

Browsings Among the Books.

(Continued from page 1805.)

squadrons to our right were seen to advance, and then a tremendous motion of the whole line showed that the horses themselves participated in the eagerness of the moment; and—at last—the word came for the cuirassiers to move up. In less than a hundred yards we were halted again, and I heard an aide-de-camp telling General D'Auvergne that Davoust had suffered immensely on the right—that his division, although reinforced, had fallen back behind Reygner—and all now depended on the attack of Soult's columns. I heard no more, for now the whole line advanced in trot, and, as our formation showed an unbroken front, the word came—"Faster!" and "Faster!" As we emerged from the low ground we saw Soult's column already half-way up the ascent; they seemed like a great wedge driven into the enemy's center, which, opening as they advanced, presented two surfaces of fire to their attack.

"The battery yonder has opened its fire on our line," said D'Auvergne; "we cannot remain where we are."

"Forward! Charge!" came the word from front to rear, and squadron after squadron dashed madly up the ascent. The one word only, "Charge!" kept ringing through my head—all else was drowned in the terrible din of the advance. An Austrian brigade of light cavalry issued forth as we came up, but soon fell back under the overwhelming pressure of our force; and now we came down upon the squares of the red-brown Russian infantry. Volley after volley sent back our leading squadrons, wounded and repulsed, when, unlimbering with the speed of lightning, the horse artillery poured in a discharge of grape-shot. The ranks wavered, and through their cleft spaces of dead and dying our cuirassiers dashed in, sabering all before them. In vain the infantry tried to form again: successive discharges of grape, followed by cavalry attacks, broke through their firmest ranks, and at last, retreating, they fell back under cover of a tremendous battery of field-guns, which, opening their fire, compelled us to retire into the wood. Nor were we long inactive. Bernadotte's division was now engaged on our left, and a pressing demand came for cavalry to support them. Again we mounted the hill, and came in sight of the Russian Guard, led on by the Grand Duke Constantine himself—a splendid body of men, conspicuous for their size, and the splendor of their equipment. Such, however, was the impetuous torrent of our attack, that they were broken in an instant; and, notwithstanding their courage and devotion, fresh masses of our dragoons kept pouring down upon them, and they were sabered, almost to a man. While we were thus engaged, the battle became general from left to right, and the earth shook beneath the thundering sounds of two hundred great guns. Our position, for a moment victorious, soon changed, for, having followed the retreating squadrons too far, the waves closed behind us, and we now saw that a dense cloud of Austrian and Russian cavalry were forming in our rear. An instant of hesitation would have been fatal. It was then that a tall and splendidly-dressed horseman broke from the line, and, with a cry to "Follow!" rode straight at the enemy. It was Murat himself, sabre in hand, who, clearing his way through the Russians, opened a path for us. A few minutes after, we had gained the wood—but one-third of our force had fallen.

"Cavalry!—cavalry!" cried a field officer, riding down at headlong speed, his face covered with blood from a sabre-cut, "to the front!"

The order was given to advance at a gallop, and we found ourselves next instant hand to hand with the Russian Dragoons, who, having swept along the flank of Bernadotte's division, were sabering them on all sides. On we went, reinforced by Nansouty and his carabinieri, a body of high seven thousand men. It was a torrent no force could stem—the tide of victory was with us, and we swept along, wave after wave, the infantry advancing in line for miles at either side, while whole brigades of artillery kept up a murderous fire without ceasing. Entire columns of the enemy surrendered as prisoners—guns were captured at each instant, and only by a miracle did the Grand Duke escape our

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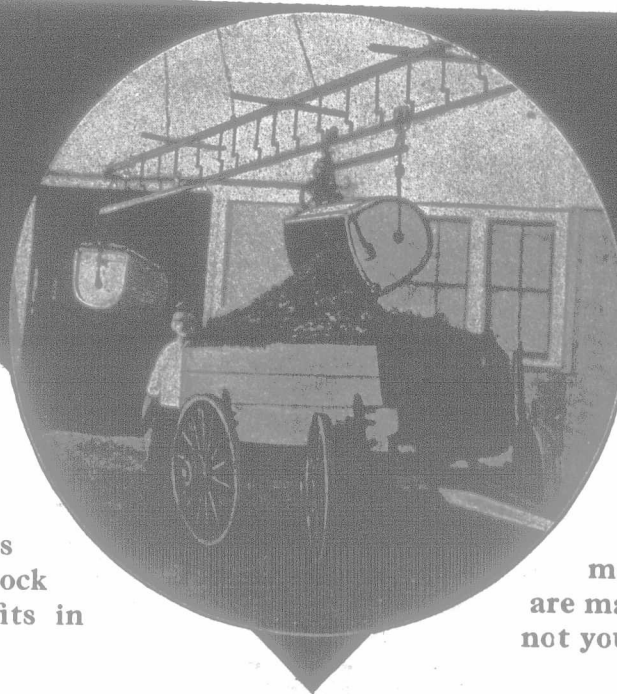
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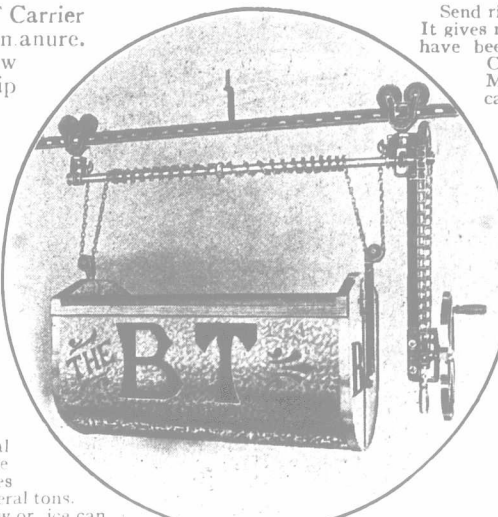
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