

crisis the column commenced its march, and the master hurried their movements by some pretty "tall profanity. A measure of fine shot was put into the gun in place of powder, which when wadded carefully down, was covered with a charge of buckshot; the double-barrelled gun was treated to a similar dose, and the party resumed their march, as the rifle was pronounced *comme il faut*.

We have stated previously that the distance of the arsenal from the town was only about one and a half miles. The Colonel with his staff, rode in front, and when they reached the foot of the hill, he called a halt. Here, conscious that an important crisis in his own and his country's history, was at hand, he concluded to address the troops before they entered into action. With a port which Cæsar and Bonaparte never equalled, he rode along the front,—his presence unconsciously electrifying all beholders, and in turns producing admiration and awe, as he thus addressed them;—

"Soldiers! the eyes of our countrymen are upon you; as I look around I see that martial ardour which bespeaks victory for your arms. You are aware the commandant of the arsenal has sent us a notification, that if we persist in storming the place that he will not hesitate to bombard the town. It is useless to conceal from you the fact that he has the power to do this unless we make short work in our attack. Our motto must be "we conquer or die," and each man must be prepared to do his duty." Just at this part of his speech, when many hearts were failing, and many knees were weak, a gun from the arsenal was fired as a signal, when lo! drill and discipline were forgotten, many fell flat upon their faces, others satisfied they were not killed took to their heels and fled incontinently. The Bucephalus upon which Colonel Puffpouch was mounted possessed that steadiness of nerve, and gravity of demeanour, which often result from age and experience, so that instead of running away, like some of the rest, he merely took advantage of a sudden relaxation of the rein to commence grazing. Some of the cavalry lost complete control of their horses, and ran so far from the field, that they did not consider it worth while returning to the scene of slaughter. No sooner was the gun fired than a regular "stampede" from the town commenced, indeed previous to the firing of the gun the greater part of the women and children had left to get beyond the range of such dire missiles.

While matters were in this dreadful state of suspense, the Colonel saw a messenger from the arsenal coming down with a white flag. Both Puffpouch and his men were at once reanimated; the ranks were dressed, order restored, and the remains of the army waited in grim and ominous silence to hear the message. The commandant desired a conference with Colonel Puffpouch, with permission to inspect the forces brought against him, so that if the odds were such as to forbid an attempt at holding out, and would justify his surrender, he must do so upon such terms as could be mutually agreed upon. After a pretence at consultation the proposal was assented to, and the lieutenant with one or two subalterns, soon after appeared. As the lieutenant walked along the