He had to be kept informed of the movements of the armies, and be told the contents of the military despatches. It was sad enough to see the child poring day and night over the map of Germany, marking it with little flags, compelling herself to unite everything in a glorious campaign.—Bazaine at Berlin, Frossard at Bavaria, MacMahon on the Baltic. She asked my advice about it all, and I aided her whenever I could, but it was the grandfather himself who was of the most service in the imaginary invasion. He had conquered Germany so many times under the First Empire that he knew all the moves beforehand. ‘This is where they will go next; this is what they will do now.’ And as his predictions were always fulfilled they never failed to make him good-natured.

‘Unfortunately, it was in vain that we took cities and won battles; we were never quick enough for him. He was insatiable, this old soldier. Each time that I visited him I learned of a new feat of arms.

‘Doctor, we have taken Mayence,’ his granddaughter said to me one day with a tearful smile, and I heard through the door a cheerful voice that cried,—

‘Forward! forward! In a week we will enter Berlin.’

‘At this moment the Prussians were not more than a week distant from Paris. We asked each other at first if it would not be better to take him into the country; but as soon as he should go outside he would learn the state of affairs, and he was still too feeble, too enervated by his great shock to learn the truth, so that we decided to remain.

‘The first day of the investment I called upon them, much agitated, I remember, by the bitterness we felt at seeing the gates of Paris shut, fighting going on under the walls, and the suburbs become frontiers. I found the old man proud and jubilant.

‘Good,’ he said to me; ‘the siege commences to-day.’

‘I looked at him stupefied ‘What, Colonel, do you know it?’

‘His granddaughter turned toward me. ‘Why, yes, doctor. It is the great news. The siege of Berlin has begun.’

‘She said it with a peaceful and composed air, threading her needle at the same time. How should he suspect anything? The cannon of the forts he could not hear. Unhappy Paris, dark and distracted, he could not see. What he perceived from his bed was a part of the Arc de Triomphe, and about him in his room, well calculated to keep up his delusion, were all the souvenirs of the First Empire: portraits of marshals; engravings of battles; the King of Rome as an infant; heavy, awkward consoles, ornamented with brass trophies, loaded with imperial relics, medals, and bronzes; a rock from St. Helena under glass; miniatures representing a bright-eyed lady in a yellow ball dress, with leg-of-mutton sleeves; and everything, the consoles, marshals, King of Rome, ladies in yellow, had the unbending figure, the awkward style, the heavy elegance, which was the grace of 1806. Gallant colonel! it was this atmosphere of victory and conquest, more than all we could tell him, that made him believe so innocently in the siege of Berlin.

‘From this time on our military operations were very much simplified. To take Berlin was only a matter of patience. From time to time, as the old man became dissatisfied, we read him a letter from his son,—an imaginary one, of course, as no one could enter Paris, and since Sedan, the aide-de-camp of MacMahon, had been sent to a German fortress. You can imagine the despair of the poor child, with no news of her father, knowing that he was a prisoner, and perhaps sick and in want, yet obliged to speak for him in cheerful letters such as a soldier would write while advancing in a conquered country. Sometimes her will failed her; then we remained without news, and the old man was troubled, and could not sleep. Then there would be a letter from