

From Villiers I witnessed during the battle I knew that Villiers was the best point at which to enter on my horrible exploration. It is just midway between Brie and Champigny. On approaching the village I found two dead horses and a dead Zouave lying immediately outside. One of the horses was by the roadside the other in the field. The Zouave lay on his back by the side of a house. Avo shells had destroyed all three, and the side of the dead horse was shattered and was shelled with vengeance. The bodies had descended everywhere, carrying with them the roofs of houses, entering through stone walls, and scattering destruction all around. But though not many of the buildings there had entirely escaped, one mansion seemed safe and sound. In the ground attached to it the shells had plowed the ground and thrown the earth on every side. The residence itself is that of a French noble, who has lived in it under all the fire, and now gives shelter to a Saxon officer who was wounded outside. This lady is the only civilian in the village. She must be the most courageous woman on earth for not to speak of the battle days, the shells are always falling in Villiers.

There is a park just at the extreme end of the village, on the Paris side. Before and all around it raged the battle of the 22nd and 23rd of November, and the 2d of December. The chateau is officers' quarters. How it suffered! There is scarcely a window-sash left in one side of it, and to approach it, there is no necessity to make use of the entrance gate. The wall is smashed from top to bottom in a dozen places. I entered near the gate, and the first sight I saw, was ten dead Saxons in a row. Their faces were covered, and three of their comrades watched over them. Passing through the gate, I passed the first of Paris. I walked out through an embrasure in the wall, and came upon rising ground. It was one of the hottest parts of the battle field, and almost the center of the scene of fighting. Heavens, what a sight! To see the men advancing under fire of the forts, and falling at every step; to see the French and the Saxons amid that horrid din of artillery shooting one another down with chase and snail-gun; to hear the hurrahs follow the valley, and as the smoke cleared away to find the line thinned and living men advancing over the prostrate bodies of the dead and dying, was horrible, but nothing like so horrible as the sight of this battle-field, with hundreds of dead lying there in the cold air, the sun shining on their ghastly features and stiff forms, while the cannon on Avron and the forts of the Paris side, continued that shook the earth for miles round. One of the first great groups I came upon was composed of sixty French soldiers. A few Saxons and Wurtembergers lay around them; but the Germans had already removed and laid in their last sleeping-place most of their dead. The centre of the group was formed of a close line of forty-six. You could not have placed a body between any two. They fell shoulder to shoulder, just as they had died, and as for the greater number of the dead on their backs, with their feet to Paris and their heads to Villiers. Alas! it was painfully evident that many of them and of others whom I saw subsequently had not died instantaneously, but had lived probably many hours without a hand to lend them succor, and in piercing snow and frost. One poor fellow lay on his face. He had two ridged wounds in his back. He had panted and heaved and died, and lay on each bullet hole. Several had taken off their knapsacks and placed them under their heads, and so pillowed him breathing their last breath. Others clenched their water bottles in one hand, but had been unable to remove the cork, and died without being able to get a drop in. In their last agony. Some, in their sufferings, had burrowed their faces in the thick clay on which they lay, and turned their bloody and swollen faces to the sky, and had expired. Two I saw who had their arms fixed and their legs clenching as if while dying they were engaged in a pugilistic encounter. Only very few faces were on their sides. These had their knapsacks under their heads, and were men on whose faces beamed the smile of life, and whose countenances were like handsome wax work. The expression of others was that of agony. Every feature was contorted, and their legs had been convulsively jerked up, until their knees struck into their stomachs and their fingers and thumb nails had been squeezed until they had become riveted into the palms of their hands. Behind, before, and at the corners of this line of the dead were others, Saxons and French. One had a frightful wound in the face. He had pulled his hands up into his sleeves to smother them, but his cap had fallen off, and the blood clotted on his hair till it was all in bloody mats. Near him was another, who had taken a biscuit from his knapsack and the bottle from his side and had partaken of a little of both. More than one of the slain had died with the hands clasped in prayer, and had taken and a little plaster medalion of the Blessed Virgin. A portion of the edge had been bent off it. The chasepots and needle guns are still in many a dead man's hand, and lying between his arm and body.

Similar were the sights all over the plateau between Villiers and Brie, and Villiers and Champigny; and among the corpses were knapsacks, helmets, shakos, bayonets and many a letter and directed to relatives and friends in Germany and France. Near a cemetery situated on the battle-field itself, I saw between two and three hundred dead French soldiers collected closely together; they had been removed from where they had fallen, and collected in that spot for burial. All were regulars; and a large proportion of them were men of at least twenty-five to thirty years of age. There were dead nearer to Paris than any spot I visited, though the fortifications were much too close to be at all agreeable, and Bullly-sur-Marne and Fontenay-sous-Bois seemed to be within a few minutes' distance on my right and left. I bow then to the memory of the dead, and for the removal of the dead.

and wounded had been agreed to; but both sides had been removing them by night. So late as last night some of the German wounded were found among the dead and are now in hospital. What must have been their sufferings in snow and frost since the second inst., for they had been laying out day and night since then, if not since the 30th! But I think your readers will have had sufficient of the battle-field with its masses of dead.—*Correspondent London Times.*

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