

listen to a word. Waving his hand as he wheeled away, he exclaimed: "Let me hear when I awake that the traitor has paid the forfeit of his crime!"

On the evening of the day when Ney was sentenced to be shot, the king held a reception, to which Wellington was invited. He went to the palace intending to ask Louis to spare the life of Ney, but the king suspected his purpose, and just before Wellington reached him, the Count of Artois—who afterwards reigned as Chas. X—darted between Wellington and his majesty, as if afraid that the duke wished to assassinate the king. It was a fitting task for the pusillanimous prince who, in 1796, when nearly a quarter of France rose in his favor, had not the courage to land and place himself at the head of the insurgents, whom he basely left to the vengeance of the republicans.

At the very moment of this interference, the king deliberately turned his back upon Wellington, in the presence of the whole court, and in the most marked and offensive manner. The duke, who felt this insult keenly, turned to the courtiers, and said:

"You forget that I commanded the armies which put your king on his throne. I will never again enter the royal presence."

Nor did he, until the Count of Artois called upon him, and begged him, almost on his knees, to return to the court.

At a conclave of the royal family it was decided to hasten the execution, and to have the marshal shot at or about five o'clock the following morning. The Bourbons could not, dared not, attempt to carry out the sentence of the law according to the forms of law. The government did not venture to let the troops or the people face the marshal. On the 7th of December a picket of sixty veterans was drawn up at the place of execution, at 5 a.m., but the marshal was brought to the spot four hours and twenty minutes later. Contrary to the usual custom, the soldiers loaded their own guns. An officer advanced to bandage Ney's eyes, but was stopped by the proud interrogation, "Are you ignorant that for twenty-five years I have been accustomed to face both balls and bullets?"

Ney cautioned the soldiers not to fire until he put his hand upon his heart. Then, with a firm voice, he gave the command: "Soldiers, straight to the heart—fire!" striking his hand on his heart as the last word was uttered.

A single report was heard. Ney fell as if struck with a thunder-bolt, without a convulsion and without a sigh.