,000 light troops before the gates of Berlin, and occupied a part of the suburbs. The King was compelled to march his troops towards the Spree, the Elbe, and the Saale, in order to unite them in strong numbers ; while the left bank of the Saale was, for a length of time, entirely abandoned to the French and Imperial armies.

But when the hostile forces crossed over to the right bank, and advanced in the direction of Leipsic, Frederick led his forces thither immediately, being anxious, ere more distant embarrassments diverted his attention and his arms, to procure elbow room on this side at least by hazarding a great battle.

The enemy retreated over the Saale on the King's approach ; and the Prussians, after forcing a passage by Halle, Merseburg, and Weissenfels, followed along the left bank.

The French and Imperial troops, under Soubise and the Prince of Hildburghausen, were at least 64,000 strong, having been joined by a division from the French main army, which lay on the other side of the Hartz mountains, under Richelieu; while the Prussian force did not exceed 22,000 men.

The allied army was assembled near Mûcheln, whither the King advanced, on the 3rd of November, 1757, through Braunsdorf and Rossbach.

At the head of a small body of cavalry, he reconnoitred their position; and its weakness, as well as the extreme carelessness of the army, gave him confident hopes of success. Indeed the Prussian hussars took horses and prisoners out of the French ranks when they pleased.

But the latter changed their position during the night, and when the Prussians advanced early on the following morning, they found the enemy so advantageously posted that Frederick determined not to attack, but retreating through the village of Schortan, he occupied, in its rear, a position covered with marshy ground, through which there was no road, his right wing resting on Bedra, his left on Rossbach. This short retreat was hailed by the French with a *feu de joie*, and with blasts of trumpets by their military bands; and as the French generals believed that the King was about to cross the Saale with all speed, they meditated striking an important blow by passing over to Weissenfels and Merseburg before him, hoping that by cutting off his retreat, and hemming him in by such superior forces, he would surrender at discretion.

On the following day this plan was to be carried into execution. Meanwhile, in order to cover the movement, and keep the Prussians on their own ground, the enemy faced a few troops towards the right flank, and commenced

a desultory fire, far too distant to be effective. Seydlitz reconnoitred these troops without molesting them. The main force of the united armies now marched in line of battle from the right, and it was soon reported that, by this movement, the enemy meant to gain Pettstädt, beyond the village of Zeuchfeld, and so turn the left flank of the King's army. Frederick did not credit this, but at noon sat quietly down to dinner in the Castle of Rossbach. Seydlitz, who dined with him, was aware of the danger from every thing which he had seen and heard, and secretly sent an adjutant, with orders to have the cavalry ready to turn out at a moment's notice; and the heavy artillery, quartered near the cavalry, followed their example.

After much doubt as to the intentions of the enemy, the King, from the lofty windows of the castle, ascertained positively their line of march, and also observed that, although they went very slowly, their divisions struck into the road from Pettstädt to Reichertswerben. Up to this moment the Prussians had remained perfectly still; but at two in the afternoon they received orders to break up their camp, which was immediately done, and the troops stood to their arms.

The advantage of Seydlitz's private orders was more apparent. Frederick placed himself at the head of the infantry, which marched off in line from the left in line, (quarter left,) and followed in the same direction that Soubise had taken. The whole of the cavalry, with the exception of some squadrons left at Schortan to observe those of the enemy's forces that remained still in their front, received an order to check the enemy's march upon Merseburg. Wheeling rapidly to the left, out of the third line, they passed the infantry at a quick trot, Seydlitz commanding them, for although the youngest cavalry general,

the King placed the most confidence in him. Low marshy ground, extending from Braunsdorf to Lunstädt and Rossbach, at first separated the two armies ; this was succeeded by a chain of small hills, stretching behind Lunstädt and Reichertswerben, of which the highest point is called the Janushügel.

Frederick established himself advantageously on these hills, which covered the march of his troops, and pushed forward a strong battery to the Janushügel, under the brave Colonel Moller, who opened a tremendous fire upon the enemy as they marched underneath ; while the fire of the latter, being directed upwards, had no effect.

The heads of both armies approached each other gradually, the Prussians unseen by the French, who were hastening on without an advanced guard, so great was their anxiety that the enemy should not escape them. At Reichertswerben they wheeled to the left, believing themselves to be already in rear of the Prussians ; and confident of victory, advanced towards the Janushügel. On a sudden, Seydlitz, with his squadrons, issued from behind the hills, and finding himself on the enemy's right flank, discovered at once the importance of the moment, and therefore, without waiting for the infantry, who were still at some distance, he decided on an immediate attack. His cavalry was comparatively small in number, and not equal to the undertaking, indeed he was compelled to extend his front considerably, and even then his squadrons were at a considerable distance from each other. He formed two lines, placing fifteen squadrons in the first, and eighteen in the second, while five squadrons of Hussars covered the left flank. In previous actions the Prussian cavalry had been formed in three ranks, but at Seydlitz's suggestion, it moved henceforwards in two.

In the advance, which took place with great rapidity, a

slight incident occurred, illustrative of Seydlitz's character. A squadron of the Prussian Life Guards was in disorder, in consequence of the captain's horse being a little shy : this was soon remedied, and the movement went on steadily. But Seydlitz had observed the circumstance ; he dashed to the spot, and in the plenitude of command drove the unhappy captain from before the advancing line, with a furious injunction to "go to the Devil ;" nor was he ever seen again with his regiment. This violent exercise of authority the King forbore to censure, probably because he recognised in it the same impetuosity which rendered Seydlitz irresistible in action.

All was now ready except the drawing of swords, which Seydlitz purposely delayed until the last moment, when he rode to the front, and in sight of the whole line gave the signal himself, by a slight waive of his tobacco pipe. In a moment every man's sabre was unsheathed, and Seydlitz and his followers rushed at full speed on the foe. The French troops, who were commanded by the Duc de Broglie, and consisted of fifty-two squadrons, endeavored hastily to deploy, but Seydlitz allowed them no time : before their preparations were completed, they were overwhelmed and cut in pieces. Two Austrian and two French cavalry regiments endeavoured to meet the storm ; one of the latter arrested for a moment a Prussian hussar corps, but in the next they were beaten down ; they then turned round, and fled like the rest, in the greatest confusion. A narrow road, near Reichertswerben, checked the fugitives, and many were made prisoners. The scattered horsemen escaped beyond the Unstrutt, and did not appear again that day. Seydlitz, who followed them to Reichertswerben, collected his breathless forces, and led them to the left front through Tagawerben, until he stood in rear of the enemy's infantry.

The King who, with his infantry, had turned the right flank in the same manner that Seydlitz had done with his cavalry, now changed direction to the left, and ordered the whole line, together with the artillery, to advance to the attack on the Janushügel, by which movement his left wing inclined to the left, while the right for a time remained stationary. Reichertswerben was already occupied by five Prussian battalions.

The enemy's infantry advanced as carelessly as their cavalry had done, and hastened towards the village, without anticipating an attack from that quarter. They were, therefore, completely taken by surprise when the Prussians suddenly appeared; their battalions found no room to deploy, their dense masses were ploughed up by the Prussian fire, their right flank was entirely abandoned, while in the extreme rear the redoubtable Prussian cavalry was seen advancing. In vain they endeavoured to make some defence against the latter, or to check with their choked up columns the King's advance; the artillery of the Prussian left wing mowed them down, and the infantry opened their powerful musket fire. After a short struggle, the whole body took to flight, while the troops in front were hurled against those in the rear, and the entire mass was hurried along in breathless disorder.

Two French regiments, cuirassiers and dragoons, had taken refuge with the infantry, and shut up the right flank of the latter within their two lines, by which means they, in some sort, defended it; but Seydlitz, with about ten squadrons, halted in their front, ready to strike, but delaying the attack, as the advance of the king could not fail, without any demonstration on his part, to make them give ground. As he anticipated, they shortly began to feel the effect of the murderous Prussian fire, and were put into

motion so as to escape it. The commander of the horse, thus surrounded, was guilty of the indiscretion of wheeling his whole force to the right, close to the front of the advancing Prussian squadrons, by which movement he exposed his full rank to them. Seydlitz did not let the opportunity escape him; he rushed impetuously on the wheeling line, forced them back upon the infantry, and threw the whole army into the wildest confusion; entire bands surrendered at discretion. In the *melée* Seydlitz was wounded by a musket shot in the arm, and the attack, in consequence, met with a temporary check. Favored by this circumstance, some French regiments sought to renew the action, and cavalry were accordingly sent by their left flank to cover their retreat; one cavalry regiment, in particular, rushed at the sword's point, on a Prussian corps, which gave way. Meanwhile Seydlitz's wound having been tied up, he again placed himself at the head of his troops, carried the last remaining five regiments of the French cavalry before him, and then turned his forces against their infantry; who, hemmed in on every side, still made a stand, in small masses, at intervals. This resistance was speedily overcome, and after a struggle of scarcely two hours' duration, before darkness had fully set in, the most complete victory crowned the Prussian arms.

Of their infantry only seven battalions, under the command of Prince Henry of Prussia, came into play; ten more on the right wing, equally with the French left, took no part in the action; whilst the skilful disposition of his forces by Frederick, the correct movements of his troops, but above all, the cavalry attack at the commencement of the battle, decided the day. The enemy's loss amounted to nearly 3,000 killed and wounded, and more than 5,000 prisoners, including five generals, and 300 officers; and

67 cannon, seven colours, fifteen standards, as well as an immense quantity of baggage, was also secured. Rarely has a battle been so quickly and entirely won, or a victory so important and brilliant as that of Rossbach gained.

The joy of the whole German nation was as much excited by the results, as the laughable circumstances attending their flight and total discomfiture were at first galling to the vanquished. But there can be no question that the French gave numerous instances, even in this action, of the most daring courage; the insufficiency of their preparations, and the abuses of their leaders, who were for the most part unsoldierlike favorites of the Court, proved the cause of their defeat. Even in France the nation looked on the war against the Prussians as an affair of the Court, on whom the whole odium of the defeat was cast; while the admiration bestowed on Frederick and his heroes was universal. The generals and officers who had been taken prisoners were well treated by the King, and shared in these sentiments. Seydlitz stood next in their estimation; of him they said truly, in reference to his age: "*Que ce garçon était né général.*"

CHAPTER XI.

THE EVACUATION OF BOHEMIA.

THE King thanked all his troops for the victory they had gained, the cavalry in particular, who had that day attained a fame never reached since Prussia was a nation. On the 20th of November Seydlitz received from the King the Order of the Black Eagle, accompanied by those expressions of esteem which Frederick so well knew how to employ. This was an honor which had been accorded only in two instances to a major-general, and has never since been repeated. A few days later he was created lieutenant-general, and the regiment of cuirassiers of which he was formerly colonel, and which was then vacant, was given to him.

To have advanced, in the short space of half a year, from the rank of colonel to that of lieutenant-general, and to have received the highest order of knighthood in the gift of the Crown, without which many lieutenant-generals had passed years of service, were distinctions of which no one in the Prussian army before or since could boast. Seydlitz showed himself grateful and modest in this elevation, and strove to soothe the susceptibility of those meritorious comrades whom he had surpassed. With this view, he himself informed the brave General von Meineck, who was his senior in the service, of his extraordinary promotion, and comforted him

with the assurance that this honor, which he owed to the graciousness of his Sovereign, would never make him forget the respect due to a most gallant general, older than himself in the profession, whose friendship was still indispensable to him. Seydlitz was as happy in his new position as a man could be who felt himself equal to any task which his higher grade might impose on him. His first care was for those brave officers who had distinguished themselves under his orders, and he lost no time in recommending several to the King for promotion—recommendations which were graciously carried into effect by the Sovereign. The wound which Seydlitz had received, though not serious in itself, was slow in healing, and prevented his taking part in those warlike exploits which the King achieved soon after in Silesia. He remained in Leipsic, where he received the welcome intelligence of the brilliant victory which the King gained at Leuthen, over the Austrians, on the 5th of December. Frederick specially informed him, through Prince Henry, of the success of his arms in Silesia ; and Seydlitz experienced the highest satisfaction, as well at the news, as at the friendly recollection of the King ; but he was compelled to suffer, in patience and at a distance, and passed his time in winter quarters at Leipsic. An eminent medical man, Dr. Cothenius, found the wound easy enough to cure ; not so, however, the state of ill health into which Seydlitz had fallen. We have before remarked that sensual indulgences had early gained an unfortunate ascendancy over him, and the injurious effects of uncontrolled passions yet remained. His intercourse with a lady in Silesia, of high birth but infamous conduct, was especially pernicious ; and the war which soon after broke out made such demands on his impetuous and incessant exertions, that any attention to the deep-seated disease was impossible. In the excitement of

the battle field, the greater the vigour with which his body answered to the demands made on it, the more intense was the reaction when these demands ceased. Some improvement was produced by the use of cautious remedies; but a local affection, connected with relaxed vessels and a weakened nervous system, prevented his riding for a lengthened period.

The King frequently enquired after him with sincere sympathy; and Seydlitz, with perfect candour, informed him of the misfortune which kept him from the saddle, as every attempt to ride had been followed by an almost total cessation of breathing. He writes to this effect: "As soon as this anguish is once supportable, I shall hope to perform my duty as of yore, with fidelity, now rendered doubly desirable by your Majesty's gracious bounty, even if in such efforts I should breathe my last." These few lines, like some quoted before from his private correspondence, indicate refined sentiments, concisely and gracefully expressed. His cure having been accelerated by the arrival of spring, he found himself, as he wrote to the King, sufficiently recovered to join the army.

Frederick, having begun the campaign of 1758 by storming the fortress of Schweidnitz, was preparing for more important movements in Silesia. He found means to deceive Marshal Dann, who apprehended an attack on the side of Bohemia, and to keep him on the same spot, while he marched with his main army, in the beginning of May, over the hills, in the direction of Moravia.

Olmütz was the first object of attack. This fortress was well defended by the Austrian General, von Marschall; and the preparations for enclosing and besieging it were not equal to the undertaking, nor was the Prussian army sufficiently numerous to intrench the complicated outworks.

The name of Seydlitz appears only cursorily at this juncture, and in subordinate occurrences, where no large mass of cavalry had to be controlled, and no decisive blow to be struck. The King gave all the orders himself; therefore the honor of leading such a force could not be very great, as the enemy avoided any serious engagement. On the 12th of May Seydlitz marched southwards, with two dragoon regiments and 300 hussars, from Olmütz to Tobitschau; and being joined by infantry near Kremsir, he carried off all the provisions from between the left bank of the march to Prerau and Holeschau, in order that the enemy might not harass them on that side. On the 17th he re-entered the camp near Neustadt.

On the 29th of June the King sent Seydlitz, with a few squadrons of hussars and dragoons, into the same neighbourhood, to ascertain the truth of a report that the enemy's troops were approaching from that side; but they never showed themselves. The position of the King was now much altered for the worse by the appearance of Dann, in whose army General von Loudon was then beginning severely to injure the Prussians. The fortress of Olmütz was succoured, whilst the King's communication with Silesia was cut off; and after Loudon had, on the 30th of June, beaten Zieten's troops in the narrow road from Domstادتal, and had partly taken and dispersed large Prussian reinforcements which were coming up, nothing was left but to evacuate Bohemia.

The King therefore raised the siege; but instead of pursuing his way quietly to Silesia, of which he made a demonstration, he unexpectedly took the direction to Bohemia; thus, even in his retreat, overrunning an enemy's country, consuming his means of sustenance, and for some time baffling his opponents, in spite of their advantageous

position and superior numbers. In executing this hazardous march Seydlitz encountered and overthrew the enemy in a famous engagement near Chlumetz ; and subsequently, at the head of the Prussian cavalry, covered the long retreat of the army, which was but slowly approaching the frontiers of Silesia. At length the King crossed the mountains, and on the 8th of August encamped near Landshut and Grüssau. But he did not long enjoy a respite there.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BATTLE OF ZORNDORF.

LIKE the French in the previous year, the Russians now approached the theatre of war in great strength, and their frequent inroads compelled the Prussian King to oppose them with the *élite* of his troops.

The Russian army, under the command of General Count Fermor, had pushed its advances, through Poland and Prussia, up to the river Oder, had crossed by the right bank of the Warthe, and after setting fire to the town with red-hot shells on the 15th of August, menaced the fortress of Cüstrin. The Prussians, under General Count Dohna, being too weak to take the field boldly against the enemy, had retreated gradually, and lay near Gorgast, behind the Oder, not far from the fortress. The King, however, had hastened, as early as the 11th of August, from his encampment at Landshut, with sixteen battalions and twenty-eight squadrons, (about 14,000 of his best troops,) to their relief, and crossing the Oder, near Frankfort, joined them on the 21st at Gorgast.

The following day he reviewed Dohna's troops, saying to him, "Your men have brushed themselves uncommonly; I bring some with me who look like dustmen; but they can bite!" Having minutely examined the state of affairs, he resolved on giving battle to the Russians without delay,

in order to gain more space on this side ; and then to turn his arms against the Austrians. He deluded the enemy into the notion that he meant to cross the Oder and defend the fortress ; but instead of so doing he pushed up the river, and throwing a bridge across it, near Güstebiese, which was done in three hours, he was soon in full march on the right bank, with 32,000 men, of whom a third were cavalry ; he had also 117 guns. The Russians lay near Cüstrin, but finding the King's army in their rear, hastened to change their front, so as to meet his advances. Frederick took up a strong position behind the villages of Quartschen and Zorndorf, with his left flank resting on the Mietzel, a small stream which flows into the Oder, and his right protected by the forest of Drewitz, which stretches away towards Cüstrin. In his front lay Zabergrund, a marshy recess bending northwards from Zorndorf and Quartschen ; at a short distance was the plain of Galgengrund, running in the same direction from Wilkersdorf ; and yet further, on a third morass, which also extends northwards towards Quartschen, where all these low grounds are terminated by the Mietzel. As the Prussians made their appearance on the left flank of this position, near Darmietzel, on the opposite side of the stream, and encamped northwards towards the mill of Neudamm, the Russians formed a curved line, having the Hofebruch, and a considerable bend of the Mietzel, in its front.

Such was the position of the two armies on the afternoon of the 24th of August, 1758. However, the King decided on not making his attack in that quarter ; but chose rather to assail the right flank, which was less strongly posted, at the same time foreseeing that he might be able to push between the enemy and Cüstrin, and in case of need fall back upon that fortress. To effect this, it was necessary to pass round the whole position of the enemy, for which the

ground was fortunately favorable. Preparations were made to pass the Mietzel in the night, near the mill of Neudamm. The troops left the neighbouring village of Zicher on their right, inclined leftwards to the forest of Massin, and early on the morning of the 25th of August the whole army was in motion, in three lines, covered by the forest. But Fermor had changed his position during the night, and marched across the Zabergrund, and his forces now stood pressed together in an irregular square, between that spot and the village of Zicher, at the back of Hofebruch, the front towards Wilkersdorf. Near Batzlow the Prussians came out of the forest into the plain, and advanced through Wilkersdorf in order of battle, in the direction of Zorndorf.

The King having reconnoitred the enemy's new position, was still of opinion that their right flank was the most assailable. But the three pieces of marsh which intersected the ground on which they were advancing, and appeared to surround it, lay no longer in front of the Russians. On the contrary, the morasses ran straight up to their guns, and therefore the further they advanced the more the front of the attacking columns became divided. The Prussian advance guard pressed on through Zorndorf, and opened the battle, with a very effective fire of small arms, upon the extreme right of the Russian position. The battalions, resting with their left on the Zabergrund, rushed boldly on, and drove back the first line of the enemy. The two main lines also co-operated in the movement, pressing on in an oblique direction, and keeping back the right flank, which was to take part in the action at a later period. Almost all the cavalry were posted, under Seydlitz's command, in the extreme left, on the other side of the Zabergrund. This march divided them effectually from the infantry, whom they were to support.

At the commencement of the action two cuirassier and two dragoon regiments received orders to march on the right flank. The King, who was so placed as to observe the whole of his troops, observed that the cavalry did not advance with their usual promptitude, and sent orders for them to follow the infantry immediately. But Seydlitz was anxious not to expose his horse uselessly to the enemy's fire, and refused to obey the second message from the King. He returned, for answer, that the cavalry must not be wasted, but that he hoped to be at hand when necessary, and pledged himself to justify his conduct after the battle. Frederick sent a third time, and warned him that he should answer for his insubordination by the loss of his head. To this Seydlitz quietly replied, "Tell the King that my head shall be at his service after the action, if he will only allow me to make use of it meantime in his interest."

The Prussian infantry had not maintained the prescribed line of march in their advance; but had exposed their left flank, which ought to have rested on the Zabergrund, to the enemy's fire. Hence the first line found itself unsupported, as the infantry which ought to have followed it, having pressed forward into its own line, was fighting side by side with it, instead of obeying the order given to strengthen the first. The battalions were consequently too few in number to break through the second Russian line as well as the first; whilst the enemy, pressed into compact masses, began to feel their superiority, and to be aware of their advantages. Their infantry broke ground with loud acclamations, and forced back the Prussians,—their cavalry charged at the same moment, and increased the confusion, which soon extended to the left flank of the Prussians. Whole battalions took to flight, and the Russians, taking 26 cannon, pursued their victorious career.

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Seydlitz, who had halted on the other side of the Zabergrund, with thirty-one squadrons, had observed the course of the battle. His keen glance at once detected that the King's order to attack the enemy's infantry as soon as it began to give ground was rendered nugatory, while he foresaw the possibility of retrieving the battle by throwing his forces on the disordered bands already elated with victory, and eager in pursuit of the Prussian infantry. He called to him the commander of the life guards, Captain von Wakenitz, together with the leader of the gensdarmes, and of his own regiment, and said, "The battle is lost; I do not tell you positively to attack, but whoever likes to try it may do so." To which Wakenitz replied, "I will not see a battle lost without hazarding an attack by the life guards: I shall charge the enemy." The two other officers avowed similar intentions. Upon this Seydlitz, gaining confidence, put his squadrons in motion, with his usual coolness and discretion, and marched on to the accomplishment of his purpose with the steady determination of a master spirit.

Having selected certain parts of the Zabergrund, through which cavalry could pass, Seydlitz formed his troops rapidly on the other side, and at a given signal they swept at a gallop after their daring leader, who, well skilled in such onslaughts, found time to arrange a two-fold attack. At the head of two hussar regiments and his own regiment of cuirassiers, he fell on the Russian cavalry, sword in hand, instantly overwhelming and driving them into the marshy ground; and at the same moment the life guards and gensdarmes rushed on their infantry, which wavered at the unexpected shock, although they resolutely maintained their ground for a short period. Seydlitz now left the Russian horse in hopeless flight, and attacked the infantry with his squadrons, having speedily re-formed them.

At the same time, fifteen squadrons, which had been posted to support the Prussian left flank, and two dragoon regiments, which the King had ordered to the right flank, appeared on the scene. As the latter were hurrying through the burning village of Zorndorf, at a brisk trot, they were countermanded by Seydlitz, and ordered to take part in the fray, which by this time assumed a very desperate and bloody aspect. Seldom, perhaps, have foot and horse fought with more determination. The Russians being hemmed in, in close platoons, gave no quarter; but as the dead fell, they were replaced by the living, and thus the rage of the combatants continued undiminished. Zieten's hussars having forced themselves into the squares, had, with untiring energy, to cut their way out again. The resolution and skill of the Prussian cavalry at length prevailed, and entire masses of the enemy were annihilated; thousands of corpses strewed the ground, and but few survivors sought refuge in flight, so that between the Zabergrund and the Galgengrund no hostile force was visible.

The main army of the Russians, however, still remained unshaken behind the Galgengrund, protected by the deep soil from all attacks of cavalry. Seydlitz did not expose his men uselessly, but collecting his wearied squadrons, led them to the rear of Zorndorf, where he ordered their array, and with a vigilant eye awaited the issue of events. The battle had already lasted from nine o'clock in the morning until one, and the exhaustion of both parties therefore caused a short truce. As the Prussian infantry on the left flank were incapable of advancing, the King determined to follow up the unexpected advantages gained by Seydlitz by bringing up the right flank, which had been thrown back, and consequently less exposed. The artillery on that flank was advanced, and commenced a vigorous cannonade on the enemy's

battalions which were lying between the village of Zicher and the Galgengrund, while the batteries on the King's left also opened a smart fire. Unfortunately, the artillery on the right, having advanced under too slender an escort, were attacked and captured by the Russian cavalry, who, pursuing their advantage, assailed also the infantry. But here they were opposed by the flower of the King's army, brought with him from Silesia, and who, being supported by the cavalry on the right flank, repulsed the assailants and pursued them up to Zicher. The Prussian artillery being re-captured by the cavalry, the whole line advanced in battle array. But the superiority of the Russians in numerical force was so great that the contest was renewed with fresh vigour; and no sooner was one cavalry corps overthrown than another advanced boldly, until the left flank of the Prussians began to waver.

These battalions, having suffered severely in the former attack, took to flight, and their example infected others. Thirteen battalions, who had fought with renown near Gross-Jägerndorf, seized with a sudden panic, retired in disorder towards Wilkersdorf. The commands of their officers were disregarded, the King's presence availed nothing, and the example of the Silesian battalions also failed to inspire them with courage. No reinforcements were at hand, and the numerous gaps caused by this unexpected defection in the Prussian line seemed to betoken their irretrievable defeat.

But it was decreed that victory should decide for the Prussians on this bloody day! Seydlitz, with his conquering regiments, lay re-organized behind Zorndorf. Undaunted amidst the general alarm, he excited sixty-one squadrons to fresh exertions, by shouting—"My children, follow me!" "We follow!" answered his brave horsemen with one accord.

His well known voice was in their ears ; his glorious example beamed before them. Dashing through the gaps in the Prussian line, the whole mass of horsemen rushed upon the foe. The Russians, slightly disordered, as before, by their own successes, could not withstand the onset ; their cavalry fled in confusion, and were driven into the morasses under Quartschen. Simultaneously, Frederick advanced against the Russian left, broke through their line, but was soon checked in his turn, and the gallantry and perseverance displayed on each side still rendered the issue of the battle doubtful. Now it was that Seydlitz, having returned from his pursuit of the Muscovite horsemen, in wheeling his squadrons to the left, swept with indomitable vehemence upon the infantry of the foe.

The enemy's cartridges rattled against the Prussian cuirasses, the musquetry renewed their countless hail, but Seydlitz's horsemen turned not, wavered not, but pressed on to the centre, where a furious contest ensued. Foot and horse were mingled in the deadly strife, and quarter was neither given nor demanded ; but at length the more skilful Prussians, their movements having been better regulated, obtained the upper hand. About eight in the evening the Russians were in full retreat. Small bands of their warriors pressed in disorder towards the Mietzel, where their passage was molested, and they again suffered ; whilst others retired behind Zorndorf, through the forest of Drewitz. In no part of the adjacent country was an enemy to be seen, excepting on the Tuchsberg, where some Russian companies of all arms, under General Demikoff, maintained a spirited contest. The King attacked the front and right flanks, but without success, for his infantry were exhausted and unsteady. Some of the battalions, wavering under the Russian fire, took to flight immediately ; others remained in

the Zabergrund to plunder; the cavalry were prevented from advancing by the marshy ground. Demikoff did not leave his position until after nightfall.

The Russian forces were, however, sufficiently strong to hazard a renewal of the battle on the following day, but it was limited to an interchange of a few cannon shots, and a cavalry attack, which failed. After this demonstration, the remainder of the enemy's army retreated towards Landsberg, during the night of the 27th of August, leaving to the Prussians the glory of being conquerors in this memorable battle, which at different periods threatened to end most disastrously for them. Even their advantages were dearly bought; as they had lost 12,000 men in killed and wounded, of whom 324 were officers. But few prisoners were taken, in fact only those who were severely wounded, for the battle had been contested with such fierce animosity that quarter was not given on either side.

The Prussians lost 26 cannon, but had taken 105 pieces of artillery, with 27 colours and standards; whatever reverse they had sustained was entirely owing to the infantry, while the success of the day was to be ascribed to the cavalry alone. The latter branch of the service had now attained the highest pitch of perfection; for, according to all historians, it had not its equal in Europe since the days of Rossbach and Zorndorf; as the horsemen were deserving of praise for their courage, impetuosity, and endurance. Engaged alike against each arm of the Russian force, they were victorious over all, and gave repeated proofs of their address and courage. Not one squadron wavered or loitered; nor did any of their attacks fail, but each movement was well turned and decisive.

The trumpet of fame sounded above all the praises of Seydlitz. All spoke of him with enthusiasm. The King

embraced the great hero publicly, and after thanking him in a graceful manner, said, with an indescribable tone and expression, "For this victory also I am indebted to him." But Seydlitz, emulating the King in a ready acknowledgment of merit in others, answered with warmth, "Not to me, most gracious King, but to the brave men I led on: your Majesty's cavalry has won the battle, and no praise is too great for them; but, above all, for Captain von Wakenitz, who fought like a lion, and performed wonders."

Wakenitz had been that day senior squadron leader of the garde du corps, the regiment which had first given the Russian infantry a specimen of their irresistible power. The King immediately promoted him to be lieutenant-colonel; and the two other squadron leaders of the same regiment, Von Posadowski, and Von Schätzel, to be majors. Many other officers, recommended by Seydlitz, were also promoted, some receiving orders and ribands, the most distinguished having both.

While yet on the field, the King gave audience, in presence of his generals, to the British Ambassador, Sir Andrew Mitchell, who had followed him to his tent to congratulate him on his victory. "Heaven has sent us," said he, "a grand day indeed, your Majesty." Frederick answered, pointing to Seydlitz:—"Without this man it would have been black enough for us!" It is said that Seydlitz was not satisfied with Wakenitz's promotion to a lieutenant-colonelcy, but pressed the King to give him yet higher rank; upon which Frederick turned round, and replied with some impatience:—"You would not have me make him a general on the spot!" We see here the characteristics of the King and of Seydlitz displayed in their true light. The anecdote is credible, and under the circumstances of the

case each might be right, without accusing Seydlitz of exacting too much for his friend, or the King of a want of generosity in rewarding his officers. The ill will which was afterwards engendered between Seydlitz and his Sovereign, concerning this very officer, had certainly no grounds for commencing here.

Another circumstance relative to the battle of Zorndorf also deserves notice. The King states, in his "History of the Seven Years' War," that he sent Seydlitz an order to make the attack which, as we have seen, proved so successful. But all other accounts agree in ascribing the movement to Seydlitz's own discernment and talent. Here again both statements are reconcilable. That the King did send an order to Seydlitz to commence has been before narrated,—so that whatever he executed after the receipt of that order may be said to have emanated from the King. It is admitted that he did not obey implicitly, but that, according to his own judgment, he selected both the time and place for making the attack, thus affording another proof of his discernment and extraordinary merit. The King's statement refers merely to the early order given by him, without contradicting that of others.

But the whole of Frederick's description of the battle is remarkably terse, as he does not enter into minutiae; but the repeated attacks and charges are merely recounted as one great atchievement of the cavalry. Hence it must be assumed that the King purposely omitted to make a more circumstantial narration; probably because it would have been painful for him to discuss, as he must then have done, the ill conduct of his infantry, who had, on former occasions, displayed so much energy and bravery. All the contemporary narrations given of this great battle are deficient in details; and we are constrained to remark, in particular,

that no account has been handed down to us of the precise movements of Seydlitz, nor of the words of command he employed, by which so large a mass of cavalry was ably manœuvred in most unfavorable ground ; hence all subsequent conjectures require historical confirmation. In sitting down to draw the plan of a battle, a writer ought not to have to conjecture, but should be able to place the troops exactly as they stood in a critical moment, and he is much to blame if he finds it necessary to draw on his imagination for the details required.

While the Russians were retreating after their defeat at Zorndorf, the King was obliged to direct his victorious army towards Saxony, where the Austrian army, under Daun, had advanced ; the Prussians, under Prince Henry, not being sufficiently strong to hold them in check.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BATTLE OF HOCHKIRCH.

THE King hastened towards the lower part of Lusatia, taking Keith, the Margrave Charles, and the Silesian troops with him, and having joined Prince Henry at Dresden, he then with his united forces rendezvoused opposite the enemy, hoping to drive the Austrians back into Bohemia, as Daun, in spite of his numerical superiority, would not give him battle. Daun, finding himself much pressed, took up a strong position between Bautzen and Löbau, near Kittlitz ; and the King, by moving beyond Bautzen, pitched his camp near Hochkirch, almost within reach of the enemy's artillery, on the 10th of October, 1758.

Deceived by false information, Frederick reckoned confidently on the continued retreat of Daun, and gave no heed to the warnings of Keith and his other generals, who thought his situation most dangerous. The King intended to break up his encampment on the 14th of October, in the evening, and considered that further anxiety about the enemy was superfluous. Indeed he reproved Seydlitz and Zieten, who were of a different opinion, and who urged him passionately to make preparations against an attack from Daun. So far from listening to their representations, he gave orders for the troops to repose that day ; adding, that

the cavalry need not prepare for immediate service, but might unsaddle their horses ; which was apparently acted on by Zieten, but the horsemen of Seydlitz were quietly kept under arms.

Late on the evening of the 13th, Seydlitz called the commanding officers of his different regiments together, and said,—“The King has given us positive orders, which we must obey ; let your horses be unsaddled, but at twelve o'clock saddle them again ; he does not forbid that.” In truth Daun, who formerly would have avoided coming into such close contact with the King, stood his ground this time, and taking advantage of the insolent security of his great rival, fell upon him at one o'clock in the morning of the 14th, with the whole strength of his arms. The Prussians fought under great disadvantage, the darkness of the night increasing their confusion ; and nothing but their rapid preparation to meet the coming storm, together with their heroic fortitude and patience, saved them from immediate and total defeat. The Prussian loss, in men and artillery, soon became considerable ; including Keith, who sank to rise no more ; Prince Francis, of Brunswick, who was killed by a cannon ball ; Prince Maurice, of Dessau, who fell badly wounded ; whilst the bravest battalions disappeared without complaining. Major von Lange and Lieutenant von der Marwitz defended the churchyard of Hochkirch with invincible determination.

The King had still hopes of redeeming the action, and led his forces, *en masse*, in one bold assault. But the victory was already secured to the Austrians, who did not allow it to be wrested from them. Cavalry could not act with decisive effect, but the Prussian horsemen had some success in driving back the cavalry, and attacking the

infantry, although no opportunity occurred for a general action, as the enemy's superiority was rapidly achieved and obstinately maintained. At this juncture the King was informed that some of his reserves had not been engaged, but were quite fresh, if he wished to hazard a last effort. Perceiving Seydlitz and the Margrave Charles near him, he looked enquiringly at them, as if to ask their advice. They remained silent, and he therefore forbore any further attack, as they evidently conceived it to be useless. Frederick immediately gave orders for the retreat, which was conducted in a firm and orderly manner, and only lasted as far as the neighbouring heights of Kreckwitz.

Seydlitz covered the retrograde movement with the whole of the Prussian cavalry, which he had collected on the left flank. The infantry, who were retiring on the right of Seydlitz, were in great disorder, and constantly exposed their weakest flank to the Austrian cavalry, who, fully prepared to dash in upon and cut through them, were following at no great distance. Seydlitz perceived the danger, and determined to check the enemy. Neglecting the squadrons before him, he wheeled by divisions to the right, and leading his regiments between the Prussian infantry and their foes, suddenly formed, and showed front to the Austrian cavalry on the flank of the former. As the whole weight of the attack, if now made, would fall on Seydlitz, the infantry gained time to reach the nearest covered road. But, although the Austrian cavalry were twice as numerous as those led by Seydlitz, they were so startled at the unexpected boldness of the movement, that they did not dare to attack him ; and Seydlitz therefore took up a menacing position on the plains of Belgern, forming his squadrons, at wide intervals, in two lines.

The retreating infantry reached their appointed station undisturbed, and the whole army encamped in perfect order in the face of the Austrians, although the greater part were without tents. Seydlitz also led his troopers quietly to their allotted quarters, between Klein-Bautzen and Kreckwitz; and they were soon busy in sending out foraging parties, as if nothing had happened. There can be no question that the discernment and address of this great hero averted many other serious disasters consequent on the loss of the action, and on the retreat. Indeed he played his game so well that no further pursuit was attempted, nor did any more bloodshed ensue.

Above 100 cannon, 28 colours, two standards, and the greater part of their tents, were lost by the Prussians, and a fourth of their army never re-appeared; whilst the Austrians, whose loss had been inconsiderable, lay opposite to them in three times their strength. The masterly disposition of Frederick's retreat from the field of battle, and the boldness with which, in spite of his reverses, he remained in the enemy's immediate neighbourhood, prevented further evil consequences to the Prussians from their loss of the battle of Hochkirch.

The King soon recommenced his manœuvres, and by anticipating the enemy's attacks, circumscribed all their operations. He charged Prince Henry with the observation of Daun, but deceived him as to his intentions, and on the 24th of October broke up his camp. Passing through Görlitz, he marched to the relief of the fortress of Neisse, in Silesia, at that time besieged by the Austrians, but where his presence soon turned the tide of affairs in its favor. From thence he returned, in haste, on the 7th of November, to check Daun's movements in Saxony. In Lusatia he learned that the enemy was in full retreat towards Bohemia,

and he therefore returned to Silesia, intending to winter at Breslau. In these marches, the success and intrepidity of which surprised all Europe, Seydlitz was always near the King, and remained with him in winter quarters, actively occupied in the improvement of the cavalry.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BATTLE OF KUNERSDORF.

THE King had but inadequate means for combating the great exertions and extensive projects of his enemies relative to the ensuing campaign ; and the greater, therefore, is our admiration of the ascendancy of his genius in the events of 1759,—the third of the Seven Years' War. It was then that the wonderful achievements of his cavalry suggested to him the idea of adding horse artillery to them, and their first union took place in the month of May, at Landshut : this plan has since been imitated by all the European powers.

Frederick was necessitated to divide his forces considerably, that he might be enabled to withstand his enemies on all sides ; for, at the commencement of hostilities, his army was so small as to oblige him to act wholly on the defensive.

The destruction of the enemy's magazines, which was accomplished during the spring, was a masterly conception. Prince Henry was charged with its execution in Saxony, Bohemia, and Franconia ; while General von Fouqué marched into Moravia, on the 16th of April, for the same purpose. Up to this period Seydlitz had been at Frankenstein, maintaining the communications between the King and Fouqué ; but he now marched with the latter to Troppau, having under his command three battalions and

twenty-two squadrons, and had the good fortune to capture one hundred prisoners. As the Austrians, however, had carried off their stores to Olmütz, and collected a large force on the other side of Troppau, Fouqué retired to his encampment on the 21st, without obtaining further success: Seydlitz, with four regiments of cuirassiers, joined the King on the other side of Neisse. Numerous other defensive operations, which demanded great attention and skill, were soon after accomplished, but they were of such a character as scarcely to deserve a circumstantial detail.

At length intelligence was brought that an Austrian force was endeavouring to force its way through Lusitania, towards Kotbus and Berlin, with the intention of joining the Russians on the other side of the Oder. Seydlitz therefore hastened to Sagan, on the 18th of May, and by using the greatest vigilance, in concert with Generals von Puttkammer and von Wobersnow, guarded that side until Prince Henry had made good his retreat from Franconia; but when the Prince had entered Saxony, our hero returned to the King.

About the end of June the King confided to Seydlitz the important charge of observing the enemy, and of forwarding to head quarters the most speedy report of their movements. To this task Seydlitz devoted himself with his usual zeal and activity, and the King was thus informed of the first demonstration which Daun made of leaving his camp near Schurz, and also that Laudon had marched with an important force towards Lusitania. It was evident that the Austrians wished to join the Russians; Frederick therefore lost no time in placing himself between them. Seydlitz commanded the advanced guard, and crossed the river Bober on the 3rd of July, taking up a position near Hussdorf and Lähn. Here Laudon's cavalry showed themselves on the following day, when, in spite of their numerical superiority,

the Prussians fearlessly attacked them, took nearly 100 prisoners, and Laudon himself narrowly escaped falling into their hands. This skirmish, although without any great results, redounded much to the credit of the Prussian cavalry. Seydlitz did not fail to notice the gallant bearing of his officers, and particularly that of Lieutenant Kordshagen, who had so distinguished himself on a previous occasion as to attract the notice of the King.

On the 6th of July, Daun took up a strong position on the heights of Mark-Lissa, and settled down there, while the King encamped on the 10th, near Schmottseiffen, between Löwenberg and Lähn, keeping Seydlitz and his troops with him. As the Russians, under Field Marshal Soltikoff, advanced into Silesia from Posen, and Count Dohna, who was opposed to them, could not withstand their attack, the King sent reinforcements thither, giving the chief command to General von Wedell, with full authority to act as he pleased, under the title of dictator.

On the 23rd of July, the day after his arrival, Wedell sustained a severe defeat at Kay, not far from Züllichau, and the Russians advanced towards the Oder. Daun had, in the meanwhile, detached two strong divisions, under Haddik and Laudon, to maintain his communications with Soltikoff,—the former to protect their march, while Laudon pushed on with 12,000 men, to effect the long wished for junction with the Russians. These Austrian detachments met near Guben, on the 1st of August; when Laudon again advanced, and reached Soltikoff's main army on the 3rd of the same month. In the interim Soltikoff had occupied Frankfort, and established a strong encampment on the right bank of the Oder; but Haddik, being warned of the approach of the King, thought it wiser to retire towards the Spree.

Frederick, on receiving intelligence of the reverses his army had sustained, had brought up Prince Henry with his best troops, and left him at Schmottseiffen, to watch Daun; and himself, with a handful of chosen men, who were speedily to be joined by others, marched on the 29th of July to the neighbourhood of Frankfort. A party of Haddik's horsemen encountered Frederick's advanced guard near Guben, and were immediately attacked, overthrown, and pursued to Sommerfeld. An Austrian battalion also, with four guns and five hundred waggons, was obliged to surrender to a single squadron of Prussian dragoons, whom Seydlitz himself was not ashamed to lead on. On the 6th of August, near Müllrose, the King ordered up those of Wedell's troops who had been lately repulsed at Kay, and encamping near Boosen until the 9th, he awaited the arrival of fresh troops from Saxony, under General von Fink. These troops duly joined, and having now a force of 48,000 men, Frederick thought himself strong enough to beat the united armies of Austria and Russia, who lay completely entrenched near Kunersdorf, in the immediate neighbourhood of Frankfort.

The affairs of the King rendered a battle imperatively necessary, especially as he believed Daun to be in full advance upon Frankfort, by way of Kothbus. Nor did he lose the opportunity, but gave orders that three battalions, under Colonel von Wunsch, should remain in the direction of Frankfort: he then, on the evening of the 10th, led his main army from the left to the right bank of the Oder. The infantry were to pass beyond Lebus, over the bridges near Reitwein, and the cavalry through a ford near Oetscher.

At this place Seydlitz nearly lost his life by the very means adopted by him to avert danger. He disliked riding heavy underbred horses, and therefore only kept those with

strong loins and hind quarters, and which were fit for galloping, leaping, or any violent exercises. He generally rode small Polish horses ; but on this occasion he borrowed a heavy Holstein one, as the water was too deep for a lighter animal. Though not a bad charger of the sort, he stumbled in going over the uneven bed of the river, and Seydlitz was thrown into deep water, and nearly drowned. One of Seydlitz's aides-de-camp assisted him out, but he was much vexed at the accident, and vowed he would never cross an underbred horse again.

Seven battalions and five squadrons remained at Göritz, and the King, with all the remaining troops, advanced against the Russian position. The latter army was on some steep hills, cut through, along the bank parallel to the road leading from Frankfort to Krossen ; the front was towards the north, through the low grounds of the Oder, and the large Elsenbruch (a plain) ; the left flank, nearest to the river, rested on the Judenberge (Jew's hills) ; the right flank was strongly posted on the Mühlberge (mill hills), towards Trettin and Bischofssee. This wing was covered by low grounds, and a hollow way, called the Bäckergrund, which lay in its front. Small lakes occur in these low grounds ; and the Hühnerfliess,* a small rivulet, pursued its sluggish course through marshes to the Oder.

The heights in rear of the whole position, that is towards the south, gradually diminish, but the ground is uneven, and the neighbouring woods of Frankfort and Neuendorf encircle the scene. Through the intervening space between the woods and the Elsenbruch is a deep cutting, which at first sight appears to be a continuation of muddy ponds ; further on, in the hollow, lies the village of Kunersdorf ;

* Literally, the Stream of the Fowls.

and at length the cutting ends in a deep ravine, called the Kuhgrund. A second hollow way, but deeper and broader, since called the Laudon's ground, cuts through the heights again, and served to divide the chief position from the Judenberge.

The Russians had entrenched themselves strongly on these acclivities; and their right flank was secured by a redoubt on the Mühlberge. This redoubt was formed like a star, the entrenchments running along the whole of the heights in front, down to Kunersdorf, and over the Judenberge to the Oder. Within these strong fortifications lay the whole Russian army, consisting of more than 70,000 men, well supplied with artillery. The Austrians, under Laudon, lay beyond, in front of the left Russian flank, in some low grounds opposite to the town of Frankfort, and only separated from the Russians by the continuation of the Elsenbruch; but the important object of establishing the communications of the allies was secured by a bank, which ran directly from the Russian position into the Laudon's ground, as it has ever since been called. Soltikoff expected that the Prussians would endeavour to advance through Frankfort; but after they had effected their passage over the Oder, near Reitwein, he changed his position, by a countermarch of his whole line, so that his front lay towards Kunersdorf and the wood of Neuendorf and Frankfort, and the low grounds near the Oder were in his rear. The disposition of his flanks was thus changed, the right becoming the left, and the left the right; hence his left flank was now directed to the Bäckergrund and beyond the Mühlberge, while his right rested on the Judenberge.*

The entrenchments caused no difficulty in this inversion,

* See the plans of the General Staff.

as they were strongly fortified both in front and rear. The selection of the troops, and the change of front made by the Russians immediately before the action, forcibly recall the movements which preceded the battle of Zorndorf; but some irregularities in the ground caused a very sensible difference in the result of the action. During the evening of the 11th of August, the Prussians had advanced to Leissow; and having encamped for a few hours they were again in motion as early as two o'clock on the following morning. The King reconnoitred the enemy's position from the heights near Trettin, and determined on attacking their left flank; the army, therefore, marching across the deep ground in their front, pressed between small lakes, over the little brook called the Hühnerfiess, into the wood of Neuendorf, so as to be enabled to make an attack, as ordered; while General von Fink occupied the heights on the right, near Trettin, with a reserve of eight battalions and thirty-five squadrons. He had some guns with him, and sought by moving about, and by a smart fire later in the day, to elude the vigilance of the enemy.

The King was not well acquainted with the country, whilst the precipices which cut through the position of the Russians, as well as the ponds towards the heath of Frankfurt, were concealed from his view; and he had also to receive uncertain reports respecting the difficulties which presented themselves upon the roads through the wood, and as to the distances. After the infantry had been filed into two lines in the forest, and the cavalry had been placed on the left wing, the whole force was commanded to march from the wood into the plain. The day was intensely hot, the troops had rested but little, and the march was long and fatiguing; the men became tired in the sandy road, and the corn brandy which was given to them for refreshment,

only invigorated them for a very short time. It was, therefore, almost noon before the real attack was undertaken.

Adjoining the left flank of the Russians the King had erected two batteries, upon the heights; these kept up a violent fire, and in common with Fink's battery, which touched the Russian line in its whole length, did much injury to the foe. The Russians gave their answer from nearly one hundred cannon, which they had concentrated upon their left wing.

The engagement had not continued half an hour when the Prussian grenadiers advanced, for the purpose of taking the Russian position by storm. General von Schenkendorf, at the head of four battalions, first ascended the Russian battery; General von Lindstedt followed, with four other battalions; and the remainder of the infantry, divided into two lines, pressed forward courageously. The Russian infantry, thus attacked in the flank, and in the narrow space incapable of united opposition, endeavoured in vain to repulse the onset by pushing forward single regiments, but were thrown down and cut to pieces without mercy. The Prussians had already taken seventy cannon, and the combat here continued favorable to the Prussian cause, as the infantry of Fink, now equally crossing the Hühnerfliess, also attacked the Russian position. But the advance of the Prussian left wing, after they had succeeded in taking possession of the churchyard of Kunersdorf in a troublesome fight, was suddenly interrupted by the ponds between Kunersdorf and the wood.

The King ordered the batteries to advance, that he might continue the attack with energy, and completely crush the enemy. But it was found extremely difficult to transport the cannon upon the sandy ground intercepted by hills, and men and horses suffered severely through the burning heat

of the sun. The Prussian battalions, without the requisite cavalry and artillery, were obliged to stop and dress their own ranks, which had become disordered ; also to form new lines for an attack. Of this delay the Russians availed themselves, in order to press forward fresh regiments, and to send all the artillery they could spare from their right wing to the left. Three lines of infantry were placed one behind the other, and numerous cannon were brought upon all those heights reaching from the Judenberge to Kunersdorf, where they could be employed with sufficient advantage. Laudon also ordered some Austrian regiments, which stood in the plain, to march forward to the battle field.

After the Prussian artillery had been again brought into proper arrangement, a very terrific cannonade once more commenced ; whilst the infantry pressed forward to a new attack, the King himself leading them on. The Russians stood unshaken, the fire of their artillery and musketry making great havoc in the ranks of the Prussians. The King stood in the midst of a shower of balls, and when Seydlitz observed that so many took effect, and most humbly requested him not to remain at that place, uselessly exposed to the danger, Frederick cut it short by saying—" Eh ! What ? the gnats only play."

For some time the battle remained undecided, and both parties continued the combat with great energy. At length the King, being very impatient that the issue was so long delayed, commanded that the cavalry, who were then on the left wing, should be drawn up. Seydlitz and the Prince of Würtemberg led the squadrons towards the left, round the ponds of Kunersdorf, through the small pieces of land between them, and posted them on the opposite side ; but no opportunity presented itself, nor was the ground favorable for the cavalry.

The King waited in vain, for the cavalry remained stationary; he therefore sent a command that Seydlitz should attack, and as the latter still delayed, he sent a second time. But Seydlitz sent him word that the moment and the place were alike unfavorable, and so refused to commence. The King then sent for the third time, by an aide-de-camp, with the message, that "in the name of the devil he should attack." Seydlitz opposed no longer, but put himself at the head of a regiment of cuirassiers, and began to storm the Russian batteries. Soon, however, the ranks of the Prussian horsemen were broken, they stumbled in pitfalls, and a horrible cartridge fire crushed them. Seydlitz was wounded by a ball, which, smashing the handle of his sword and his right hand, caused him to fall from his horse, and obliged his attendants to carry him off the field. When the King heard of the accident, he immediately sent an aide-de-camp with kind enquiries respecting him; but Seydlitz, who was angry that he had been obliged to attack in order to be beaten, and who remembered the former expression of the King, desired the officer to tell his Majesty that "he had merely been stung by a gnat."

The attack was several times repeated by the cavalry, but only with single regiments, as the space was too narrow and contracted to allow the development of a greater force: all efforts were, however, in vain.

The King even accused the Prince of Würtemberg, who was very shortsighted, of having directed the attack upon the churchyard of the Jews, (Judenkirchhof,) which was the best fortified position of the Russians; and is reported as having remarked to Seydlitz, during the retreat, "Had I been able to take this height, the battle would have been won." To this the latter, who was carried by soldiers, as

he had been so painfully wounded, answered:—"I believe you would, but whenever has any one heard that mere cavalry storm fortresses?"

The brave horsemen retired from the murderous fire with great loss, and as the Russian and Austrian cavalry attacked their flank at the same time, they turned to flight so completely that they could only be again arranged behind the ponds of Kunersdorf, and below the second line of the battle. The latter now received the command to push forward, they therefore marched between the lagunes, and through Kunersdorf, placed themselves in order when they had arrived on the other side, and rushed with rage and determination upon the next Russian battery, being led on by the King, who encouraged them by his presence. The Prussians are said to have gone as far as the Laudonsgrund, through the Kuhgrund; and some eye-witnesses assure their readers, that the principal battery upon the Spitzberg had been already abandoned. But it is impossible to give a true picture of what happened at this juncture of the contest, as the reports are extremely contradictory.

The King being determined, if possible, to clear the field completely, intended also to storm the Judenberge by a last effort, whereby the victory would have been fully secured. General von Fink had already advised the King that it was sufficient for the Prussian cause that they had gained a victory over the left wing of the enemy; and further suggested that he should not expose the fatigued troops to a new and desperate attack, for that the Russians would certainly leave their position during the night. Seydlitz, and various other generals, supported this opinion; but the King thought otherwise, and was anxious to crush the enemy's forces completely, as the retreat over the Oder was already shut up by Colonel von Wunsch, who, according to

orders, had taken possession of the town of Frankfort, on the left bank of that river.

The defence of the Russians became more desperate as they saw no other deliverance than by fighting. Tempelhof, in his history of the battle states, that the Prussians never came to the Kuhgrund and the Laudonsgrund during the attack upon the Judenberge; the King says the troops had advanced so far, but he seems to be mistaken respecting the neighbourhood. It may be noticed that Gaudi agrees with the King, and Retzow with Tempelhof. It appears certain that the advance of the Prussians was prevented by one of those declivities previously referred to, and which were so favorably situated to aid the opposition of the Russians. At this momentous crisis the attack by the Austrians, under Laudon, gave the battle a turn of great importance, causing the defeat of the Prussians, whose right flank suffered severely by the onset of these fresh troops, and compelling the brave men to give way. In vain the King ordered the cavalry of the left wing to hasten to the right flank; and in vain he commanded the Prince of Würtemberg to make an attack, through the Elsenbruch, upon the left flank of the Austrians: the Prince was wounded, and the cavalry took to flight. The King was not more successful with his infantry; they would not remain any longer, and a general scamper ensued.

The Russians again exerted themselves to the utmost, brought up new regiments, and having re-taken their own guns, they obtained a complete victory over the Prussians, capturing, in connection with their Austrian allies, as many as 172 Prussian cannon, 26 colours, and two standards. More than 18,000 Prussians, (equal to one-half of the infantry, and a quarter of the cavalry,) were either dead or wounded: the Russians and Austrians had lost nearly 16,000 men.

Never had the Prussians experienced such a hopeless, bloody, and total defeat. For a time the King considered his cause entirely lost, but his enemy's force was also stunned by the fearful contest, and as their leaders could not agree, or come to a determination, they missed the superior advantage they had gained, and thereby gave opportunity to the King to recover his strength by new conscriptions and armaments.

The Prussian States' Gazette, in its reports on the battle of Kunersdorf, alleged that the Prussian cavalry had not done more than they did because Seydlitz, their leader, had been wounded; an expression which shows how much the King thought of Seydlitz, and how much confidence was placed in his acting as commander. It seemed to be forgotten that the entire body of cavalry could not do much execution where it was impossible to develop them, on account of the narrow space; and that single attacks were of little or no service, as the heights were too well fortified by numerous men and cannon; but full of confidence they fancied that the hero of Zorndorf would have become also that of Kunersdorf, though he himself was of a different opinion from the very commencement of the battle.

The history of the Seven Years' War, by the officers of the Great General Staff, contains the following remarks on the battle of Kunersdorf.* "Napoleon accuses the King of having made two mistakes. First. That altogether too small a force had been taken to this enterprise. Second. That he had weakened his forces by the considerable portions which he had posted near the bridges."

As to the first complaint, it has been said, in the well

* See plans, published at Berlin; also, Life of Frederick the Great, by himself.

known memoirs :—"What prevented the King from uniting himself with the 20,000 men of the 50,000 which were commanded by Prince Henry? They would have arrived at his position on the evening before the battle, and on the day after that event they would have marched off again." The only answer which can be returned is, that the King considered an army of 48,000 men sufficient to beat the Russians. That he was mistaken in the sequel is indeed true, but one who had been a victor in many battles against forces twice or thrice as numerous as his own, may be excused for having made such a blunder. When Napoleon dictated the above, he too might have recollected that he began at the same time, in 1813, two offensive operations after the truce, without procuring superiority on one side; and had he reflected, he would not have used these words, which are as just a critique upon his own operations as they are upon those of the King. The means adopted by Napoleon in 1813 proved just as insufficient as those of the King at Kunersdorf; but critics of these movements have only been produced by the result, and many would have praised the correct estimate taken of the adversary, and the careful distribution of the attacking forces, if these great generals had but proved successful. Uncertain, and dependent on the result, is often the judgment of the military critic.

Napoleon's opinion, that the King ought to have secured to himself the superiority by means of troops taken from Prince Henry, may be generally and theoretically considered as correct; but practically it will always be difficult to find an accurate definition of superiority, as it does not consist merely in numbers, and there are no instruments with which to gauge the moral and intellectual capabilities of an army.

The second reproach is thus expressed by Napoleon:

“The King, although himself much weaker than Soltikoff and Laudon, left nine battalions for the protection of his bridge, and they marched during the battle to Frankfort, and were of no use—such detachments the art of war does not permit.”

The King said, both before and after the Seven Years' War :—“That nowhere could a better use be made of troops than upon the field of battle.” That rule is generally true, but sometimes an exception may be justified, and such seems to have been the case at Kunersdorf. The bridges near Reitwein were alone available for the King's retreat, and as he was obliged to keep at a distance of three German miles from them, how easily could detachments of Cossacks, or the light troops of Haddik, have taken possession of them and blown them up? How critical would then have been the situation of the King, if overcome! Hence it was necessary to effect the security of the bridges, and to seek their protection was also justifiable. That a part of the troops were ordered to occupy Frankfort was to prevent the Russians retiring to that town if defeated, and also to avert their union with Haddik, and at a later time with Daun; nor can the opinion be maintained that the three weak battalions which were sent to Frankfort would have decided the battle. So much for Napoleon's criticism.

It does not appear that any author blames the King for having passed the Oder, so as to attack the Russians; and all consider his pressed situation, in which a passive defence of that river was impossible. Jomini is, however, of opinion, that the King would have done better by crossing the Oder above Frankfort, thus cutting off the Russians from Daun, and preserving for himself the shortest junction with the army of Prince Henry. It must be acknowledged that the latter arrangement was worthy of observation; but

three circumstances induced the King to pass the Oder below Frankfort.

In the first place, if the King had effected his passage above Frankfort, the bridges were more exposed to Haddik's attacks. Secondly, the King not only received provisions from Küstrin, but also ammunition, and the boats which he wanted for a second bridge, as he merely carried the pontoons for one bridge. Thirdly, the King wished to protect Berlin, which he could not have done, if he had operated from Krossen.

It is the latter circumstance which induces us to mention Jomini's critique. Prussia is still in want of a great central military station between the Elbe and the Oder. Berlin contains the large war depôts, cannon foundries, and gunpowder mills, but it should only be a depôt for all branches of the service, without being in any way fortified. It is a place which will always demand great consideration in case of a war raging in the above district, for it will tend to hinder the leader in his defensive measures. But while we endeavour to explain the motives which may have induced the King to effect the passage over the Oder near Reitwein, we must not omit to remark, that the advantages of an earlier junction with Prince Henry might have been of greater importance than all other considerations, especially as in case of a failure the retreat to Glogau was open to the Prussians, whilst that by way of Reitwein, against any other adversary than Soltikoff, would have caused the utter destruction of the defeated army. The march of the King to the wood is, however, very remarkable, as the Prussians had to pass the muddy brook, called the Hühnerfliess, by a few bridges only, and were afterwards obliged to place themselves in battle array, in a large forest, which stretched itself nearly to the enemy's fortifications.

To attack under such circumstances appears extremely daring ; for according to modern military tactics it is forbidden to have defiles and wood too near on the back. Nevertheless, these natural drawbacks ultimately became very advantageous to the King, as the dispersed troops could be somewhat collected in their neighbourhood ; and the wood especially, which at first had concealed the King's march from the Russians, served to delay the advance of the enemy's cavalry, after he had been defeated. So doubtfully true are the strict rules of warfare ; circumstances alone must decide upon the course adopted. Opposed to a Napoleon or a Frederick, other means were necessary than against a Soltikoff or a Daun ; mere *systems* are not sufficient for the art of warfare, and it would often prove a great mistake to operate against such as a Napoleon or a Frederick in a similar manner to that in which they acted against their enemies.

Let us now turn to the battle itself. As to the point of attack chosen by the King, near Kunersdorf, there are some persons who, availing themselves of every misfortune suffered by a great man, in order to undervalue him, declare that it would have been better to have attacked the Judenberge than the Mühlberge. They pronounce the Judenberge to be the key of the whole neighbourhood, and of the Russian position, because they are the highest. But much may be stated against such an opinion, for any attack upon the Judenberge could indeed only have been made by the King crossing the Oder above Frankfort ; coming from Reitwein he would have been obliged to march round the whole of the Russian army in order to attack the Judenberge. In advance of these hills was a thick forest, not more than 300 yards from the fortifications, and under such circumstances it is not probable that an attack by artillery

could have been prepared, as was done so excellently upon the Mühlberge; the infantry would have been obliged to storm from the forest without delay, against a perpetual fire from the Russians, which would certainly have done great execution; and that such would have answered the purpose cannot be affirmed for a moment. That side of the Russian position which fronted towards Reitwein could not be attacked, on account of the Elsbrüche; and the third side was protected by the Oder; consequently there remained only the fourth side upon which an attack could be made. It had also the advantage of presenting but a small front, against which the Prussians could have a compact and united attack.

These considerations seem to contradict the critics who demand that the onset should have been upon the Judenberg. The disposition of the artillery, in the engagement upon the Mühlberge, seems to have been managed with extraordinary skill and precision, and is the more remarkable, as the King possessed but insufficient information, given by a sportsman unacquainted with the neighbourhood. The Mühlberge were taken at once by the brave grenadiers, but the first success was not maintained, as the artillery could not follow quickly upon the sandy and steep hills; cavalry also was required, because at that time their mixture with the infantry had not been introduced. Kunersdorf and Kollin sufficiently prove how ruinous is the absence of cavalry in decisive junctures. To the period of occupation of the Mühlberge all narrations agree, but from that moment great difference of opinion prevails.

The Prussian cavalry during two campaigns were deprived of their brave leader, Seydlitz, and henceforth were not so decisively employed as at Rossbach, Leuthen, and Zorndorf; and thus was the bravery of the Prussians defeated, in spite

of the masterly beginning of this battle, owing to the superiority in numbers, the bravery of the third division of the Russians, and also by the clever attack of Laudon's cavalry, who thus corrected the fault of his commander-in-chief.

Why Soltikoff did not prevent the King from passing the Oder, near Reitwein,—why he should have placed himself in so dangerous a position, and also remained so inactive—and lastly, why he did not at least pursue the defeated Prussians, are questions, the answers to which might not add to his fame. The day of Kunersdorf belongs to those in which a controlling Providence shows itself in history, and in which genius is neutralized often by trifling accidents.

CHAPTER XV.

SEYDLITZ'S MARRIAGE.—DISAGREEMENT WITH THE KING.

THE wound which Seydlitz had received in the battle of Kunersdorf was so important and dangerous, as to compel him to leave the field; and shortly afterwards he was attacked by a kind of apoplexy, which deprived him of the power of speech for some days. He was taken to Berlin, where, having good medical aid, his wound soon became better, but his general health remained very much impaired for a long time.

The severe and difficult labors of the remainder of the campaign, which extended itself until the winter was far advanced, and during which the King so admirably recovered from his dangerous situation, were completed without the assistance of Seydlitz, whose absence was much felt and lamented. The King recollected him favorably, and forwarded to him, by the Marquis d'Argens, at the same time as to his brother the Prince Ferdinand, a copy of his observations on the campaigns of Charles XII.; a little attention which, as his Majesty remarked to d'Argens, might perhaps afford Seydlitz pleasure. By a gracious letter, from his winter-quarters at Freiburg, directed to Seydlitz, he also enquired how he was progressing.

But no sooner had Seydlitz recovered, than he turned his

attention to a subject which frequently becomes far more ruinous than warfare, and such indeed it proved itself to him. As Seydlitz was of a very excitable temperament, he had shown but little constancy in whatever love affairs he had been engaged in. Once, indeed, shortly before the outbreak of the war, he became so much enamoured of a young lady, who resided in the neighbourhood of his quarters, that he anticipated permanent happiness, and therefore proposed marriage to her : but an untoward accident intervened to prevent him. Whilst sitting by the side of Seydlitz, near the piano, on which she played with wonderful precision, the lady attempted to rise from her chair, that she might strike with more force on the pedal, but so slipped as to break her foot. As the cure could not be effected speedily, and the physicians declared that lameness would be the ultimate result, Seydlitz believed the modest maiden no longer suited for so rash and brilliant a man as himself, and therefore declined the union. To this determination the war also assisted, and the attachment was therefore soon forgotten.

Having been compelled to remain quiet, in consequence of his illness, and during his recovery having seen the enjoyments of domestic life, and tasted the sweets of kindness and compassion, Seydlitz became anew impressed with an admiration of female excellence, and could not resist the desire to venture on a married life. Susanna Albertina, Countess of Hacke, whose father had been a lieutenant-general and commandant of Berlin, was at that time one of the most handsome and accomplished young ladies who adorned the Prussian court. The flattering attention she paid to the suffering hero soon led him into the snare, and he forthwith made up his mind to marry her. But the King was not well pleased that his best cavalry general should

thus act in the middle of the war, and therefore Seydlitz wrote him the following straightforward letter, on the 12th of March, 1760 :—" Your Majesty,—I pray most devotedly that you will give your permission that I may marry the youthful Countess of Hacke, on the day preceding that on which I take my departure hence to join the army. Not to be entirely subjected to servants, if I should be wounded at a future time, is one of the motives which causes me to venture to lay this petition before your Majesty. If additional zeal for your service were possible, it would be effected by such a gracious permission, but now I can only lay at your Majesty's feet the fidelity with which I shall be remaining, until my death, your Majesty's devoted servant, Seydlitz."

The King took the circumstances into full consideration, and granted permission, in the following words, in his own handwriting, on the reverse of the letter: "I wish him success in it.—FCH." The marriage was delayed until the 18th of April, on which day the handsome couple were united; and immediately afterwards Seydlitz left his young bride and went to Leipzig to join the King, who encamped with his army near Meissen, on the 25th of April, and acted on the defensive against Daun.

Seydlitz had not yet regained the free use of his hand, and was also suffering from a disorder in the gums, which required a bandage, and prevented him from speaking aloud with facility. He had, however, offered himself for service in this condition, and assured the King that he would be able to do his duty in the day of battle; and as appearances seemed to indicate that an engagement would soon take place, he repeated his conviction, and requested the king to give him a command. The King replied that he had no intention whatever of attacking, that he would let



him know when he wanted him, and that he might therefore pacify himself until then. But on the next day, when Seydlitz perceived that the preparations for battle were continued, and that the King gave instructions to his generals in reference to an attack, he felt vexed and offended that he was not merely refused a command, but that his presence was rather disregarded. An engagement did not take place, nor did the King wish to employ Seydlitz without necessity; perhaps also, he considered him not yet sufficiently recovered. Seydlitz could not brook being thus neglected, and in ill humour said, "He could well see that the King did not want him." He asked for permission to return to Berlin, which was granted, and he thus left the army amid general regret, but especially that of the cavalry, who had the greatest confidence in his leadership. The consequence of this behaviour of Seydlitz was a disagreement with the King, which very probably had been secretly existing before, through a mutual want of entire confidence.

The correct deportment of a great military sovereign to his generals is an extremely difficult affair, for whilst the Prince is obliged to become a comrade, he considers himself the summit of military honor and glory; he thus raises his inferiors, who gain his gratitude by meritorious and courageous deeds, from rank to rank, until they are almost equals to himself, when they frequently become ill-humoured, jealous, and even dangerous to their master. Frederick the Great had his troubles, as much as any one before or after him, although he could not always lay the blame upon his generals, as he often forgot himself. He was grateful to his generals, zealous in an acknowledgment of their merits, and willingly proved himself their personal friend; but when the pressure of the moment, desperate circumstances, or heavy misfortunes, harassed him, they drove

him to frenzy, he became unjust and angry, and displayed ill temper. Seydlitz had had the good fortune to be on easy terms with the King without interruption, the result not merely of his merit but also of his character ; for he was quiet and retiring, neither doing or suffering wrong, but in his elevation maintaining modesty, as he had in an inferior position displayed dignity and determination : the King, therefore, treated him with especial esteem. This friendship was now seemingly disturbed, for the first time, and the King evinced dissatisfaction with Seydlitz.

That the cavalry had not been successful near Kunersdorf could not be a reproach to Seydlitz ; on the contrary, the King expressed himself in the newspapers, in a manner most flattering to his general. And yet, under the heavy burden of the great disadvantages which that unlucky day laid upon the King, he may be excused for having thought that the cavalry could have done more, and that Seydlitz had not shown his usual intelligence and energy ; whilst his sickly condition, which deprived the King of his services in times of great difficulty, and his marriage, which seemed neither to have increased his zeal nor his strength, would also create an unfavorable impression. The greater the King's desire to see him, and the more his presence with the army was required, the less satisfied would he feel with his weak and feeble appearance on his arrival. The assertion which Warnery makes, that the King regretted having stated in the newspapers, in his report of the battle of Kunersdorf, that the wound of Seydlitz was one of the causes of failure, and that he had wished to show that he could win battles without him, is not to be lightly credited. On the contrary, it appears that the King only intended to spare the general, who was ill, and perhaps unfit for doing his duty, but that he did not wish to offend or vex him. Never-

theless, Seydlitz understood the King's behaviour in the latter sense, and his sulkily returning to Berlin no doubt increased the ill-humour of his sovereign. The uneasiness did not, however, manifest itself openly, but remained veiled by the usual forms of devotion and grace.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BATTLE OF LIEGNITZ.—CAPTURE OF BERLIN BY THE RUSSIANS.—THE BATTLE OF TORGAU.

THE King accompanied his army to Silesia, to prevent the union of the Austrians with the Russians, the latter having again advanced. In this position the Prussian cause was always in danger, and it required a very skilful leader and brave soldiers to maintain the field against the superior forces which conjointly threatened it. But, under such unfavorable circumstances, the King defeated the Austrians, near Liegnitz, on the 15th of August, 1760; and although it did not prove decisive for the campaign, yet it delivered him for the time from a position of great peril.

The King, after the battle, saluted the regiment of Seydlitz, and thanked the brave cuirassiers for their valour: he also wrote to Seydlitz, informing him of the victory; and received from him the following reply, on the 6th of September:—"From the bed on which I have been thrown by evil attacks, I beg to lay my humblest congratulations at your Majesty's feet, and to wish that your Majesty may be able, after this great victory, soon to take Dresden; but I wish still more that no evil consequences may arise from the contusion which your Majesty received, to embitter to us the victory. I made known the victory immediately in Stettin

and Silesia. I received the news at a time when I was compelled to consider it a slight from your Majesty, as the director-general had not only omitted my name from the list respecting the rations, but even refused to furnish me with those which your Majesty had granted to me in time of peace, as a colonel of a regiment; I shall, therefore, be compelled to sell my horses, if your Majesty does not graciously interfere. I remain, until the last day of my life, with unchangable faithfulness," &c.

The King answered him very graciously, on the 21st of September, from Dittersdorf; and, in thanking him for his sentiments, expressed the hope that Seydlitz would soon be sufficiently recovered to take a command. It has been asserted that the King felt angry with Seydlitz, and had on that account given orders respecting the rations; but such was not the case: on the contrary, it only indicates that the King was careful of his resources, and pursued a middle course between extravagance and meanness, as he immediately gave orders that Seydlitz should receive his rations as a colonel.

Our hero soon found an opportunity in Berlin to become active and zealous for his sovereign. Early in October 1760, some Russian troops advanced, under the command of General Count Tottleben, and, crossing the Oder, they approached Berlin, and endeavoured to take that city. The Prussian governor, General von Rochow, thought of retiring with his inferior force, but Seydlitz rose from his bed, and with General von Knobloch, who was also suffering severely from his wounds, opposed such an idea: Field Marshal von Lewald united with them. Disregarding the high position he held in the army, Seydlitz could not be prevented from marching at the head of a few soldiers and citizens, whom he had quickly collected, on the road which leads to Köpen-

ick, that he might see how matters really stood. He soon met some troops of Cossacks, whom he put to flight ; but when the main body of the enemy advanced he was obliged to retire, and help to fortify the gates of the town. Walls of earth were at once formed, some three-pounders mounted, and the exposed parts of the wall occupied by sharpshooters. The gates towards Köpenick, and that leading to Kotbus, were especially attacked by the Russians ; and the personal exertions of Seydlitz were of the highest importance, as he remained at these entrances day and night.

The first onsets of the enemy were fortunately repulsed ; but when the Russians received reinforcements, and the Austrians also advanced, under General Lacy, from Potsdam and Charlottenburg, Berlin was abandoned, and Seydlitz followed the few troops in their march to Spandau ; but he did not remain there long, as the enemy was soon compelled to leave Berlin. The King was much pleased with the zeal displayed by Seydlitz on this occasion, and in his history of the war refers to it in a manner highly honorable to the general.

Frederick concluded the campaign of the year 1760, by the bloody victory which he gained near Torgau, on the 3rd of November, and of which, by a gracious letter, he gave a report to Seydlitz in Berlin. The latter, in reply, informed the King, that on the following Sunday a *Te Deum* should be sung in all the churches, and cannon and musquetry fired ; and also that he had immediately made known the glorious news in Silesia and Pomerania.

At the commencement of the year 1761, the following letters were exchanged between the King and Seydlitz : they evince the careful interest of the one, and the faithful zeal of the other, nor do they indicate any grudge respecting the trifling misunderstandings which had taken place

between them. The King's communication was dated from Leipzig, on the 10th of January :—" My dear Lieutenant-General von Seydlitz,—I understand, with great satisfaction, that your condition has much improved lately, and that it continues, so that you believe you will soon be able to join us. As I am very desirous again to see and converse with you, I shall be glad if you will come here speedily, if your strength will permit you to do so, especially as your physician, Counsellor Cothenius, is here, and will consequently be able to take care of your complete cure."

But, meanwhile, Seydlitz had again become very ill, and on the 13th of January, he wrote the following sad reply :—" The improvement in the state of my health, which had continued for some time, inspired me with the hope of soon being completely cured ; but during the last two days I have suffered such a relapse, that I received your Majesty's gracious letter whilst lying in bed ; and my disease has increased so much, that even the memory suffers, a circumstance I do not yet wish to communicate to any one but your Majesty. Geheimerath Cothenius, who is in correspondence with my doctor, will be able to communicate to your Majesty, on command, what is very likely to be the cause of my illness. But if your Majesty command me to come, in order to kiss your Majesty's coat, nothing except death shall prevent me from so doing, after I have received the order. I beg to remain, until my death, with the most faithful submission," &c.

Frederick consulted with the physician, and on the 16th of January forwarded this answer :—" My dear Lieutenant-General von Seydlitz,—I have seen with great regret, from your letter of the 13th instant, what you wished me to know of your health, which has again become worse. Since then I have spoken to Geheimerath Cothenius about it,

according to your own wish, and he is of opinion that it would rather do you good, and contribute to your restoration, if you would undertake the journey here, as not only the bodily exercise during the journey would refresh you, but here you would have a better opportunity than at home to recruit your health and strength by moderate exercise, and can always be assisted by advice from the physician at the same time ; I therefore hope you will undertake the journey, that you may not become in such a condition at home as would prevent you from ever recovering your health completely again. I shall also be glad myself then to prove to you that I am your affectionate King." In his own handwriting, the King added : "The air in Leipzig will be far more wholesome for you than that of Berlin."

Seydlitz's condition was not such as to permit him to undertake the journey so early, nor was he able before the 20th of May to inform the King, who had gone to Silesia in the beginning of the same month, that he had joined the army under Prince Henry of Prussia, where he was to take the command of the cavalry ; but his cuirassiers were not there, having followed their sovereign to Silesia. The King expressed much pleasure and satisfaction on hearing of Seydlitz's arrival, and remarked that bodily exercise and activity would soon restore him to health, as his cure had not yet been completely effected.

CHAPTER XVII.

FREQUENT SKIRMISHES IN SAXONY.

WHILST Frederick was directing his main army against the Austrians under Laudon, and the Russians under Field-Marshal Butturlin, he ordered Prince Henry to oppose the Austrian army in Saxony, commanded by Daun, and also the Imperial troops under the Austrian Field-Marshal Serbelloni. The Prussians scarcely mustered 32,000 men, but the enemy 50,000 ; so that the skill of the leaders alone could make up for this inequality of numbers, as the troops of the Prussians were neither so courageous, well selected, or thoroughly exercised as in former campaigns. Many battalions consisted of deserters, or prisoners of war : of these the Saxons served only by compulsion, but were enlisted so rapidly that they retained their foreign uniform for some time. Seydlitz himself, on one occasion, on entering a small town, supposed that he had met with the enemy, as the gates were guarded by grenadiers in red coats, the wearers of which had been taken prisoners before his arrival in Langensalza, and had been forcibly transferred from the service of Saxony to that of Prussia.

On account of these notorious irregularities, it is said that Frederick ordered Seydlitz to assist his brother Henry, instead of keeping him near himself ; especially as against the Imperial army and the Austrians, two experienced

generals on the part of Prussia might sometimes prove advantageous. And indeed it thus happened, that although Prince Henry superintended the whole of the campaign, he was principally occupied with the Austrians, leaving Seydlitz to manœuvre against the Imperial army. The ordering Seydlitz to go into Saxony, was not the result of caprice or dislike, but simply because the King could make better use of him there than in Silesia ; for after his displeasure had passed away, his Majesty esteemed and valued Seydlitz as much as formerly.

The war was not, however, so decisive on this side as on the other, as Prince Henry had to make good his numerical inferiority by choosing good positions, having also strong reasons to avoid giving battle. The enemy, instead of making use of his advantages, expected a determined blow from Silesia, and therefore feared to make an attack, but kept to his fortified camps with due precaution. But although the main body of troops thus rested, the leaders of small parties undertook so much the more boldly to surprise one another, and many brilliant skirmishes took place. Among the Prussians, Colonel Friedrich Wilhelm von Kleist especially distinguished himself ; he commanded a regiment of hussars, had raised one of free dragoons, and a troop of green Croats, and obtained great popularity by his polished manners, brilliant uniforms, and especially by his well-merited success. Although inferior in rank to Seydlitz, he had the advantage thereby of more frequent opportunities for distinguishing himself in skirmishes and surprises than his general, whose extraordinary skill and energy became most conspicuous in a great battle. As a consequence, Kleist was at that time more generally talked of than Seydlitz, and so became a sort of rival, without having such an intention himself ; and indeed the few occur-

rences by which Seydlitz might have added to his military glory, were unimportant, and Kleist shared in them.

The Austrian Colonel von Törreck had succeeded, on the 18th of August, in surprising the Prussian outposts, near Siebenlehn and Neuenkirchen, between Tharant and Meissen. Kleist played a trick against the Austrian general, Von Zetwitz, near Freiburg, and afterwards designed another scheme to seriously injure that general. Prince Henry, to whom Kleist submitted his plan, approved of it, and directed Seydlitz to take care of its execution. On the 25th of August, the latter caused 1,000 horsemen and some infantry, under the command of Kleist, to march from Doebeln, and to pass the Mulde, so as to come upon the rear and the left flank of the enemy. Seydlitz led about 15,000 horsemen and several battalions of infantry from Deutsch-Bohra, by way of Ditmannsdorf, to Nanendorf; and two smaller bodies of troops endeavoured to direct the attention of the enemy to another point. On the 26th of August, early in the morning, the Austrians were attacked, but the irregular ground favored their retreat, which was effected in good order to Dippoldiswalde, Seydlitz and Kleist only securing a few prisoners, and then returning to their quarters.

The excursions of the Imperial troops occupying Pegau, Weissenfels, and Naumburg, and who had penetrated to the gates of Leipzig, demanded a greater enterprize. Seydlitz therefore started on the 2nd of September, with about eight battalions and twenty-four squadrons, by way of Waldheim and Rochlitz, for Penig, there to attack a strong division of the Imperial army, and to cut it off from the main body; Kleist commanding the advanced guard. But the enemy had already retired over the Pleisse, and behind the narrow roads of Lohma. Seydlitz overtook some battalions on the other side of the Pleisse, and captured a few prisoners;

afterwards collecting all his troops, near Schmöllen, he marched, on the 4th of September, by way of Weisenbach, against the principal position of the Imperial army, the left wing of which was encamped near Ronneburg, and the right upon the hill near Reust.

Kleist immediately examined with great attention the position of the enemy, and the same evening informed Seydlitz that the hill near Reust could be attacked without difficulty, and that the defeat of the foe was certain if that post could be taken, as the entire camp was commanded by it. The village of Reust, through which they were to march, he had already occupied. Seydlitz at once made preparations for the attack, and marched the troops the same night. But on the following morning, when Seydlitz reconnoitred the position, he found that an alteration had taken place since Kleist had made his report. The troops were well defended by guns and infantry, and an attack would have been difficult and dangerous; narrow roads, numerous ditches intersecting the fields before and behind the hill, and a steep rock under the enemy's fire, rendered success very doubtful; and even if the height could have been taken, it would have been necessary to engage with the main force of their opponents, consisting of thirty-six battalions and forty squadrons, while the Prussians were far inferior in numerical strength, and their cavalry could do but little on account of the uneven ground. A consideration of these difficulties induced Seydlitz to give up the enterprize, and in the face of the enemy, to march back unmolested, whence he had come, by way of Schmöllen to Altenkirchen,

Without a just pretence, Henry von Bülow accuses Seydlitz of lacking energy, because he had reconnoitred instead of attacking. On the contrary, the intrepid leader evinced

his prudence and judgment by his withdrawment, as it did not behove him to hazard such a mad attack as would, perhaps, have been suitable for the leader of a separate troop of horsemen.

After Serbelloni had attended to his left flank, and had retired behind the Elster, near Weida, Seydlitz retired, on the 6th of September, by way of Altenburg, to Borna; Kleist being stationed with light troops near Altenburg, in order to observe the movements of the enemy. But on the 12th of September the troops joined the army again, afterwards going into quarters near the Elbe, between Lommatzsch and Oschatz, whilst Kleist was quartered in Döbeln, somewhat nearer to the foe. By command of Prince Henry the men were kept continually prepared for an immediate march, on the least movement of the Imperial troops; and the Prince well knew he could fully rely on the care and watchfulness of our hero.

CHAPTER XIX.

DEATH OF THE EMPRESS ELIZABETH, OF RUSSIA.— SKIRMISH NEAR TECHNITZ.

THE situation of the Prussians, and their affairs generally, became gradually more dangerous ; the King was scarcely able to oppose the Austrians and Russians in Silesia ; Laudon had taken the fortress of Schweidnitz, by an unexpected assault ; the French approached near Halberstadt ; Daun and Serbelloni also seemed to become more active, as the latter commanded General Luzinsky to march with light troops against Halle and Mansfeld.

Prince Henry could not permit the enemy to extend his excursions thus far, as the French threatened Magdeburg, and on the other side the Russians approached Berlin, which was unprotected. To check these various dangers promptly he sent Seydlitz, with about 2,000 infantry and 1,200 cavalry, against Halle, that he might drive the enemy from that neighbourhood, protect Magdeburg against the French, and Berlin also, if the Russians should approach from the Oder. Seydlitz started with his forces on the 10th of October, and on the 12th arrived near Leipzig. The Imperial troops left Halle, but the French having gained a skirmish near Wolfenbüttel, seemed desirous to take Magdeburg. Seydlitz kept his men ready for action, between

Köthen and Bernburg ; but the French unexpectedly retired, Berlin being better situated ; and then, as Prince Henry urgently required Seydlitz, the latter, with his troops, rejoined the main army on the 21st of October, taking up his quarters between Döbeln and the Katzenhäusern. The excursion had been a very skilful one, although not fraught with immediate consequences. During the short absence of Seydlitz, Daun had not ceased to annoy the Prussian outposts, and after his strength had been increased by 24,000 men, sent to him from Silesia by Laudon, it appeared that the Prussians would be seriously attacked by this superior force, and compelled to give up Saxony.

Prince Henry was watchful, and manœuvred with great boldness and prudence. Daun had meditated an attack for some time, and on the 5th of November took a fortification upon the Lerchenberge, before Meissen ; he also pressed back the outposts near the Katzenhäusern, and near Siebenlehn and Rosswein. Seydlitz dispatched five squadrons of dragoons from the Petersberg, for the support of Rosswein, but when they arrived the enemy was already in occupation of the place. He next took up his own position nearer to the Katzenhäusern, that he might be ready to support the main body of the Prussians, who stood there under arms, and well prepared if an attack was made upon them. Prince Henry located himself according to circumstances, especially directing his attention to the right wing of his army. The enemy's object was to settle upon the right bank of the Mulde, but Prince Henry directed Seydlitz to drive them away. Daun wished to secure at least the left shore of the Mulde, so as to extend his winter quarters with advantage, and therefore tried, on the 14th of November, to occupy the little town of Döbeln, but Seydlitz, with five squadrons of cuirassiers, followed by Kleist, and his light

cavalry, chased the Austrians back over the river; and on the following day, after Kleist had been engaged in an indecisive skirmish, it was mutually agreed, that Döbeln should not be occupied by either Prussians or Austrians: thus terminated the war in Saxony for that year.

The winter passed without any further enterprize by the enemy, and the Prussians did not wish to disturb the quiet. Frequent skirmishes, however, took place, especially with the Imperial troops, against whom Seydlitz proceeded in a peculiar manner. He was of opinion that the Prussians ought not to engage with them in serious contests, as they only fought by compulsion, though with great valour, when obliged to act; and that, therefore, they should rather be allowed an honorable retreat; or yet better, be taken as prisoners, as most of them would enter very willingly into the Prussian service, even the officers being gratified when they were not again required to fight against a monarch whom they so highly esteemed. Seydlitz on one occasion had made prisoner of a general of the Suavian troops, and wished to console him with friendly words on account of his fate, but he was highly flattered when the captive general replied that he was very glad about it, and did not wish to be exchanged. In this manner the little movements and skirmishes along the outposts often proved advantageous to the Prussians; but the difference in the relative strength of the two parties was too great, and the cause of the King was therefore much threatened. The death of the Empress Elizabeth of Russia was a fortunate event for Prussia, as the entire Russian army ceased fighting; but even that did not restore the balance. The favorable circumstance of the alliance of the Russians with the Prussians was soon ended, in consequence of the death of Peter the Third, when the sentiments of his successor, the Empress Katharina the

Second, were speedily manifested. This change, indeed, only affected Silesia, the position of the principal stage of the war, where the main armies of the Russians, Austrians, and Prussians were concentrated, and where Frederick himself had to bear the whole weight of his desperate situation, with his mind exerted to the utmost, that he might gain time by diplomatic and political movements.

In Saxony the affairs of the Prussians betokened increasing difficulty, and Prince Henry needed all his skill to prevent a complete failure. He had only 25,000 men in the beginning of the campaign, and received the necessary reinforcements for his weakened army in a slow and protracted manner. He was also obliged to occupy a large extent of territory, and to encamp his regiments far from one another. Seydlitz perceived the danger of such deployment opposite an enemy, at least double as strong, and advised the Prince respecting it; but he thought he could not alter his orders under the circumstances, and therefore heeded not the repeated admonitions of Seydlitz. In the meantime Daun had been compelled to take the command of the army in Silesia, and Serbelloni received the chief command in Saxony, both of the Austrian and of the Imperial troops, the latter being also entrusted to the Prince of Stolberg. The allied forces, although diminished by 20,000 men taken by Daun to Silesia, were still more numerous than the Prussians, and occupied the country between Dresden and Thuringia. Such an extended line was of course on some points open to an attack; but the more important stations were well fortified and sufficiently protected by troops.

Prince Henry soon perceived that the enemy had to contend against similar disadvantages as himself, and therefore took care to provide for emergencies, by throwing as much

as possible of the inconveniences of the position upon his adversaries, at the same time avoiding exposure to injury himself. He thought it of importance to separate, and to keep asunder, the Austrians from the Imperial troops, which had arrived near Chemnitz on the 28th of April, and were approaching Freiberg; and as Serbelloni was very much impeded by the Imperial War Office at Vienna, and felt but little inclination to act, Prince Henry was enabled to mature his plan without being obliged to hasten its execution. While waiting for reinforcements, some movements were made to induce the enemy to suppose that he wished to strengthen and concentrate his troops upon his left wing, near Meissen; but he had made all arrangements to cross the Mulde upon his left wing, so as to break the chain of the positions there, and then press the Imperial troops back to Franconia.

The Austrians had destroyed all the bridges over the Mulde, and had fortified the left bank, from Rosswein to Leissnig. Every night 3,000 men marched from their quarters, and in the morning, when daylight appeared, marched back again, posting the necessary guards: it was of this routine Prince Henry wished to make use.

On the 10th of May some Prussian regiments were marched apparently to Meissen, but on the evening of the 11th those troops destined for the exploit quickly concentrated near the Mulde, in four divisions, ready for action early on the 12th. Seydlitz led the first division, consisting of about thirty-seven squadrons of cavalry and some infantry; the second and third divisions were composed mainly of infantry, with cavalry; and the fourth, which was commanded by Kleist, embraced all sorts of arms. They marched forward by different routes, and were to conceal themselves until the enemy had left the fortifications as usual; they

were then to rush across the river at the same time, and so attack the position of the enemy in front and on both flanks. The two divisions upon the wings, commanded by Seydlitz and Kleist, had by this arrangement the principal task to perform. Seydlitz had to conduct the entire enterprize, and by firing a cannon near Technitz, he purposed giving the signal for a general attack.

But the sharpshooters and green Croats of Kleist became visible too soon near the Mulde, and thereby received a charge of musquetry from the foe; when Kleist, knowing that the principal troop of the Austrians had marched off already, but afraid that they might return, and anxious to make haste so as not to lose the favorable moment, ordered a gun to be fired. He thereby gave the signal for a general attack, which ought to have been given by Seydlitz, but which the latter certainly would not have given so early, as he was ignorant of what had happened near Kleist, for it was necessary that the enemy's retired troops should be farther away than they were. At seven o'clock in the morning the Prussians pushed quickly over the Mulde, on four points, the fortifications of the enemy, the cannon of which had soon been silenced, were taken, and the Austrian General, von Zetwitz, who obstinately defended himself at the head of his soldiers, with great valour, was at last taken prisoner, together with the remainder of his troops; and although those men who were on their march to quarters returned immediately to the Mulde, on hearing the report of cannon, they found the affair already decided, and could merely receive the fugitives.

By this surprise the Austrians lost the left bank of the Mulde, some cannon in the fortifications, and about 2,000 men, most of whom were made prisoners. However, the manœuvre had been but half played, for, according to the

original arrangement, an hour later the Austrians who had marched off would have been too far away to admit of their returning to the battle field, but would have been themselves surprised in their quarters, and perhaps made prisoners. Prince Henry seems to have been satisfied with the reasons which Kleist gave as to firing the decisive cannon shot for a signal of attack, but for which he should have waited until given by Seydlitz ; but the latter was in no way satisfied with the explanation, and hence the good understanding previously existing between these two leaders was after that time remarkably disturbed.

CHAPTER XX.

SKIRMISHES NEAR FREIBERG AND CHEMNITZ.

A FEW minor attacks upon other points met with similar success to that just narrated ; the enemy was driven back, and the Prussian army had room for new movements. Accordingly, on the 13th of May, Prince Henry marched with his whole strength upon Freiberg, Seydlitz and Kleist leading the advanced guard, and succeeded in putting some of the enemy's cavalry to flight, and in taking 200 prisoners. The Austrians then left their fortified station near Freiberg, and retired to Dippoldiswalde ; but Seydlitz attacked their reserve several times during the subsequent days, drove them from the positions they were anxious to keep, and took possession of the narrow highways which led to the main body of the army. On the 16th of May, the Prussian forces marched to Pretschendorf, where they encamped.

By these movements the line of the enemy was broken in the centre, and the Prince of Stolberg, who perceived that he was in danger, by being separated from the remainder of the Imperial army and from the Austrians, believed the Prussians would fall on him with their entire strength, having already retired on the 13th of May to Tzschopa, on the 16th continued his retreat to Zwickau. On the 18th, Prince Henry ordered General von Bandemer to march with four

battalions and six squadrons towards Chemnitz, that he might follow up these advantages ; but Seydlitz disapproved of this advance, considering it dangerous, as the enemy's generals, Kleefeld and Luzinski, were too favorably placed in the flank. The Prince cared not for these remonstrances ; and when it was announced that Bandemer had advanced to Chemnitz, he sent for Seydlitz to inform him of the good news. This did not alter Seydlitz's opinion, and the result showed that he was in the right, as Bandemer was shortly afterwards attacked on all sides, and escaped to Oederan, to which place General von Kamitz had been sent to assist him, with a loss of seven cannon and 800 men. The Prince could not conceal his annoyance, and displayed some indifference towards Seydlitz.

The combatants remained inactive for some time after this event, with the exception of a few skirmishes for advantageous positions. Serbelloni wished to drive the Prussians out of the Erzgebirge, where they had taken up good ground, and for that purpose sought to annoy them in their rear by the Imperial army, which received orders to push onward towards Leipzig and Magdeburg. Prince Henry was fortunately more active than the enemy, and hoped to rid Saxony completely of the Imperial army. Seydlitz was entrusted with the command of the troops chosen for that purpose, and marched with 4,000 horsemen and 3,000 foot soldiers, on the 21st of June, by way of Waldheim and Rochlitz, towards Altenburg.

With a force so comparatively small, he could not venture to attack his opponents straightforwardly, and therefore endeavoured to gain upon their rear and left flank, so that the Prince of Stolberg, who was afraid of severing his connexion with Franconia, retreated quickly to Zwickau, and from thence to Reichenbach. Seydlitz kept him watched

and followed up by Colonel von Belling, who had a short time previously led some troops there from Pomerania, and among them his own regiment of hussars, consisting of fifteen complete squadrons: with these served the young Blücher, afterwards Prince of Wahlstadt.

The Imperial army retreated more and more, being driven beyond Hof, the Prussians taking many prisoners and much booty. Serbelloni sought to give assistance to the Imperial army by frequently attacking Prince Henry's left wing, thereby hoping to compel him to recal Seydlitz, who pressed onwards for his own protection. But the Prince understood these tactics sufficiently to check the Austrians with the troops under his command, and thus enabled Seydlitz to continue near the foe, keeping them in constant uneasiness, by petty engagements, surprises, the taking of provisions, &c.

Kleist had been recalled to receive a new commission, and had invaded Bohemia with his troop, by way of Marienberg and Einsiedel, on the 2nd of July: he was fortunate in some engagements, captured men and spoil, and returned to the Erzgebirge on the 6th, after an excursion as far as Osseck and Brüx, in the face of a division of the enemy placed near Töplitz, and double as strong as himself. On the 17th of the same month Kleist undertook another forage, which lasted until the 20th, going by way of Brüx and Kommotau to Sebastiansburg, and again meeting with very great success. But Serbelloni could not possibly brook that an enemy so much weaker than himself should have the advantage everywhere, and naturally felt indignant that the Prussians were able to maintain the field; he therefore sent strict orders to the Prince of Stolberg to march forward to meet Seydlitz, and to attach himself to the main army: a movement which was made but slowly.

On the 14th of July the outposts of General Belling were pressed back near Plauen and Reichenbach, and on the 17th the army of the empire marched to Schneeberg; by which manœuvre Seydlitz, who was encamped near Zwickau, was threatened near his left flank. He was not, however, afraid of being overtaken in this manner; on the contrary, his rivals soon had to feel the consequences of their movement, as Kleist, who had just been created a general, marched on the 20th of July to Marienberg, and took up his position on the right flank of the Prince of Stolberg, Seydlitz occupying the side of Zwickau, on the left; no wonder, therefore, that the Prince considered himself already vanquished, and thought of nothing but a hasty retreat. In consequence, he put himself in motion during the night, and continued his retrogression without delay during the following days, by way of Hof to Münchsberg, still pursued by Belling and Seydlitz.

It was upon this march that our hero found an unexpected opportunity of showing his presence of mind and determination, in a most remarkable manner. He was riding with his suite far ahead of the regiments, and halted in a field that he might reconnoitre the flight of the enemy. Belling, with the advanced guard, was close in pursuit of the fugitives, and the main body had not yet arrived, when an Austrian regiment of cavalry, in full gallop,—because attached to the Imperial army, but too far in the rear for its proper place,—came suddenly and very inconveniently between the Prussian divisions, so that Seydlitz with his entire staff might have been taken prisoner. All endeavours to escape would doubtless have only made the enemy more attentive, but Seydlitz almost instinctively knew how to act. He quickly divided the thirty or forty persons by whom he was surrounded, consisting of aides-de-

camp, ordnance officers, hussars who had returned with prisoners, dragoons, grooms, &c., into little troops of three or four men; he then placed them in a long line, with wide intervals, and directed them in sham fight furiously to attack the flank of the galloping regiment of the enemy, to utter loud cries, fire their pistols, and again retire quickly into the field if a troop of the enemy encountered them. These mock attacks confused the Austrians, who thereby fancied themselves in the vicinity of a strong body of cavalry, and consequently hastened rapidly forward, without showing any inclination to lose time through a skirmish. By this stratagem Seydlitz was not only enabled to extricate himself, but was also able to forward information to the guard in front, respecting the approach of the frightened adversary.

The Imperial army retired on the 24th of July to Baireuth, with a considerable loss of men, luggage, horses, waggons, &c.; the hussars of Belling having even taken the war treasury. Seydlitz left some light companies near Zwickau, that they might observe the Prince of Stolberg, whilst with his main troop he followed a new destination which Prince Henry had given him. He was directed to unite himself with Kleist, and to drive away a division of the enemy's troops stationed near Töplitz, in Bohemia, so that Serbelloni might be compelled to retire from the Erzgebirge to the former country. Seydlitz, with about 1,000 cavalry and 2,000 infantry, proceeded by way of Annaburg and Sebastiansburg; on the 31st of July arrived near Kommotau, and effected his junction with General Belling, whom he commanded to join him by way of Eger: he also, near Scherwina, met Kleist, who had come with almost equal strength from Porschenstein. The generals then marched to Brüx, where they left their infantry, and repaired with the cavalry to Töplitz, from thence to reconnoitre the enemy.

They ascertained that there were about 10,000 men encamped upon the heights, under General the Prince of Löwenstein, in a disadvantageous position, and an unprepared state. The outpost, which had fallen back on seeing the Prussians advance, had confused the whole camp by their reports, the cavalry had not saddled, and the infantry were in their tents, none expecting that the Prussians were such near neighbours.

Kleist immediately perceived these advantages, and therefore advised an immediate engagement, being convinced that the cavalry might distinguish themselves with extraordinary success. They might have surrounded the enemy's position, and thus have penetrated into the camp on all sides, under circumstances which would have insured the overthrow, and perhaps the entire destruction of the Austrians; and, even if the attack proved unsuccessful, no disadvantage need be feared, as the enemy was without light cavalry. But Seydlitz, who was usually so rash and active, hesitated on this occasion, was doubtful and delaying; said he found the position of the enemy too advantageous, that success was very precarious, and that he therefore wished to wait for the arrival of the infantry. In vain Kleist and Belling made the most pressing representations to him: the night passed without action.

The infantry arrived on the 2nd of August, early in the morning, and Seydlitz immediately advanced upon the foe, leading the cavalry himself; but the position had been shifted during the night, and strengthened as much as possible, so that although the infantry on both sides fought most obstinately, and with the greatest valour, the advantages which might have resulted from a surprise were lost to the Prussians, through the unfortunate delay of Seydlitz, and consequently the Austrians maintained their ground.

Seydlitz again and again endeavoured to take the heights, but in vain, and he had at last to retire with a loss of two cannon and 600 men: the first time that an enterprize undertaken by him was unsuccessful, but in which he seemed somewhat unfaithful to his character as a leader and a soldier.

It cannot, however, be doubted, that, according to the opinion of all those who were well acquainted with the circumstances, the disagreement which had previously existed between Seydlitz and Kleist, and which had been increased by various occurrences, may be accounted the principal cause of failure on this occasion.

Seydlitz ostentatiously kept his troops encamped two days longer, near Ober-Leitensdorf, in the face of the enemy, who neither dared to annoy or persecute them, but actually left the field to the Prussian hussars, even permitting them to make excursions in the neighbourhood of Prague, until, on the 5th of August, Seydlitz went to Porschenstein, Kleist to Böhmisches-Einsiedel, and Belling retired to Zwickau, on observation of the Imperial army.

The Prince of Stolberg again advanced, and, on the 11th of August was near Hof, where he received instructions to march through Bohemia, and to effect a junction with the main army of the Austrians. He accordingly put himself slowly in motion, whilst Belling hung upon his sides and rear, annoying him perpetually, and extorting money by making excursions far into the country. Meanwhile Seydlitz, who was near Porschenstein, kept his attention upon such of the hostile force as lay near Töplitz; but on the 2nd of September he received orders to retire over the Mulde to the camp near Pretschendorf, Prince Löwenstein having been reinforced by the arrival of fresh bodies of troops. On Seydlitz's arrival, Prince Henry stationed him behind the

right wing. The Imperial army did not effect its union with that near Dresden until the 6th of September, after a very long and troublesome march through Bohemia. On the following day General von Haddik assumed the command, thereby succeeding Serbelloni, who had been recalled.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BATTLE OF FREIBERG.

HADDIK was a far superior commander to Serbelloni, was very active, had had more military experience, and therefore did not intend to leave the Prussians, who were so much weaker than himself, in quiet possession of the many advantages they had gradually gained. After having well reconnoitred the strength and positions of the Prussians, he considered it advisable to order a large number of troops upon their right flank, and at the same time to annoy them by frequent attacks on their front, and thus compel Prince Henry to retreat, as he had not sufficient force to oppose an assault from two sides at once. But the Prince was prepared for such an emergency, gave the command of the right wing to Seydlitz, and kept his troops ready that he might energetically oppose any onset. The Austrians attacked the Prussian outposts along their whole position, and numerous skirmishes took place between the 27th and the 29th of September, in which the Prussians maintained their ground generally, although they were sometimes worsted. Seydlitz and Kleist, with fourteen battalions and some cavalry, had originally occupied the left bank of the Mulde, but were driven away therefrom, and compelled to move nearer to Prince Henry; but the latter had resolved to leave his

position, and therefore led his army, in four divisions, on the 1st of October, to the left bank of the Mulde, and encamped advantageously near Freiberg.

Haddik renewed his assaults on the 14th and 15th of October, turning his more numerous troops especially against the right wing of the Prussians, where Seydlitz in vain opposed him, so that at last he had the enemy completely in his rear. The Austrians maintained the advantage they had gained, and Prince Henry was again forced to retire, after having lost ten cannon and more than 2,000 men in the engagement. He marched a short distance during the night of the 16th of October, and then encamped between Reichenbach and Klein-Voigtsberg. The Prussians had received a severe blow, but had not lost their determination through it, and they now stood in proper order, ready to renew the contest courageously.

The Austrians remained quiet for some time, expecting reinforcements sent by Daun from Silesia. There were also twenty battalions and fifty-five squadrons of Prussians on the road, dispatched by Frederick to succour his brother, the Prince Henry; but the latter did not wish to delay an action until they arrived, as he was afraid he would thereby lose the favorable opportunity which at that time presented itself.

The Imperial troops, with whom were all the Saxon cavalry and 12,000 Austrians, held positions in the neighbourhood of Freiberg, but the intervals between, as well as the bad condition and management, which Haddik was unable to alter, gave the Prince great hopes that a bold and vigorous attack would meet with success. The Prussians took a strong position before Freiberg, through which they were protected on their left by the steep banks of the Mulde, and on their right by the Asbach, whose bed was

very deep, between two declivities, and thus appeared to think merely of defending themselves. On the 28th of October, Prince Henry, as quietly as possible, made his preparations for the following day. The reinforcements from Silesia would have arrived in a few days, but within that time the Prince of Stolberg might also have been strengthened, or he might have completed the fortifications on which he was engaged in his camp. It is also reported that the ambition of Prince Henry induced him not to wait for the arrival of the troops from Silesia, as the King had sent with them his favorite, Lieut.-Colonel von Anhalt, as an experienced military guide and adviser; but that the Prince preferred finishing the business without such assistance, and thereby obtain the glory of the success for himself alone. All historians agree in praising the Prince for the skill which he displayed on this occasion, his preparations for the battle having been conducted in as masterly a style as Frederick himself could have accomplished; and they were crowned with brilliant success.

The army, consisting of twenty-nine battalions and sixty squadrons, in four divisions, marched early in the morning of the 29th of October, Seydlitz commanding the right wing, which should give the decisive blow, and Prince Henry near him, with that division. The opposing force, numbering forty-nine battalions and seventy-eight squadrons, lay before Freiberg, with the right wing leaning towards the Mulde, and the left towards the Spittælwald; the heights were defended by artillery, and the wood before them by trees, which had been cut down and placed in the way. Kleist and the advanced guard commenced the battle, and the other troops followed according to the orders which had been given. In the Spittælwald, in the front of the enemy's left wing, the troops fought most obstinately, and at

that place the issue of the contest long remained doubtful ; the artillery fire from both sides was also violently continued.

When the right wing of the Prussians at last arrived near the left flank of the foe, in turning to the left for an attack, it was discovered that they occupied the Kuhberg, yet farther off, with about 6,000 men, to whom the Prussians would now be compelled to turn their rear, if they wished to continue the march upon which they had entered. For a moment Prince Henry was unresolved, but Kleist assured him that he knew quite sufficient of General von Meyer, who commanded the 6,000 men, to feel certain that he would only fire a few cannon shots, but do nothing else, and that he would, if the Prince permitted it, pass by him with indifference. Only four weak battalions and six squadrons were therefore placed against him, upon the height of St. Michael, sufficient to keep him employed, and the remainder of the army marched on.

The Prince of Stolberg, perceiving the imminent danger to his left flank, ordered the second division to march forward, so that the whole line was speedily and severely engaged. The Austrians maintained their ground well, and were enjoying the most advantageous heights ; whilst Prince Henry, in this his first regular battle as a leader, already feared it was lost, as the march was going on rather slowly, but Seydlitz had more confidence, and assured him that all was proceeding well, and that success was certain. As the fight continued a very long time, but without proving decisive, Seydlitz took two battalions of grenadiers, and made them attack with the bayonet the Drei Kreutzer, a height which was defended by Hungarian infantry. The cavalry of the enemy endeavoured several times to advance, but were again and again repulsed, and the Prussian grenadiers marched up

the hill in excellent order. As the Austrian cavalry was far enough away, Seydlitz ordered some squadrons of hussars to attack the left flank and the rear of the enemy's infantry, whilst he proceeded with the utmost energy in front, where he took many prisoners; and then, with his horsemen, pursued the fugitives to Freiberg.

In consequence of this important success, all the positions of the enemy were rapidly taken, and the terrific charges of the Prussian cavalry soon put their infantry to flight, the latter being forsaken by their own horsemen. The left wing of the Prussians decided the battle; and the Count of Kalkreuth, at that time captain, but who became a field-marshal in after life, especially distinguished himself by the execution of the orders which he received from Prince Henry, whose aide-de-camp he then was, for he not only delivered the instructions with great energy and speed, but took care that they were carried out accordingly.

The Prince of Stolberg retired with his troops over the Mulde, to Franenstein, having lost 4,000 men in killed or wounded, and just as many more who had been taken prisoners, together with 28 cannon and standards. The Prussian loss amounted to 1,500 men, including killed, wounded, and prisoners. Freiberg was occupied by the Prussians, but the enemy was not much harassed, although Seydlitz desired it, Prince Henry wishing to keep his troops together in the neighbourhood of Haddik's encampment; but the Imperial army continued their retreat during a few days, and then left the Erzgebirge entirely to the Prussians, and Haddik concentrated his troops, near Dresden.

The battle of Freiberg was the last of the Seven Years' War, and covered the Prussian arms with glory. Its arrangement reflected great credit on the abilities of Prince Henry, but the merit of the execution is due to Seydlitz, as

was said with pleasure by the Prince, and as Warnery plainly and openly states in his history.

It is most remarkable that Seydlitz, in his latter campaigns, and more particularly in this battle, appears rather as a general leader than as a commander of cavalry, even directing a body of infantry how to take by storm a height defended by infantry; but it serves to show that he was indeed a great captain, who not only understood one part of the service, but was also able to lead all kinds of arms and soldiers to victory. Without doubt, his most brilliant appearance was that of a cavalry general, and it was the perfection to which he attained in that branch of the service which opened for him the road to distinguish himself in the other departments. During the latter part of the Seven Years' War his merits were very great, and they contributed largely towards the success of the Great Frederick, although his former youthful achievements were unquestionably far superior. That Seydlitz who, at Rossbach and Zorndorf, had rushed forward at the head of his cavalry like an angry Mars over the field of battle, and who had decided in a moment the fate of the day, that shining meteor was not thus seen afterwards. It was said, that as his body became weak and sickly, his mind had become equally inactive, but such was not the case; for, whenever he had an opportunity of showing his talents and his energy, during the latter part of the war, or during the time of peace, he did so most courageously in the service of his Sovereign.

The problem may be otherwise explained. It was not so much the leader who had sunk, as it was the whole Prussian army; the war had diminished the giant strength of the people, and the best soldiers had gradually been either killed or rendered invalids, so that it was almost impossible

for Frederick to get a sufficient number of men to oppose his numerous antagonists, his resources being almost exhausted. The great battles had been caused by great troubles only; and the opportunities by which Seydlitz had distinguished himself could not again return. That man is indeed very much favored whom fortune permits to show once or twice during his lifetime what he is able to perform; because many, many others, have never a single opportunity granted to them for such a display.

CHAPTER XXII.

ARRIVAL OF THE KING FROM SILESIA.—CONCLUSION OF THE PEACE, AT HUBERTSBURG.

THE reinforcements from Silesia arrived on the day after the battle of Freiberg, at Meissen, and the King, on the 6th of November. The field of victory was visited by him on the 9th, when he did not fail to express his admiration of his brother's management, and of the ability displayed by the generals who had served under him. Meanwhile Russia had made peace with Prussia, and France had concluded a treaty with Great Britain; Austria, therefore, having already lost some allies, and being in danger of losing more, felt but little inclination to continue the war on her own account.

On the King's arrival at Meissen, the Austrians, through Saxon mediation, made immediate proposals for peace, which were favorably received, as Frederick was zealously anxious to bring the war to a termination, since its continuance could not be of any advantage, but might now be suppressed without further injury to his cause. He considered it desirable, in order to further the peace with Austria, that the principal Imperial princes (Princes of the German Confederation) should be compelled, by a sudden invasion of their territory, to recal their troops from the

army of the Empire, and as a consequence make treaties independently of Austria ; an arrangement which was secretly encouraged by that power, as she thereby hoped to rid herself of certain obligations. Kleist therefore entered Bohemia with his troops, and penetrated as far as Saatz, from whence he returned with prisoners and booty. On his return he was ordered to invade Franconia with 6,000 men, and there he caused such terror, that the Diet of Regensburg asked the Prussian Minister Plenipotentiary, von Plotho, for protection, and the most influential princes made petitions for peace.

During this period a treaty of peace had been concluded with Austria, and Frederick had paid a visit to Gotha, on the 3rd of December. Remembering the feat of arms by which, at this place, Seydlitz so brilliantly preceded his future achievements near Rossbach, he chose him as his companion during the journey, in preference to others, and manifested the greatest condescension and favor.

On the 15th of February, 1763, the treaty of peace was concluded at the hunting seat of Hubertsburg, and the armies were permitted to return home from their field camps. But a happy return to their homes was not the privilege of all the Prussian warriors who had been victorious in the war. During the contest Frederick had permitted several enterprising officers to raise free corps, who depended solely upon their own merit, and the fortune of war ; and these free corps, free regiments, and volunteer battalions, both of cavalry and infantry, had performed excellent service throughout the campaign, having distinguished themselves by the utmost valour, and contributed materially, in the closing scenes, to the success with which the Prussian cause was often rescued from imminent danger and ruin.

Notwithstanding their services, it was necessary that

these companies should be disbanded before the other regiments, as the peace demanded a very considerable reduction of the army; and, as a consequence, the finest and well-grown men were divided among the regular troops, whilst those who were less fit for duty were discharged without hesitation. On learning their fate, these brave men would naturally despair, as the peace deprived them of their bread and occupation, leaving them without reward for their past services, and uncheered by any hopes for the future.

Seydlitz had scarcely arrived in Silesia when he received orders to dismiss the cavalry portion of these free corps; and he proceeded, with as much mildness as possible, in the performance of his cruel task. But the affair caused the utmost indignation, and provoked a mutiny, as the privates wished to remain together, and therefore kept themselves ready to oppose a dissolution. It was necessary to suppress this insubordination with promptitude, and for that purpose Seydlitz galloped at once to that part of the ground in which the mutineers were most crowded and noisy, took out his pistols, and was about shooting their bold leader, when his adjutant, Captain von Tschirske, for whom he entertained the greatest respect and confidence, held his arm, exclaiming—"Your Excellency, if it must be done, let me do it!" This impassioned action happily mastered the rage of Seydlitz, and prevented the execution of a hasty action which might have caused still greater misery and confusion. Seydlitz effected the arrangement without bloodshed, and did all he could to modify the fate of those who had to encounter the misfortune; the best officers, as far as practicable, were placed in standing regiments, and others received situations.

Seydlitz resided at Ohlau, the head-quarters of his regiment, and lived in much the same style that he had done

before, making only a few trifling alterations in his household establishment, which was, however, conducted on a somewhat more extensive scale. Soon after the peace, the King entrusted him with the newly-established office of inspector-general of cavalry, an authority which extended throughout the whole province of Silesia. But he was more particularly occupied with his own regiment, and especially with the squadron which was quartered at Ohlau; looking to their carriage, service, exercises, and general conduct, as any major might have done, although indeed not much more than a major would have done with his men, had he possessed the same power and independence. The King continued to attend daily, in a similar manner, upon the first battalion of his guards, at Potsdam.

But the influence which Seydlitz was called upon to exercise, as giving an example of a great warrior, a perfect master and leader of cavalry, was of course very much strengthened and increased through the office with which he had been entrusted; and which was, in fact, the union of two inspectorships, that of Upper Silesia, and that of Lower Silesia, embracing the superintendence of twenty squadrons of cuirassiers, ten squadrons of dragoons, and forty squadrons of hussars. The situation was, nevertheless, rather intended for saving money than as an encouragement to active service; for, after the ruinous war, the King wished to restore the trade and agriculture, and not avail himself so much of his subjects in playing at soldiers, and hence it was necessary to diminish the number of foreigners (Germans) then in the army.

To attain this object Frederick found it desirable to make new arrangements, being determined neither to give permission to regiments to enlist their own people, nor allow them any longer to manage their own affairs. He wished

to carry out these alterations under a strict inspection, and with the greatest possible equality and justice ; but the new measure produced much dissatisfaction, not only because it touched the pockets of many, but it also hindered and obstructed the activity and care of some extremely good officers, who were anxious to stand well with their King and his soldiers. Seydlitz remonstrated most energetically, but he was obliged to submit to the great and wise object of the King, who thought only of the future greatness of Prussia, disregarding present annoyances if they could be made to further his ambitious projects ; the inspector-general, therefore, had not only to introduce these hateful alterations, but also to see that they were carried out strictly according to the King's will and command.

In addition to this, Seydlitz's advancement exceedingly displeased the colonels of regiments, as they considered his appointment an attack upon their honor. Old deserving generals, who had been in direct communication with the King, receiving their orders from him, and accustomed to account only to him, were now compelled to settle their affairs through another ; and, if the office were filled by a young comrade, they would find themselves deprived of correspondence and oral intercourse with their Sovereign, which they valued so much, by a stranger, to whom they neither could nor would trust all their hopes and wishes.

Many generals loudly opposed the new order of things, and endeavoured to avoid complying with them, or to delay and prevent the object in view. But Seydlitz, after having accepted the office, was not a man to be played with ; not being influenced by egotistical obstinacy himself, he was not to be prevented by obstinacy in others, but would carry out his superintendence properly, being sure to exact from the highest, as well as from the lowest, that obedience and esteem

which was due to him. He was supported in his endeavours, to a greater extent than others would have been, by his acknowledged merits, his glory as a leader, and his military and manly appearance, as well as through the general confidence felt in his earnest desire to act with impartiality. He was also so free from all selfishness of character, that he had great moral influence over others whenever a meeting took place ; indeed during the whole war his conduct had been exemplary in that respect.

Seydlitz always evinced such a disgust of all commissions by which exactions of money, plunder, contributions to the war by forced means, &c., were required, that the King never ventured to entrust him with the execution of any such orders ; and although he had many opportunities given him, and might have occasioned many more, to fill his pockets, yet he never availed himself of them.

A similarly honest man was General von Saldern, whom the King commissioned to plunder the hunting seat of Hubertsburg, at the same time telling him not to forget himself ; when Saldern, full of indignation, desired the King would please to honor somebody else with such a commission. Seydlitz was well aware that the light cavalry especially might be much encouraged by the prospect of plunder and booty, but he urged his men to make it a point of honor that only that spoil was taken in an honorable way which was taken from the enemy by fighting. Prince Henry fully agreed in these sentiments, although he, with his army, was obliged to live upon Saxony, and to suffer many extortions of money from Bohemia and Franconia, but which did no good to the great cause.

Whenever the noble-minded Prince had an opportunity, he expressed his indignation of such conduct ; and when,

after the battle of Freiberg, Prince Neuwied arrived with Prussian reinforcements from Silesia, having misconducted themselves in different ways on their march through Saxony, he received that general and his officers with a severe speech, telling them that their progress had been conducted like that of a band of thieves and robbers, and not according to the honor of Prussia.

Not all the Prussian leaders, but certainly the most distinguished generals, were of opinion that no other profit should attract the soldier than the glory of the deed and the approbation of the sovereign. Keith testified that he shared in these noble sentiments, for although he had been compelled to extort money contributions throughout Bohemia, for the war, yet when he died in the following year, he left but the trifling sum of seventy ducats. Seydlitz had had many similar opportunities, but had never made use of them, nor did anyone doubt his magnanimity, or his carelessness for his own pocket.

The King knew very well that Seydlitz did not trouble himself about monetary affairs, but he did not, therefore, forget to provide for him. During the war he had appointed him to the office of Drost von Vlotho, which secured him a yearly income; and, like other deserving generals, he also occasionally received presents of money from the King. Afterwards, his income as general, inspector-general of cavalry, and colonel of a regiment, amounted to 15,000 thalers (£2,250) annually, a sum certainly quite sufficient to enable him to live according to his rank. But the King was desirous of doing yet more for him, and when Seydlitz purchased the estate of Minkowsky, near Namslau, with forests containing an abundance of game, and wished to erect a castle there,

the King most generously presented him with 20,000 thalers (£3,000) for that purpose ; and to enable him to make an advantageous use of the great number of trees contained in the woods, he was permitted to send them down upon the royal canal, free of duty.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MILITARY AND FAMILY LIFE, AT OHLAU.

As, in the time of the old Dessauer,* the little meadow near Halle had been the ground for training the Prussian infantry, so Ohlau now became the training school for the cavalry, and Seydlitz's own regiment served as a pattern for all the rest.

He arranged all the details in a strict and particular manner, from the most insignificant exercise in arms, and the mere rudiments of horsemanship, up to a perfect field service, with its important movements, on a comprehensive scale, inspecting everything, and keeping everything in order. In all the regiments, officers and privates had to ride in the same manner, and according to the same rule—quick, light, easy, with the greatest boldness and security. During the most violent movement, the single rider, as well as the entire squadron, was taught to have a perfect control over himself, to be able instantly to execute any order, and to allow the horse the greatest liberty, but subduing him again whenever required.

* Prince Leopold, of Anhalt Dessau, born at Dessau, in 1676. Princes of this name were for three generations in the highest rank of the Prussian army. The above was the most renowned of all.

Boldness in riding was carried out to an extraordinary extent, and accidents arising therefrom were uncared for. New comers, especially, were put upon a hard trial. If a strong young peasant or nobleman entered as a recruit—little ones or weak ones were not received at all—they were placed upon unbroken horses, and left to their fate, whilst chased over sticks and stones: he who broke his neck, or met with any other accident, was no more spoken of; but he who mastered this first trial, and remained boldly in his seat, was enlisted, and taught to ride according to Seydlitz's rules. The consequence was, that throughout the regiment, and especially in the first squadron, only the most select and courageous riders were to be seen; every private retained a full consciousness of his worth, and had the appearance of a commander, and none could be compared with the corps of officers. The following example shows to what perfection the master had brought his pupils in skilful warlike exercises, and similar ones were practised daily.

The King had sent a number of cavalry officers to Ohlau, from other provinces, that they might learn Seydlitz's method of exercise. The general first requested that they would afford him a specimen of what they could do, and gave them a squadron to manœuvre for that purpose; but they did not manage it well, and he therefore speedily ended the trial, at the same time informing them that he would let them see on the following day how to exercise cavalry. On the morrow he led his life squadron himself, having his best officers on service in it. The squadron assembled in the market-place, their swords were drawn, they formed threes, and then trotted away to the practice ground. On arriving there, all the regular movements usually practised on field-days were gone through at the gallop, and they again received the word to trot. Instead, however, of allowing them

to retire quietly to their quarters, Seydlitz led the dragoons direct into the river Oder, ordered them to form troops in the water, then decreased the front to threes, and returned to the market-place. Here they again formed, and were wheeled into line with such precision that the fourth and third squadrons stood between the Court-house and the left row of houses, the second squadron between the Court-house and the main guard-room, and the right, or first squadron, between the main guard and the row of houses on that side of the little town of Ohlau. Again they advanced, formed close column of squadrons, and when the word halt was given, the column stood exactly in front of their own quarters.*

The strange officers were surprised, and full of admiration; they had never seen such quickness and mastership, each movement had succeeded perfectly. Seydlitz smiled cheerfully, and said:—"Gentlemen, I wish to show you what cavalry is able to do, if there exists industry and good will." He thanked his officers for their attention, and then, to reward the cuirassiers, gave them an abundance of the best victuals, and concluded the feast by a ball.

The handsomest and strongest young men, belonging to the most distinguished families of Prussia and other countries, endeavoured to serve in his regiment; and as numbers were unable to obtain commissions as officers, they were obliged to serve merely as volunteers. Young noblemen, who were handsome, rich, full of strength and energy,

* This novel sort of *watering order* and field-day in one, shows the eccentric and daring spirit of Seydlitz, as the Oder is a considerable stream. Swimming horses is not uncommon in our own service occasionally, or in the chase; and the Roman soldiers, in the time of Cæsar, passed through every river between the Tiber and the Rhine, without using boats of any sort. When will all British soldiers be taught to swim?

rivalled each other in severe equestrian exercises, which was changed into a species of luxury; the pride of having the finest horses was united with the ambition of riding them cleverly and with the greatest boldness, and the splendour and ornament of a handsome appearance was increased by the honorable pride of maintaining a warlike carriage. But the moderating restraint which war lays upon wantonness, through its aim and dangers, does not exist in the time of peace, and the very capabilities which are distinguishing in the former, are frequently most ruinous in the latter; distinction and preference being too often sought in vain dress, dandylike exaggeration, and wild disorder.

The officers of Seydlitz were not backward in these respects, nor did they escape from that hard severity which they in a great measure thereby voluntarily undertook; and as a tight, narrow-fitting dress was then fashionable, no trouble or fatigue was spared to get into it. An exaggerated joke on this subject is narrated, which states that the officers of Seydlitz, to be able to put on their leather breeches, were accustomed to hang them up wet, and thus get into them, then remaining in them for hours, until they had completely shrunk into the skin, when the unmentionables appeared as if cast upon the living body, and displayed every strong and handsome figure. We give the tale as it is still repeated, but rather doubt whether there were many such examples.

That not everything dandylike was avoided at Ohlau, but that many such habits were rather suffered or even encouraged by Seydlitz, may readily be credited for several reasons, and from various records, as well as that they are suitable to his character. This light-hearted courage did not, however, merely exercise itself upon the exterior, for it was not less seriously evident in other respects; and as the

inclinations of the general were favored by his ability, his arrangements were such as ultimately resulted in sad consequences. Having a large income, he maintained a rich house, and liked to be visited by his officers and foreigners, who were at all times welcome. His wife also was partial to cheerful company, social pleasures, and amusing change. It is probable, that for the sake of gratifying his own inclinations, Seydlitz neglected his home more than he should have done; and he also seems to have willingly overlooked trifling faults, the investigation of which might have proved painful to his feelings. When his lady gave parties, he usually retired soon after the first salutations, and took no share in the concerts, the rides, or the feasts which she enjoyed with young persons; on the contrary, he preferred riding into the open field, or engaging himself with hunting. At other times he would sit in his private room, smoking tobacco, not caring for conversation, but satisfied merely to exchange words with a companion similarly occupied.

It thus happened, that the gay but neglected wife soon found the easy friendship of younger officers very agreeable to her; and as these sentiments were mutual, and every one wished to be a Seydlitz in love adventures, as well as in other glory, there could not fail to be vexatious affairs occurring, through which the general's honor had to suffer. The circumstances at length became so public and notorious that a separation was the necessary result, the union having scarcely lasted four years.

Madame de Seydlitz went to Berlin, leaving her two daughters by Seydlitz to his care; but he did not much heed them, and had so little confidence in their future career, that on the very morning on which their mother took her departure,—when the elder daughter was passionately

crying, because her Berlin china teacup had been packed in one of the cases, and she had only one of Fayence placed before her,—he cut short the complaint which was being made to him, by exclaiming:—"That is humbug! who knows whether she may not yet be glad to take her breakfast from a cup of common Bunzlau clay!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

SEYDLITZ IN RETIREMENT.—MILITARY ORDERS.

SEYDLITZ sustained his domestic misfortune with indifference, and speedily seemed to forget it; but it increased his desire for a soldierlike retirement, as its apparent quietness possessed a charm and a comfort for one who did not enjoy the noisy company of the capital and a life near the Court. The neighbourhood of his residence afforded him abundant facilities for satisfying his attachment to the chase, and he was not without occasions for trying his good fortune with the ladies; although as to the latter, he was not very particular, caring neither for accomplishments or elegance, but was pleased with a fresh complexion, a neat foot with clean stockings, good temper, and a simplicity of manner.

The bold horsemanship practised by Seydlitz, and in which he dared and carried out himself all which was demanded from his men, did not always end happily or safely. Hence, on one occasion, during a review which the King held near Lissa, in the year 1765, Seydlitz had the misfortune to fall so dangerously with his horse, that it was at first thought he had been killed, as he remained unconscious for some time. The King galloped up quickly to him, dismounted, and was glad to learn that signs of life were visible; he therefore sent to head-quarters for his own

carriage, and dispatched a page to Breslau, to fetch the most celebrated physician. When his condition gave hopes of recovery, although not unmixed with danger, and Seydlitz looked up but could not speak, the King became so moved as to be obliged to turn away; but he continued to come daily during the time he was in the neighbourhood, inquiring after the patient's health, conversing with the physicians about the case, and particularly concerning the remedies; and when he was obliged to take his departure he recommended the greatest attention and care.

Seydlitz speedily recovered, and was not at all dismayed by his misfortune, but continued his reckless riding as before, even repeating the daring exploits of his youthful days, for as a general he rode through the flying wings of a windmill, as he had formerly done when a page; his suite immediately following his example. Once, while riding near Ohlau, he met an open coach, which progressed very slowly through the sand, and contained a country preacher and his wife: Seydlitz surveyed the coach, the forepart of which was very much in advance, and consequently gave unusual space between the body of the vehicle and the coachman's seat. The daring horseman did not long hesitate, but gave the spurs to his horse, and leaped over the carriage, followed by all his companions, not a little frightening those who were sitting in the coach, but without in the least hurting them. He who did not care for himself, could not be expected to care for others; and hence the determined rider was obliged to meet any sort of danger on horseback, and think only of overcoming, not of avoiding, the difficulty. Unfortunate and fatal accidents very frequently occurred, but Seydlitz heeded them not, rather considering them as sacrifices which war requirements demanded in time of peace.

The King on one occasion enquired—"Seydlitz, what is the cause that so many people break their necks in your regiment?" Seydlitz's reply was—"Your Majesty need only to command, and such an accident shall not happen again; but then it will not be my fault if, as a consequence, the regiment proves unable to do anything against the enemy." The lady of the Minister of State, Madame de Schlabrendorf, who was unable to suppress her anxiety lest her son might meet with a misfortune through the daring feats of which she had heard with terror, was otherwise comforted, by his remarking—"Your Excellency may pacify yourself, as one may throw a cornet or a cat down from a tower, and they do not immediately break their neck."

The hunting-field also afforded many opportunities for accidents, as none could avoid the meet without disgrace, and for the young officers it was as charming as it was honorable to take part; whilst, next to beautiful hunters, good hounds were most valuable, those belonging to the general being trained to bring the prey upon the horse. Life was also risked in a similar manner upon shooting with rifles and pistols, in which Seydlitz had attained great proficiency, both on foot and horseback; for we are assured that he was just as ready to hold a thaler between his fingers as a target for a good marksman, as he was himself to shoot at such a coin. Sometimes from his window he would shoot the rope in two, which served the bellringer of Ohlau for ringing a little bell three times daily at the mansion-house; and also little pieces of clay pipes, which he had stuck in the ground for that purpose.

The following Orders for the regiment, and for the inspection, which have been preserved, will fortunately serve to give most readers a welcome proof of the manner in which Seydlitz managed the service. On the 20th of

January, 1766, the following was issued :—" All horses shall be particularly examined by the chefs of companies, to see whether they have been so saddled, packed, bridled, and the stirrups buckled, as is usual in the regiment. As I have already again perceived several persons ride too short, you will be obliged to pay strict attention to it, that the stirrups are so long that the men do not sit upon the saddle as upon an easy chair, but that they keep their feet almost straight down. The horses' tails are never to be fastened up, except when the ground is dirty. The tails shall be cut when the moon changes, and attention must be given that they are not spoiled by combing and improper cleaning. The recruits shall not be placed upon the horses until they have been properly drilled on foot ; and they shall not be exercised with the carbines until they are able to stand and march well, and as they ought to do. On learning to ride, they shall practise it without stirrups, until they have a proper seat and carriage. Altogether, it is to be borne in mind that the gentlemen officers ought to exert themselves to the utmost, that the corporal and private may look better than common peasants ; and they must seek to impress them, as much as possible, with ambition, because a horseman cannot pass for a properly exercised soldier, until, without arms or the presence of his officer, he looks like an honest and proper man. The gentlemen officers will endeavour to exercise their men well before the spring, that then every garrison may immediately manœuvre together in one line and march ; and that it may not happen, as it did last year when the regiment came together, and was obliged to do that at the beginning which ought to have been finished in the garrison."

The anxiety that the soldier by his exterior should be recognised and distinguished as such, influenced the general

at this period very much, for on the following day he thus writes :—"Since I see from time to time privates on leave, who are not in any other way distinguished from peasants than that they wear a few pieces of the royal uniform, and who are so ignorant that they cannot even state the name of the chef of their company, I am compelled hereby to bring to the recollection of the gentlemen chefs of the regiments that it is their duty, not only to inspect their regiments, and to inquire into all circumstances themselves, but also to order their staff-officers, according to Royal command, to travel from time to time through their districts, and to ascertain whether or not some of the gentlemen captains permit any one to have leave who wishes for it ; the certain consequence of which, after such a long peace, would be that soldiers would be found in the squadrons, not having the least knowledge of their duty, or how to act against the enemy, if it became necessary to march. The gentlemen staff-officers and commanders will therefore exert themselves, and also instruct their inferiors to work their men properly, and not permit a recruit who enters their squadron to return home at once on leave, but first make a soldier of him ; or else, in case of need, the regiments would be strong as to their numbers, but weak as to useful men. Those men who are on leave shall be examined every month by a corporal ; and such commission shall not be entrusted according to rotation, but a man shall be selected who has reason, and who is able to instruct the men how to conduct themselves as soldiers. The gentlemen staff-officers will know that it is the will of the King from olden times, and that it has always been the custom of the Prussian service, that a soldier on leave, if he is not in work, and on Sundays, shall not be permitted to show himself in public other than in complete uniform, with his side-arms, in towns and

garrisons. Every commanding officer in a garrison shall take care to act properly up to this order, and see that the riders, dragoons, and hussars of the regiments stationed in Silesia, in their respective garrisons, on Sundays and when unemployed at work, do not show themselves in a dress which is disrespectful to the Prussian army. I am satisfied that the regiment under my command, and which enjoys the King's approbation, will also preserve it, and endeavour to carry out the above orders most scrupulously."

Curious through its minuteness, and it might almost be added, the naivete of the orders, is also a letter of command of a later date, directed to Major von Minkwitz, in Strehlen. It is to the following effect:—"You will have the goodness to travel through the garrisons of the regiment, and to execute the following instructions. Every officer, from the highest to the lowest, shall keep himself in such a condition, except as regards the pack-horses, that he may be ready for a march, which might possibly happen; and you will inform me with whom you do not find everything in proper condition. You will also order the subalterns to show you the pack-saddles, and that which belongs to them, and you will communicate to me wherever you do not find them in proper order. From the 1st of April no officer of my regiment shall, either in or out of service, wear other boots than those of the regiment; and on the 1st of May each officer shall have a surtout coat, lined with white merino, of such a size that he can wear it over his uniform; the buttons, sleeves, collar, and everything, exactly as I have ordered the tailor Lange to make one for myself. Between the lining and the cloth he may perhaps put flannel, alpaca, or what he pleases, but the exterior, and that which is to be seen, must be quite alike, the same with one as with another; for I will absolutely no more permit anything different in

the regiment from first to last, as I perceive that if I continue so lenient, the habiliments will become variously colored, and such as do not befit a Prussian regiment. Besides this, I further command, that when on guard, or while exercising, as well as during all other service, the officers shall use iron spurs, and that the silver ones shall be preserved for reviews only, until further orders. You will inform the chiefs of companies that they must take especial care that the saddle-woods, as well of the companies as of the augmentation, are in such a condition as not to break upon the first march, and thus the regiment be troubled with sore or pressed horses; also, that the carbines and the pistols are in such a state that, except through a particular accident, every piece may be at once discharged with certainty: these orders are all given for the augmentation, as well as for the company. During the spring I shall travel unexpectedly through the garrisons, inspecting the saddles and arms, and shall form a bad opinion of that chief of a company who neglects these most essential matters. Among such important affairs belong the covers with which the pistols are covered, which must be of that description which will prevent the pistols becoming wet by rain. The provision waggons, their harness, and other requisites, you will also inspect, and inform me whenever you do not find them in such a condition as that they may be made use of at a moment's notice. A few years ago I commanded that every officer should know my Orders, and I repeat it again, for they have as their foundation the honor of the regiment, and the effective service of the King; and since I have the honor of commanding, in by far the greatest part, men of a true ambition, I hope that each will endeavour, in his own department, to effect what is necessary for the preservation of the old reputation of the regiment."

As a conclusion, an Order of the same character, given by Seydlitz after the last review at which he was present, may be added. "During the last review," so commences the document, "I have seen some men who manage their accoutrements in much the same manner that a Silesian peasant, as a marriage beggar, fires his pistols; and I consequently must believe that the Royal Orders, according to which cuirassiers, dragoons, and hussars, singly and together are to work, and how they are to be taught the use of the carbines, pistols, and swords, have been forgotten by some, and perhaps not even read by others. I hereby earnestly again repeat it, that all Orders which are issued to the regiments, shall and must be made known to every officer; and the gentlemen officers belonging to the staff shall make particular inquiries, when they travel to the garrisons, whether such has been the case. It is the King's command, that no healthy horse is to remain in its stable two days, and one object should always be to make the soldier more skilful and sure in the use of his charger and his arms. I therefore request that all officers belonging to the staff will make such arrangements in the regiment, that unceasing endeavours may be made to improve its condition, and that the young officers may not appear so shockingly stupid as at present in the evolutions, which must be performed without apprising them of it beforehand. Every commanding officer shall send to me a report once a fortnight, by an ordinance, stating what has been done in the regiment during that period, in order to obtain his Majesty's approbation."

CHAPTER XXV.

BLANKENBURG'S OPINION OF SEYDLITZ.—THE ADJUTANT, HERR VON REIBNITZ.

FROM the narrative given by Captain von Blankenburg, of the character and life of our hero, we further add something to the peculiarities we have just supplied, using the words employed by his venerable predecessor. He says:—The manner in which Seydlitz acted towards the regiments, and the leniency and kindness with which he punished faults, or noticed their imperfections and wants, incited the men of their own good will to rectify them ; whilst the intelligence with which he pointed out the cause of their mistakes, enabled them to fulfil his wishes. The exercises ordered by him, when he visited single squadrons or whole regiments, may be said to have contained the germ of all military perfection, as they tended to open the understanding respecting that which was to be carried on. For instance, in a regiment where, according to his opinion, the men did not ride with sufficient boldness and determination, he would choose, for the place of exercise, that part of the ground which presented the greatest inequalities, possessing heights and valleys, or other difficulties.

For those officers whom he knew by their zeal and integrity in the service, although they were not distinguished by special talents, he evinced an extraordinary esteem and

confidence, even manifesting a friendly interest in their more private circumstances and conditions. The reprimands he was obliged from time to time to administer, were never wounding to that feeling of honor which ought to burn in the breast of the soldier; but were always fitted to the customary character of the person addressed, and thus did credit to Seydlitz's true worth, as well by his manner as by his matter. He was very lively, but never passionate; and in time of danger, or when angry, he maintained a perfect mastery over himself, never making violent gesticulations, or uttering loud cries, as is frequently done by others. From traditions and verbal reports, the peculiarities of that period, and of his character, may be clearly enough perceived.

We have already seen that Seydlitz did not derogate from the customary feature of his time and profession in his commanding power towards his inferiors; but the following incident will show how liberally he behaved in a case of honor, when there was really a cause for his doing so. During the battle of Freiberg, whilst impatient that the Prussian attack was not more quickly effected, Seydlitz became insulting towards an officer who seemed to remain inactive with a troop of cuirassiers. The officer did not return an answer, but immediately afterwards, when an opportunity offered itself, performed what he could with his soldiers. The general felt that he had acted wrong towards his subordinate; and therefore, on the following day he informed him, through the commander of the regiment, that he was ready to give him personal satisfaction; a magnanimous offer, and, under the circumstances, the thing itself, so that it was unnecessary to proceed further.

An officer of his regiment, who was in debt, contrived to support himself, and thus make ineffective the summons

of a creditor; for by Royal command all debts incurred by officers were declared unlawful, and not binding. As soon, however, as Seydlitz heard of this breach of confidence and honor, he at once imprisoned the officer, and forced him to desist from his disreputable course of proceeding. It was often difficult to avoid making an ill use of the power of command, but a happy move in the right direction on such occasions became so much the more valuable.

In Ohlau, there was a family which was rendered very attractive by its numbering charming daughters within its circle; and Seydlitz, as well as one of his officers, fell desperately in love with one of them. As the rival was thus inconvenient to the general, the latter transferred the former to a more distant quarter. But the lover secretly came so much the more frequently, as he ventured in the evening to Ohlau, dressed as a civilian, and returned unperceived to his quarters before daylight. The affair, however, was betrayed, and Seydlitz went out hunting very early on a foggy autumn morning, selecting the road upon which the officer was obliged to ride home. Unsuspecting any mischief, the careless lover galloped down the road, wearing a great coat and a cap, and suddenly found himself opposite the general, whom he could not avoid, and he therefore began with the greatest embarrassment to stammer excuses. But Seydlitz, who was satisfied with the discomfiture he produced, and who felt that his own position was not quite the proper one, interrupted him, saying:—"Only ride on; I do not know you; but take care that the general is not informed of it, or else it may not end well." The officer afterwards married the maiden. Similar instances of personal forgiveness frequently occurred; and tended to increase the confidence, without weakening the respect, paid to him.

It sometimes happened that officers went without leave from Ohlau to Breslau; but if Seydlitz heard of it, he immediately mounted his horse, according to his usual rash manner, and rode after the delinquent: if the latter was overtaken, he had to expect the severest punishment, but if by successful exertion he escaped, he not only remained unharmed, but was publicly praised for his clever riding and his good horse.

Seydlitz hated effeminacy, and did not allow comforts or luxuries near himself. All officers were required during service, and whenever they were seen by him, to wear stiff cravats like the privates: on one occasion an officer had put on a velvet cravat, and came thus to dinner, when Seydlitz angrily exclaimed—"I am not accustomed to have mechanics at the table;" and he was only pacified when he heard that the velvet, which was thus curiously awarded to mechanics, ought to be excused on account of a sore throat.

Neither did the King tolerate luxury or weakness in the army, or let any opportunity escape of showing his antipathy thereto. Once he saw in his ante-room a splendid fur intended for the hands, and immediately threw it into the fire. He thought that Seydlitz had left it behind, and therefore did not wish to spare even the general from a severe admonition; but the muff belonged to the Spanish Ambassador, and great was Seydlitz's delight about the mistake, which immediately became known. Nor was he particular himself when he punished people in a similar manner. Among the officers of his regiment was a brave and intelligent one, who, during his spare hours employed himself with handiwork, which was not unusual at that time. Seydlitz esteemed him very much, but was angry respecting this habit, and once called out to him during the exercise—"Sir, do not sit so sleepy before the troop, as though you

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were sitting before the fillet-case!" On another occasion, he would mingle praises with his reproaches. A regiment was to be inspected by him, but when on the point of starting a heavy shower poured down, which the colonel considered an obstacle, and therefore enquired whether the affair should not be delayed? he received for an answer—"That is impossible; the regiment was not frightened upon the field of battle by worse weather."

With none else was the connexion of the general so direct and personal as with his aides-de-camp, who rendered themselves the instruments of his will and temper, and had to experience his every fancy and whim in a strong and unavoidable degree. Among them may be especially mentioned the adjutant of the regiment, Herr von Reibnitz, and from the information which he left behind him we have derived many particulars, which may be here for the first time publicly stated.

As a youth in the hussar regiment of Werner, Reibnitz had been attached to the general, as ordonnance officer, during a tour of inspection, and succeeded in pleasing him by his quick riding, ready replies, and prompt execution of every command. As a consequence of this favor, Seydlitz wished to receive him as cornet in his regiment of cuirassiers. The youth was, however, without any property, having had the promise from the commander of the squadron in which he served, Major Count of Krockow, that he would fit him out, if he become an officer in his regiment; but now it seemed that he might unexpectedly obtain promotion, without asking for it, in a strange regiment, but where assistance was yet the more necessary, on account of the splendid outfit. The major did not hesitate to explain to the general, plainly and openly, in the presence of the youth, who looked upon his possible good fortune with tears in his eyes, that

he was of noble birth, but too poor to enter a regiment of cuirassiers, and that therefore his Excellency had better select a young nobleman of property. Seydlitz answered in a cold and severe manner :—" If I had wished for your advice I would have asked you: the youth Reibnitz pleases me; I receive him as a cornet in my regiment, and if he does his duty, and has confidence in God and me, he will never be forsaken." And, by the liberality of Seydlitz, a large proportion of that which had been promised by Krockow, was bestowed upon him.

After the cornet had for several years, under sharp observation, proved his industry and zeal in various ways, and when he had become a lieutenant, the general resolved to accept him as adjutant of the regiment; but immediately put him upon a trial, to see how far he would persevere in the rashness and willingness which he had evinced until then. On a stormy winter's night the general sent for his new adjutant, who immediately appeared, dressed according to the service, merely in the coat without surtout: Seydlitz enquired how many men from the neighbourhood were in the regiment, how many children they possessed, and so on: the adjutant gave his answers well and with precision, and was dismissed. After the necessary time had elapsed for undressing himself and going to bed, the adjutant was again called, and was just as quick and ready to give a short answer to the question as to which squadron contained the tallest cuirassier; when he was once more dismissed. During the night he was a third time summoned, on account of some purely unimportant affairs, which might have remained until the morning or later; but the adjutant was, as at the first call, active, cheerful, zealous, and showed not the least astonishment. At four o'clock in the morning, when he stood for the fourth time before the general, who sat in his

arm-chair, Sedylitz looked with pleasure upon the zealous officer, and said :—"I only wished to see whether you would not show your temper, as I sent for you so often on account of trifles ; but as you always came quickly, and was able to answer me immediately upon the most insignificant matters, and your dress is in such a condition that you may easily do yourself harm in the cold nights, I request you to accept these five ducats, and therewith to order a surtout coat."

The fatigues and troubles, as well as the advantages, of such an agreeable and honorable situation, are described in a pleasant manner in the following anecdotes. At one time it frequently happened that the cuirassiers lost their hats during the exercise, and Seydlitz consequently became angry about the delays caused thereby. One morning, when marching out, he made it known that the private whose hat fell off should be punished with twenty lashes, the corporal of the troop with an arrest of three days, and the officer of the troop with an arrest of twenty-four hours. The same day he was very dissatisfied with the exercise, and therefore commanded that the officers should assemble in the afternoon on horseback, and then go through the evolutions without the men. He superintended the exercises himself, and the officers exerted themselves with attention and zeal ; things went on well, and the march past him in gallop was to be the finale. Reibnitz, at the head of the regiment, galloped towards the general, when his horse became restive, and threw off his rider's hat before the general's eyes ; but as, according to the fashion of that time, the bottom was quite straight, and had an even and broad edge, it therefore fell so happily that it stood erect on the ground, with the bush of feathers upwards. The adjutant quickly perceived this advantage, made a slight inclination, bent down from the

horse, grasped the hat by the feather, and put it quickly on his head, and so passed the general at the proper time without having broken the gallop. Seydlitz made no remark at the time, but sent for Reibnitz on their arrival at quarters. The adjutant was much embarrassed, but he found the general comfortably smoking, and was asked by him in a friendly manner,—“Why may I have sent for you?” Reibnitz replied, that he was afraid of being the first on whom should be fulfilled the denouncement of the morning; but added, that his hat was generally as firm as if nailed upon his head, and that the breaking of a cord had alone caused the accident. He was ordered to prove it by putting it on, when Seydlitz stated that he would not punish him, as he had retrieved the mistake so well and cleverly; but that his too meagre horse might become more quiet he must purchase more forage for him, and therefore spend the rolls of money which lay upon the mantelpiece for that purpose. In a similar manner does the following story end.

In the neighbourhood of Ohlau the lightning had struck a village, which was thereby burning, but the place could not be immediately recognised for the violent thunder-storm and rain, and the great wood. The adjutant received orders to ride to the neighbourhood, find out the fire, and see how things stood: he returned in an hour and a half, quite wet. Seydlitz saw him coming, and accosted him from the window; Reibnitz turned his horse immediately, leaped over a reservoir which stood at the pump before the house, and asked the general whether he had any commands? “Nothing now,” was the reply, “but that you shall not break your neck; put on dry clothes, and afterwards come to see me.” When Reibnitz returned and made his report, it was evident that he had accomplished

almost four German miles in so short a time, before he made the last leap with the fatigued horse, and which was consequently so much the more hazardous. "I command you," said the general, "not to ride so madly, for the neck can only be broken once; but that your horse may keep up its strength, and get more flesh, accept of these twenty thalers, and of my thanks for your zeal." Such an encomium, spoken before many witnesses, for Seydlitz had distinguished visitors with him, was esteemed equal to the highest reward.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SEYDLITZ AS A GENERAL OF CAVALRY.—THE EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA IN SILESIA.

DURING the year 1767, Seydlitz attained the rank of general of cavalry, which was then the highest post to be obtained, as the King never made a field-marshal after the Seven Years' War. His employment was not, however, altered through his promotion, although the new rank increased his power. He continued to hold the inspectorship of the Silesian cavalry regiments, which he visited and exercised, but paid especial attention to his regiment of cuirassiers, and above all the life squadron, in Ohlau, which being always before his eyes, experienced in the highest degree his severity as well as his favors. When the King came to Silesia to hold a review, Seydlitz was certain of satisfying all fair expectations, through the conduct of his horsemen, although praise was usually given but sparingly.

He seldom went to Potsdam at the inspections, and only when the invitation of the King seemed to be a command: in 1768 he went there for the last time. Nor were the officers of his inspection summoned to Potsdam, to see and learn new evolutions, as all were convinced that the school of Ohlau was far superior to any other—a fame which was recognised in foreign countries, as well as throughout the

Prussian army. Seydlitz therefore always appeared on the first day of a great review with an extraordinary degree of distinction; natives and foreigners were most desirous of seeing the illustrious general of cavalry, whilst the people and troops named him with admiration and interest.

During the year 1769, the Emperor Joseph the Second, of Austria, desired to have an interview with Frederick the Great, and the review which the latter used to hold over the troops of Upper Silesia was appointed as a proper period for meeting, but the Emperor expressly requested the King to permit him to see the celebrated cuirassier regiment of Seydlitz. Although the regiment belonged to the district of Lower Silesia, yet the solicitation of such a guest could not be refused, but the King secretly disliked it; in addition to which a particular occurrence tended to spoil the glory and honor of these days for our hero. The King had immediately informed Seydlitz of the wish of the Emperor, and added, with his own hand, on the reverse side of the letter,—“But that is only for your own knowledge.” Seydlitz did not see these words, but on the contrary informed his adjutant of the inspection, that he might communicate the intelligence to his father, the minister von Schlabrendorf, in Breslau: hence it became quickly known, and even talked about in Berlin. The King was much vexed, soon knowing from what source the news had been made public, and when he met the general in Silesia, he thus addressed him angrily:—“How lately have you eaten the rump of a fowl, that you cannot keep anything to yourself?” Contrary to his usual habit, Seydlitz was ashamed and confused, but endeavoured to excuse himself by saying that he had been compelled to inform his adjutant of the affair, and that through him it had become known. The King was generally in the habit of saying a few words to

the young Schlabrendorf, but on that occasion he merely looked at him with displeasure, and rode on; whilst the latter could not reconcile himself to the unmerited disgrace he had received. Seydlitz, who was much enraged, fancied he ought to console him, and therefore remarked:—"The King looks very ill, and his legs hang quite painfully, so that his pleasure or displeasure will not be of long importance."

The King sent to inquire if Seydlitz wished to have new colors for his regiment, or whether anything else was wanted for the proper appearance of the troop; but he replied that he considered it more honorable for the regiment to appear with the standards which had been shot in pieces during the war: he asked, however, for new hangings to the drums, as those in use had been taken from the Austrians, and might be recognised by the Emperor. The King immediately granted the request, but although he had personally a tender consideration for the Emperor, and carefully avoided everything which might hurt his feelings, yet he seemed to find it unnecessary to require that his generals should feel an equal interest.

During the review, Seydlitz gained the greatest admiration, as the Emperor took particular notice of all the details of the service, asked for explanation respecting the arrangements, and acted a personal part in all the field exercises which Seydlitz executed with his regiment; and once, when a very successful evolution had been performed, flatteringly said:—"M. General von Seydlitz, that was a little piece of Rossbach." But the praises which the Emperor bestowed upon the Prussian cavalry and their glorious leader lost something of their value, as it might have been frequently perceived that they were given rather from intention than knowledge of the service, and it was obvious that praise

from a warrior like Frederick possessed far more value. The latter gave not the least sign of satisfaction, but seemed to leave the admired general quite unobserved. As a consequence of this treatment a certain degree of coolness and indifference was engendered, through which Seydlitz showed no desire to approach the King, but rudely turned off the contrary way. This feeling may explain the strange conduct which the former observed on one occasion, according to the statement of Friedrich Nicolai, and which may be considered as having really happened.

On the third day of the review the King was alone upon a hill, and looking attentively through his telescope, to see that everything which had been arranged was properly executed. The Emperor was with Prince Henry, at a distance from the King, nor was there anybody in the whole neighbourhood, except General Seydlitz and the surgeon of his regiment, and they were about a hundred yards from him. Unexpectedly the King's horse began to rise, and then rolled itself upon the ground, his Majesty falling, but not under the animal, which jumped up and ran away. The surgeon of the regiment was frightened, and asked the general if he should ride to the King, who might have met with an injury; but Sedylitz, perceiving that his Majesty was already upon his legs, answered:—"Remain here; the King cannot bear that any one should perceive such a thing, especially if he has not hurt himself." The surgeon then asked if he might fetch one of the general's horses; but Seydlitz shook his head, saying,—“No! if the King does not expressly demand it! My horses might play tricks: they are rather shy around the heads;” referring to the King's manner when he punished his horses.

Thus stood the King nearly a quarter of an hour, quite alone and on foot, looking with his glass at the evolutions of

the troops, whilst the general looked on the other side as if unconscious of what had happened. The runaway horse was brought back, and the King mounted immediately without saying a word. In such high and important circumstances a man should be able to swallow anger and annoyances, for momentary trifles sometimes cause permanent vexation and torment: an example of which is preserved in the following incident.

A very vain officer, who for his boasting was nicknamed "The Grand Mogul," had shortly before the parade the misfortune to lame his best horse, and the fact that it had been caused by a nocturnal revel induced his comrades to refuse to lend him one of theirs, so that he was compelled to pass the Emperor on his second horse, which was very ugly and had a rat's tail. The Emperor was full of admiration, and could not sufficiently praise the regiment for its beauty, order, and quickness; encomiums in which his suite perfectly agreed with him, except that a gentleman remarked that it was a pity one of the officers had ridden a mule. Seydlitz overheard the observation, and it acutely touched his pride; he could not brook the disgrace, and that a similar occurrence might not again happen, and that his anger might receive satisfaction, he placed the unfortunate rider of the rat's-tail horse in arrest for the remaining days of the review.

When the inspection had terminated, the Emperor and King, with a numerous retinue of generals and staff-officers, rode to Neisse; and there, at the door of the bishop's palace, the Emperor commenced a private conversation with Seydlitz, asking him about many things, administering the highest praise, assuring him of his continued favor, and then ended by saying,—“If my circumstances allowed it, I would come to you to learn the cavalry service, but as I cannot

do that, I wish you would enter my service." Seydlitz answered:—"Your Imperial Majesty would have but a bad acquisition in me, for I only understand how to serve one master, and that is my present one." The King, who was near at hand, had observed with visible jealousy the lengthened conversation, and although he might have overheard the last words, Seydlitz having spoken quite loud and plain, and even pointed at the King, yet was he called immediately to him and asked in an angry manner,—“What have you to talk about so long with the Emperor?” and concluded, after Seydlitz had repeated all that passed, with the admonishing words,—“You owe that gentleman no explanations.”

The Emperor kept Seydlitz in remembrance, and afterwards sent him three beautiful Turkish horses from Vienna; and as the sensual habits of the general had become known to him, he also forwarded a charming Circassian slave. But she seemed to know that she enjoyed greater rights in Europe than in the East, and consequently behaved in such a manner that Seydlitz retained her only for a short time, and then sent her away.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE KING'S TREATMENT OF SEYDLITZ.—AN ATTACK OF APOPLEXY.

SEYDLITZ's position with the King continued to be of a very uncertain character; for much as the latter esteemed and honored the general, and acknowledged his merits on the whole, thinking highly of his arrangements and judgment, yet he willingly availed himself of all opportunities to blame single affairs, and was thereby able to hurt his feelings. After the review in the year 1770, during which Frederick had expressed great satisfaction, he made the remark:—"My dear Seydlitz, I think your regiment rides with much longer stirrups than the rest of my cavalry." Seydlitz, who indeed took care that the stirrups were very long, and who did not wish that their correct arrangement should be blamed, answered bluntly,—“Your Majesty, the regiment rides to-day just as it did at Rossbach.” The King was silent.

On another occasion the King permitted a similar bold answer, when he had laid before his generals a new plan for supplying and keeping the horses with the regiments, and wished at last to hear Seydlitz's opinion also. The general meditated awhile, and then replied,—“I have just been calculating, that by this arrangement within ten years the youngest horse of your Majesty's cavalry will be fifteen

years of age." The King turned away, and did not execute the plan.

Once, in the presence of the King, the question was discussed, whether the cavalry should have sword blades with two edges or with a back? Seydlitz cut short the contest, which had become annoying to him, with the remark,—“If the cavalry only come soon enough to the enemy, before they can look at the blades, they will conquer, even if they have merely hazel-sticks in their hands.”

Seydlitz also cleverly understood how to avoid a collision at another period. On the day of a review, the cavalry in marching up appeared to waver on the right line; he therefore rode quickly towards the wing which seemed to fail, and shouted,—“Forward! Forward!” But the King came also at the same moment, and cried,—“Back! Back!” Seydlitz turned his horse immediately, quietly dismounted, looked to the bridle, and behaved as if he had no business there, upon which the King rode on, and left the wing to find out the right direction.

Often, for an entire day, the King and Seydlitz were rough and cold towards each other, and upon their guard, until, perhaps through a further occurrence, they either broke out violently or became friendly, as with an enchanting grace the King, sometimes by one word, allayed all anger. One day Seydlitz sat at the royal table, sulky and dull, the King not speaking to him, but so much the more to a French general, who was making enquiries respecting the occurrences of the war. The conversation turned upon the battle of Zorndorf, the King explaining the several movements; and, as he more particularly explained the circumstances, looking with still greater interest upon Seydlitz, who did not alter his features. At last, the King said jocularly, “What more shall I say of it? there

he sits," pointing to Seydlitz, "who did win the battle." Cheerfulness and friendly conversation were immediately restored.

The esteem into which Seydlitz had brought himself, through his conduct towards the King and the gentlemen of the court, is evidenced by the following incident, which occurred at the royal table. The King loved to display his wit during dinner, and some of his guests were usually the mark for his biting jokes. Of these, the master of the horse, Count of Schwerin, a careless man in many things, was regularly much baited; but one day he became so enraged that he could not stand it any longer, and unexpectedly and violently exclaimed,—“Towards me, you can act in such a manner; I must permit everything; but there is one sitting,” (and he pointed at Seydlitz,) “only try it once with him.” The company present was frightened and surprised, the King became quiet and serious, and the banter ceased for that time.

Seydlitz was never more fearless or open towards the King than when a love of justice, and a sense of duty, caused him to speak for others; and his intercession on such subjects, was generally accompanied with the desired success. At Breslau, on one occasion, too many invalid soldiers pressed around the King, and annoyed him, so that he commanded them to be dispersed. Seydlitz urged—“These are the brave men who have jeopardized their life and limbs, in order to gain victory and glory for your Majesty, and now they may go begging.” The King meditated, and then ordered that the poor men should have presents, and be kindly treated.

General Major von Bredow had tendered his resignation, which the King had accepted, without granting him a pension, when the old general, who had his merits, but was

now aged and helpless, endeavoured to commit suicide, but the ball slipped on the skull. Seydlitz, under whose inspection Bredow had served, so pressingly represented the misfortune to the King, and demanded assistance for him in so determined a manner, that an annual pension of 1,500 thalers was granted to him, a greater sum than he ever could have expected.

A similar instance occurred with a general, whose regiment of dragoons also belonged to Seydlitz's inspection, and who had given a plain and open answer to the King respecting the last remount, which implicated the Royal Adjutant-General, von Anhalt, to whom, among others, the care of the remount was entrusted. Very soon after, no doubt through Anhalt's intrigues, the general received his dismissal, with merely a small pension. Seydlitz immediately wrote to the King, that he had always been a brave soldier, that he had a family and was poor, and that the King must give a larger sum, as the amount granted was insufficient. The King at once paid the officer's debts, and bestowed a yearly income of 1,500 thalers.

Another time Seydlitz contradicted the King with great zeal, when the latter judged harshly about the general of a Silesian hussar regiment, instead of agreeing with him, as the King might have expected, Seydlitz being an opponent of that officer; but our hero spoke resolutely for him, and reproached the King with giving too easy credence to false and calumnious reports. Seydlitz, however, knew very well what he did and dared to do, while he used such language towards the King; for once, having been requested again to mention an affair which the King had already refused, he replied, without delay,—“Only believe me, that neither I or any of my equals are ever quite certain that we may not be sent from the cabinet of the King to Spandau.”

In common affairs, where no special cause or interest impelled him to venture something, he was very cautious and prudent, and availed himself of favorable moments and circumstances ; so much so, that in times of displeasure he left all the details of the regiment which required the decision of the King, untouched : no petition for leave or marriage, for resignation or pension, was sent in ; but as soon as his Majesty was in a better humour, everything was brought forward, and with certain success.

In social life, as well as in affairs of the service, the King's conduct depended on impressions which belonged quite to the moment. For instance, the King disliked tobacco smoking, and often let the smokers experience his disgust in a disagreeable manner. To Seydlitz, who smelt strongly after using his pipe, and who had answered, on one occasion, the question as to whence he had come, that he had been making court visits, he manifested anger, and said, "Please ask the maids of honor how long since they have taken to smoking tobacco." At another time, feeling the value of such a man, and full of careful kindness towards him, he is said to have asked him to smoke in his presence.

The high claims which Frederick's noble and richly cultivated mind made upon enlightened conversation Seydlitz certainly could not satisfy. Indeed, he was in that respect far inferior to many other generals, who, through a lively and original spirit, or a scientific and æsthetic education, were fitter companions of the King, by their knowledge of the French social and literary world, than Seydlitz, who could not boast of any of these accomplishments, but who almost always remained in doubtful and silent seriousness, merely taking part in conversations on hunting, and then with a few words only, thereby rather

keeping back, in the presence of the King, the small amount of good humour which he evinced on other occasions. Of course, such an associate felt rather uncomfortable with one who was so severe and important as his Majesty.

The King, however, did not merely wish to amuse himself, but he really loved his old companions in arms with a strong enthusiasm, which united him affectionately to them: a feeling which increased as he became older. It had been for some time one of his desires to see again the old heroes with whom he had experienced so many changes of his fortune, who had shared so many dangers, and who had gained him so much glory, that he might prove to them his gratitude, and render them his acknowledgments; and to this feeling, without doubt, may be attributed the friendly invitation, so naïve and short, addressed by the King to Seydlitz on the 10th of April, from Potsdam. The following is a copy:—"My dear General of Cavalry, von Seydlitz,—It appears to me that you have not been here so many years, that I am very desirous to see you once more, and the regiments in this place. Therefore I shall be very glad if you will come here with this intention, on the 1st of May.—FRDCH."

But before the letter could reach Ohlau, Seydlitz had been attacked by a fit of apoplexy, which the former weakness of his nerves, and his continued careless exercise of body, had caused by degrees. For his recovery, the physician advised him to make use of the Carlsbad waters; and on his informing the King thereof, he received the annexed answer, expressing the kindest interest:—"I am certainly very sorry to learn, from your letter of the 14th, that instead of having the pleasure of seeing you here, you have had an attack of apoplexy. As a similar accident occurred to me during the year 1747, and I have, never-

theless, so far recovered, that not the least effect of it has remained, so I have equal hope for your perfect recovery, if you will avail yourself, during the approaching good weather, of the 'spa of Carlsbad, and of other baths. Such I wish at least with a sincere heart."

But Frederick was in the strength of youth when he met with his misfortune, whilst on the other hand Seydlitz was advanced in years, and much weakened through his method of life. His restoration was greatly delayed at the beginning from his not thinking much of the illness, and because he paid no attention to the physician's advice ; but he rallied so far at last, as to be able to exercise his regiment in the autumn, and to travel through the inspection: the good appearance did not, however, continue long, and although during the review in Silesia he appeared in the camp, yet he could scarcely keep himself upon the horse, or take part in the exercises of the troops. Still, he neither listened to the warnings of the physicians, nor to his own experience, for an officer who was sent to Turkey to fetch horses for the remount received from the general an express order to bring him two handsome Circassian girls. They became doubly injurious to him, who was in need of every care ; the weakening effects added also to the previous illness, and the most deplorable consequences ensued.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SEYDLITZ'S LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

DURING the spring of 1773 Seydlitz's condition became worse and worse, and he rapidly sank, owing to the exhaustion of his strength. From the King he received repeatedly the most affectionate letters, full of good advice and wishes; and Prince Henry also wrote to him in a very kind and consoling manner. A second use of the Carlsbad waters seemed to have completely enervated him, and he was brought in a state of serious illness from Bohemia to his estate of Minkowsky, where he was unable to leave his room, and was soon afterwards confined to his bed. In the summer, when his regiment marched to Ohlau for the review, he caused himself to be carried thither, that he might refresh his weak eyes with the sight of his attached horsemen. The King also arrived there in his progress through Silesia, in the month of August, when he visited the beloved patient, and seated himself near his couch. Seydlitz was already a very spectacle of misery, as the disease displayed itself in the most loathsome manner, having affected the nose, thus compelling him always to avert his head while the King conversed with him, that he might somewhat conceal the dreadful aspect he presented.

The King remained more than an hour with the invalid,

inspiring him with consolation and hope, and frequently exclaiming,—“I cannot but miss you! I cannot but miss you! I cannot do without you!” He also kindly persuaded him to take the requisite medicines, saying,—“My dear Seydlitz, you must not be obstinate, but must be obedient to the doctor;” and turning to the physician, he added,—“And you doctors must not be obstinate, or torment the patient with powders when he would rather have drops, if one is as good as the other.” Seydlitz was moved to tears, and encouraged by the King, indulged in renewed hopes for life; but his real disease had not been named to the latter, who always called it apoplexy. On going away, however, he conversed about the symptoms with the physician, who complained very much of the temper of the patient, but was stopped short by Frederick’s remarking,—“Not so loud! Not so loud! for if Seydlitz overhears it in his room, he will play the devil with us.”

Seydlitz recommended those officers to the Royal favor who were considered by him especially useful and zealous for the service, and among them his faithful adjutant, remarking to him as he stood by his bedside with sad countenance, after the departure of the King,—“Reibnitz, be quiet; if God helps me up once more, you will also be helped; and if not, you are recommended to the favor of the King.” This earnest recommendation was conscientiously acted on by his Majesty, who faithfully fulfilled everything which he had promised the general. After the King’s return to Potsdam, he is said to have written to Seydlitz that he could not possibly accustom himself to the thought of losing him, but in the event of that misfortune occurring, he would wish to know who Seydlitz considered most worthy to become his successor in the command of the cavalry—a last act of friendship which the King, and a last

service which the country, might expect from him. It is asserted that the general accordingly affirmed that as being his true opinion which appeared like satire under the circumstances, a recommendation of Colonel von Wakenitz, the same officer he had recommended upon the field of battle at Zorndorf, but who had since that time left the Prussian service, having entered into that of Hesse, and who could not therefore be acceptable to the King. Frederick is said to have received the nomination with displeasure, as being a very improper one, and to have said smilingly,—“Cela prouve que les plus grands hommes, radottent quand ils sont aux abois.” Blankenburg doubts the whole affair, but apparently without sufficient reason, for the incident is not opposed to the characteristics of either of the parties; and Major von Kaltenborn, who narrates the circumstance as a fact in the letters of an old Prussian officer, may generally be relied upon. Retzow also gives the story as being perfectly true, but says it happened at the bedside of Seydlitz, who, when asked by the King,—“How can you propose for such a post an officer who is not now in my service?” replied,—“I know no better;” upon which the King angrily left him.

The Prince of Prussia, afterwards King Frederick William II., also visited the invalid, and Seydlitz requested him to accept a handsome horse from him. The Prince was pleased with the gift, and wrote him the following letter of thanks from Breslau, on the 27th of August, 1773:—“My dear General von Seydlitz,—Lieutenant von Kleist has just delivered to me the horse which you have had the kindness to give me: I am very much pleased with it, and cannot sufficiently express my gratitude. I hope that my sentiments towards yourself are sufficiently known to you to assure you that I never could forget such a meritorious man and a

friend, and that I therefore accept of the horse with pleasure, as a token of your friendship, but not as a memorial. I must again urgently request you to follow in all respects the advice of the doctors and surgeons, and then I doubt not I shall see you restored to health. As you have so often dared your life for the glory and advantage of Prussia, so is it your duty now to preserve that life for the benefit of the fatherland, and for your friends, among whom I reckon myself with confidence, as I am your very affectionate friend, FRIEDRICH WILHELM."

Advice and hopes were, however, alike useless, as the patient lived only a few weeks longer in great weakness, and expired composedly and softly on the 7th of November, 1773, in the fifty-third year of his age. When the King received the intelligence, he immediately wrote to General von Röder, who succeeded Seydlitz in the inspection of the cavalry of Lower Silesia, and to General von Pannwitz, who succeeded to that of Upper Silesia, that he had lost in Seydlitz one of his most worthy generals; and that he might give the army a convincing proof of it, and evidence how much he valued his services, he commanded that all the officers belonging to the staff of the Silesian inspection should go into mourning for him, by wearing crape around their arm for a fortnight.

The dead body, which soon became decomposed, was brought, according to the order of the late general, to his country seat, on the way thither receiving military honors on the other side of the Oder bridge; and was afterwards quietly interred in the garden of Minkowsky, at which place, surrounded by dark forests, Seydlitz had arranged his house, and also his mausoleum, according to his own taste and inclination.

The house was stately, but of a somewhat vulgar appear-

ance, much space being occupied by large horse stables : over the entrances he had sculptured Curius with the turnips, and Cincinnatus with the plough-oxen. In a little hermitage, under some old oaks, is his grave, surmounted by an oval monument of sandstone, which sustains an urn of black marble and a sleeping lion. A black marble slab bears the following inscription, in golden letters :—

HEROIS FRIED. WILH. L. B. DE SEYDLITZ.

NAT. A. 1721. DENAT. A. 1773.

CINERES.

Seydlitz left no male heir of his name, and his descendants were not remarkable. The elder of his two daughters married a war councillor of Massow, in Breslau, was separated from her husband, was then married to a Polish count of Monczinski, through whom she lost the whole of her property, became a convert to the Catholic Church, and after many sad adventures died in the madhouse at Brieg. The younger daughter lived to an advanced age, and resided at last in a state of much poverty in the country, at Nieder-Lausitz.

We have already noticed the most important traits of Seydlitz's person and character ; but there are a few additional particulars which are interesting. He was not very tall, but his limbs were in handsome proportion, and his body bore the impress of strength and quickness ; whilst his upright and proud carriage on horseback, which he maintained till his last years, was, according to all authorities, not to be surpassed. Blankenburg asserts as a fact that his figure alone, without the spirit which animated it, would have led a line of cavalry against an enemy. His countenance would not have been so remarkable had not his eyes possessed such an extraordinary sharpness, thereby

betraying the courage and fire which he displayed in dangers and adventures. His character was unquestionably formed upon a noble and magnanimous model, as among the warriors of his time he was one of the most humane, detesting cruel punishments, and having almost entirely abolished flogging in his regiment. Towards the peasant he was especially well inclined, and would not allow him to be annoyed in his work, although he considered him far below the soldier; hence, on one occasion, when a young officer rode directly through a corn-field to deliver a message, he was saluted by the remark,—“Surely you have no farm!” thereby expressing the soundest advice and reproof.

Seydlitz always willingly took the part of such officers as were known to him by their activity, but who did not shine with any exterior peculiarities; so that when one of them shook the shoulders of an old captain, who seemed not to have understood some orders, he enforced respect to the veteran with the words,—“Leave him alone; he has done more deeds against the enemy than both of us!” But we have also seen that in the excitement of the moment he hesitated not to exercise the most unscrupulous tyranny and selfish power; and this was especially manifest whenever the conversation turned upon military in contrast to civil affairs, in which the ambition of the warrior was always considered immeasurably superior to that of the citizen.

A curious example of Seydlitz’s contempt for civilians is related by the Prince Friedrich Ludwig von Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen, who in his younger days belonged to the regiment of Tauentzien, at Breslau, and frequently visited Ohlau to see Seydlitz. The latter after having sufficiently tired himself with riding, was in the habit of spending the remainder of the day in smoking and looking out of the window. The burgomaster of Ohlau, who resided opposite,

and was equally partial to the latter amusement, was accustomed to lean out of the window during the morning with his nightcap on ; but Seydlitz considered the wearing that article to be disrespectful, and therefore commanded him to remove it. The burgomaster, on his part, felt such a demand to be an insinuation against his honor, and consequently remained covered, when Seydlitz fetched a pistol, deliberately took aim, and fired : the burgomaster retired in terror, but announced the occurrence to the King by an estafette. Frederick left the complaint unanswered, and thereby avoided the embarrassment of being obliged to punish the wantonness of one who held such rank, and possessed so much merit, but whose conduct was more like that of a young madman. It is but just to add, that the simplicity of his sentiments, and of his mind, preserved him from many such outbreaks of passion ; and many things were treated by him with indifference, when he had no opinion to contest, or no interest to serve. Hence he was a stranger to all party warfare, and lived with the majority of his comrades on terms of good fellowship and friendship, being especially intimate with General von Warnery, who had been his faithful friend and companion in Natzmer's regiment of hussars.

The career of Seydlitz, and his remarkable elevation during his younger days to the highest honors of war, was brilliant without example ; but the merit of his deeds was so indisputable, that none could either easily or consistently dare to envy him on account of his successes, and he had therefore but few real opponents. General von Röder, who succeeded him in the inspectorship, had the will and the intention to be his adversary, and afterwards endeavoured to alter everything which Seydlitz had arranged. By accident, and through the course of circumstances, but not of

his own will, General von Kleist had become Seydlitz's rival during the war, and continued so during the peace, as in all affairs of the cavalry the King used not merely to ask the opinion of one but also that of the other, and these opinions were often very different. Seydlitz, however, with justice acknowledged the value of his antagonist, and made known to his inspection the death of the man he was said to hate, and which took place in August, 1767, by the following eulogium, which caused general astonishment:—"I have the pain of being obliged to make known that the army has lost, through the death of Lieutenant-General von Kleist, one of the most distinguished generals of cavalry, and his Majesty one of his most faithful servants."

In narrating the peculiarities of our hero we omitted to mention one of them, which, contradictory as it may seem, was an esteem of piety, and of the customs of the church, an esteem which he maintained through the wild years of his youth and the stormy time of his manhood. Though his own passions were never mastered by these influences, and he may never have had recourse to religion for that purpose, yet he nourished a devoted adoration of the Supreme Being, and during the Seven Years' War invariably caused his horsemen to be encouraged to perseverance and valour, before every engagement, by the field preacher, who was also commanded to administer spiritual consolation and the holy communion to the wounded and dying.

He was once during the war riding near the King, when a regiment of dragoons came forward singing a hymn as they marched. "They appear to me to be poltroons of horsemen who sing there!" said the King; but Seydlitz, although not in the habit of singing, defended the men, and remarked that General von Zieten was accustomed to sing; upon which the King remained silent.

With the field preacher of his regiment, who lived as pastor in Ohlau until the year 1791, Seydlitz was on friendly terms, and honored him publicly on every occasion. Nor would he permit the younger officers to speak lightly or jocosely against religion and its ministers, although he otherwise cared but little about their faith or practice.

His education must be estimated by the standard of his time, yet it was manifestly sufficient for his position, and for his task ; but it would be unjust and fruitless to award him any especial praise in that respect. His natural talents in this direction were neither great nor fully developed ; his was not a capacious head, but an excellent one within certain limits, as his answers and epigrammatic expressions, as well as his deeds, sufficiently prove. He was well versed in the French tongue, but it must not be supposed that he had any knowledge of its literature ; with the German he had no better acquaintance. Still, it is possible that during a conversation on honor, in which the son of a rich financier wished to lower that virtue in his opinion, he may have quoted, as Blankenburg narrates, the two lines of Haller :—

“Der Held der sucht sein Glück auf hunderttaussend Leichen,
Und vieler Dörfer Noth macht einen einz’gen Reichen.”

These lines may have been accidentally learned by Seydlitz, but it is a doubtful matter, and accords too well with the praiseworthy but mistaken intention of the same author when he strives to persuade us that Wieland’s *Agathon* was a favorite book with the general of cavalry ! Seydlitz fully acknowledged the value of scientific instruction, and willingly furthered it in military affairs : with this object he formed a library for the officers belonging to his regiment, from which books of entertainment were excluded.

Warnery relates a comprehensive plan, suggested by Seydlitz, for the education of some officers under his inspection in Silesia, consisting of about one hundred young men who were standard bearers. He wished to draw these noble non-commissioned officers to Ohlau, and there educate, exercise, and cultivate them, according to his own views, causing them to learn foreign languages, the mathematics, and all necessary gymnastic exercises, so that two months before the review, when the regiments again assembled for drill, they might return to their troops. The students might have made much progress under Seydlitz, and the utmost cost to the King would have been only fifty ducats for the masters; but intrigues prevented it.

On his merits as a leader and warrior all witnesses agree, from the time of Frederick the Great until now. Canitz, in his considerations on cavalry, has expressed himself with an enlightened judgment on the most distinguished exploits, that he was a horseman without an equal, and that as a leader he decided battles with irresistible power, being great as a hero, and great as a master of arms, one who elevated the Prussian cavalry to the very highest summit of excellence. Among the assistants of Frederick during the war, the first rank is due to Seydlitz and Winterfeldt; whilst the peculiarities of these two officers, their deeds and successes, their inclinations and adventures, as well as their deaths, would afford rich materials for comparison.

In Berlin, upon the Wilhelmsplatz, on the 2nd of May, 1784, a monument was erected by the King to Seydlitz,*

* The only good picture, or rather statue, of Seydlitz, is that at Berlin, representing him on horseback, and which was executed by Rauch. There is also a portrait of him in the church at Ohlau, in a cuirass and the full dress of the day, with the motto, "Unsterblichkeit ist dein Eizenthum;" literally, "Immortality is your peculiarity."

consisting of an upright statue of the hero in his uniform, from the design executed by the sculptor Tassaert, in marble, and which was made use of by command of the King, so as to obtain a correct likeness of the features as portrayed in a picture which had formerly belonged to the lord marischal. The monument which was dedicated to the memory of the heroes of Prussia, by Prince Henry, at Rheinsberg, also mentions Seydlitz with the highest praise. In the Prussian service Seydlitz's name will ever be venerated.



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