The Siege of Berlin.
[From the French of A. Daudet.]

We were walking up the avenue of the Champs Elysées with Doctor V—, recalling the history of the siege in the walls and pavements shattered by shot and shell, when just before reaching the Place de l'Etoile the doctor stopped, and showing me one of the large mansions so pretentiously grouped about the Arc de Triomphe,—

"Do you see," he said, "the four closed windows over that balcony? In the early part of the terrible month of August, 1870, so full of storm and disaster, I was called to that house by a case of apoplexy. My patient was Colonel Jouve, a cuirassier of the First Empire, an old man, carried away with the love of glory and patriotism, who at the breaking out of the war had taken lodgings on the Champs Elysées in a balcony apartment. Can you imagine why? To be present at the triumphal return of our soldiers. Poor old man! the news of Wissembourg reached him as he was getting up from table. On reading the name of Napoleon at the bottom of that bulletin of defeat, he fell speechless.

"I found the old soldier stretched upon the floor of his room, his face lifeless and bloody, as if he had been struck down by some heavy weapon. As he lay there he seemed immense, and must have been a very tall man. Regular features, fine teeth, and an abundance of curling white hair made his eighty years seem no more than sixty. His granddaughter was on her knees beside him crying. She resembled him so closely that, to see them side by side, they seemed like two rare Greek coins struck from the same die; one, however, ancient, dull, and worn, the other clear and shining, with all the lustre and clearness of a new imprint.

"The grief of this child touched me. She was daughter as well as granddaughter of a soldier, for her father was on the staff of General MacMahon, and the sight of the tall old man lying before her called up in her mind another vision not less terrible. I reassured her the best I could, although at heart I had little hope. We had to do with a heavy stroke, from which at eighty years there was little chance of recovery. For three days the sufferer remained in the same state of paralysis and stupor. In this interval the news of Reischaffen reached Paris. You remember in what a strange manner. Until evening everybody believed in a great victory,—twenty thousand Prussians killed, the prince royal prisoner. By some miracle, some magnetic current, I do not know what, an echo of the national rejoicing aroused our helpless invalid; when I approached his bed that evening he was a different man. His eyes were quite clear, his tongue not so mute. He was able to smile, and stammered twice, 'Victory! Victory!'

"'Yes, Colonel, a great victory.'

"And as I gave him the details of the success of MacMahon, I saw his features relax and his face light up. When I went out the child was standing before the door waiting for me. She was pale and sobbing.

"'He is saved,' I told her, taking her hands in mine.

"The poor child had hardly courage to reply. The truth about Reischaffen had just become known,—MacMahon in flight and a whole army destroyed. We looked at each other in consternation. She was concerned at the thought of her father. I trembled for her grandfather. It was certain that he could not survive a second shock.

"'His joy must be maintained, the illusions which have revived him must be preserved, it will be necessary to deceive him.——'

"'I will deceive him, then,' said the brave girl, wiping away her tears, and with a beaming face she went into her grandfather's room.

"It was a difficult task that she had undertaken, but for the first few days she managed it easily. The invalid was weak-headed, and let himself be deceived like a child; but with returning health his ideas became more clear.